



U.F.U. Newsletter

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The Way to the Future

Prof. Dr. I. Mirchuk, the rector of the Ukrainian Free University in Munich devoted his inaugural address to a problem of absorbing interest to all concerned with the intellectual world, viz., the cause of the present world crisis, indicating also a solution thereof. It is his opinion that one of the causes of the crisis, and not the least important, lies in the ascendancy of civilisation over culture, in the gulf between those two aspects of our life. He reminded his audience that man's relation to Nature, a problem that was familiar even in the Ancient World, is also of enormous significance for our future. The harmony of this relation is destroyed, he said, by man's arrogant endeavors to subdue Nature with all her treasures, powers and secrets, and that solely for the sake of material progress and the satisfaction of the thirst for power. This was defined as the stage of civilization when man and Nature as subject and object stand in opposition to each other. But Nature puts up a strong resistance against her conquerors and takes bitter revenge. This, the speaker explained, would provide the common denominator for the catastrophes which periodically befall the human race, if the philosophy of history can lay claim at all to understanding even the broad outlines of the great drama of the history of man.

This relation was shown to be quite different when culture had the upper hand. The thoughts and deeds of the individual leading a cultural life were not, Prof. Mirchuk said, controlled by an inexorable will for power, or by the feelings of hate and ambition connected with all material possessions. He too, strove for knowledge of Nature, but not in order to subdue her, but to understand the harmony of the spheres, to penetrate into her inmost being, to grasp her spirit and live according to her laws. In the words of a Ukrainian sage, „The nearer one is to God, the more peaceful, the happier, one is. That is the meaning of living according to Nature.“ Thus all hostility between man and Nature melted away leaving a state of harmony instead.

The lecturer said that, when civilization had the upper hand, the individual's fundamental feeling was based on the consciousness of his superiority and on the ambition to subject great masses to egoistic aims and to overcome all resistance by brute force. The man of culture, on the other hand, obeyed the voice of love and respect for the universe as a whole as well as for the private individual. A short time ago, Prof. Planck, the eminent deceased scientist, explained to the lecturer who happened to be paying him a visit, that research scholars never considered for a moment for what criminal and punishable purpose our intellectual labours might be misused. And we must remember that modern physics would be impossible without Planck's quantum theory. The deeper the intellect of a real scholar pierced into the secrets of Nature, the more clearly the old Socratic conviction of the limitations of our knowledge crystallized within him. Only the half-educated, individuals with an immature philosophical view of the world could believe in their own superiority and on their absolute mastery over their surroundings. The secrets of Nature and the human soul are not always accessible to us. Every violation of Nature or man, the lecturer pointed out, was merely superficial and was invariably followed by some unexpected reaction.

The present crisis could not be overcome by a mechanization of life, be it ever so complete, but only by its permeation by the spirit. The cardinal evil of all totalitarian systems, for instance, was the exaggerated mechanization of life and the neglect of the emotional

world, by which alone human life became valuable, beautiful and interesting. Should the will of the individual be compelled to subject itself to a dictatorship, the result would be that society as a whole would fall into a state of spiritual poverty and degeneracy, as there would be no more feeling for the higher endeavors of man towards unity with the Absolute, no more understanding for ideal beauty and noble deeds. No individualities, but merely types of the homo technicus existed in the mechanical world. Nature, the lecturer said, would punish all attempts to attack her standards of right and morality, i. e. force, tyranny and injustice as the foes of culture had in Nature their most bitter enemy, whereby grave disaster and indescribable tragedy would befall nations, classes and individuals. As an example for this, the speaker quoted the tragedy of the regime of Hitler, who was perhaps a genius but a half-educated one.

What, then, was the way out of this dreadful situation and what the way to a better future? The lecturer saw in the practice of morality in all departments of private and public life, in the respect for the strivings and needs of one's fellows, in understanding the secrets and processes of Nature, the key to the program, which, if generally applied, must lead to the solution of the present persistent crisis. But first, our spirits must be thoroughly cured and if we are to pursue our way to the future under the banner of culture, we must be born again, so that our life may be expressed in a disinterested love for our fellow-men, in a properly understood harmony with Nature and the universe, and in a complete union of subject and object.

In the view of the lecturer this would open new vistas to the Ukrainian people. Since it was, he said, not yet subdued by the allegedly invincible power of civilization and had never ceased cultivating cultural values, since it had not lost the feeling of harmony with Nature nor had succumbed to the demon of ambition in the form of imperialist desire for power, it was well to the fore on the way to the cultural and spiritual renaissance of the world to-day. Not words alone, but deeds, would be necessary to achieve this lofty aim. And that is why the speaker appealed in the first instance to all students to keep alive the consciousness of their duty towards history and to co-operate in the fulfilment of their great task,

Marks of Matriarchate in Ukrainian Wedding Customs.

Dr. V. Shcherbakiwskyj, on occasion of the conferring of an honorary degree of doctor of Philosophy to him by the Ukrainian Free University, delivered a lecture on „Social Order in ancient Ukraine as Illustrated by the Ukrainian Marriage Customs.“ In his analysis the lecturer arrived at the following conclusion: the marriage customs derive from a time of transition from an early and unknown structure of the family in ancient Ukraine to the modern individual family, and that marriage was the expression of the approval of the ancient Ukrainian community, i. e. of all the basic elements in the structure of this community as represented in marriage customs. The author finds evidence for the existence of the following sections of society:

- 1) a class of young girls, 2) a class of young bachelors,
- 3) a class of matrons, 4) a class of older men.

A special group was formed within the class of matrons by the mothers of grown-up daughters, who play the rôle of priestesses, and even represent the goddess symbolically on occasion. So, too, within the class of unmarried young men, a group of older men crystallized, who were called „starosty“ and who played the rôle of certain priests. The symbols of their dignity as starosts were a staff and an embroidered towel that was bound across the shoulders. It was the function of the priestesses to dispense blessing and as representatives of the great divine Mother using the appropriate symbols of magic, to endow men with all good things by scattering grains of all seeds on the young people. The Eldest, with his staff, blesses the beginning of all ceremonies of the marriage ritual. The Eldest had always to be a brother of the bride's mother and a brother of the bridegroom, for there were two. The father never appears in the marriage customs, which means that he was unknown as such to Ukrainian society. Another figure in those marriage customs is the so-called „Candle-bearer“; she appears with a candle and a sword in her hand to witness the oath (as before the notary) which the „boyars“ swear to the „Marriage prince“. The bridegroom and the bride are called „prince“ and „princess“ during the marriage ceremony. The members of the bridegroom's suite are called „boyars“, the senior and leader being a friend of the prince. At the marriage, choirs of girls and of matrons appear separately. The choirs sing songs, the texts of which are a program of the ceremonies and the usual moral proverbs of the community (the laws). The young men do not sing as a choir; they appear as men at arms. At marriage the bridegroom hands his celibacy along with its symbols — bow and arrow — to the boyars. The bride hands her virginity along with the wreath, its symbol, to the bridesmaids, i. e. the class of young girls.

To judge from the manner in which the single groups appear, one may conclude that every group, that of the girls and that of the young men lived apart and in houses of their own and obviously after being specially initiated according to rules regulating those societies.

From the marriage customs it is obvious that the individual family did not exist in ancient Ukraine.

The class of matrons apparently had been composed of women who had lost their virginity by some rite (the most obscure problem of ancient Ukrainian society), or of women who already had children.

The class of young men probably had to perform military duties, to defend the clan and the tribe and to do certain hard work, such as hewing wood in the forest and plowing and perhaps also getting potter's clay, etc.

An analysis of Ukrainian marriage customs therefore leads to the conclusion that the structure of society in ancient Ukraine is reminiscent of the matriarchal system in the Caucasus and, in the days of Herodotus, in Lydia, Lykia and Asia Minor.

It is entirely different from the patriarchal system of Muscovy (Russia) which has not one trace of the matriarchate.

Ukrainian Culture Week.

At the inaugural ceremony, Prof. I. Mirchuk, the rector of the UFU, gave among others an address in which he briefly sketched the tragedy of Ukrainian history. It was mainly caused, he said, by the country's disastrous geographical position. For centuries the Ukraine had lain on the path of the many Asiatic hordes who raided Europe. The country had repeatedly been sacrificed to this its historical mission. But, its spirit unquenched, its intellectual powers unabated, the Ukrainian people according to the lecturer still aims, in spite of all present distress, at contributing to the cultural wealth of the world. The exhibition of the works of Ukrainian painters and sculptors, and of rich Ukrainian craftsmanship which had just been opened, was a small cross-section of the cultural activities of Ukrainian emigres.

Addresses were also given on this occasion by Dr. R. I. Smook, director of the American-Ukrainian Relief Committee for Western Europe and by W. Mudryj, president of the central organization of Ukrainians in exile in Germany. Among the representatives of foreign authorities we noticed Mr. van Wagoner, director of the American Military Government for Bavaria and many other American guests, some of whom were accompanied by their

wives. Many representatives of German public life were there, Regierungsdirektor Dr. W. Keim at the head. The American, German, Ukrainian and DP press were represented. Ukrainian boy scouts acted as ushers.

The attendance at the exhibition by the general public was satisfactory.

An Eminent Visitor.

Early in May, Bishop Dr. I. Boochko, the newly appointed Visitor of the Ukrainian greek-catholic Church in Germany and the last surviving bishop in Eastern Europe, paid a visit to the UFU while on a round of visits. He was received by Prof. Dr. I. Mirchuk, by representatives of the staff and the students. The reverend guest showed deep interest in the scientific work and the material situation of the university and discussed with leading personalities the possibility of transferring this institution later to an area where a supply of students would be assured. He also promised the university material support. On this occasion the Bishop also inspected the library and some of the lecture rooms of the university.

Lecture on the American Constitution.

Dr. h. c. Arnold Margolin/USA/ lectured to the students of all faculties of the UFU on May 22 on the American constitution, his address being followed with great attention. The next number of the News Letter will contain a detailed report.

500.—RM for International Holiday Courses in Munich.

At one of its last meetings, the senate of the UFU decided to contribute RM 500.— to the International Holiday Courses to be held in Munich by Bavarian universities.

The UFU will also be represented at the holiday course as its students will be in attendance there. It will also make due contribution to the planning of the program.

Publishing Activity of the UFU.

Since the beginning of 1946, the UFU has issued the following 14 reproductions:

1. Prof. Dr. I. Mirchuk: *The Elements of Ukrainian Culture.*
2. Prof. Dr. V. Petrov: *Ukrainian Folklore.*
3. Prof. Dr. N. Chubatyj: *The History of Ukrainian Law Parts I and II (2 vols.)*
4. Prof. Jurij Sherech: *On the Genesis of the Nominal-Sentence.*
5. Prof. W. Shcherbakivskij: *The Stone-Age in the Ukraine.*
6. Prof. Ju. Starosolskij: *Criminal Trials.*
7. Prof. Dr. A. Baraniv: *Introduction to the History of Roman Law.*
8. Dr. Ja. Padoch: *The History of Western European Law.*
9. Prof. Dr. N. Andrusiak: *The History of the Cossacks.*
10. Prof. Dr. K. Kysilewskij: *The Ukrainian Language.*
11. Prof. L. Okinshevych: *The History of the Philosophy of Law Part I*
12. Prof. L. Okinshevych: *The History of Ukrainian Law.*
13. Prof. Dr. Ja. Rudnytskij: *The Grammar of the Old Slavonic Church Language.*
14. Prof. Dr. St. Tomashivskij: *The History of the Ukraine.*

Some publications are already out of print; they will be reprinted shortly. One of our next numbers will contain details of plans for new editions of papers.

Ukrainian Academic Evenings in 1947/48.

Every term academic evenings with scientific lectures followed by discussions are arranged by the Shevchenko Society of Learning in cooperation with the U.F.U. and with the support of the Academic Catholic Elders and the Central Union of the Ukrainian students. For 1947/48, 31 lectures were listed, almost all held by members of the professorial staff of the university and dealing with subjects of philosophical, sociological, historical, artistic, literary and present-day interest. One of the last that deserves special mention was the lecture given by Dr. Ju. Starosolsky, lecturer, on „The Problem of Guilt and Sanctions, with Reference to the Nuremberg Trials“.

Prof. O. Kultshytskij is responsible for the conduct of the Academic Evenings.