

# Ukrainian crisis: Will the West keep silent?

by Oksana Polishchuk

In the early 1930s, Josef Stalin seized the Ukraine's food supplies, creating a famine that killed 8 million. Western governments did not even protest. After World War II, Ukrainians rose up and fought an armed struggle for independence from Soviet dictatorship. Again, Western governments did nothing. Today, a resurgence by the Ukrainian people has been accompanied by a brutal KGB campaign against political activists. The documentation of this resurgence and the KGB's brutal activities in response, has been submitted to the world's press and governments. To date, almost none of the major newspapers has printed a word, and not a single Western government has uttered a syllable of protest.

Here is part of the untold story of what is happening in the Ukraine, now, this year.

**Kiev, March:** 150 people gathered at the monument of Ukraine's national poet, Taras Shevchenko. Authorities accused the Ukrainian Cultural Club, which organized the event, of being "on the verge of anti-Sovietism and of deliberately adopting a confrontational stance toward the authorities."

**Lviv, March 17:** A crowd of 500 gathered to discuss a multi-party system. Members of the editorial board of *Ukrainian Herald*, the organ of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, addressed the crowd.

**Kiev, April 26:** 500 people marched along the central boulevard to mark the second anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. The demonstration was dispersed by the militia, KGB, and *Afghantsy*, Afghanistan veterans used in "anti-riot" police forces. 50 people were detained.

**Kiev, June 5:** 200 assembled before the St. Volodymyr monument to celebrate the millennium of Christianity in the Ukraine. Militia and KGB filmed the demonstration, but made no attempts to interfere.

**Lviv, June 11-12:** The third meeting in 1988 was held by representatives of six non-Russian national movements. They founded the Coordinating Committee of Patriotic Movements of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R., composed of Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Georgians, and Armenians.

**Lviv, June 16:** About 6-8,000 people gathered at a meeting organized by the *Ridna Mova* Society, and expressed dissatisfaction with Ukrainian Communist and KGB leaders.

**Lviv, June 21:** 50,000 people, after being denied entry to the Druzhba sports stadium, marched to the statue of Lenin, carrying signs demanding full usage of the Ukrainian

language and the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

**Lviv, June 23:** 30,000 people participated in a requiem service at Lviv's Lychakivsyi cemetery, in memory of the victims of Stalinism, organized by Ivan Hel, chairman of the Committee in Defense of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Two Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) priests said prayers for the 8 million victims of Stalin's famine, killed during the 1930s, the political prisoners murdered by the NKVD secret police in 1941, and the prisoners of conscience who died in the post-Stalin era.

**Kiev, June 26:** A rally of 1,000 Kiev University students, organized by the *Hromada* Society, was disrupted by the KGB.

**Lviv, July:** The Jewish Levy Society and the Ukrainian *Ridna Mova* Society jointly commemorated the 45th anniversary of the destruction of Lviv's Jewish ghetto. Participants discussed protecting monuments to Jewish culture, popularizing the Jewish language and literature, and supported the opening of a Jewish school and synagogue.

**Lviv, July 7:** 20,000 people attended a demonstration where the Democratic Front in Support of Perestroika, which comprises all the unofficial groups in Lviv, was formed.

**Hrushiv, July 10:** 6,000 people gathered to attend a mass celebrated by four Uniate priests, in commemoration of the millennium of Christianity in the Ukraine.

**Abrahtsiems, Latvia July 10:** A meeting was held of the representatives of the Coordinating Committee of Patriotic Movements. The Ukrainian delegation was represented by Catholic leaders Mykhailo Horyn and Pavlo Skochok.

**July 10:** The Soviet youth newspaper, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, charged Ukrainian Uniate and human rights activist Vyacheslav Chornovil with being connected to the "subversive center of the OUN [Ukrainian nationalists] abroad."

**Hoshiv, July 17:** 2-3,000 people gathered for millennium celebrations.

**Zarvanytsia, July 17:** 12-13,000 people attended a mass celebrated by Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Wasylyk.

**Kiev, July 24:** A mass rally was planned for 8:00 p.m. At 4:00 p.m., the KGB began apprehending activists throughout Kiev. People were hunted down in their homes; they were forced into cars and driven to and left behind in deserted areas. Larysa Lohvytska was injected by the KGB with strong doses of the drug halopyridol, and thrown out of a car. Other activists were threatened with murder.

**Lviv, Aug. 4:** Over 3,000 demonstrators participated in an anti-Soviet rally in defiance of the Supreme Soviet decree calling for an end to street protests. The crowd was brutally dispersed by militia, KGB, and interior ministry special units. There were mass arrests, and more than 25 people are still being detained.

**Sept 12:** *Pravda* announced KGB "Operation Boomerang," followed by the arrests, among others, of V. Chornovil and M. Horyn, human rights activists and Uniates.