

***Violation and Destruction of Human Rights
In Ukraine***

MEMORANDUM

**TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Submitted by

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I. The Soviet Union and the Concept of Human Rights

The Soviet government is a signatory to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and it makes much of this fact in its massive propaganda drives outside the Soviet Union.

Recently an article marking "International Human Rights Year" appeared in *Izvestia*, official organ of the Soviet government. It stated that the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights had become the generally accepted basis for man's political, social and economic rights. It further stated:

But in the conditions of capitalism the Declaration's basic tenets remain unfulfilled to this day. The bourgeois democracies, which serve the interests of imperialist monopolies, have turned the rights and freedoms assured by their constitutions into a farce. Thanks to the unstinted efforts of the Soviet Union... the U.N. has taken a series of measures aimed at restoring the independence of colonial people, the ending of all forms of racial discrimination, and (has) signed conventions condemning racialism and genocide. However, much remains to be done...

("The Chornovil Papers," by Gabriel Lorince,
New Statesman, Feb. 23, 1968, London)

This self-serving boast of the official Soviet organ can in no way be substantiated by evidence. On the contrary, the Soviet Union has been and continues to be a crass violator and destroyer of human rights on a scale unprecedented in mankind's history.

Its Marxism, grafted onto Russian Messianism, has led to this lamentable result: every single article of all 30 articles contained in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* has been transgressed, violated, or deliberately broken by the Soviet government.

II. Violation of Human Rights in Ukraine

Article 18 of the Declaration reads:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

But how does the Soviet government observe this right in practice?

In such fashion:

a) The Soviet government destroyed the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in the 1930's by murdering over 30 archbishops and bishops, and over 20,000 clergy and monks;

b) In 1945-46 it ruthlessly destroyed the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Western Ukraine by arresting 11 bishops and over 2,000 priests, monks and nuns; it forced the Ukrainian Catholics into the fold of the Communist-controlled Russian Orthodox Church, against their will and conviction;

c) The Soviet government persistently harasses and persecutes other Christian adherents in Ukraine — the Baptists, Evangelics, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, by imposing heavy taxation, arresting pastors and preachers for alleged "crimes" against the state, and other repressive means;

d) The Soviet government is relentlessly persecuting over 1,000,000 Ukrainian Jews by closing down synagogues, molesting religious leaders and terrorizing worshippers;

e) The same policy of intolerance and open persecution is being applied by the Soviet government to the Moslems in Ukraine, who are hounded by the secret police and effectively prevented from practicing their traditional religion.

Article 19 of the Declaration reads:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

This vital aspect of the Human Rights Declaration has been cynically and ruthlessly violated by the Soviet government, especially in Ukraine, up to the present. Beginning in August, 1965, a wave of arrests swept through Ukraine, ensnaring over 200 *Ukrainian intellectuals* in such cities as Kiev, Lviv, Odessa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lutsk, Zhytomyr and Ternopil. This veritable intellectual *pogrom* in scope and intensity far surpassed the arrest and trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel. Most of these victims were young men reared under the Soviet system in Ukraine. They were charged with "anti-Soviet" nationalist writings, glorification of the Ukrainian past, and disseminating speeches by Western leaders, such as an encyclical of Pope John XXIII and the address by former President Dwight D. Eisenhower which was delivered on June 27, 1964, at the unveiling of the Taras Shevchenko statue in Washington, D. C.

Most of these men were tried *in camera* and sentenced to long terms at hard labor under Article 62 of the Penal Code of the Ukrainian SSR, which is in direct contradiction to Art. 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Article 62 of the Penal Code of the Ukrainian SSR reads:

Any agitation or propaganda with the intent to undermine or subvert the Soviet regime, the participation in certain specific and particularly dangerous crimes against the state, the dissemination with the same intent of slanderous inventions against the Soviet state and its social system, as well as distribution, preparation or possession to the above end of literature with such content, are punishable by loss of freedom for terms from six months to seven years or banishment for terms from two to five years. The above actions, if committed by persons previously convicted for serious crimes against the state or of crimes committed in time of war, are punishable by imprisonment for terms of three to ten years.

This Soviet criminal code which is overworked as the legal justification for extreme repression, is contradicted by the Soviet constitution itself, which specifies as follows:

In accordance with the worker's interest and with the aim of strengthening the Socialist system, the citizens of the USSR are guaranteed by Law: a) Freedom of speech; b) Freedom of the press; c) Freedom of gatherings and meetings; d) Freedom of processions and demonstrations on the street.

(Soviet Constitution, Chapter X, Article 125)

It was these trials to which U.S. Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg referred in his debate in the U.N. Human Rights Commission on March 6, 1968, when he said:

What has been completely overlooked is the particular concern of this Commission in light of the Declaration of Human Rights with the aspects of the trials to which I referred in the Soviet Union... And the prosecutions which have occurred

in the Soviet Union and the convictions are specifically in violation of that provision of the Declaration of Human Rights, and the covenants which have been drafted to implement it...

The breakthrough as to information on the Ukrainian trials and convictions was provided by a Ukrainian journalist, *Vyacheslav M. Chornovil*. As a TV newsman and a member of the Comsomol organization, Mr. Chornovil attended the trials of several Ukrainian intellectuals. He found intolerable the flagrant violation of "Soviet justice" and the coercion and terror of the KGB. His protests to the Soviet authorities and party leaders in Ukraine came to no avail. He was finally arrested, tried and sentenced on November 15, 1967 to 3 years at hard labor. His manuscript, *Portraits of 20 'Criminals'*, was smuggled out of Ukraine in 1967 and published in Ukrainian by *Ukrainske Slovo* in Paris.

On the basis of his white book the international press carried a series of articles on the suppression of freedom and human rights in Ukraine: *The Times* of London, February 7, 1968; *The New York Times* on Feb. 8, 9 and 10, 1968; *The Observer* of London, Feb. 11, 1968; *New Statesman*, Feb. 23, 1968, also of London; *The Toronto Telegram*, Jan-11, 1968, and *The New Leader*, January 15, 1968.

Articles on the persecution of Ukrainian intellectuals also appeared in *Die Welt* of Hamburg, *Die Sued-Deutsche Zeitung* of Munich; *Le Monde* of Paris, and *L'Osservatore Romano* of Rome.

EXAMPLES OF INHUMAN PERSECUTION

Some of the Ukrainian cases merit special mention:

1) *Svyatoslav Y. Karavansky*, poet and journalist. In 1944 he was tried and sentenced to 25 years at hard labor. He was amnestied in 1960 after 17 years in an Arctic slave labor camp; the maximum prison sentence in the USSR was then reduced from 25 to 15 years. He returned to Odessa, enrolling at the university there and working on translations of Shakespeare and Byron. He also wrote well-documented petitions to the government of the Ukrainian SSR protesting practices by the Russians conducted against the Ukrainians and Jews. In 1965 he was arrested on an Odessa street and sentenced, without benefit of jury, to 8 years and 7 months. In imprisonment he has gone on a hunger strike 5 times. At present he is incarcerated in Camp 11, Yavas, Mordovia.

2) *Yurly Shukhevych*, son of General Roman Shukhevych (Taras Chuprynka), commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Arrested in 1948 at the age of 15, he was sentenced to 10 years at hard labor. In 1958 he was released, only shortly to be rearrested; on December 1, 1958 he was sentenced again to 10 years at hard labor. In 1963 he was brought from Mordovia to Kiev, where KGB Major Kalash and KGB Captains Lytvyn and Markatanenko proposed that he denounce Ukrainian nationalism and the activities of his father, General Shukhevych, in return for prompt release. He refused, stating that he had been sentenced twice without having committed any crime against the Soviet state. His second sentence is up this year.

3) *Mykhailo Soroka*, Ukrainian patriot. Arrested in 1940, he was sentenced to 8 years at hard labor; released in 1948, he returned to Lviv (Western Ukraine), but again was arrested and sent to Krasnoyarsk for the same "crime." Upon his return to Lviv in 1951 he was vindicated, only again to be arrested in 1952 and sentenced to 25 years at hard labor. He is now in Yavas, in the Mordovian ASSR. Altogether, he has spent 31 years in Polish and Soviet jails. As late as 1966 he was reported suffering from coronary thrombosis. He was refused medical treatment in a camp, where the so-called camp hospital contained only 7 beds to accommodate 225 invalid and sick prisoners. It was reported that Yuliy Daniel protested to the camp authorities against the "shocking and inhuman treatment" of this prisoner.

4) Three Ukrainian women-martyrs, *Katherine Zarytska*, *Odarka Huslak* and *Halyna Didyk*, members of the Ukrainian Red Cross organization. Each was sentenced

to 25 years at hard labor, although none committed any crime against the Soviet state. All three are at Vladimir Prison, northeast of Moscow.

On these mass trials of Ukrainian intellectuals, Edward Crankshaw, a leading British authority on Soviet affairs, commented (*The Observer* of London, Feb. 11, 1968) :

What had these men done? They had discussed among themselves and among their friends, ways and means of legally resisting the forcible Russification of Ukraine and the continued destruction of its culture. They possessed books dealing with this problem, some of them written in Czarist times. They possessed notebooks with quotations from the great Ukrainian patriots.

No evidence whatsoever was produced to show that they agreed with these opinions or were contemplating subversive action. Unlike some who had gone before (and others still active) they were not advocating secession in any form and even had they done so, there would have been no violation of the constitution. They were deeply concerned because the Moscow government was still persisting in its efforts to blot out Ukrainian consciousness, which even Stalin with his massive deportations and brutal killings had failed to do...

III. Destruction of the Non-Russian Nations in the USSR

Article 2 of the Declaration reads:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 15 of the Declaration reads:

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

1. GENOCIDE OF ENTIRE ETHNIC ENTITIES

Despite these provisions of the *Declaration*, the Soviet government has been engaged in a systematic destruction of the non-Russian nations and ethnic entities.

After World War II, Stalin ordered the wholesale deportations and destruction of such non-Russian peoples as the *Crimean Tartars*, *Volga Germans*, *Chechen-Ingushes*, *Kalmyks* and *Karachais*. All were uprooted from their ancestral homes and dispersed throughout the Soviet Union on thinly-substantiated charges of having been "pro-German" during World War II. These people were collectively found guilty — many men and women were executed without trial or even a hearing, to which they were entitled under the Soviet constitution. In 1958 the Soviet government restored statehood to some of these peoples, and some survivors were allowed to return, only to find their homes occupied by Russian settlers sent in by Moscow. For instance, when a number of Chechens and Ingushes returned to their city of Grozny in the Caucasus, they were greeted by hostile Russians brandishing posters, which read: "Long Live Stalin's Nationality Policy," and "Chechens and Ingushes, Get Out of the Caucasus!"

The genocidal treatment of the non-Russian ethnic entities by the Soviet government is a crime of the first magnitude under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

2. PERSECUTION OF THE JEWISH MINORITY

There are still about 3 million Jews in the USSR, of which at least a million are living in Ukraine. Their treatment by the Soviet government was deplored by Svyatoslav Karavansky, one of the most outstanding Ukrainian intellectuals persecuted by the Soviet Russian regime, in his "Petition to the Council of Nationalities of the USSR." In it he stated:

I call your attention to the discrimination against the Jewish population. I state this problem first because the attitude of a society towards its Jewish population is the litmus paper indicating that society's level of international consciousness. The closing down of Jewish cultural institutions (newspapers, schools, theaters, publishing houses); the execution of Jewish cultural workers; discrimination in admitting Jews to institutions of higher and secondary learning — these are all practices that flourished in the era of the personality cult... To appease public opinion abroad, Nikita Khrushchev (who paid little attention to public opinion in the Soviet Union itself) was forced to "rehabilitate" the innocent Jewish cultural leaders executed under Stalin. But he went no further...

3. DEPORTATIONS OF ESTONIANS, LATVIANS AND LITHUANIANS

The brutal uprooting of the Baltic peoples by the Soviet government in 1940 is a matter of historical record. Karavansky underscores these large-scale deportations of the Baltic nations in his cited petition. Thousands upon thousands of the hapless Baltic nationals were deported for the usual offenses: they happened to live near the western Soviet frontiers, they opposed Russian Communism and its totalitarian system and, above all, they wanted to be free and independent of Soviet Russian control. Entire towns and villages — for example, the town of Silamaye in Estonia — were deported to Siberia. The societal fabrics of the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians vanished under the genocidal onslaught. In his petition Karavansky asks a penetrating question:

Today in Komi ASSR (Vorkuta, Inta, Pechora), in Siberia (Irkutsk Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast, Krasnoyarsky Krai), in Kazakhstan, and in Kolyma, are large numbers of *Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians* who were deported on the suspicion of opposing the personality cult in the years 1943-49. One can only presume that it is precisely because it intends to prevent the release of these persons that the USSR continues to maintain its barbaric 25-year prison term. For at this time 25-year sentences are being served primarily by *Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Byelorussians* and *Moldavians*. Why is there no pardon for them? We have generously pardoned those who contributed to the mass extermination of Soviet citizens in 1937-39, excusing them on the ground that they were not responsible for the conditions of those times and were only obeying orders...

4. RESTRICTION UPON MOVEMENT OF CITIZENS

Article 13 of the Declaration reads:

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave the country, including his own, and to return to his country.

This provision of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is violated daily by the Soviet government by its practice of the so-called *system of passport registration*. According to this practice, articulated into law, a person may live only where the militia allows him to live.

One does not have the right to move about freely in the country, more precisely, he has the right only to go East: to Siberia, to the Urals, to Kazakhstan; he does not have the right to live in the so-called "regime" cities. Thus, an inhabitant of Ukraine may not settle in Kiev, Odessa or Lviv; an inhabitant of Lithuania, in Vilnius or Kaunas; or an inhabitant of Latvia, in Riga. And why, we may ask, is he not? Why should not Ukrainians be allowed to live in their own capital city of Kiev?

Because it is the intent to Russify Kiev and all other important urban centers. The discriminatory system of passport registration presently in force in the USSR allows only Russians to settle in these cities. Here is the other side of the genocidal coin: a slow extirpation as compared with swift Stalinist deportations and mass killings. In a technological era, wherein the city has become all-important, this insidious form of genocide is perhaps most heinous of all. Inevitably, such a practice provokes deep resentment and bristling antagonism between the non-Russian and Russian populations not only in Ukraine, the Baltic states, Byelorussia, and Moldavia, but also in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and in the Moslem countries of Central Asia.

IV. Russification and Cultural Oppression in Ukraine

The Soviet government's linguistic and cultural policies are in direct violation of two articles of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, namely, Art. 2 (*freedom of language, and so forth*) and Art. 15 (*the right to a nationality*).

In theory the Ukrainian SSR is an independent and sovereign state, and a charter member of the United Nations. In practice, however, it is a puppet creation of Communist Russia.

The Soviet Union, following hard on the footsteps of the Russian Czars, relentlessly pursues a policy of cultural and linguistic *Russification* aimed at the creation of a "Soviet man," who in essence and ideally would be a Russian.

In his petition Svyatoslav Karavansky fixes the crux of the matter:

The *Russification* of Ukrainian institutions of higher learning introduced after 1937 has been condemned and partially corrected in Western Ukraine, but in Eastern Ukraine these institutions remain completely *Russified*. This discriminatory policy is explained by the supposed difference between the two regions; but if this is the case, why did the Ukrainian nation unite into one Ukrainian Soviet state in the first place?

The ongoing Russification of Ukraine by Moscow was described recently by a Canadian Marxist who had spent two years in Ukraine (1963-65) attending the "Higher Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine" in Kiev. In his book, *Education in Soviet Ukraine* (published by Peter Martin Associates in Toronto), John Kolasky says:

The aim of Russian policy is to maintain a tight control over education in Ukraine and other national republics, to restrict Ukrainians and other nationals from progressing beyond the elementary and general secondary level... to denationalize them... to increase... the continuous influx of Russians to occupy posts in government, education, science and other fields...

Everywhere in Kiev there was evidence of pressure to impose the Russian language... Many Russians with whom I came in contact displayed open contempt because I spoke Ukrainian... Russians were everywhere with their arrogant, over-

bearing attitude; their contempt, sometimes veiled, but often overt, for the Ukrainian language; their open display of a feeling of Russian superiority...

Anyone who insists on the right to speak a language other than the Russian "runs a risk of being denounced as a bourgeois nationalist," he contends. There is no instruction in the Ukrainian language at the universities of Odessa, Kharkiv and Dniepropetrovsk, all in Ukraine. Only 20 to 25 percent of the instruction at the University of Kiev is given in Ukrainian.

In every Union Republic the percentage of students studying in the Russian language is higher than the percentage of Russians living in the Republic.

In Ukrainian School No. 178 in Kiev, there are 1,400 pupils with a library of 3,323 books — of which a scant 14 are in Ukrainian. There are no non-Russian schools in the Russian Republic, despite its millions of non-Russians, including some 8 million Ukrainians, who are forced to send their children to Russian schools.

In Ukraine, for instance, about 17 percent of the population is Russian; students studying only in Russian constitute nearly 30 percent.

Among certain ethnic groups Russification has progressed to the point where the national language has all but been throttled. This fate has befallen such languages as the Yiddish, Tartar, Ossetian, Kalmyk, Chechen, Ingush and Karelian-Finnish. In Armenia, Russian is the language of instruction beginning with the first grade of primary school.

Prison Camps – Still a Perennial Feature Of Soviet Russian Landscape

The persistent claims of the Soviet Russian leaders, from Khrushchev to Brezhnev and Kosygin, that the slave labor and prison camps are things of the past in the USSR, are but hollow propaganda pronouncements for foreign consumption:

There are some 36 prison camps in the Potma area of the Mordovian ASSR (east of Moscow) alone. Each holds 2 to 3 thousand prisoners. Some have more, as, for instance, the Yavas Camp, which holds 6 thousand prisoners... Altogether there are up to 100,000 prisoners in the Potma area alone...

The great majority of prisoners are on semi-starvation rations. Theoretically they receive 2,300 to 2,400 calories daily, but they are lucky if they get 1,500, because the products are of low quality, especially in spring and summer, before the new crop. The herring is rotten and smelly; the dried potatoes, macaroni, barley and meat are infested with worms...

There is no medicine, nor do the prisoners have the right to receive any from their relatives — even vitamins. Prisoners who work on construction have no warm clothing...

(From reports by Ukrainian political prisoners in Mordovia)

The Soviet government does not observe the canons of elementary decency, much less the dignity and liberty of man envisioned by the U.N. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.