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**Oggetto:** Appeal Concerning the Latest Events in Ukraine and in Kharkiv

Dear friends, I am sending you the text of the appeal to the world community of intellectuals by the Kharkiv Historico-Philological Society. Please circulate it among your contacts.

Serhii Vakulenko

Шановні друзі, надсилаю Вам текст відозви Харківського історико-філологічного товариства до світової інтелектуальної спільноти англійською мовою для поширення серед Ваших контактів. Сергій Вакуленко

#### APPEAL CONCERNING THE LATEST EVENTS IN UKRAINE AND IN KHARKIV

To all scholars of the world, learned societies,  
university staff, men of letters and arts

The Kharkiv Historico-Philological Society, founded in 1886 by the leading professors of the University of Kharkiv, addresses the following message to the scholarly community of the world. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2014, a violent clash was staged in Kharkiv between the supporters of Ukraine's European integration and the so-called ralliers "for stability and restoration of order".

The supporters of the Maidan for Europe, numbering a little over 100, most of them university freshmen, were peacefully located in the premises of the Provincial Administration to which they had been invited on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February by the Deputy Governor Vasyl Khoma. They were demanding the appointment of a new Governor instead of the deeply compromised Mykhailo Dobkin, a long-time henchman of the ousted President Yanukovych. That same Dobkin, together with his accomplice

Hennadii Kernes, the Mayor of Kharkiv (a former criminal convict, backed by Yanukovich's Party of Ukraine's Regions) orchestrated a pro-Russian rally to which about two thousand participants from the nearby Russian city of Belgorod were brought across the border. To avoid any clashes, the Co-ordinative Council of the Maidan for Europe cancelled its own rally, previously summoned at the same time and place.

After the end of the pro-Russian rally a large group of well-trained fighters, armed with bats, compliance weapons and tear-gas attacked the building of the Provincial Administration and severely beat its defenders, throwing them afterwards in the midst of the enraged pro-Russian (and largely imported from Russia) crowd striking and kicking them. The police, corrupted by the Mayor Kernes, did not intervene. Among the injured defenders of the Provincial Administration were Serhii Zhadan, a writer of international renown, and one of the members of our Society Valerii Romanovskyi, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Ukrainian Academy of Culture in Kharkiv. Russian official propaganda and media try to portray the supporters of democracy and freedom in Ukraine as nationalist nazi-like radicals and extremists that menace the existence of the Russian-speaking community. This Goebbelsian rhetoric has nothing to do with the Ukrainian reality. The nazi tendencies can rather be observed on the other side.

Suffice it to say that the person who put the Russian flag on the top of the building of Provincial Administration of the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, Mika Ronkainen, is a Russian citizen and a Moscow dweller, exhibiting his overt admiration for Adolf Hitler on the web. There is sufficient evidence to affirm that this was a part of the aggression against Ukraine which is now carried out on the order of the Russian President Vladimir Putin. In this connection, we confidently declare that the pretext of defending the rights of Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, used by the Russian propaganda, is a pure invention.

The Russian language has always been freely used in the Ukrainian media, schools and universities, and everyday life. Ukraine has one of the best legislations in the world ensuring the rights of ethnic minorities, including state-run schools using not only Russian, but also Crimean Tatar, Hungarian, Polish, Rumanian as languages of education. In many areas, including Kharkiv, it is the Ukrainian language that indeed needs protection and support.

The attempts to play the ethnic and linguistic card in order to destabilize the situation in Ukraine come from abroad. During the 22 years of independence, Ukraine has learnt to handle its ethnic and linguistic problems in a responsible way. Unlike many other post-Soviet states, it has never had conflicts on ethnic grounds. In case of need, we solve all our problems by means of open discussion resulting in a viable compromise. No intervention from outside is necessary. We launch an appeal to the world scholarly community to help promulgate truthful information concerning the real state of affairs in Ukraine. Those of you who can address the general public through all kinds of media, please do it as soon as possible. The disinformation campaign engineered by the Kremlin must be thwarted. We want the world to know the truth. The savage rampage, inspired from

Russia, that took place in Kharkiv last Saturday is part of it. On behalf of the whole Society President

Professor Ihor Mykhailyn, PhD,  
DLitt. Permanent Secretary

Assistant Professor Serhii Vakulenko, PhD