



## Project Update

Onsite work on the Memorial to the Victims of Communism has begun after the winter break. Once the site has dried, the plinth will be sandblasted for an even finish, followed by the completion of the stonework around the edges and stairs. Landscaping will also be completed by the end of May. Further, the fabricator is making final calculations regarding the bronze sculpture. Additional timelines on specific elements for the memorial include:

- Stone Pavers: Expected to be finished by May 13<sup>th</sup>
- Granite: Expected to be finished by May 25<sup>th</sup>
- Asphalt and Hydroseed: Expected to be finished by June 1<sup>st</sup>

Stay tuned for more construction updates in our summer newsletter!



Construction starting up at the memorial site in early spring.

# The War in Ukraine Highlights the Importance of Commemorating the Victims of Communism

*The following is an op ed that appeared in the Toronto Star on April 11, 2022, written by Marcus Kolga, Senior Fellow at the MacDonald-Laurier Institute; Paul Grod, President of the Ukrainian World Congress; and Ludwik Klimkowski, Chair of the Board of Tribute to Liberty.*

A recent edition of The Economist magazine, symbolically titled “The Stalinization of Russia”, has rightly termed Vladimir Putin “a 21<sup>st</sup> century Stalin”, both due to his aggression and war crimes against its neighbour, as well as his repressions at home.

What is even more important to understand is that the driving ideological force behind Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is the glorification of the Soviet Union and its communist leadership, including Josef Stalin, which Putin’s government has been actively promoting within Russia for years.

Russia’s war against Ukraine and its hostility towards the democratic West have their roots directly in Russia’s communist past. This is why it is important today to recognize the dark legacy of the communist ideology and properly to commemorate its victims.

The history of communism is the history of conquest and subjugation of independent peoples to the rule of a repressive centralized dictatorship. After the end of World War I, Vladimir Lenin attempted to impose Moscow’s rule on the newly independent republics including Ukraine and Poland, with the aim of eventually carrying out a “world revolution” in the entirety of Europe and annihilating whole classes of people deemed “counter-revolutionary”.

Stalin continued this policy of expansion, and after the notorious pact with Hitler in 1939, he annexed the Baltic States, half of Poland, a portion of Romania, and then invaded Finland. Following WWII, Stalin extended his de-facto rule to most of Eastern Europe.

The peoples who fell under the communist rule were subject to terrors and devastating social and economic reorganization. In the name of the Marxist utopia, communist dictators abolished civil and property rights, confiscated homes, farms and businesses, conducted mass executions and deportations of “undesirable” groups of people, and implemented a policy of systemic repressions.

Lenin’s Red Terror and class purges, Stalin’s genocide of the Ukrainian people (Holodomor), mass deportations of numerous ethnic groups, the Great Terror against his own people, the deadly collectivization of the farms, and the war crimes committed during WWII, such as the Katyn massacre of the Polish prisoners of war, are just some of the examples.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the individuals and the organizations responsible for these crimes were never brought to justice in Russia, and their victims were never officially recognized.

On the contrary, Putin’s government was busy whitewashing Russia’s past and glorifying its communist leaders. Many in Putin’s inner circle are in fact former functionaries of the KGB, the successor organization to Stalin’s NKVD and Lenin’s CheKa, the secret police that carried out the mass executions during the communist times. Putin and his advocates make it no secret that they aspire to resurrect the Soviet Union and see Stalin as a role model.

Given all this, it is not surprising that Putin’s Russia has culminated in invading Ukraine, an independent democratic state that does not wish to be controlled anymore by the autocrats from Moscow who terrorized it throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For many in the West, unfortunately, communism is simply associated with naïve but well-meaning idealists who only wish the best for others, but are somewhat mistaken in their methods. Given its true history, however, the horrific crimes that have been committed in its name, and the fact that its specter still incites new acts of aggressions in Europe, we need to do a better job in raising awareness about it.

The Memorial to the Victims of Communism, A Land of Refuge is the only project in Canada that seeks to commemorate the tens of millions of victims of communism. It is a collaboration between many ethnic communities across Canada, **representing about 20% of Canada’s population**, whose members found refuge in our country after surviving the violence of communist rule in their homelands.

However, the Memorial has faced many challenges and is still waiting to see the light of day, 14 years since its inception. Despite the expressions of support from federal politicians, the remaining stages to complete the project are again delayed.

A new act of abhorrent injustice is being committed

today in Europe by Putin's regime, which has its roots directly in Russia's communist past. It has claimed lives of thousands of victims and made millions flee their homes. It is time for the Memorial to open to the public as a place to commemorate the victims, past and present.

## History Unhidden

### *The Butovo, Russia Firing Range*

*Submitted by Denis Tsarev*

I grew up in a small ordinary town in Russia just south of Moscow. Merely a few kilometers away was the location of the notorious Butovo firing range. Nobody I knew in my town ever talked about it, but later I was able to learn about the horrors and the tragedy that this place witnessed. Unlike countless other similar sites in Russia, thankfully historical information was made available in the 1990s about this particular one.



Mass grave of the Butovo firing range.

The Butovo firing range was a site of mass executions of predominantly Russian political prisoners, where in only about one year, between 1937 and 1938, over 20,000 people were murdered and buried in mass graves. For the most part, these were not military commanders or communist party functionaries, but ordinary people who were labeled counter-revolutionaries. Amongst the

victims were workers, peasants, former priests and merchants, former soldiers of the White army, as well as members of the intelligentsia such as engineers, writers and artists. Some of the victims were also foreigners.

On a daily basis throughout this period detainees were brought to the site in trucks disguised as grocery delivery vehicles, often with the sign "Bread" written on them. The victims were sent to a barrack for an alleged medical examination, where they were roll called. After the names were verified with the lists, the prisoners were brought outside and shot by the NKVD executioners in the head with a pistol at a close range. The victims' bodies were then thrown into large trenches and buried.

For the NKVD personnel at the firing range this was a daily routine for about 14 months, with some days seeing up to 500 people killed. One of the executioners at the firing range also promoted the use of modified "Bread" trucks, which had the exhaust pipe connected to the inside of the vehicle, turning it into a gas van and killing the prisoners inside.

The relatives of the victims were not notified about the deaths – only in the late 1980s did the government deliver death certificates to some of them.

The Butovo firing range is one of only few similar places that were officially recognized and commemorated in Russia in the 1990s. Many other locations of mass executions in Russia still remain classified, and the current government actively suppresses any work that seeks to investigate and to recognize the crimes of the Communist era.

Sadly, the Communist Party stayed in power in Russia for many decades following the horrors of Stalin's rule, and by the time the Soviet Union collapsed, most of the immediate relatives of the victims, as well as most survivors, were already gone. Only very few remained in Russia to seek justice and the truth, but even they are under pressure by the government and the rest of society. As decades passed, for many in Russia it was, unfortunately, easier to forget about these dark pages of history, or to pretend that they never took place, than to face and acknowledge them.

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## History Unhidden

### **Communist Crimes in Ukraine**

*The following is a speech given by recently deceased author and speaker Andrew Gregorovich at the Crimes of Communism Seminar, June 11, 2007, in Toronto, sponsored by the Baltic Federation.*

There are three things that most people know about Ukraine. First of all because of its huge wheat production it is the “breadbasket of Europe.” They also know that the world’s worst nuclear disaster in 1986 was in Ukraine at Chornobyl. Lastly they know that Viktor Yushchenko, the President of Ukraine, was poisoned in 2004 with a deadly poison which scarred his face.

Ukraine is the largest country inside Europe by territory although the Eurasian countries of Turkey and the Russian Federation are larger. With 49 million population Ukraine is fifth in size. Some people with poor geographical knowledge have been unsure whether Ukraine is in Europe or Asia. However, the father of history Herodotus almost 2,500 years ago placed Scythia-Ukraine in Europe and in fact for 2,000 years it was considered the borderland of Europe with Asia just east. In fact, the exact geographical center of Europe, calculated by Austrian scientists in 1887, is in the Ukrainian town of Dilove in Transcarpathian province of western Ukraine.

When the Russian Empire collapsed in 1917 Ukraine became independent from 1918 to 1921 when it was finally conquered by the Red Army. Except for three years of German occupation in World War II Ukraine has been under the complete control of the Russian Communist Party. It established a branch in Ukraine in which Ukrainian Soviet collaborators assisted in

the exploitation of the country.

Today I would like to speak briefly about Communist Crimes in Ukraine when it was under Soviet Russian domination for seventy years from 1921 to 1991. Ukraine, or the Ukrainian SSR, was the first country to be occupied by the Red Army and turned into a colony of Soviet Russia. Because the Soviet Union was a totalitarian country it controlled very tightly the information, the education, the history, and the culture of all the countries under its rule.

The Soviet Union was so powerful it was able to hide its crimes against humanity, its genocide of peoples and its culturcide of nations. According to the *Black Book of Communism* the communists in the Soviet Union killed 20 million people although other sources cite 40 million. Today the information on these communist crimes is very available. If this information is so available how come the world does not know about it? The first reason is that most people are indifferent to the killing of 20 million people because it is such a huge statistic. It is a meaningless statistic unless you, your family, your relatives or your friends were in harm’s way of the Cheka, NKVD or the KGB Soviet Russian secret police. Soviet terror was a communist weapon in Ukraine. Western educators and academics have carefully avoided teaching about Soviet Russian crimes although the Nazi German crimes in the Jewish Holocaust by contrast have been heavily studied, researched, published, incorporated into school curriculums, and extensively dealt with in TV and motion pictures.

Soviet Ambassador Aleksander Yakovlev once said there were 40 million victims in the USSR. However, the *Black Book of Communism* says the Soviet Union killed over twenty million people of its own population as “enemies of the people.” This was a phrase invented by the diabolical Lenin in 1917 as an excuse for killing anyone who opposed him, or later, Stalin. Stalin once said “a man a problem, no man no problem.” Killing, torture, and exile were the essential means that the communist party and its Soviet collaborators used to terrorize and control the population.

So let us now turn to some specific examples of the Communist crimes in Ukraine and against Ukrainians. There are basically two categories of crimes against humanity perpetrated by the communists and their collaborators in Ukraine. These are physical annihilation or genocide and cultural annihilation or culturcide which were

carried out simultaneously in Ukraine and throughout the Soviet Union.

Among the Ten Commandments there are two which have special relation to communist crimes in Ukraine. These are Thou shalt not steal and Thou shalt not kill.

Recently there was a case in London, England where a former KGB agent, Alexander Litvinenko, was poisoned with radioactive Polonium because he was a strong critic of Russian leader Putin. On his deathbed Litvinenko accused Vladimir Putin of being behind his killing on November 23 (2006) last year. The British Government has identified Andrei Lugovoi, who was a Kremlin employee, as the probable assassin and has demanded he be arrested, extradited and put on trial in London. Putin has refused to cooperate.

Previously, in September 2004, Viktor Yushchenko, the candidate for the presidency of Ukraine, had been poisoned. However, he survived probably because through miscalculation the dose of dioxin he was given was not large enough to be kill him. Experts identified that the poison originated in a Moscow laboratory.

A KGB agent Pavel Sudoplatov says that a special top secret Lab-X was established by Lenin in 1918 to make undetectable poisons and that it has operated for 70 years.

In spite of this laboratory Soviet Russia arranged the assassination of Ukrainian leader in exile Simon Petlura with a pistol on May 25, 1926 in Paris.

On May 23, 1938 Pavel Sudoplatov used a bomb in a box of chocolates which he handed to Ukrainian leader in exile Evhen Konovalts in Rotterdam, Holland successfully assassinating him. Stalin personally ordered the killing of Konovalts and congratulated Sudoplatov after the event. Incidentally, Sudoplatov, whose book is a valuable expose of many criminal murders, was born in Ukraine from Russian and Ukrainian parents but was not a Ukrainian although he claims to be in his book. He was actually a collaborator of Soviet Russia used to suppress Ukraine and Ukrainian patriots or “bourgeois nationalists” in Moscow’s words.

Soviet agent Sudoplatov later organized the infamous 1940 killing of Leon Trotsky with a pick-axe by Ramon Mercader in Mexico.

Victor Kravchenko, author of the book *I Chose Freedom* was a Soviet official sent to the USA. He defected in 1944 and later in 1946 was found shot dead in New York. A documentary about him is now in production.

On October 25, 1959 Ukrainian leader in exile Stepan Bandera was assassinated with a poison gas pistol by a Soviet agent, Bogdan Stashinsky, in Munich, Germany. The head of the KGB, Shelepin, ordered that a poison gas weapon be made for the Bandera killing. This method left almost no trace and some people at that time thought it was a natural heart attack.

In 1978 a Communist agent, KGB General Oleg Kalugin, poisoned Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov on Waterloo Bridge in London, England with an American umbrella that was designed by the KGB to fire into his thigh a tiny ricin poison pellet.

In 1999 the journalist Anna Politkovskaya, whose Ukrainian name was Mazepa, was shot and killed in her apartment building. She was probably killed because of her reporting of Russian crimes against humanity in the Chechen War which annoyed the Russian government.

I believe that this sample of eight killings out of many more carried out by the Soviet Russian CHEKA/NKVD/KGB clearly establishes some of the crimes of which the communist government was guilty.

If the Soviet Russian government was guilty was the Soviet Ukrainian Government also guilty? Sudoplatov gives no examples of Ukrainian communist crimes. However, many Ukrainians, such as assassin Stashinsky, were collaborators in the killings, genocide and culturicide perpetrated by the communist government of Soviet Russia on their country.

## CULTURICIDE

An aspect of Communist crimes in Ukraine which is ignored and little known is the culturicide perpetrated by the Russian governments, both Imperial and Soviet for 350 years. Culturicide, which is my own word or neologism, is the suppression of a national culture of an occupied country and an attempt to destroy the language, history and culture of that nation.

For example, both Ukrainian churches, Orthodox and Catholic were destroyed in Ukraine,

hundreds of priests and bishops were shot. We now even have a document which says that Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolitan Lypkivsky was shot at midnight in 1938. It was first used in the film *Between Hitler and Stalin* for which I was film coordinator and senior researcher. The Russian Orthodox Church is an arm of the Russian government, according to the Mitrokhin Archive and its clergy works for the KGB.

Culturcide in Ukraine was started by Tsar Peter the 1<sup>st</sup> of Muscovy-Russia. He is known as Peter the Cruel to Ukrainians and as Peter the Great to Russians. He started the Russification process in Ukraine by ordering Ukrainian religious books be printed with Russian spelling or orthography. The Russian Empire also suppressed the distinctive Ukrainian architecture and even the Ukrainian language.

On May 30, 1876 the Russian Tsar Alexander II ordered the suppression of the importation and the printing of Ukrainian language publications in the Russian Empire. It was a secret decree called the Ems Ukase because it was made in the town of Ems in Germany where the Tsar was visiting. Ukrainian books were banned in Ukraine by the Russian government.

The Russian Russification campaign was continued in the Soviet Union which prohibited and banned the Ukrainian letter G from use in the Ukrainian alphabet, language, literature and all Ukrainian books. Ukrainian has two letters H and G but Russian has only one, so they banned the extra letter.

Both the Russian Empire and communist Soviet Russia strictly censored Ukrainian culture and history. Ukrainian Cossack Hetman Ivan Mazepa had served Tsar Peter for over 20 years. Troubled by Russian domination Mazepa joined King Charles XII of Sweden in an attempt to win independence for Ukraine. However, at the Battle of Poltava on July 8, 1709 they were defeated by Tsar Peter. Peter called Mazepa a "traitor" a dozen times in one letter and ordered the destruction of all Mazepa portraits, probably many hundreds. As a result we today do not even know for sure what this Hetman looked like. When I visited the Battle of Poltava Museum in March 1975, I was surprised to discover that not even one portrait of Mazepa was exhibited. The Soviet Union as a totalitarian state controlled not only the present but also the past. It created many white pages in Ukrainian history and culture through its bias and censorship.

In 1989 when I visited the Vernadsky National Library

of Ukraine I was given a tour of the Library and discovered that this library of over 10 million books was not allowed to have a copy of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Russian censorship has created such a severe lack of information in Ukraine that the great majority of Ukrainians are ignorant of their own history and culture and are much better acquainted with Russian literature, history and culture. There is a flood of Russian books today into Ukraine attempting to undermine Ukraine's integrity and language.

For example, the greatest Ukrainian historian, Michael Hrushevsky, from his death in 1934 until Ukraine's independence on August 24, 1991, could not be quoted and his books were strictly banned from publication in Soviet Ukraine.

An important weapon of communist Soviet Russia was *dezinformatsia*, or dis-information which is still part of the arsenal of the Russian Federation. For example, it has been said that Russia today has a \$300 million budget for anti-Ukrainian propaganda.

Another example, the communist government of Soviet Russia kept the identity of the Ukrainian scientist who conquered space completely hidden for nine years. The name of the Ukrainian who conquered space with Sputnik on October 4, 1957, who built the world's first Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), who sent the first object into space to hit the moon, who sent the first man into space and was the first to send a rocket and camera around the moon and became the first man to see the other side was not known until he died in January 1966. It was the Ukrainian Serhiy Korolev, born in Ukraine and educated at the Kiev Polytechnic, who was responsible for every space first in the first nine years of the space age. On one of his documents Serhiy Korolev clearly gave his nationality as *Ukrainets*, or Ukrainian.

Chornobyl in April 1986 was the worst nuclear disaster in the world. It was also a communist crime in Ukraine. The Chornobyl Power Station, although it was in Ukraine, was directly operated from Moscow. It was Moscow that ordered a test which required the criminal action of shutting off all the safety systems. However, even before that test there was a design fault in the RBMK-1000 Nuclear Reactor which contributed to the disaster. But the great Soviet communist crime in Chornobyl by Gorbachev was the attempt to cover it up. Even more criminal was allowing children and the Ukrainian population to be exposed to the radioactive fallout for over a week.

Many children who were exposed to the radioactivity have suffered severe health problems and some have died. Chornobyl was a pervasive event that actually covered the entire world. It may surprise you, but every one of us here today has at least one Chornobyl molecule in our body.

Theft of Ukrainian cultural artifacts goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Tsar Peter 1<sup>st</sup> ordered that Scythian gold dug up in Ukraine had to be turned over to Russian museums. As a result many important Scythian artifacts are in St. Petersburg in the Hermitage instead of the capital Kiev in Ukraine. When Soviet Moscow ordered the destruction of medieval Ukrainian churches in the 1930s many mosaics and other treasures were carried off to Soviet Russia where they are to the present day. Even Cossack weapons, cannons, and flags are in Russian museums although Ukraine has demanded that these historical treasures be returned to Ukraine where they belong.

Many art treasures, including a Rembrandt self-portrait, and rare books were looted by Germany in World War II and have not been returned to Ukraine. Some have ended up in Russian museums after the Red Army captured Berlin.

Let us return to the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill.' This had no meaning for atheistic Soviet Russia which President Reagan called the "Evil Empire." Huge communist dumping grounds for corpses have been found in or near many Ukrainian cities. For example, under a public park in Vinnytsia was found almost 9,500 Ukrainian victims of the 1937-38 Vinnytsia Massacre by the NKVD.

However, it is in Bykivnia Forest near the capital city of Kiev that one of the largest cemeteries of victims of communist criminal political repression has been found. Over 100,000 Ukrainians killed by the communist secret police were buried here in mass graves. On May 21, 2007, a Presidential Decree by Viktor Yushchenko, no. 431/2007, ordered Ukraine to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1937-38 Great Terror and to commemorate this historic tragedy every year on the third May Sunday of each year. This will be a Remembrance Day for victims in Ukraine of Soviet Political Repression.

Ukrainian Deputy (MP) Krutsyk has said that a Museum of Soviet Occupation of Ukraine, presumably of criminal actions, is planned for the Ukrainian capital city Kiev.

In conclusion, let us turn now to the greatest communist crime in Ukraine: the Ukrainian Genocide of 1933. Almost 50 years ago I wrote this passage:

"Ukraine, 'the breadbasket of Europe' is a land famous for its fertile black earth and its golden wheat. Yet only 40 years ago seven million Ukrainians starved to death although no natural catastrophe had visited the land. Forty years ago the people starved while the Soviet Union exported butter and grain. While Moscow banqueted Ukraine hungered."



Holodomor memorial in Kyiv.

"Stark, cold statistics, the accounts of thousands of Ukrainian survivors and German, English and American eyewitnesses, as well as the confessions of Moscow's agents and the admission of Stalin himself: All these have slowly seeped out of the Iron Curtain and have been piled into a tremendous mountain of facts. The whole story pieced together like a jig-saw puzzle, ends with the biggest puzzle of all: Why did Moscow decide to starve to death seven million Ukrainians?"

Although seven million Ukrainians died in Ukraine in this genocide there were also three million Ukrainian victims who were living in the Kuban, the Russian SFSR and other areas so the total today is estimated at "up to 10,000,000" Ukrainian genocide victims according to President Yushchenko. This is one of the worst crimes ever perpetrated by a communist government. Stalin confessed to Churchill that there were 10 million victims holding up his two hands.

Stalin was ultimately responsible but his henchmen Molotov and Lazar Kaganovich were directly involved in carrying out this crime which is so immense that the mind cannot grasp it. We know that this genocide was reported to Mussolini and Hitler. It is possible that just as Stalin managed to cover up this Ukrainian Genocide which was ignored by the world perhaps Hitler decided that he could also cover up the terrible Jewish Holocaust.

The weapon to perpetrate this Ukrainian genocide was starvation and it has usually been called a man-made famine. Ukrainians call it the *Holodomor* or murder by hunger but for us it is simply the Ukrainian Genocide of 1933 with 10 million victims. As I have already said Stalin, Molotov and Kaganovich organized this genocide.

Every November independent Ukraine commemorates this genocide as a result of a government decree. The United Nations has also recognized this tragedy and some countries have designated it as genocide. Next year will be the major commemoration and the Ukrainian Government hopes to have support around the world for recognition of the event as genocide. However, the Russian Federation still refuses to admit that it was a crime against humanity or genocide.

Here is one letter written to Professor K. Riabokin in Kharkiv by his niece Zina:

"Please Uncle do take me to Kharkiv. We have neither bread nor anything else to eat. Dad is completely exhausted from hunger and is lying on the bench, unable to get on his feet. Mother is blind from hunger and can't see at all. So I have to guide her when she has to go outside. Please Uncle do take me to Kharkiv, because I, too, will die from hunger. Please do take me please. I'm still young and I want so much to live a while. Here I will surely die, because everyone else is dying. . ."

The Uncle received the letter at the same time that he was told Zina was dead. He says, "I did not know what to say or what to do. My head just pounded with my niece's pathetic plea: 'I'm still young and want so much to live . . . Please do take me, please . . .'"

The Ukrainian Genocide of 1933 perpetrated by the communist government of Soviet Russia is the worst genocide on the continent of Europe in history. Up to the present day no perpetrator of Soviet crimes against humanity has been arrested and taken to trial in Canada, the USA or anywhere in the world. The Communist Party was and is a criminal organization

and should not be allowed to exist in Ukraine.

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