

HOLODOMOR: DESTRUCTION OF IDENTITY



Holodomor
Museum

Ukrainians are the autochthonous nation of Ukrainian land with own language, culture, and state. Owing to our state-building struggle, the Ukrainian People's Republic appeared on the world map 100 years ago.

However, in 1932–33, on the territory of Ukraine occupied by the Bolsheviks, one of the biggest crimes in all human history was committed: the Holodomor-genocide. The object of deadly and directed hatred was the Ukrainian nation. The main organizer of the crime, Joseph Stalin, did not want to let Ukraine secede from the USSR.

The Communist regime was actively killing the peasantry, who were perceived as the carriers of Ukrainian customs, traditions, language, and culture. The genocide was aimed against Ukrainian intelligentsia, the Ukrainian church, against every active upholder of the Ukrainian identity.

HOLODOMOR-GENOCIDE. TO REMEMBER IN ORDER TO BE

The Holodomor-genocide consisted of the destruction of the Ukrainian nation by the means of physically killing Ukrainians; humiliating those who spoke the Ukrainian language, and practiced its culture; falsification of Ukrainian history; the liquidation of whole institutions.

This project of the National Museum of the Holodomor-genocide was created to tell about the unique subjects and phenomena as well as about the Ukrainians, who changed the history and defined the nation, and therefore form our national identity.



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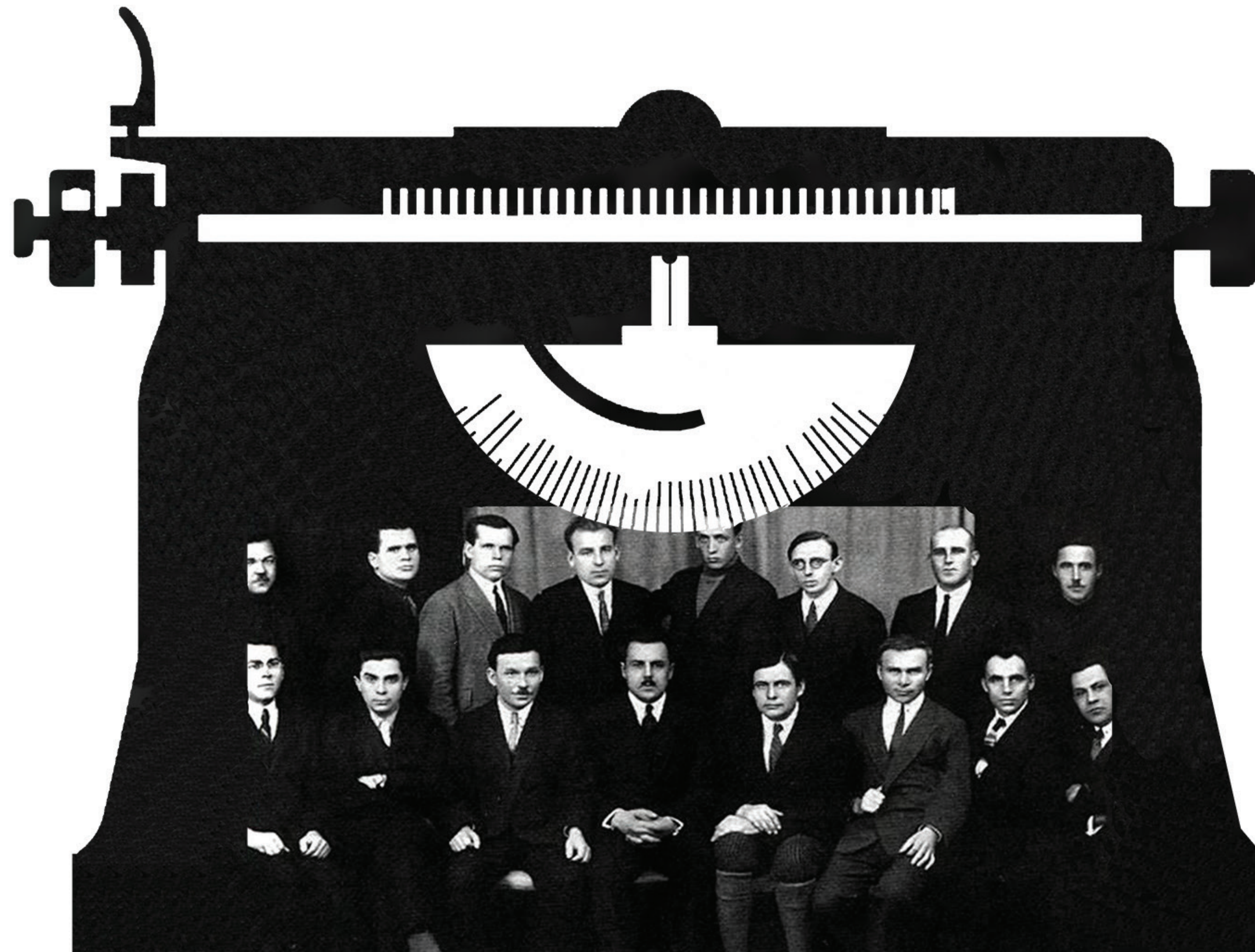
UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE

The beginning of the 20th century became a period of active development of Ukrainian language. In 1918, it became the state language of Ukrainian People's Republic. Consequently, it prevailed in every aspect of publishing, from scientific publications and theatrical plays to signboards and labels. After the occupation of Ukraine, the Bolsheviks supported these tendencies for some

time, just to help stabilize their power. During the period of "Ukrainization," the Ukrainian language remained official. Scientists prepared more than 130 terminological and specialized dictionaries. However, at the end of the 1920s, the Bolsheviks started an attack against the linguists, who were falsely called, "bourgeois nationalists." They were repressed, and their works taken out of circulation.

Total Russification resulted in: the likening of the Ukrainian language to the Russian standard; the reduction of the number of Ukrainian schools; the introduction of surcharges for Russian language teachers; teaching and studies in higher education institutions conducted in the Russian language only; supplanting the Ukrainian language in theaters, visual space, and, finally, even from the household.

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UKRAINIAN LITERATURE

The 1920s were a turbulent epoch of national cultural renaissance. During the period of 10 years, there was formed the original cultural environment in which new literature texts were written, and the more demanding reader appeared. The most significant event of that time was the 1925-1928

literature discussion taking place on the pages of Ukrainian press. It was started by Mykola Khvyliovyi, the writer, who proposed to refuse little-Russian provincialism, and to include Ukrainian culture in the European art context. The Bolshevik authorities stopped this process that was dangerous for them.

The Union of Soviet Writers that functioned under strict government control was created in 1923. Socialist realism was declared the only permitted (and therefore, possible) method of art. Criminal processes against “bourgeois nationalists,” occurring from 1933 to 1938, resulted in imprisonment and execution of dozens of Ukrainian artists.

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NATIONAL SCHOOL

In 1917, after Ukrainian People's Republic had been proclaimed, the All-Ukrainian Teachers' Union was restored. This was the first organization of Ukrainian professional teachers intended to protect their interests and the national school. It defined main principles of organization

of both school and afterschool education in Ukraine.

This Union had Central Bureau that coordinated the functioning of all sections, including its own printed medium – "Free Ukrainian School" magazine. At the end of 1918, there were already 78 teachers' associations (about 20,000 members) in 10 Ukrainian governorates.

At the beginning of 1920, when Ukraine became occupied by the Bolsheviks, the Soviet authorities created their own organization, the All-Ukrainian Union of Education and Socialist Culture Workers. This started the liquidation of the All-Ukrainian Teachers' Union as the national education system.

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UKRAINIAN CHURCH

In 1921, the First All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council gathered, and proclaimed that the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) was created: “It is autocephalous; it does not obey any theological government of other Orthodox Churches; it rules its spiritual life by itself under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.” One of the leaders of the church liberation movement, archpriest

Vasyl Lypkivskyi, was ordained to the Metropolitan of the UAOC. To the end of the year, the UAOC included more than 1500 parishes that were the centers of the national traditions of the church life revival and Ukrainian culture. The language of the church was Ukrainian. The Bolshevik regime of occupation established in Ukraine was hostile to the national Church. The anti-religious campaign was the part of the attack

onto the UAOC. The authorities inspired the Council, which dissolved the UAOC. During 1930–1937, the majority of the clergy and active believers of the UAOC were repressed. Following ten years of house arrest, Lypkivskyi was sentenced by a NKVD troika (an extrajudicial group used as a means of repression by sentencing targeted individuals, without fair trial or representation, able to impose the death penalty). He was executed in 1938

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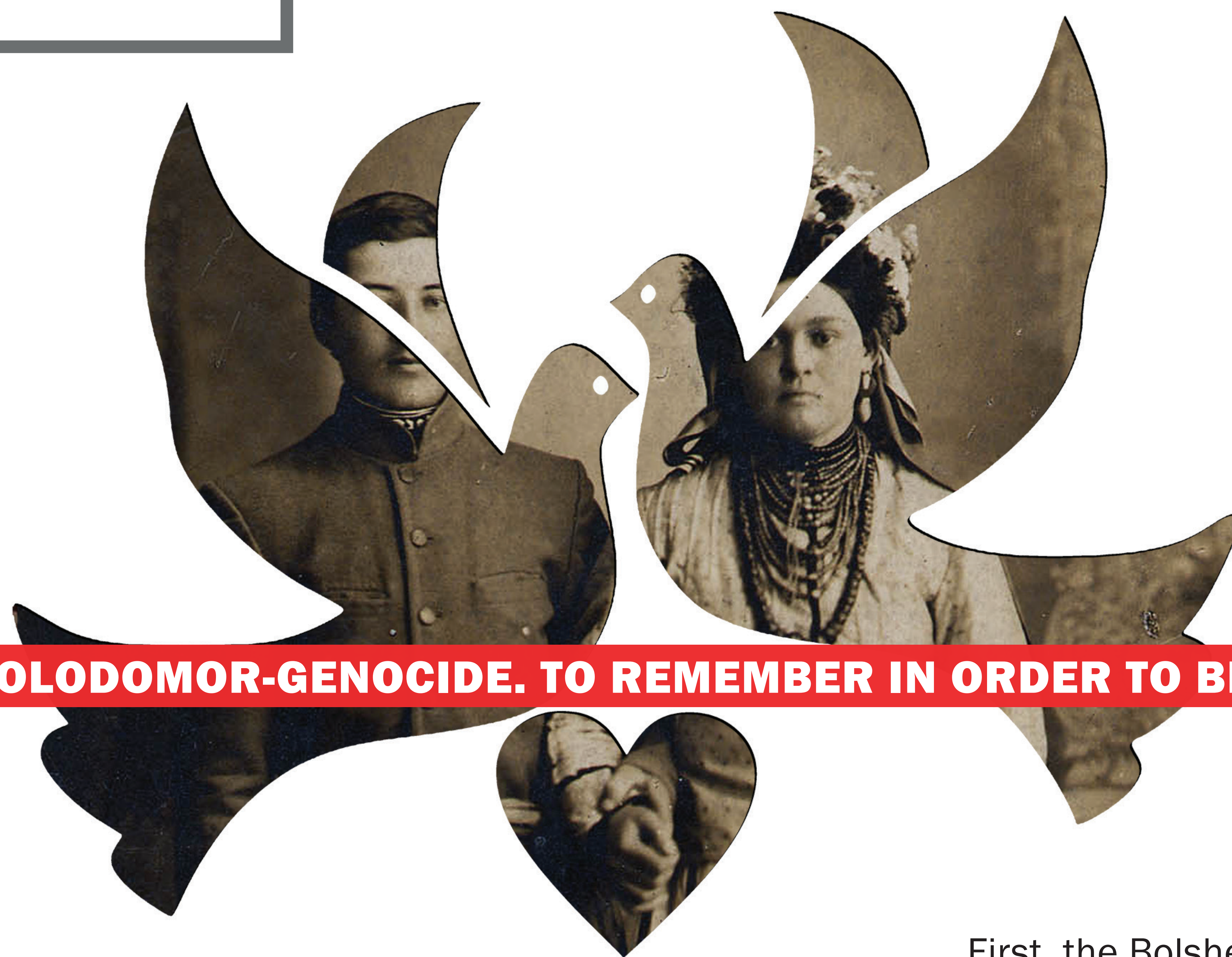
HOLIDAYS AND CEREMONIES

The holiday and ritual culture of Ukrainians has developed over many years. Through these rituals, universal values (the understanding of the good and the bad, conscience, dignity, justice) were passed from one generation to the other. The calendar cycle regulated all spheres of life (including working and resting). Partly, it coincided with

the church liturgical year. After Ukraine was occupied by the Bolsheviki, there was an active offence against this sphere of life. Traditional feasts and rites were denigrated as superstitions and remnants of the past that were slowing down general cultural development and socialist construction.

The authorities ruined churches to demolish the places upon which Ukrainian identity was focused. They forbade the people to attend the few churches that were left or to celebrate Christmas, Easter, and other folk or religious holidays. The sacraments of marriage and baptism were prohibited, due to which these societal bonds and familial religious obligations were no longer considered compulsory.

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UKRAINIAN WEDDING

The wedding ceremony is an ancient ritual that creates a new family. It combines complex customs, ritual acts, ideas, beliefs, folk ethics, and morality. Except for slight local variations, it traditionally consisted of “vyviduvannia” (getting information about the potential bride), “svatannia” (matchmaking), “ohliadyny” (the examination of the bride’s household),

“zaruchyny” (engagement), korovai baking, “zaprosyny” (invitation to the wedding), “posad” (the seating of the bride and the groom in their special place), etc. Since the end of the 18th century, the church rite became compulsory. Therefore, the wedding lasted for a whole week. Collectivization and the Holodomor-genocide had a devastating effect on the wedding ritual.

First, the Bolshevik authorities prohibited church marriages. Being destitute, people were not able to make the feasts or to invite guests. That is why a new type of marriage appeared. It was called, “to come together,” and it did not mean adherence to the traditional rituals. Because of “struggle with old orders,” the structure of the wedding was distorted; its duration shortened to 1–2 days, which led to the extinction of many of the traditional wedding’s components.

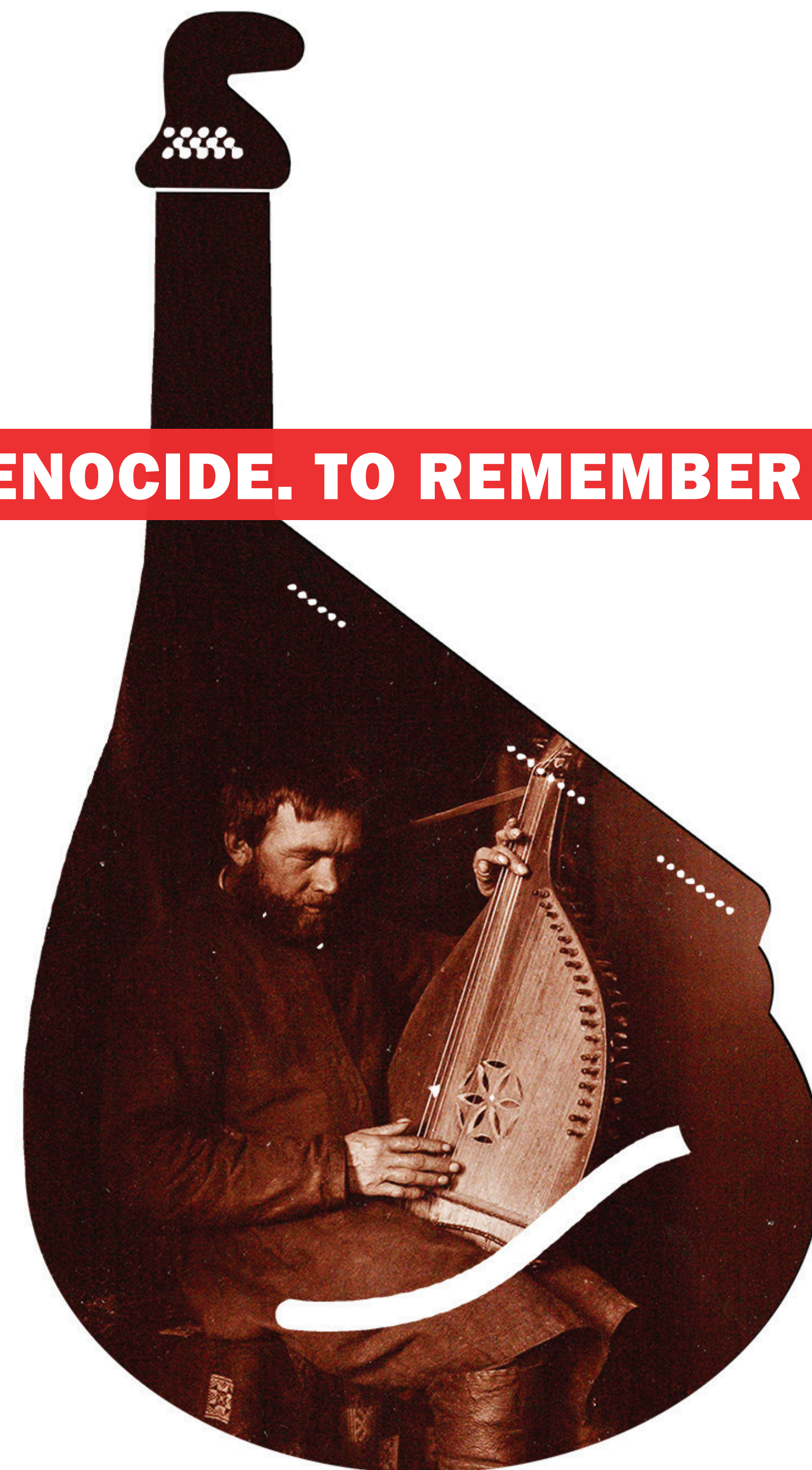
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KOBZAR TRADITION

At the beginning of the 20th century, kobzar art was passing through a new stage of its development as a Ukrainian cultural phenomenon. Kobzars (blind kobza players) were continuing the traditions of centuries, combining philosophical thinking with Christian morality and lifestyle. Wandering around Ukraine communicating with the people, they performed psalms and historical songs about the heroic past and present of Ukraine and its moral values. After the Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine, the authorities



tried to gain control over their repertoire. The decree, “On the prohibition of begging (kobzar tradition)” was issued. At the beginning of the 1930s, a so-called “Art Congress” was organized in Kharkiv. Afterwards, about 400 performers, together with their child-guides (children, who escorted the blind performers as they walked

from village to village, and helped them with tasks of daily living) were killed outside the city. Those kobzars who survived were arrested and imprisoned. Some of them, like Stepan Pasiuha, died during the Holodomor years. Many were killed or died from the excesses they suffered while incarcerated in the Soviet Gulag forced labor prison camp system. In a few years, the starosvitska (traditional) bandura, and the old ways of playing it became almost extinct. Russian bayans (accordians) and balalaikas appeared, instead. As a result, the authentic tradition of kobza performing was demolished.

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UKRAINIAN TRADITIONAL CLOTHING

Ukrainian traditional costume, at the beginning of the 20th century, was characterized by elegance, good taste, and diversity. “Plakhta,” “zapaska,” “svyta,” “kersetka,” “yupka,” “kobeniak,” “kozhuikh,” “baibarak,” “ochipok,” “namitka,” “kraika” had various regional differences. Localized patterns and embroidery techniques of shirts; types of ornaments; and the gamut of color choices made clothing

an element of not only national, but also regional identity. That is why the Bolshevik gangs of Muravyov that broke into Kyiv, in January of 1918, were killing the passers-by, who wore traditional embroidered shirts or kozhuikh. Later, the occupiers destroyed artisanal centers of leather and metal processing through the prohibition of both private property, and individual production.

During the Holodomor-genocide years, starving Ukrainians were forced to exchange clothes for food; to give away their valuable jewelry for small amounts of food in order to survive. After the disrespecting of traditional clothing as “old-fashioned” and “rustic,” the last straw was the creating of a unified stage costume, which included sharovarys, “kosovorotka” shirts, Russian sarafans and kokoshniks. This denigrating stereotypical image still persists.

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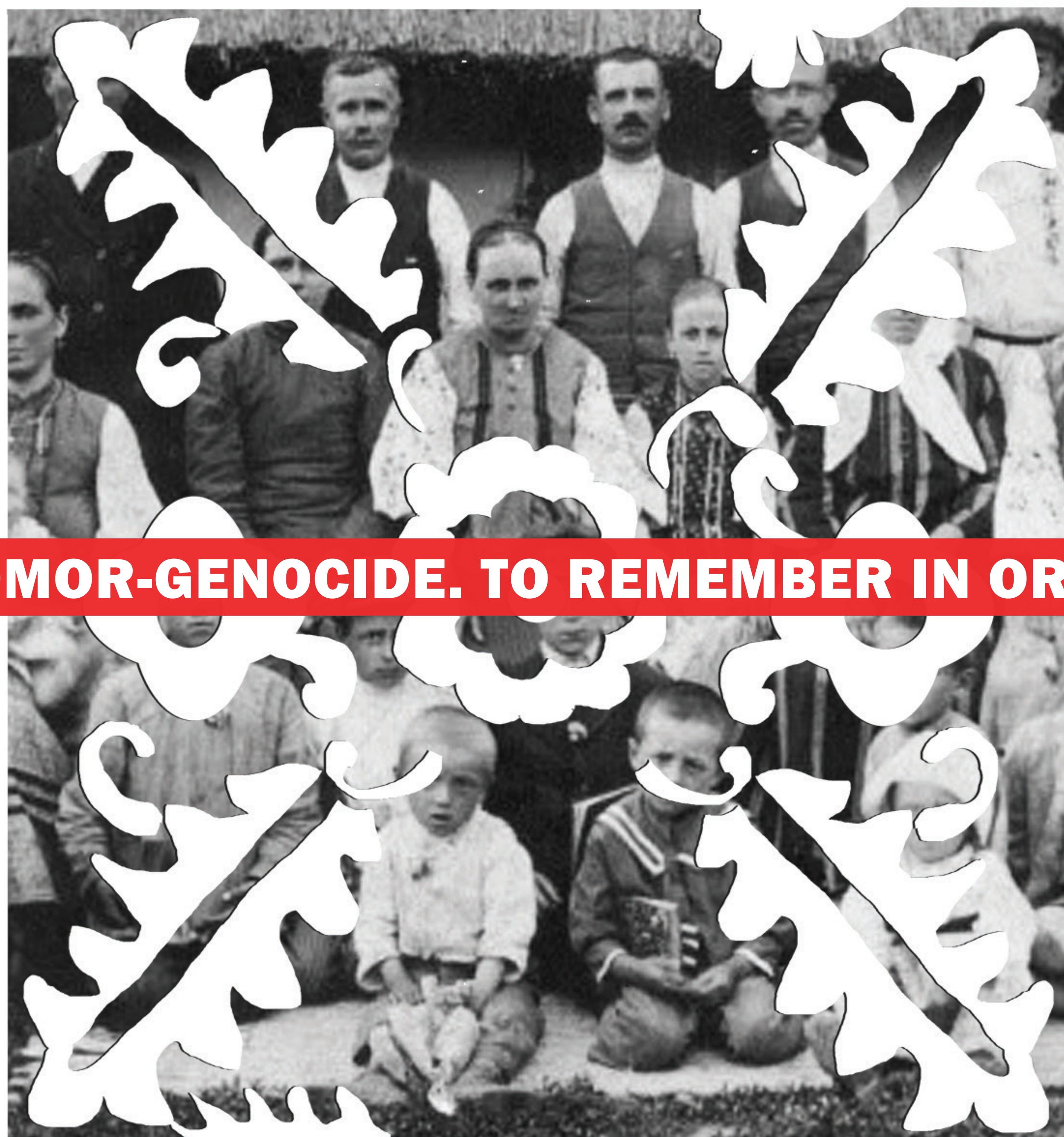
PYSANKA ART

The Ukrainian tradition of creating intricately decorated eggs (pysankas) is an old artform characterized by diverse techniques and regional singularities in the use of various symbolic signs. Our krashankas, krapankas, maliovankas, driapankas, pysankas are known far beyond Ukraine. Traditionally,

they were made in every family before Easter, when they were blessed in the church, and gifted to relatives and friends with the wishes of health, good harvest, strength, beauty, and changes for the best. In the 1930s, when Ukraine was occupied by the Bolsheviks,

during the anti-Easter campaigns, pysankas were proclaimed to have “harmful” or superstitious attributes. To eradicate the tradition, the teachers were ordered to examine the hands of their pupils before Easter, looking for the marks of paint. Ultimately, pysanka art was prohibited as the sign of identity in Ukrainian culture.

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CERAMIC TILES PRODUCTION OF POLTAVA REGION

Kakhliarstvo (ceramic tiles production) is a kind of the folk decorative art that appeared during the Kyivan Rus' period. Kakhli (ceramic tiles) were used for embellishment of stoves in the interiors of both palaces and private homes.

The most famous centers of this type of pottery were functioning in the 19th century in Velyki Budyshchi, Bilyky, Opishnia, Khomutka, and Popivka. In 1865, in the Poltava governorate, 5 ceramic tile plants were working in Poltava, Kremenchuk, and Lokhvytsia. Craftsmen sold their production at fairs. In the 1920s, the production

of ceramic tiles stopped. Having occupied Ukraine, the Bolsheviks nationalized the plants. The centers were eliminated, after the attempts to re-profile them to produce ceramic items without the traditional bright national appearance or any expression of the craftsman's artistic individuality and talent.

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POTTERY

Since the Neolithic Era, the craft of pottery has been developing in Ukraine. At the beginning of the 20th century, about 700 professional centers were functioning all around Ukraine. They differed by the types of technology, kinds of clay, and ways of decoration. At the end of the 19th century, special schools,

such as the Myrhorod artistic industrial school, were opened. In 1929, in connection with collectivization policy implementation, very high taxes were established for artisans (including potters), which made them discontinue their activity. In 1933, the pottery industry schools were closed. The repressions against potters in the 1930s were economical

(the destruction of private manufacturing) and political (deprivation of national traditions in production and decoration). They became the part of the plan coordinated by the Communist authorities calling for the destruction of Ukrainian identity. These factors led to the decline of the art centers, and put this craft on the verge of extinction.

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BOICHUKISM

The school of Ukrainian master painters founded by Mykhailo Boichuk became an important phenomenon of Ukrainian culture at the beginning of the 20th century. The artists of this movement created a new Ukrainian style. They combined the Ukrainian traditions of folk-paintings and icons; historical heritage and Byzantine art.

These principles did not fit the canons of Soviet art that was censored; subordinated to Moscow; and required to adhere to the style of socialist realism. At the end of the 1920s–1930s, while also striking out against Ukrainian villages, the authorities charged the boichukists with nationalism, and propagandizing for the dehumanized “bourgeois-

kulak element,” because of the rustic topics that formed the dominant theme of these painters’ works of art. In 1936–1937, the most prominent artists of this movement (Mykhailo Boichuk, Ivan Padalka, Vasyl Sedliar, Sofia Nalepynska-Boichuk, Ivan Lypkivskyi, and others) were shot. Later, all their monumental ensemble paintings were destroyed.

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UKRAINIAN BAROQUE

In the 17th century, an art style called Ukrainian or Cossack Baroque appeared. It became our calling card in architecture for ages. In 1696, in Kyiv, the St. Nicholas Military Cathedral was built in this style for the hosts of Hetman Ivan Mazepa.

On 22 May 1919, in this cathedral, Father Vasyl Lypkivskyi performed the first ever liturgy in the Ukrainian language. This was the place where the movement for the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox church began. In 1934, calling for the anti-religious

struggle, the Soviet authorities demolished the St. Nicholas Cathedral.

Thousands of churches throughout Ukraine were destroyed or turned to other non-sacred uses, such as granaries or village halls. In 1965, at the place of the former Military Cathedral, the hotel "Salut" and the Palace of Pioneers were built.

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UKRAINIAN CINEMATOGRAPHY

In the 1920s, before the Holodomor-genocide, the groundwork of Ukrainian national cinematography was laid. Ukrainian movies became known worldwide. In 1927, All-Ukrainian Photo Cinema Administration sent the movies “Taras Triasylo” (directed by P. Chardynin),

“Alim” (directed by H. Tasin), and others to Paris and Berlin. In 1928–1929, 68 Ukrainian films were released. More than 17 million people watched them. However, in the 1930s, Soviet repressions began in this sphere. In 1930, the film “Earth,” directed by Oleksandr Dovzhenko, the hymn to the Ukrainian plowmen,

was made. Nine days after its release, it was denounced as irrelevant to the ideological orientation of the party policy, and broadcasting it was forbidden. In 1930, the All-Ukrainian Photo Cinema Administration was closed. On this basis, the trust “Ukrainafilm” was created and then joined to “Soiuzkino.”

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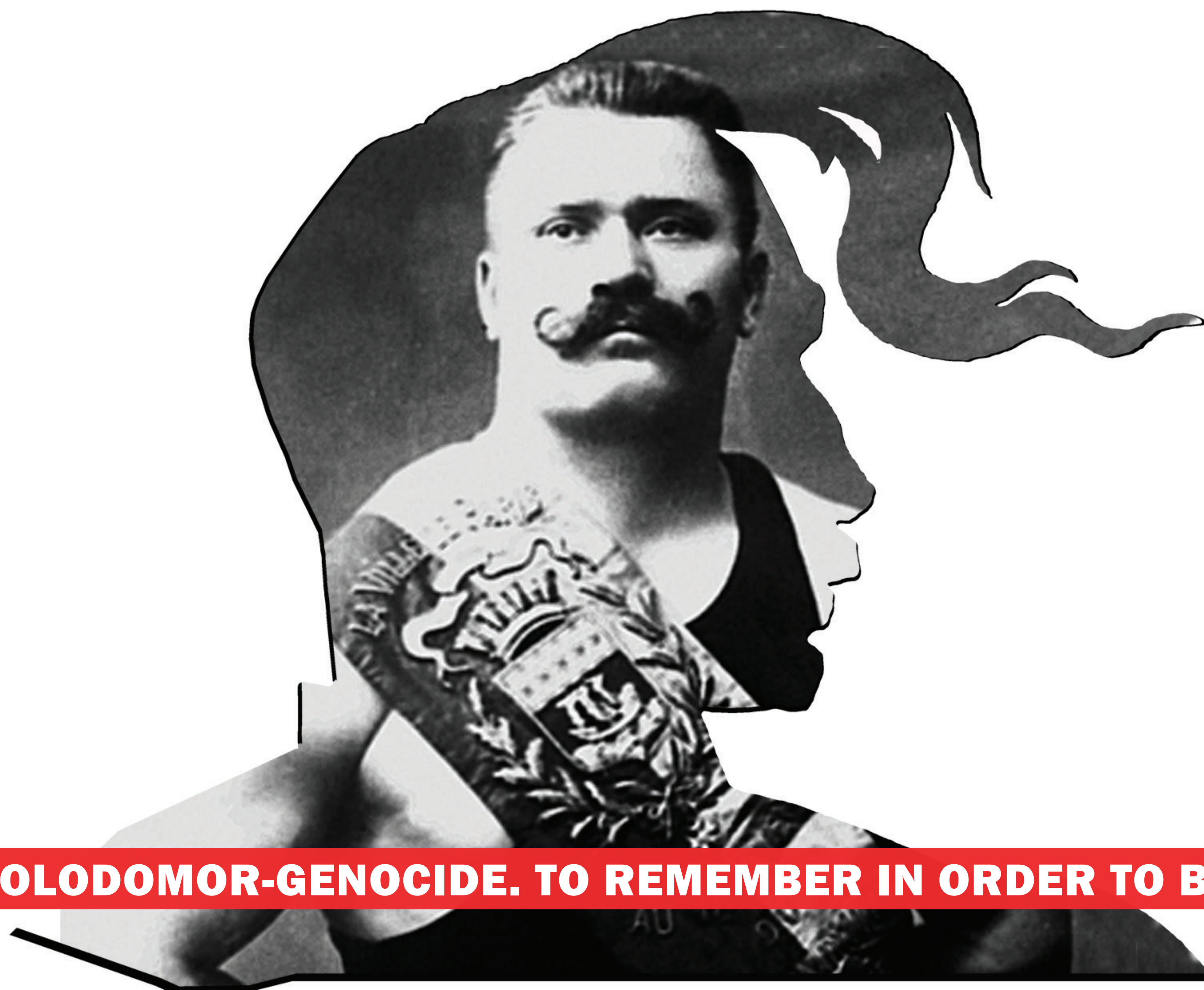
INNOVATIVE THEATRE

The innovative theatre, “Berezil,” was an outstanding Ukrainian phenomenon of the 1920s. Its founder, Les Kurbas, called this theater philosophical. His performances made the spectators think. “Berezil” performed all types of dramas, both classic

and popular in the 1920s plays. It represented avant-garde, expressionism, constructivism, and neo-baroque symbolism. The performance, “Hello on 477 Wave,” was the first Ukrainian jazz musical. The director put the accent on the actors; decorative stage props creating a moderate, transparent mise-en-scène,

in which photos, cinema, and music were combined. In 1930, the theatre performed the play, “97,” written by Mykola Kulish, the main topic of which was famine that already was beginning in Ukraine. In 1933, theatre director Les Kurbas was arrested and convicted of nationalism. “Beresil” was closed. He was shot in November 1937.

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SPORT

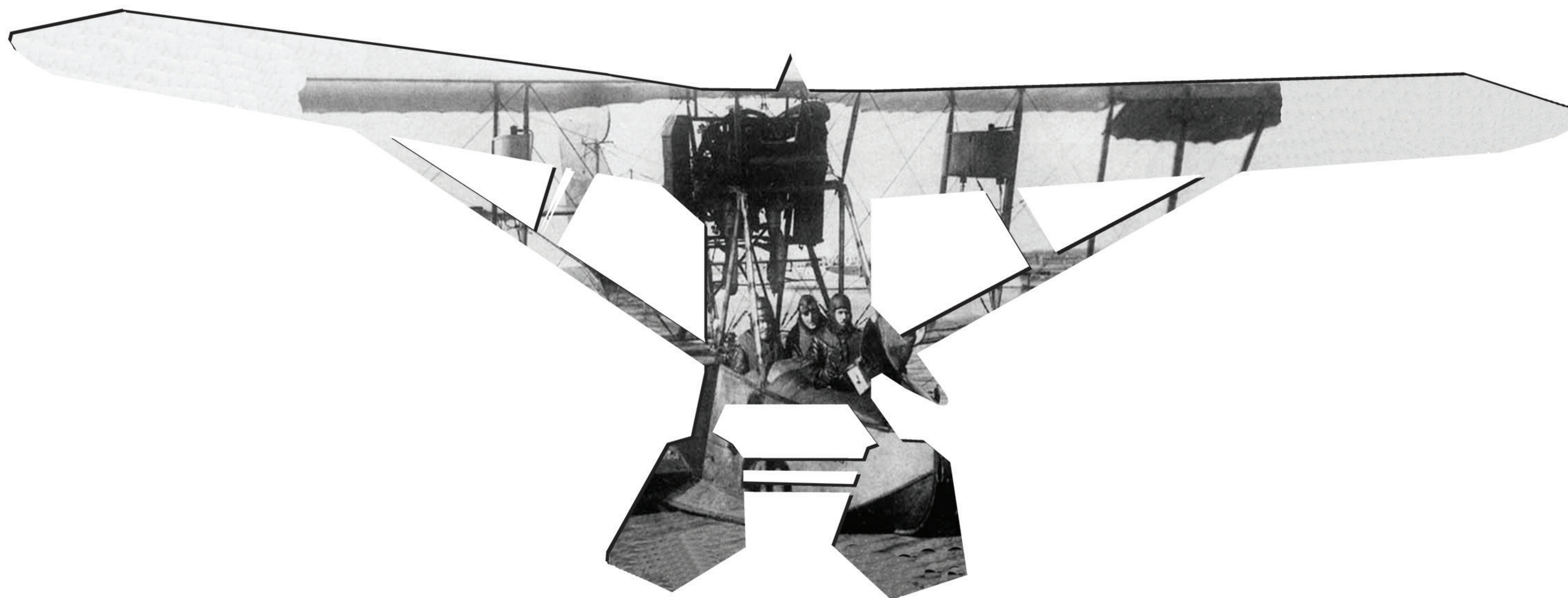
In 1905, in Paris, Ivan Piddubnyi, a Cossack-born Ukrainian from Krasenivka village of Cherkasy Oblast, won the World Championship in classical wrestling. Later he became a six-time World

photo: Ivan Piddubnyi

Champion. Since 1927, Piddubnyi lived in Kuban region. In the time of total Russification of the region where Ukrainians accounted for 75% of the population, he was constantly defending his ethnic identity. Despite the attempts to label

him as “Russian bogatyr,” he amended his surname from “Podubnyi” to “Piddubnyi,” and “Russian” to “Ukrainian,” when he got his passport in the 1930s. He was arrested and imprisoned for this declaration of his Ukrainian heritage.

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AVIATION

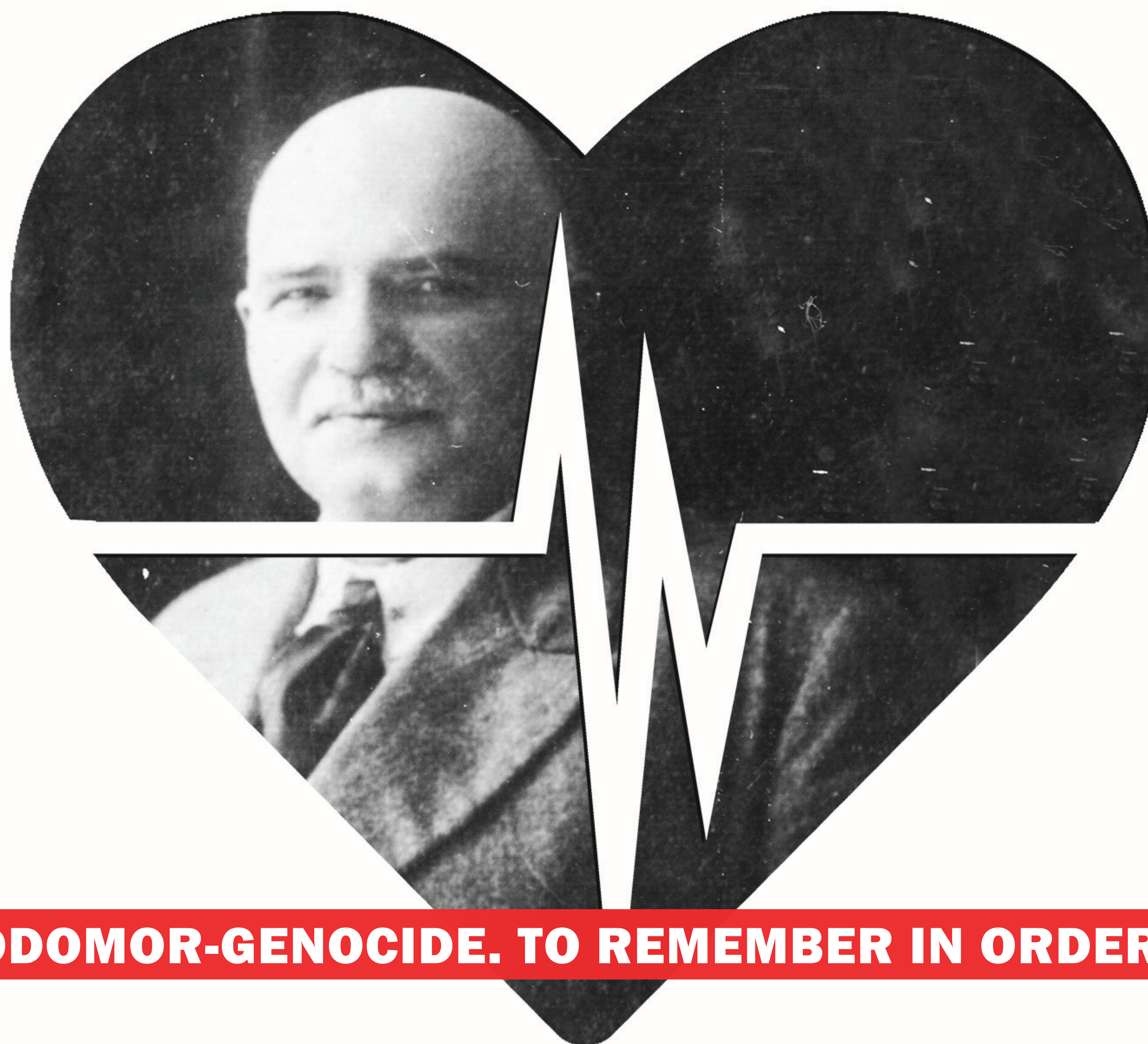
The history of Ukrainian aviation began in 1910, when the first plane constructed by an engineer from Kyiv, Oleksandr Kudashev, flew into the sky. In 1908–1917, aircraft design was advanced by the aircraft designer, Ihor Sikorskyi, who created

the helicopter, and the first multi-engine airplanes. During the World War I, another Ukrainian, Dmytro Hryhorovych, created more than 10 types of seaplanes that later were serially produced in Europe and the USA. After the occupation of Ukraine,

Dmytro Hryhorovych was forced to work for Bolsheviks.

In 1928, he was arrested, and accused of “wrecking” and “bourgeois nationalism.” For several years, he was put to his work while imprisoned in Butyrka prison. In 1918, after the Bolsheviks had seized power, Ihor Sikorskyi immigrated to France.

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CARDIAC SURGERY

In 1901, in Kyiv, the young surgeon, Yevhen Cherniakhivskiy, sutured a wound on the heart of his patient. This was the 86th operation of this kind in the world according to medical statistics. Later, Cherniakhivskiy proposed original methods for curing meningitis, gangrene, and bowel obstruction.

In 1929, his brother was arrested on false charges, as part of the criminal case against the so-called, "Union for the Liberation of Ukraine." This case was fabricated by the OGPU (Soviet secret police, later named the NKVD; KGB; or as presently, the FSB) to discredit the reputation

of the leading figures of Ukrainian culture and science. In connection with this, Yevhen Cherniakhivskiy, who served as the head of the department of general surgery in the medical institute at that time, was fired. He was no longer allowed to carry out surgical operations. The new methods of healing he was developing have never been tested.

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FOOD TRADITIONS

Traditional cuisine reflects the life of the people. Fertile Ukrainian land enabled diversity in the national cuisine. Ukrainians ate a variety of cereals, beans, fruits, vegetables, berries, and mushrooms. They used the methods of stewing, boiling, frying, baking, pickling, drying, and salting. While cooking, Ukrainian housewives added

locally-grown traditional spices. From the 18th century, imported black pepper, cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon were used, too. The Holodomor ruined the traditional system of nutrition. During the years of the genocide, people dying from starvation were forced to break food prohibitions. For example, before that terrible time, Ukrainians never ate ravens, storks, or swans.

Resulting from the Soviet atheistic struggle, ceremonial cuisine disappeared together with the Christian holidays. People were able to cook “kutia” (a dish made from whole grains of wheat) for Christmas or bake “paska” (a kind of ritual bread) for Easter only secretly, because of the threats of public disapproval, being fired from their jobs, or arrest for anti-Soviet behavior.

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MONEY

Ukrainian currency, hryvnia, has long historical roots. In the 8th-9th centuries, it was used as the measure of weight and counting. During the reign of Volodymyr the Great Duke of Kyiv, hryvnia became the official currency used until the 14th century.

In December of 1917, in the times of Ukrainian People's Republic, the currency of this nation, the "karbovanets," was implemented. Beginning in the spring of 1918, karbovanets was supplemented by "hryvnia," which was divided into "shahs." Hryvnias were

still produced in the periods of the Skoropadskyi's Hetmanat, and the renewed Ukrainian People's Republic headed by the Directorate. After the Bolshevik occupation, hryvnias were prohibited. The tridents painted on them were considered anti-Soviet propaganda.

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CREDIT COOPERATION

In 1917, “Ukrainbank” was founded in Kyiv. Its initial capital was 1 million karbovanetses. During 2 years, its working capital increased to 286 million karbovanetses. Besides bank operations, “Ukrainbank” financed the agronomy and

cooperation enterprises by crediting; attracted foreign capital to Ukraine; purchased and sold abroad ploughs, seed drills, cultivators, chaff-cutters, winnowing machines, sheaf-makers, and other machinery necessary to the farmers. Credits and help with product selling provided

by “Ukrainbank” gave the small farms an opportunity to compete with large producers, and become the basis of the Ukrainian economy in the future. ver, having occupied Ukraine, the Bolsheviks liquidated “Ukrainbank,” in December 1920. Its enterprises were nationalized. In 1938, its founder, Fedir Kryzhanivskyi, was shot.