Letter from Mykhailo Moskovchuk to Volodymyr Maniak, February 1989 (?).

Regarding events in Demivka, Chechelnyk raion, Vinnytsia oblast

Honorable editorial staff – greetings! Having read in your newspaper the article “The Memorial Book on the [19]33 Famine is Being Compiled,” and having recalled my bitter childhood, I too decided to describe those horrible years of 1932 and 1933.

I was born in 1925, and I was 7 years old at that time, and I recall well how “our” father and teacher Stalin – with the help of his blind subordinates – stifled our Ukrainian nation by famine. And how those activists who did their leader’s bidding, robbed the people and would leave not one handful of grain for the large families which were so prevalent at that time.

During the pre-war period, up to 1914, my father was a village teacher. After the revolution he was the head of the komnezam [committee of poor peasants]. In 1929, when the first kolhosp [collective farm] in our village was being organized, my father joined it and surrendered his entire collection of agricultural instruments, including the horses. But in 1931 my father was expelled from the kolhosp and he was branded a kurkul. And then they began to impose such taxes, that it was simply impossible to fulfill the requirements. And then in 1932, because of the unpaid taxes, the authorities encumbered our house with intent to sell, and then when snow fell, the “towing [confiscating; Ukr: *buksyrna*] brigade” arrived to expel us from the house and indeed chased us out. They gave the following order: whatever you are wearing, and nothing else, is all you can take. As it turned out, of course, aside from ragged clothes, there was nothing else to take. In the oven in a metal pot there was corn meal, but the authorities did not permit us to take even this.

The “towers” included two women-Komsomol members, if you could call them women. However, there probably weren’t any good-natured, sympathetic people among the “towing brigade,” because they gave the neighbors the order not to accept any of the children into their house, but rather have the “enemies of the state” freeze to death. But good people were to be found who took us in and gave us shelter. And later, just where did we not live: in the garden, in the pit-hut, and with good people. We barely survived. And my older brother, who was born in 1909, together with his friend went and asked to be accepted into the Army. But he and his friend were told that the Army does not accept sons of kurkuls. No one was signing up people for work either, and there was nothing to eat. So, because they were starving, they crawled into the kolhosp’s pantry, took two loaves of bread each and were then arrested and incarcerated in the prison of Bershad. That’s how my brother’s friend survived, while my brother died of hunger.

My father stayed out of sight until 1939, when he returned home and bought us a small house for 100 rubles. Thus, Olha Pylypivna Stakhova feels guilty for her tainted conscience. She shook and cleaned everything out to the bone [did everything she could], so that more people would die.

I concur with the point of view of M.F. Koniuk of the Cherkasy region, who claims that the activists of those as well as of the subsequent years are still around, and there a lot of them, in governmental administration. Thus, there is no place for them to “reform” and they continue to hinder the reforms. Wherever they may be located, they need to be handed over to the local authorities and expelled from administrative positions.

Honorable editorial staff. I implore you to publish my letter. Perhaps someone from my native village can add something from themselves. And may the likes of Stakhova, O.P. know that awarding those, on whose conscience rest millions of innocent people who perished – is inhumane.

My address: Vinnytsia oblast, Chechelnyk raion, the village of Demivka, 35 Kotovskoho street. Moskovchuk, Mykahilo Zakharovych, an invalid of the Great Patriotic War [World War Two], 2nd Class.

I wish all of the employees of *Silʹski visti* (The Village News) good health and success in your noble endeavor.