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SHEVCHENKO IN CANADA

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TARAS H. SHEVCHENKO
MUSEUM & MEMORIAL PARK

By **PETER KRAWCHUK**

● *Translation by Mary Skrypnyk* ●

Душомань єсть єго корхати
на зємлю єго зємїни є лєволи:
Тємєро Кравчук

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SHEVCHENKO IN CANADA

by Peter Krawchuk

TRANSLATED BY MARY SKRYPNYK
Associate Editor, "The Ukrainian Canadian"

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On the occasion of the centenary of the death of Taras Shevchenko.

1961



The Taras Shevchenko monument in Palermo, Ont., a gift from the people of Ukraine to the Ukrainians in Canada in honour of the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, celebrated in 1951.

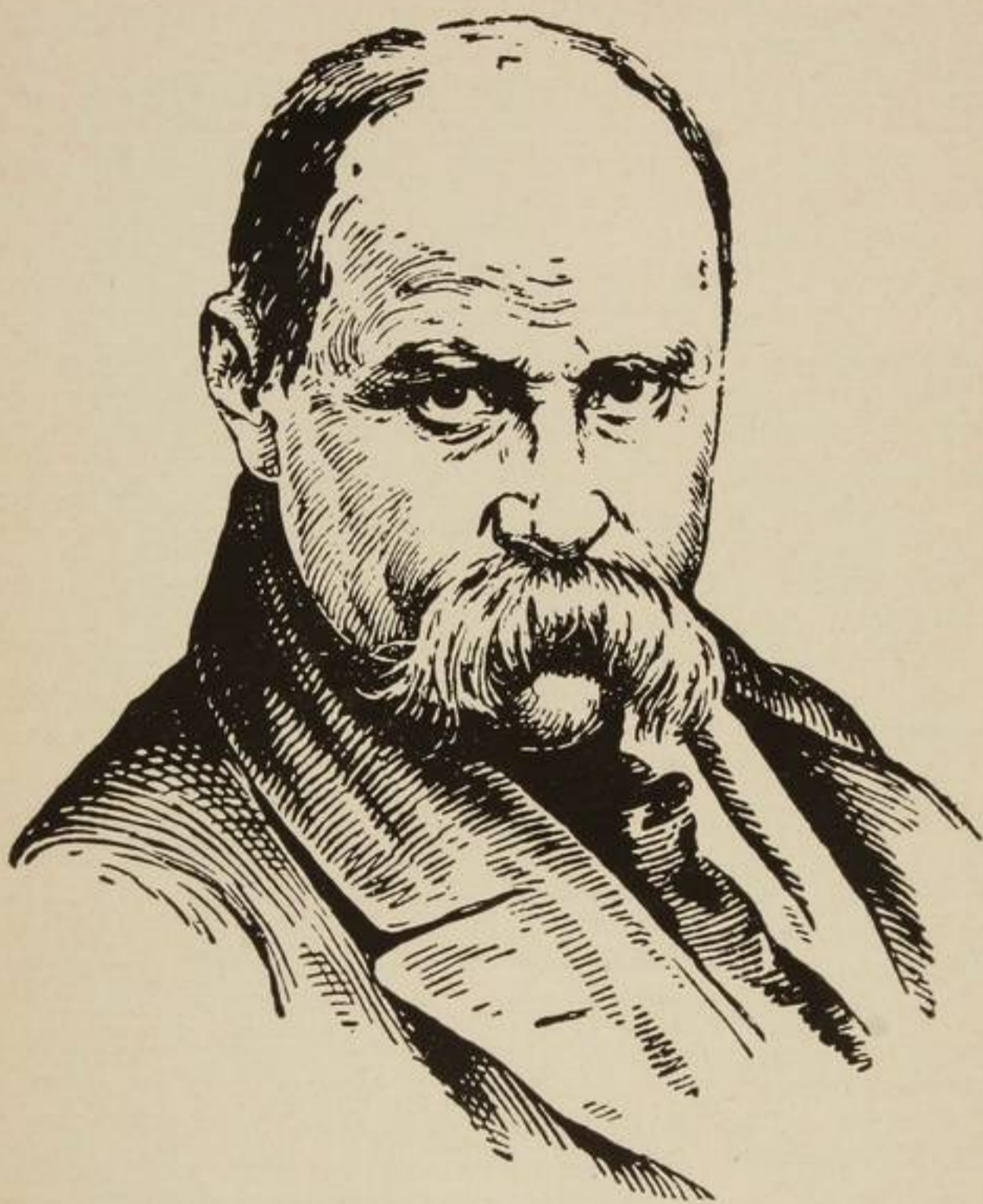
PREFACE

Dedicated to the Canadians of Ukrainian descent who cherish and are learning to appreciate the wonderful heritage of Ukrainian culture and tradition as exemplified in the music, song, dance and literature of their people. In the realm of literature, the spiritual legacy of Ukraine's great poet, Taras Shevchenko, has left the greatest impression, expressing as it does the finest ideals of mankind in the past and in the present day.

I hope this book will enrich their understanding, as it did mine, of the role Taras Shevchenko played in the life of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. Their contribution to the material and cultural growth of our young country is an achievement they can look back on with pride and a real sense of fulfilment. Their struggle and sacrifice has made us, their children and grandchildren, better Canadians for all that. Let us, in turn, enjoy and understand our heritage even as we pass it on to our children — so that they too, in their lifetime, can come ever closer to Taras Shevchenko's dream of a family new and free.

MARY SKRYPNYK.

*FRONT COVER: The entrance to the Shevchenko Park and Museum in Palermo, Ontario.



ABOUT THE POET

Taras Hrihorovich Shevchenko, Ukraine's greatest poet and revolutionary democrat, was born March 9, 1814, into the family of a peasant serf, in the village of Morintsi, Ukraine. While still a babe the family moved to the village of Kirilivka, which now bears his name.

Both villages belonged to Baron Englehardt, a wealthy landowner, as did the people who lived there.

Although his parents died while he was still a young lad, Shevchenko was able to get some schooling from the village church deacon. When his father died, and he was eleven, Taras went to

work for this deacon, in return for which he continued his schooling between chores.

His love for painting led him to run away to seek in vain for someone to teach him the art. However, he was unable to find a good teacher. The deacons he turned to were drunken sots who used the boy for all the work they could get out of him. After some wandering about he returned to Kirilivka where the Baron took him into his home as a "kozachok" or house boy. Here Shevchenko continued his drawing in spite of severe beatings.

Fortune turned for the boy when his master moved to Vilno and then to St. Petersburg. He was fifteen at the time.

The city fascinated the boy and all his free time was spent in the public parks copying the statues. Englehardt finally conceded the boy's talent and apprenticed him to a painter, Shirayev, when he was eighteen.

While painting in the park one evening he was discovered by the Ukrainian artist Soshenko, who immediately recognized his promising talent. Through him he met the outstanding figures in the world of art, including Bryullov. These were the people who finally bought Shevchenko's freedom for the sum of 2,500 rubles. The money was raised through Bryullov's painting of V. A. Zhukovsky, the leading poet of his day.

Shevchenko was given his freedom in 1838 when he was 24 years old. His friends immediately entered him in the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts.

It was also at this time that Shevchenko started to seriously write poetry, and in the next few years some of his most outstanding works were written. Getting them published was a difficult matter because of the strict tsarist censorship on all that was considered radical and revolutionary.

Nine years after he was freed from serfdom, Shevchenko aroused the ire of the tsar with his outspoken poetry and was arrested and sent into exile, forbidden to write and draw. Ten of the best years of his life were spent in exile. He returned in ill-health, to constant persecution by the state and finally, to a premature death four years later, March 10, 1861.

However, none of the measures taken by the tsarist regime kept Shevchenko from writing or painting. His works were printed secretly and read widely. Today, after the revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet Ukrainian state, his works are printed in the millions of copies, in many languages, and are becoming the property of all mankind.

On this, the 100th anniversary of his death, he is universally recognized as one of the great men in art and literature, and one of the giants in the ceaseless struggle of mankind for justice, freedom and brotherhood.



*Tribute
by a
Canadian
Poet*

J. S. WALLACE

*He was the Ukraine
In body, soul and brain —
As the tree is the root
And the river is the rain.*

*And so his verses go
Thro' lands he did not know,
Bringing them the light
That he kindled long ago.*

*We cannot be his peers
But in our smaller spheres
We can make our lives a light
That will set the world aglow.*

—J. S. WALLACE,
Toronto, 1959.

The Early Years

Speaking at a festive gathering commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko in the town of Snyatin, Ukraine, May 10, 1914, the great Ukrainian writer and democrat, Vasil Stefanik, said:

“Read his words (Shevchenko’s — **P. K.**), search for that way and follow it, so that you will be counted among the finest of people. Take your children on your knees, if you are going to Canada, and teach them to drink deep of the words of Shevchenko. Learn discipline from Shevchenko, seek the blossoms of beauty from him, and you will be the better for it, coming closer to that sunrise when we will all find ourselves in a free, independent and great Ukraine”.¹⁾

Such was the advice that Vasil Stefanik gave to the Ukrainian immigrants, the Ivan Didukhs he immortalized in his story “The Stone Cross”, who had their passports ready in their pockets and who, in a few days, would leave their native country for the distant world — for the unknown Canada, to seek “a better fortune and greater freedom”.

The Ukrainian immigrants listened to these words of advice from their revered writer who so realistically portrayed his people’s woes and took Shevchenko’s “Kobzar” along with their meagre belongings in their travels across the ocean. They avidly read the flaming words of the poet-genius, revolutionary democrat and fighter for

1.) From the newspaper “Hromadsky Holos”, Lviv, May 21, 1914.

freedom for the oppressed. In the poetry of Taras Shevchenko they found lines which reflected their own lot. Were not these words of the poet written about them?:

Three highways wide together join,
Three highways lead away.
Three brothers left for foreign parts,
Forsaking fair Ukraine.
Their grey-haired mother's left bereft.
One left a wife at home,
And one a sister, while the last—
He left a maid forlorn.²⁾

There was so much truth in these lines for the Ukrainian immigrants. Was it not they who left the Ukraine by three highways into the far unknown — to Brazil, to the United States, to Canada. Were they not the ones who left behind their aged mothers, bowed with grief, their unfortunate wives, worried young maidens? To this day Ukrainian Canadians with deep pain in their hearts sing this poem of the "Kobzar" the words of which, not only in the Ukraine but beyond the ocean, have become a beloved folk song.

Taras Shevchenko, while in exile in Kos-Aral in 1884, wrote the poem "I Grew Up In a Foreign Land". This is the way he portrayed his native village Kirilivka:

So grimly ugly
The life within that village fair:
In gloom dark as the darkest earth
The people wander; the orchard's bloom
Is dried and sere; the whitewashed homes
In sad decay are tumbled ruins;
The ponds with weeds are overgrown.
The village seems as if by fire razed,
The people seem as if deranged,
Dumbly they slave in servitude,
Taking their children with them too! . . .

2.) Translation by John Weir.

In this poem the poet describes the Ukrainian village in the period of autocratic tsarist rule. But the Ukrainian village was no better off 50 years later during the "constitutional" Austro-Hungarian monarchy in western Halichina from which the people fled along the three highways into foreign lands.

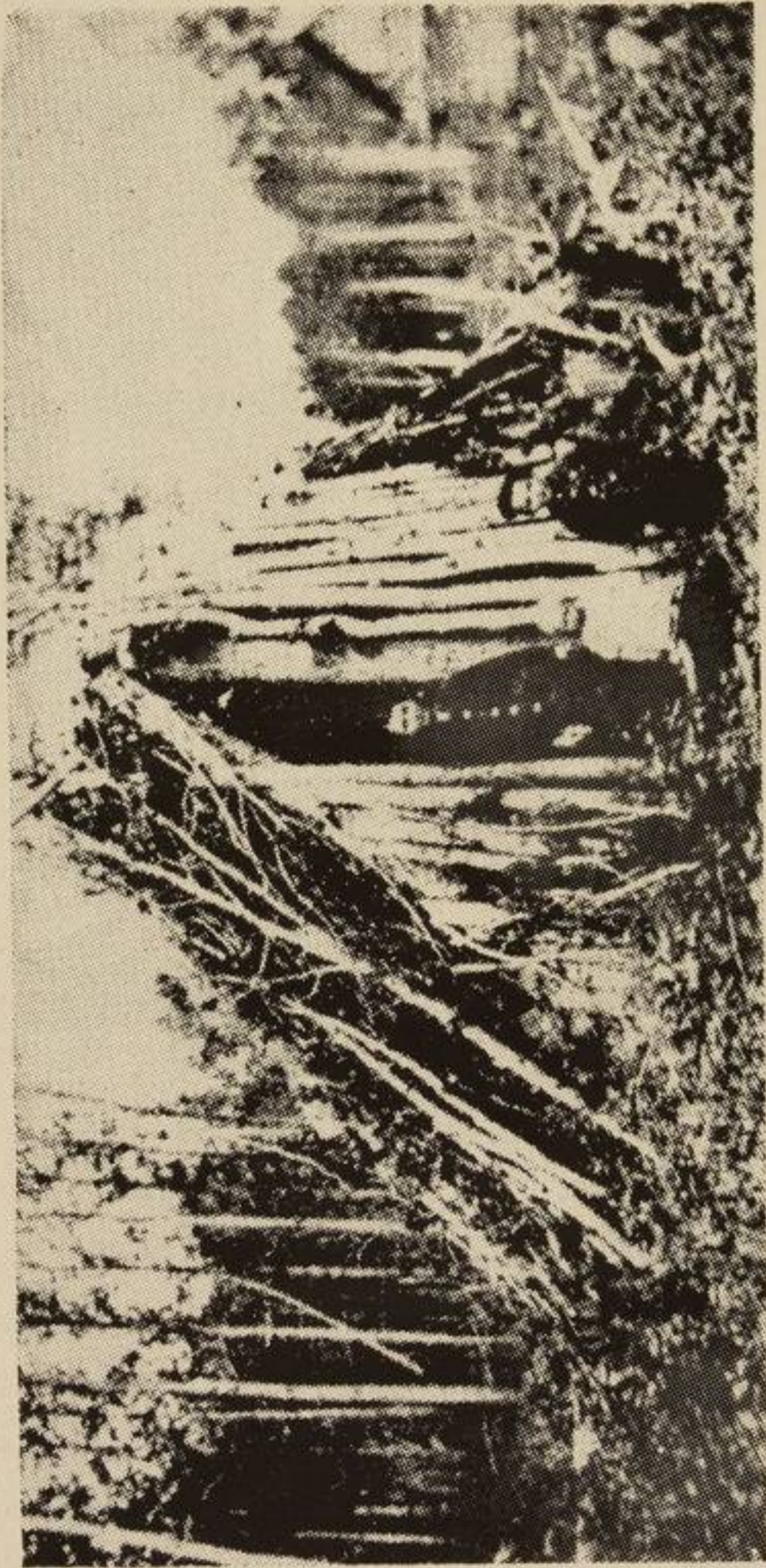
Almost as if exchanging words with Shevchenko, the writer Ivan Franko wrote in 1900:

I saw the village. My heart aches to this day
From the grim scenes that I encountered there . . .
The old at work, the children barefoot, frayed,
Uncared for, running wild; and in the homes
The small ones cried, for mother's in the field.
Then there's the grand-dad ill, at home alone,
Coughing and groaning, with no-one there to pass
A glass of water — the harvest's in full sway!
Bracing myself, I went into a cottage.
The air was hot and sour with damp decay . . .
From every corner destitution gazed.

Such was the village in Halichina in the early years of the 20th century, with thousands of peasants leaving to go across the ocean because there, they were promised, would be lots of land—and with forest too. While formally, serfdom, in which the peasant was driven to work for the landowner with a whip, had ceased to exist, economic pressures forced the peasant to work on the big estates of the wealthy from sunrise to sunset for the paltry sum of 10 to 15 cents. The poverty-stricken villages bowed to the authority of the landowner's bailiffs because "every insubordination was punished, as an infraction of the law, with the help of the cane — that universal administrator of justice" in Austro-Hungary.³⁾

It was this kind of life that tens of thousands of peasants escaped from every year, fleeing across the ocean to Brazil, to the United States and to Canada. Within two

3.) K. Marx and F. Engels. *Collected Works*, Volume VI, page 40.



Ukrainian immigrants to Canada were first settled in the western provinces. They arrived barehanded — without agricultural implements, without beasts of burden, without tools — lacking even the materials for building a roof over their heads. Building a primitive shelter such as is shown here they worked endlessly and awaited better times.

decades, between 1890 and 1910, some 302,330 people from eastern Halichina emigrated to the United States and Canada.

The first Ukrainian immigrants to Canada settled in the western provinces — on the wild prairies. Distribution agencies in Winnipeg and Strathcona (now Edmonton) sent the immigrants into the northern districts of Manitoba and Alberta. The immigrants went alone or with whole families into impassable thicket and forest. They came barehanded, without agricultural implements, without beasts of burden, without tools, lacking even the materials for building a roof over their heads. They were forced to start life in the new world naked in the wilderness. Building a shelter over their heads in the most primitive way, they worked endlessly and awaited better times.

According to agreement the settler was obligated, during the three-year terms of the contract, and for the sum of \$10.00, to build a house on the land allotted to him, buildings for cattle, and to clear and plough at least 30 acres of land. Only after carrying out these terms of the contract could the land be considered as belonging to him. If these terms were not carried out he lost his rights to the land and the three years of work and effort that was put into it was lost and wasted. To make sure that this wouldn't happen and that he would have the right to settle permanently on his contracted land, the settler and his family worked from sunrise to sunset to clear the forest and cultivate the 30 acres demanded in the contract. Without horses or oxen — the people themselves donned the harness, ploughing the earth and harrowing it with their own strength. And just as in the old days of serfdom, in the time of Shevchenko, "people were harnessed to the yoke", so here in Canada, in the "new land", they were also forced into harness to keep from dying of hunger. It was the same serfdom — only in a different form.

On a day of rest, Sunday, or another holiday, the

neighbours gathered together to pour out in talk their sorrows and their homesickness for their mother country. Often at such gatherings the "Kobzar" was read. Shevchenko's words helped to lighten their burdens, gave birth to hope in their hearts for a brighter future and urged them to struggle for its realization.

Under the influence of the "Kobzar" the Ukrainian settlers often attempted to write their own poetry, which reflected their hard lot. One of the first Ukrainian immigrants, N. Khrapko, in his recollections written on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the coming of Ukrainians to Canada entitled "The Difficult Beginnings of Farm Life", tells of how he and his family came to Canada in 1903 from the village of Zavalya, Snyatin Region, Western Ukraine. They settled in Alberta near the settlement of Zavalya (the settlers named it after their old village at home). The years that followed were extremely difficult.

N. Khrapko writes:

"I took a great liking to Shevchenko's poem "The Cherry Orchard by the House". I was also eaten with the boredom and terrible monotony of our life. I dreamed of that "cherry orchard by the house". For the home I lived in here presented an entirely different picture and I tried to paint it as Shevchenko might have seen it:

The burned-out woods surround the house,
Mosquitos in their branches hum,
From work the weary woodsmen come
The cows return with ringing bells,
The children meet them on the run.
A chilling wind sweeps from the north,
Coyotes in the forest howl,
And dogs in sympathy respond . . .
The children in the yard grow cold
And finally come in the house.
The family sits down to sup
As the western night comes down,

All grows quiet, except the bells
And the coyotes with their howls."⁴⁾

Rephrasing Shevchenko's "The Cherry Orchard by the House", N. Khrapko in simple words presents a Canadian evening as seen by Ukrainian settlers in northern Alberta. And we see the harsh realities faced by our settlers in this lonely — "forgotten by God and people" — corner of the earth, where there was no cherry orchard, no melodious maiden's voice raised in song, no nightingale — only endless burnt-out forest, the hum of mosquitos, a cold wind, the howling of the hungry coyotes, answered by the barking dogs of the settlement. The cold night falls and the tired people sleep, because tomorrow another day of heavy labour awaits. . . This picture, painted by N. Khrapko in his poem, could be painted not only of Alberta, but of Manitoba and Saskatchewan where the first Ukrainian immigrants settled.

First Organized Group

When the first immigrants came to Canada they found no established cultural-educational, theatrical or social life. It was only later, when new contingents of Ukrainian settlers came in, that such groups were formed in the cities and in farming centres as literary circles named after Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Mikhailo Pavlik and Mikhailo Drahomanov. It must also be stated that among the first immigrants were also people who, in Eastern Halichina, belonged to the Rus-Ukrainian Radical Party which was organized in 1890 by Ivan Franko and Mikhailo Pavlik. They were the main initiators of the social and cultural-educational life of the Ukrainians in Canada in the early years of this century.

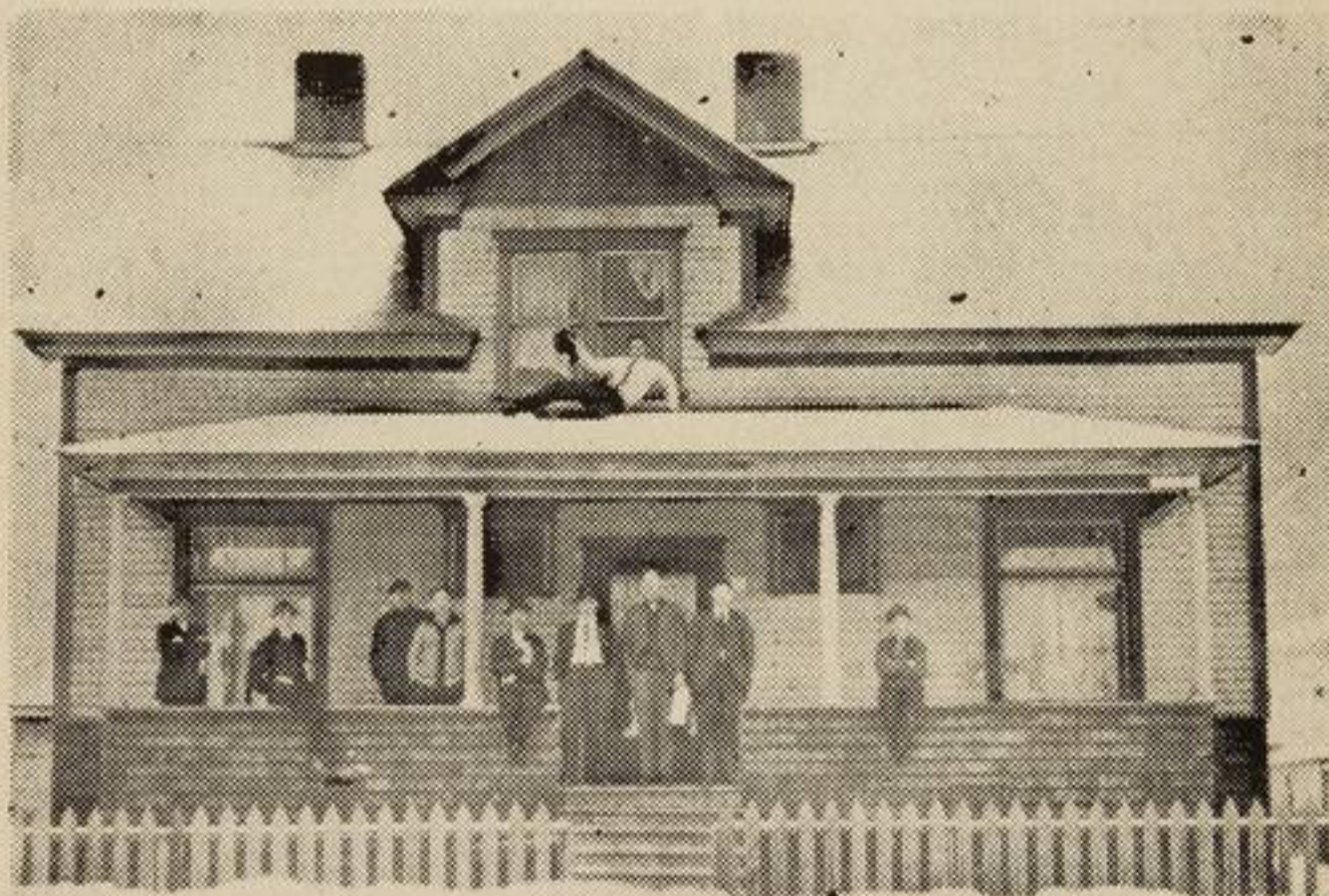
We have been able to establish that the first such lit-

4.) "Ukrainian Word", Winnipeg, April 4, 1951.

erary circle named after Shevchenko was formed in Edmonton in 1901. It had 33 members. However, it did not last long and did not leave any significant traces in the social and cultural-educational life of Ukrainian Canadians.

In 1904 a group of progressive Ukrainians formed the first association named for Taras Shevchenko in Winnipeg. In the leadership of this association were radical socialists from Halichina and Bukovina. This association played a very important role among the Ukrainian immigrants and constituted the beginning of the Ukrainian labour-farmer movement in Canada.

The Taras Shevchenko Association in Winnipeg propagated socialist ideas and promoted community and political activity among Ukrainian workers and farmers. Its influence grew quickly and already, in the first years of its



Among the first Ukrainian cultural and educational centres was this hall in Fernie, B.C., built in 1916.

existence, it grew to a membership of 400. For that period it was regarded as a strong organization.

The building housing the association became the centre of an organized program of lectures, meetings, dramatic and other cultural activities — presenting concert and other theatrical performances. A fairly large library was established with an excellent fund of classics including the works of Shevchenko, Franko, Pavlik, Drahomanov, Lesya Ukrainka, Olga Kobilyanska, Fedkovich and others. The association often organized public meetings. One such meeting took place July 22, 1906, and the "Improvement of Life for the Rusini⁵⁾ in Canada" was discussed. One of the main aims of the organization was to struggle against old religious superstitions.

As time went by the Shevchenko Association in Winnipeg was torn with inner strife. One section of the membership upheld the position of international solidarity with the workers, another, the position of Ukrainian nationalism. Not having the strength to take over the leadership of the association, a group of national-opportunists left the association, openly joined the nationalist camp and actively carried on a campaign against the progressive forces in the Ukrainian community.

By 1919 some 23 Shevchenko literary circles existed in the various cities and towns across the country. These, when the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temples were established, became branches of that organization. They existed in such cities as Edmonton, Regina, Brooklands, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie and others.

Here is just one example of the type of activity carried on by these groups: The Shevchenko Association in

5.) **Rus and Rusini** meant Ukraine and Ukrainians in the West Ukrainian dialect, referring to the ancient times when Kiev was the capital of the Rus state embracing the forefathers of the Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians, who at that time were a single people.

Brooklands, Manitoba, was formed January 1, 1914. A Ukrainian school was established where the Ukrainian language, history, geography and literature were taught. The children attended classes after the official hours of public school. The school was supported by voluntary funds donated by the Ukrainian workers — without any help from the government. The drama group of the association regularly presented plays, lectures were organized on various educational and social-political subjects. The association had its own library.

The various Shevchenko Associations had their own statutes which guided their activities.

A meeting of the membership of the Kenora Shevchenko Literary Association on February 5, 1916, adopted a statute which outlined the following aims:

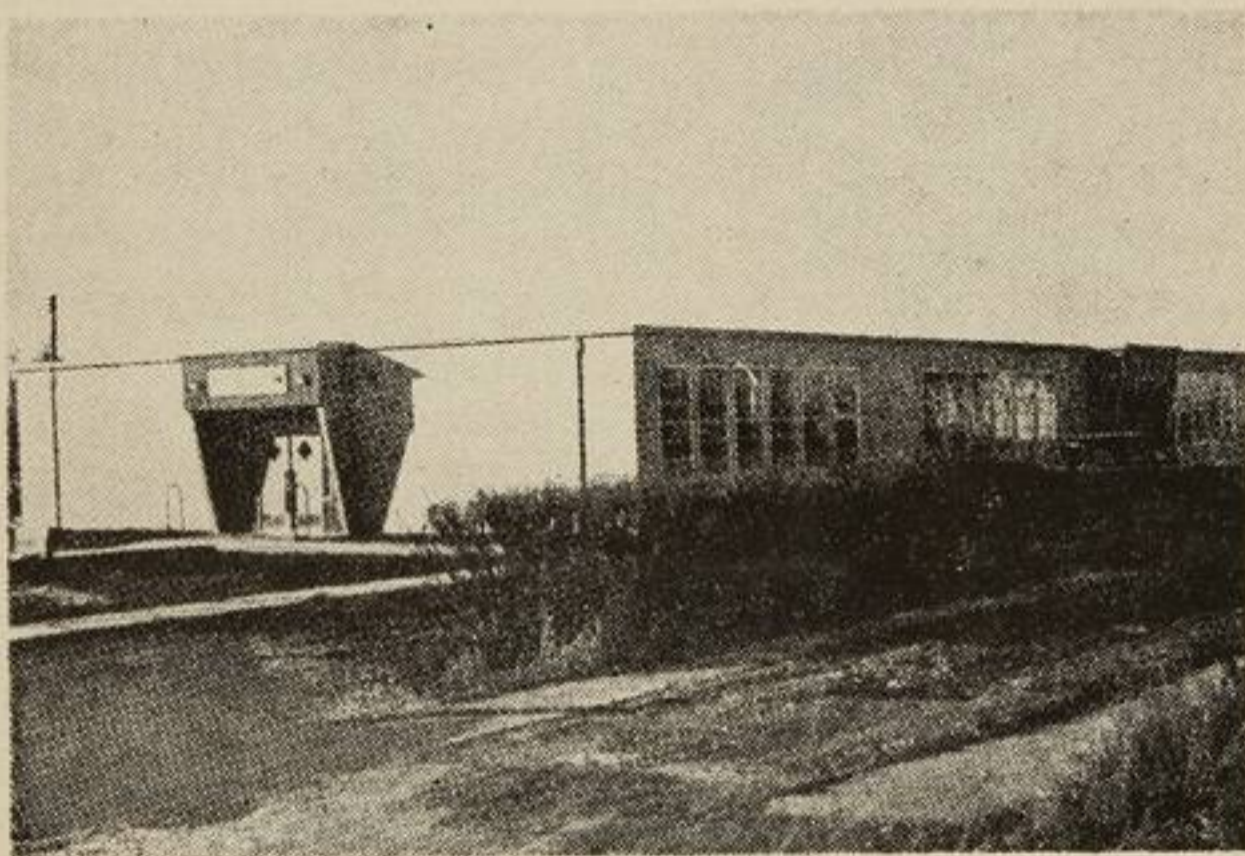
“. . . to spread enlightenment and knowledge, to raise the cultural and living standards of the local and district Ukrainian population in all its various aspects and aspirations”.

Of course, not all the Shevchenko associations in Canada set such aims before themselves. Those whose leadership was made up of radical-socialists or social-democrats outlined their aims quite clearly: they were organizations which, along with being cultural and educational, carried out a big program of community work, teaching their members to fight for their day-to-day interests and national dignity.

Ukrainian settlers in Canada did not only limit themselves to naming literary groups in Shevchenko's name. One of the first Ukrainian settlements in Manitoba was named Shevchenko and carried that name till 1908. That year, for reasons unknown, the name of the town was changed to Vita. However, the town high school still bears the name of Shevchenko. Many of the schools in Manitoba and Saskatchewan also bear the name of “Taras”, obviously given them by the Ukrainian residents in these districts.

Today, in the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians in Toronto, one of the most popular and well-known male chorus ensembles in Canada bears the name of the great poet.

In 1914, in connection with the 100th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko, the Ukrainian community in Winnipeg petitioned the City Council that one of the streets of that city, Burrows Ave., be renamed after the poet. Unfortunately, this request was refused.



The Shevchenko Public and High School in Vita, Manitoba. The first school in the district was built in 1906, about eight years after the first settlement of the district which at the time was also named Shevchenko. Later, when the railway came through, the name of the town was changed to Vita. The school started as a one-room schoolhouse until 1919, when a two-room building was erected. In 1943 this building burnt down and a four-room school was built. In 1955 a tornado destroyed the school making way for the fine new and modern building above. The high school section of the school was established in 1924.

1914—100th Anniversary

In 1914 Ukrainians living in the two Ukraine's — around the Dnieper and in the western region — prepared to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko.

The tsarist government of Russia, which practiced a despotic policy of national oppression in Ukraine, alarmed at the possibility of mass protest demonstrations in connection with the jubilee, banned the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the great Kobzar.

The government ban against the planned celebrations to mark the anniversary of the poet-revolutionary aroused the anger of wide masses of people. This anger grew into stormy demonstrations in Kiev on March 10 and 11, where Ukrainians, Russians, Poles, Georgians and Jews of the city united to voice their protest of the ban. The battle of the workers against the tsarist ban to allow the marking of the anniversary was led by the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party — the party of Bolsheviks.

The question of the tsarist ban on the celebrations and the brutal attack on the Kiev protest demonstrations was discussed in the state Duma. Echoes of this discussion in the Duma sounded around the world, exposing the autocratic tsarist government and its oppressive national policies. V. I. Lenin in an article "**To the Question of National Policy**" had this to say about the ban on the Shevchenko Jubilee: "**The prohibition of the Shevchenko celebrations was such a marvelous, amazing, so rarely fortunate and successful measure from the point of view of anti-government agitation that anything better would be difficult to imagine. I think that all our finest social-democratic anti-government agitators could never have, in so short a period of time, reached the dizzy heights of success that were achieved against the government by this measure. After this action by the government millions of 'biased' people**

began to change into enlightened citizens, realizing the correctness of the deduction that Russia is 'a prison of nations'."6)

Overcoming many obstacles — the confiscation of articles on Taras Shevchenko in the progressive press by the Austrian censorship, the chauvinistic campaigns of the Polish gentry, the boycott of the Uniate clergy and the nationalists, the toiling masses of eastern Halichina with dignity marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Kobzar.

The radical and socialist press — "Pratsya" (Labour), "Upered" (Forward), "Zemlya i Volya" (Land and Freedom), "Dobra Novina" (Good News) and "Hromadsky Holos" (Public Voice), carried extensive articles on Taras Shevchenko. Ivan Franko, though very ill at the time, joined the people in marking the jubilee by writing his memorable "Dedication" to the Kobzar. Democratic writers Vasil Stefanik, Marko Cheremshina, Anton Krushelnitsky, travelled from village to village to appear at jubilee meetings with lectures on Shevchenko and his revolutionary works.

And just as in the home country, so beyond the ocean — in Canada, 1914 was proclaimed Shevchenko Jubilee Year. In many towns and cities across the country, where Ukrainian societies and literary groups existed, jubilee committees were formed to prepare the celebrations.

The Federation of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, which united the most progressive elements of the Ukrainian workers and farmers, actively participated in the preparations to mark the anniversary.

A special Jubilee issue of "Robochy Narod" (Working People), organ of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, was printed Feb. 5, 1914. The front page carried a large portrait of Shevchenko and excerpts from his poetry. Leading social-democrat and editor of the paper, Eugene

6) V. I. Lenin on Ukraine. Ukrainian edition, 1957, p. 341.

Hutsailo, dedicated an article "Our Prometheus" to the Bard. Page four of the paper carried an appeal from the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party to the Ukrainian community, calling for a mass celebration of the Jubilee. Ukrainian workers and farmers right across the country responded by holding meetings, lectures, readings of Shevchenko's poetry and concerts.

"Robochy Narod" in its issue of Feb. 18, 1914 carried the information that the branch of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party in Vancouver was sponsoring a mass celebration on March 8 in honour of Taras Shevchenko — "the great genius and fighter for the rights and freedom of the Ukrainian people."

Shevchenko celebrations organized by Ukrainian social-democrats were held in Winnipeg, Elmwood, Sarnia, Lachine, Montreal and Edmonton.

Exceptionally successful was the fine program planned for the 100th anniversary in Edmonton. The Ivan Franko Ukrainian Dramatic Society prepared a concert for March 16 of that year. The program consisted of choral and solo numbers as well as recitations from the works of Shevchenko. I. Yaremko read an essay entitled: "Who Was Shevchenko?"⁷⁾

In connection with the 100th anniversary a number of Shevchenko's works as well as booklets which carried the poet's biography and an outline of his creative work were published. The "Ruthenian Bookstore" in Winnipeg advertised in the Ukrainian press the information that such works as Shevchenko's "Kobzar" (2 volumes), "Selected Works" (2 volumes), a collection "In Everlasting Memory of T. H. Shevchenko", "Shevchenko, the Ukrainophils and Socialism" by M. Drahomanov, "Taras Shevchenko and Halich Ukraine" by M. Pavlik, portraits of the poet, a medal with his portrait and a calendar with his portrait, were available for sale.

7) V. Chumar, *Recollections*, Edmonton, 1942, p. 103.

Also published in Winnipeg were a series of 24 booklets called "The Illustrated Shevchenko Library" which included such works as "Prichinna", "Katerina", "Topolya", "Haidamaki", "Heretic", "Naimichka", "Nazar Stodolya" and others.

A collection of articles prepared by the well-known social-democratic activist Ivan Hnida was also published in Winnipeg under the title of "Our Prometheus".

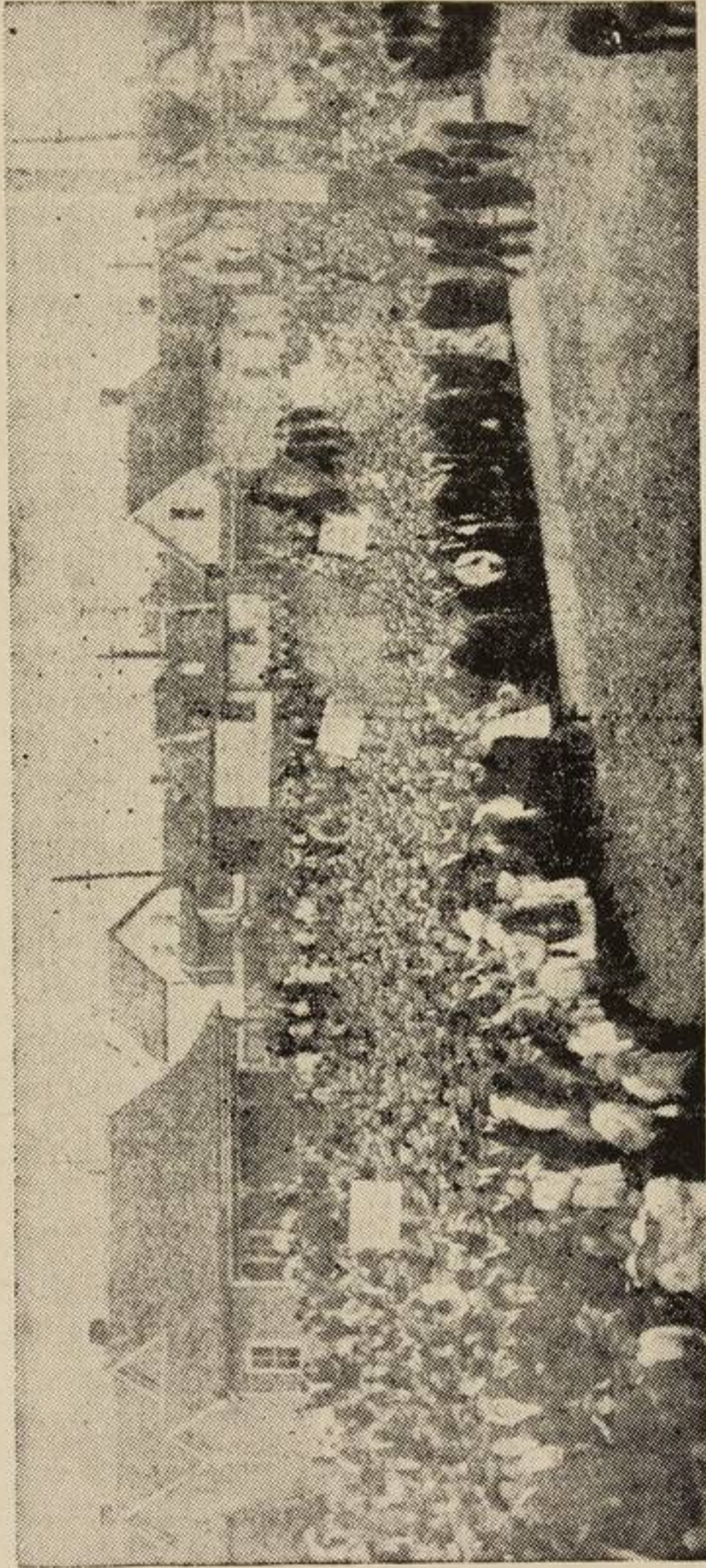
So the Ukrainians in Canada honoured the 100th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko in 1914.

Since then March has become established in the Ukrainian Canadian community as the month to mark Shevchenko anniversaries with concerts and meetings based on his creative work. There is not a nationally conscious Ukrainian in Canada today who does not know or has not heard of the great Ukrainian poet. His portrait holds a place of honour in many Ukrainian homes, his "Kobzar" has become part of many personal libraries, to be read by grandparents, parents and grandchildren.

Taking seriously the words of writer Vasil Stefanik, Ukrainian immigrants to Canada passed Shevchenko's heritage down to their children in their homes and in Ukrainian schools organized by Ukrainian societies. Taras Shevchenko's work is an integral part of the Ukrainian school curriculum. The children learn of his life, memorize his poetry and often recite it at concerts and other gatherings.

The ideas of the great Kobzar have become part of the life of the Ukrainian Canadians, warming their hearts with their sincerity and fervour.





The 100th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko in 1914 was widely celebrated by Ukrainians in Canada. Meetings, concerts and public readings of the poet's works were held. In Winnipeg Ukrainian workers and farmers of the district staged a big parade to mark the centenary of the birth of the great Bard.

Shevchenko and the Press

In the fifty-four years of its history the Ukrainian progressive press in Canada has printed many of Taras Shevchenko's poems as well as articles on his life and creative work.

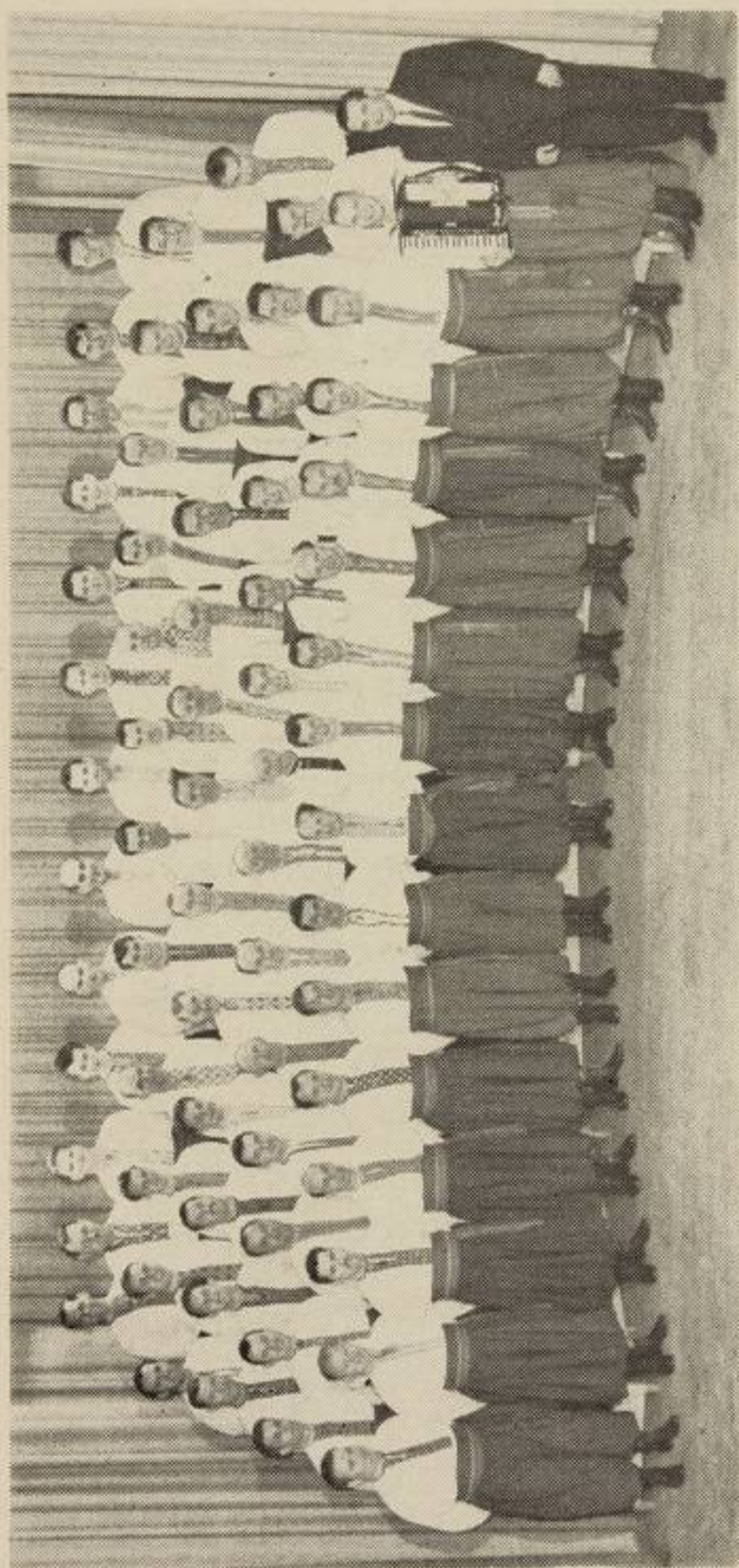
Every year, in the month of March, whole pages in the newspapers are dedicated to biographical sketches of Shevchenko, his poetry, and articles and essays that add to the fund of knowledge of his tremendous heritage. His portrait appears as well as reproductions of his paintings.

During the first world war, the Canadian reactionary government persecuted the Ukrainians. Taking advantage of the war, the Conservative government, then in power, gave orders to arrest those Ukrainians who entered Canada from eastern Halichina. They were arrested as "enemy aliens", because eastern Halichina was at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian empire which, as Germany's ally, was at war with Canada. Those arrested, completely innocent people, were then sent by the powers-that-be into concentration camps surrounded by barbed wire.

But neither the terrorism of the government nor the provocations of the nationalists were able to stifle the cultural-educational and social-political activities of the Ukrainian workers.

The Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party led an active struggle in mobilizing the workers to fight against the imperialist war. Their press, the newspaper "Robochy Narod", exposed the imperialist aims of the war and educated its readers in the spirit of international workers' unity and solidarity. The Shevchenko anniversaries were an excellent means for this propaganda.

When it wasn't possible to write freely against capitalist exploitation of the workers because of wartime conditions that would have brought about a government ban on



The Shevchenko Male Chorus of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians in Toronto with their conductor Eugene Dolny. The 100th anniversary of the poet's death also marked the 10th anniversary of the existence of the choir which has 75 members and a repertoire of over 150 songs. It is one of the outstanding Ukrainian choral ensembles in the country.

the newspaper, "Robochy Narod" very ably used the Shevchenko anniversaries for anti-war propoganda.

In March, 1916, when the fields of Europe were drenched with the blood of an imperialist war in the interests of capital, "Robochy Narod" wrote:

"Shevchenko was the poet of an oppressed people. The heart of the poet responded to every wrong and injustice — but even more deeply and more sincerely he hated social injustice. Only a man who was directly and closely involved in this social injustice in all its forms and manifestations, who was himself, up to his 24th birthday, a serf, who saw his nearest and dearest — mother, father and family — spend their lives in servitude and destitution, only such a man could, in his work, give such living, truthful, terrible, wrathful and painfully burning pictures of the life of the oppressed masses of toiling people.

"But besides his soul-shaking poems of people's suffering, Shevchenko also lighted the flame of revolutionary protest against this social system. He created vivid pictures of wrathful revenge on the part of the oppressed and exploited against their exploiters and oppressors, gave the slogans for a holy war for social equality, for equal rights for all, for a Ukraine 'without serf or master'.

"All the pain, all the injustice of tortured Ukraine, not a master's, not a nobleman's, but a people's Ukraine, echoed in Shevchenko's poetry. That which seethed in the breast of the peasant serf after countless centuries of oppression, both political and social; all the bleeding wounds inflicted on an enslaved people by the thieving hands of the tsar, the nobility and their petty servants; all the aching blows borne by a helpless people in the hands of a cruel conqueror; the entire soul of a people is reflected in the poetry of Shevchenko.

"The Ukrainian working masses, organized in the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, see in Shevchenko a great poet, who with his inspired and prophetic words car-

ried to the Ukrainian community the good news of political independence and social justice for Ukraine. With flaming protest against the oppressive yoke of serfdom and slavery he sowed his revolutionary ideas. He fired the hearts of his readers with the desire for freedom; he planted the seeds of a democratic outlook, the ideas of equality and brotherhood, of the right of every Ukrainian to be a free man. It is for these things that Ukrainian workers and farmers honour and revere his memory on the anniversary of his birth.”⁸⁾

This article was, in its own way, a revolutionary manifesto that gave courage to thousands of Ukrainian workers and farmers, filled their hearts with the hope of victory, of a free Ukraine ruled by social justice.

The Volin regiment had already revolted in St. Petersburg, and the revolutionary workers united with the soldiers had taken the offensive against tsarism when “Robochy Narod”, which had not yet received the news of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, marked the 56th anniversary of the death of Taras Shevchenko with these words: “The time will come, when the people will rise like that giant, will break ‘the chains of centuries’, ‘crush the thrones and smash the porphyry’, settle accounts with ‘tsars, blood-hounds and dogs’, with their landlord oppressors, sprinkling their freedom with the foe-man’s blood and, fulfilling the testament left by our immortal bard, will remember him with ‘kind and gentle words’ in

‘the family grand and free . . .’ ”⁹⁾

The 104th anniversary of the birth of Shevchenko saw Russia and Ukraine waging a courageous battle between the workers and peasants led by the Bolshevik party and the counter-revolutionary forces — the white guards and

8) “Robochy Narod”, March, 1916.

9) “Robochy Narod”, March 16, 1917.

bourgeois nationalists who called imperialist interventionists in to help them save the old order of things, where once again the people would be harnessed to the tsarist and landlord yoke.

In marking the Shevchenko anniversary in the new situation that emerged as a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution "Robochy Narod" wrote:

"The sun of freedom is rising above an enslaved people. In the far-off east, in Russia and the Ukraine, the masses of working people and peasants have become conscious of their grievances which Shevchenko expressed in these words:

. . . Await no good.
Awaited freedom do not wait —
It is asleep: Tsar Nicholas
Lulled it to sleep. But if you'd wake
This sleeping freedom, all the mass
Into its hands must hammers take
And sharpen well the battle-axe —
And thus start freedom to awake.¹⁰⁾

"These people finally understood that there was no point in waiting for someone to bring them liberty, that it was something that they must do for themselves, in their masses. And in their masses they arose and rid themselves of the executioner-tsar, of the little tsars, of the gentry and their henchmen."

In speaking of Ukraine, where courageous battles were being fought by the Ukrainian workers against the nationalist forces who wanted to establish a new slavery over the Ukrainian people, wrapped in the yellow-blue of the nationalist flag, "Robochy Narod" wrote:

"The sun of freedom has risen there and the liberated people are striving to uproot that economic evil of which

10) Translation by John Weir, in "Bard of Ukraine."

Shevchenko wrote so much. For till that evil has been destroyed, Ukraine will not know good fortune nor will its people enjoy liberty.

We would good fortune know at last,
If in Ukraine it came to pass
That not a trace of lords remained.

“But the ‘traces of the masters’ will disappear from the Ukraine. That is what the working people of Ukraine who have understood the truth of the immortal bard’s words are fighting for, and sooner or later they will forever banish their oppressors and wipe out all traces of them.

“This will happen in the Ukraine. It will happen in other countries as well and in the whole world. There will be an end to oppressors, an end to masters and slaves, but ‘there will be people on this earth!

. . . and there will be truth!’ ”¹¹⁾

After 1917

But the 105th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko could not be reflected in the pages of the progressive Ukrainian press in Canada. The Conservative government, alarmed at the victory of the October revolution in Russia, the revolutionary situation in Europe generally and the quick growth of revolutionary ideas in Canada, started to clamp down on the working class progressive movement. Several drastic measures were put into effect. In various parts of the country Anglo-Saxon chauvinism was encouraged and socialist organizations and their members were attacked and meeting places pillaged.

In September, 1918, the government issued a law banning a number of workers’ organizations, among them the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party and its paper “Robo-

11) “Robochy Narod”, March 13, 1918.

chy Narod." These measures of the government, however, did not stop the growth of class-consciousness among the Canadian working class. In 1919 the workers of Winnipeg came out in a general strike that shook the country and was followed by a wave of strikes in other industrial centres across Canada. Ukrainian workers played an active, and often leading role, in the strike struggles, having had a background of social-democratic organization as well as education through a progressive press which promoted the study of the finest revolutionary traditions of the world. They also had the revolutionary spirit and teachings of the poetry of their great poet-revolutionary, Taras Shevchenko, whose work was so near and dear to their own aspirations of a better world for the common man.

And when in 1919, Ukrainian workers and farmers, by their own efforts and finances, again started to publish their own press — "Ukrainski Robitnichi Visti" (Ukrainian Labor News) and later the "Farmerske Zhittya" (Farmer's Life), "Robitnitsya" (Workingwoman) and "Svit Molodi" (Youth World), then the militant words of the great Kobzar once more circulated in the Ukrainian Canadian community. Shevchenko's poetry and articles on his work appeared often on their pages.

There was not at that time, of course, a developed, sound and deep literary analysis of the work of Shevchenko, so that often the material used was superficial and shallow, giving an incorrect and incomplete picture of the period in which the poet lived and worked as well as a limited analysis of his heritage. It was only after Soviet rule was established in the Ukraine, after the Ukrainian people were freed from social and national oppression, that Ukrainian literary scholars and critics turned their full attention to the study of the poetry, prose, dramatic and artistic legacy of Shevchenko. A whole series of articles, essays and books emerged from these attempts, which made serious efforts to give a scientific analysis of the

work of the poet and define his place in the history of Ukrainian literature. And although these efforts were not always successful during the first years, one indisputable fact was established — that Taras Shevchenko was a revolutionary-democrat, a genuine people's poet and a progressive thinker and philosopher.

As the new material came out in the homeland, so it appeared on the pages of the "Ukrainian Labor News", the "Farmer's Life", the "Workingwoman" and "Youth World." During this period articles by such outstanding Ukrainian literary figures as Volodimir Koryak, Serhiy Pilipenko, Alexander Doroshkevich and Andriy Khvilya were reprinted in Canada and, in spite of certain shortcomings, helped Ukrainian Canadians to gain a deeper understanding of the work of Shevchenko, quite different from that given by nationalist Ukrainian "literary scholars" whose work was published in Canada.

Every year, in March, the Ukrainian progressive press published Shevchenko anniversary issues.

The "Farmer's Life", marking the 113th anniversary of the birth of the poet, asked:

"Why is Shevchenko so dear to us?"

And answered:

"Because he was among the first who fought for the liberation of the oppressed Ukrainian working masses. He was one of the first courageous rebels who confronted the people's oppressors with the truth and was not afraid to face even death for his convictions. Taras Shevchenko, who left us his immortal "Kobzar", was the one who awoke the Ukrainian people from their long slumber, calling on them to break their chains and water their freedom with the tyrant's blood. Today, the dreams and aspirations of this great son of the Ukrainian people have come true! There, where before, and in very recent times, the gentry luxuriated, now exists a free workers' and peasants' state —

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УКРАЇНСЬКІ РОБІТНИЧІ ВІСТІ

UKRAINIAN LABOR NEWS

Office: 414
414 Wellington St.
Winnipeg, Man., Canada

Subscription Rates
Per Year \$1.00
Per Six Months \$0.50

КАРТИ ЖИТТЯ ЗАПИСКИ І ПОСЛАННЯ

Фармерське життя

THE FARMER'S LIFE

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РОБІТНИЦЯ

THE WORKINGWOMAN

СВІТ МОЛОДІ

PEOPLE'S GAZETTE
The Progressive Worker
and Working Woman
Winnipeg, Man.

НАРОДНА ГАЗЕТА

People's Gazette

Subscription Rates
Per Year \$1.00
Per Six Months \$0.50

The only Ukrainian daily newspaper in Canada.
Published daily except Sundays.

The progressive Ukrainian press, from the early years of Ukrainian immigration to the present day, played a big role in informing its readers of the heritage of Shevchenko through reprints of his poetry, articles on his life and work and reproductions of his paintings. Above are the titles of the newspapers and journals that served the progressive Ukrainian community during the 1920's and in the '30's.

**Soviet Ukraine. This was the great dream of Shevchenko:
'A Ukraine without serf or lord!'** ¹²⁾

While the older Ukrainian immigration had learned and studied the work of Shevchenko in their own land — in Eastern Galicia, Bukovina and Transcarpathia — their children, who were born and grew up in Canada, knew little or nothing about the poet, except what might have been relayed to them in stories from their parents. Attending Canadian schools and growing up in an environment where English is the accepted language, the children of the immigrants quickly assimilated, forgetting the mother tongue taught them by their parents. To counteract this swift assimilation, Ukrainian workers and farmers, organized in the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Association, established a Youth Section as part of the organization to educate and bring up their children in the national Ukrainian progressive spirit. At the same time Ukrainian schools of language, music and dance were established where the language, history, geography, literature and cultural traditions of the Ukrainian people were taught.

With the further development of the Youth Section of the ULFTA and the Ukrainian schools the need for a youth paper in the Ukrainian language arose and such a paper, "Svit Molodi" (Youth World) made its appearance as a monthly journal in 1927. Its first editor was the writer and journalist, Miroslav Irchan. This journal filled a deep need and accomplished a great deal in giving leadership and a progressive education to the growing generation of Ukrainian Canadians. It made them conscious of their background and traditions, included them in the daily struggles of their parents and all Canadian workers for a better life in Canada. It also did much to make the name and work of Taras Shevchenko known to the Canadian-born generation of Ukrainians during the Shevchenko anniversaries in March every year.

12) "Farmer's Life", March 9, 1927.

Just one example of how "Youth World" acquainted its readers with the legacy of Shevchenko:

"The name of Shevchenko is uttered with love and respect not only in the Ukraine, but everywhere in the world where poverty and misery have driven the Ukrainian worker and peasant. Here, in Canada, where our fathers came to seek a better life, the great poet has not been forgotten. He is constantly remembered and our parents have taught us, their children, to know and love him as well. There is not, it seems, a Ukrainian worker's or farmer's home, that does not have a copy of the 'Kobzar'. And we, who were born and have grown up in Canada, far from the Ukraine where our great poet grew up and about which he wrote, we also love and respect him, find his ideas near and dear."

And further:

"Every year the people of Ukraine mark the anniversary of the death of Shevchenko. The organized workers and farmers in Canada also honour the anniversary of this great genius of the people, who suffered much during his lifetime fighting for their freedom, and whose flaming words are even today teaching and giving leadership to all who struggle for a better world.

"And we, the young people, marking this anniversary with our older friends and comrades, should take the life of Shevchenko as an example for ourselves to follow, try to conduct our life as he did, for the benefit of the people. The unforgettable Taras also left us this testament:

Seek enlightenment, my brothers,

Read, and reading, think . . .

"These words are a call to us to develop into conscious, cultured people, to develop our educational facilities wherever we are, to study ourselves and to help by teaching others. Let us mark Shevchenko's memory with honour by carrying out his testament and working to realize those ideals for which he fought."¹³⁾

13) "Youth World", March, 1928.

The two women's journals "Holos Robitnitsi" (Voice of the Workingwoman) and "Robitnitsya" (Workingwoman) also did much to carry the work of the Bard to their readers.

The "Voice of the Workingwoman", for instance, in March, 1923, printed an article by that outstanding Ukrainian progressive leader and journalist, Matthew Popovich, entitled, "**Taras Shevchenko as the Defender of Enslaved and Outraged Womanhood**". In this article the author, in analysing the work of the poet, points out that there is not another Ukrainian poet who so grieved over the fate of womanhood, who so truthfully, and with such depth of feeling, painted the life of woman under feudal servitude, of the deceived and abandoned maiden or the unwed mother, as did Taras Shevchenko, the poet of an enslaved people, in his immortal works.

In March, 1924, the journal "Workingwoman" made its appearance with Miroslav Irchan as editor. This first issue was dedicated to the 63rd anniversary of the death of the poet. Besides the editorial, the journal also carried excerpts from such poems as "Dolya Siroti" (The Orphan's Fate), "Dumka Materi" (A Mother's Thoughts) "Son" (The Dream) and an article "Woman's Fate in the Work of Taras Shevchenko." There was also an 1860 self-portrait of the poet and illustrations to both the poetry and articles.

In the article "**Woman's Fate in the Works of Shevchenko**" which was unsigned, but quite likely belonged to the pen of M. Irchan, it was stated:

"In going over Shevchenko's immortal 'Kobzar' one very often comes across poetic sketches of the bitter life of woman under the peasant roof, of broken happiness, of the suffering of motherhood and the misfortunes endured by young maidens under serfdom.

"Such deep love for the unfortunate, such vivid pictures of woman's martyrdom and agony, could only be painted by one of great heart and high belief in human dignity.

"To womanhood Shevchenko gave the full strength of his feelings and poetry. The living spirit of our greatest poet-martyr, poet-revolutionary, had the full right to ask of womanhood their warmest regard from generation to generation. Shevchenko himself, in writing of this, says:

**Remember, fair maidens, and you must remember!
It loved you so deeply, rose-radiant blossoms,
And sang of your fate in a voice that was tender."**

As can be seen, the Ukrainian progressive press in Canada gave much space to Shevchenkiana. Of course, in the 1920's and 1930's, articles on Shevchenko and his work, which were reprinted from the Soviet Ukrainian press, did not always, as was mentioned before, evaluate the poet's work correctly, for the authors interpreted it from the vulgarized sociological point of view. Only in later years, the 40's and 50's, did Shevchenkiana get the correct interpretation in articles and research carried out by Ukrainian literary scholars. Authoritative and deep studies were then offered by academicians Alexander Biletsky, Maxim Rilsky, Alexander Kornichuk, Pavlo Tychina, corresponding members of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Eugene Kiriliuk, Eugene Shabliovsky, literary critics Ilya Stebun, David Kopitsya and Vasil Ostriuk. It was these later works that, reprinted here from the Soviet Ukrainian press, helped Ukrainian Canadians to better understand Shevchenko's legacy, his place in Ukrainian national literature and world progressive literature.

1939—125th Anniversary

The 125th anniversary of Shevchenko's birth came due in 1939.

The people of Soviet Ukraine made early preparations to mark this important date. The Soviet of People's Commissars of the Ukraine and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine appointed a State Jubilee

Committee to plan the preparations in honour of the memory of the great people's poet. Throughout the whole year leading up to the anniversary and after, the Soviet press carried articles in connection with the preparations and plans outlined by the jubilee committee.

The anniversary as such was marked not only in Ukraine. The whole Soviet Union with all its republics participated, and translations of Shevchenko's works came out in the many languages of the people of the USSR.

And beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian Canadians, organized in worker-farmer organizations, also actively prepared to celebrate this great event in Canada.

"Narodna Hazeta" (People's Gazette) carried this information on the preparations:

"A meeting of the secretariat of the Central Executive Committees of the Ukrainian Workers-Farmers organizations in Winnipeg elected an Initiative Committee of five members who have been assigned the following tasks:

to prepare a plan for the formation of a broad people's national Shevchenko Jubilee Committee with representatives from all localities and all organizations as well as individual people prominent in public life;

to work out an outline of suitable educational material during the period of the preparatory campaign — about the life and work of Shevchenko — for mass distribution. To popularize through the widest possible media, not only Shevchenko's work, but also the struggle of the poet-revolutionary for the liberation of his people;

to examine available materials on Shevchenko in Canada, particularly music of various composers written to the words of Shevchenko and suggest a suitable program for the existing musical and choral groups of our organizations in Canada;

to make contact and establish ties with literary and cultural circles in Ukraine so as to enrich the available fund of materials on Shevchenko in Canada;

to prepare for the jubilee during this fall and winter season through the press, through the publishing of various brochures and pamphlets and in the everyday activities of our organizations”.

The Initiative Committee held its first meeting on Sunday, September 11, 1938. A broad discussion on the outlined tasks was held and decisions made to carry out the work along the proposed lines. Special letters to organizations and individuals as well as press releases to the papers "People's Gazette" and "Farmer's Life" were agreed on.

Following the example of the National Shevchenko Jubilee committee, committees were formed in other centres across the country. Choirs and orchestras belonging to the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association prepared to take part in concerts marking the Jubilee. The program for the concerts was based on musical and choral numbers written to Shevchenko's poetry, or music and songs based on Shevchenko's life or dedicated to his memory.

The Educational Committee of the National Executive Committee of the ULFTA prepared a paper on Shevchenko to be read at concerts, meetings and other public gatherings.

The Worker-Farmer Publishing Association issued a biographical sketch "Taras Hrihorovich Shevchenko" by Ilya Stebun, Soviet Ukrainian writer, in thousands of copies for mass distribution.

The National Shevchenko Jubilee Committee ordered from Ukraine the five-volume set of "Shevchenko's Collected Works" published by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, to be offered for sale during the Jubilee year.

Practically every number of "People's Gazette" and "Farmer's Life" carried materials which gave the latest news on preparations for the Jubilee year in Ukraine. In a much deeper and broader way than ever before these articles acquainted the Ukrainian Canadian community with the heritage of their great poet.

On March 8, 1939, in connection with the 125th Anniversary, the "People's Gazette" came out in a special Jubilee issue.

The first page carried the reproduction of a poster painted by Soviet Ukrainian artists, A. Riznechenko and S. Khotinok, with a portrait of the poet as its central theme. The same page offered a news story "Monument on the Grave of Shevchenko," which informed the readers that in June of 1939, in accordance with a resolution passed by the Soviet of People's Commissars of Ukraine, a monument was to be erected on the grave of Taras Shevchenko in Kanev, after the design submitted by Honoured Art Worker of Ukraine, M. Manizer and architect E. Levinson.

The second page carried the editorial "A Great Son of the Working People" and articles: "What They Would Do to T. H. Shevchenko", "The Jubilee Edition of the 'Kobzar'", "Taras Shevchenko In Popular Legend", "Founder of New Ukrainian Language" by P. Altman, "My Testament" in A. J. Hunter's English translation and Shevchenko's poem "Yurodivy" (The Simpleton).

The third page, under a banner headline "March 9, 1814 — 125th Anniversary of the Birth of Shevchenko — March 9, 1939", had the following articles: "Taras Shevchenko" (an excerpt from the book by M. Zoschenko), "A Great Artist of the Ukrainian People", "New Documents About Shevchenko", "Maxim Gorky on Shevchenko", "The Ukrainian Theatre and the Jubilee".

The fourth page carried these poems by Shevchenko: "Na Panshchini Pshenitsyu Zhala" (In Servitude She Har-

vested the Wheat), "Dumka" (A Thought) and "Malenkiy Marianni" (To Little Marianne).

The issue was illustrated with Shevchenko's portrait, reproductions of his paintings and a picture of the monument to Shevchenko to be erected in Kiev.

Matthew Shatulsky, editor of the "People's Gazette" in the article "What They Would Do to Shevchenko" wrote:

"Today we are honouring the 125th Anniversary of the birth of Shevchenko and today we say: every Ukrainian worker, farmer, professional, every sincere Ukrainian citizen should know, not only of Shevchenko, but Shevchenko as he was.

"To know Shevchenko — means to read his work — not the work that has been censored by all kinds of 'moralizers', not the expurgated versions offered by Ukrainian nationalists, falsified by nationalist literary 'historians', reviewers, critics and itinerant authorities on Shevchenko — but read his work as Shevchenko wrote it. And only after studying the work of Shevchenko can we discriminate regarding who wrote about Shevchenko and what he wrote.

"Let the 125th anniversary of our great Bard be the beginning, for us in Canada, of a study of the life and struggles of the Ukrainian people depicted in the poetry of Shevchenko, for in learning the history and struggles of the Ukrainian people for freedom — we can more readily understand the present and make better use of Shevchenko's work in the defence of the Ukrainian people, better organize the Ukrainian people to struggle with today's fascist aggressors and their Ukrainian hangers-on".

Every locality in Canada where Ukrainian cultural and educational groups existed held Jubilee concerts during March and April in honour of this occasion.

In Toronto an audience of more than 2,000 attended the concert held in Massey Hall — then the largest con-

cert hall in the city. Over 1,500 were present at the concert in the Walker Theatre in Winnipeg, 1,400 in Calgary. Ukrainian Labour Temples proved much too small in most localities to hold the enthusiastic and interested audiences.

In Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, Shevchenko concerts were given radio time, so that thousands of listeners across Canada had the opportunity to learn something of the great Ukrainian poet.

The national Shevchenko Jubilee Committee made attempts to get permission to erect a monument to Shevchenko in one of the public parks in Winnipeg to mark the 125th anniversary. The City Council of Winnipeg, however, would not give permission for such a project, explaining their refusal by stating that their policy was not to allow any national groups outside of those of British origin to erect monuments to outstanding statesmen in public parks.

Progressive Ukrainian Canadians, within the limits of their possibilities and capabilities, marked the 125th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko with honour and dignity. With this celebration they demonstrated their unswerving unity with their own people who, freeing themselves from both social and national oppression, joined with other free Soviet nations in a strong Union, paid homage to their great son who gave his life, all his creative energy and genius to the struggle of liberty for all who suffered injustice and oppression.

60 Years in the New Land

During the 70 years of their life in Canada, Ukrainians, through their physical labour and creative ideas made a great contribution to both the industrial and cultural growth of the country. They helped to transform the virgin soil of Western Canada into the fertile fields of the prairies; laid miles of railway track from ocean to ocean; erected many-storied buildings in Montreal,

Toronto and Winnipeg; dug coal, nickel, copper and gold in the mines of Bellevue, Sudbury, Timmins, Noranda; smelted steel in the plants of Hamilton and Nova Scotia; logged the forests of British Columbia.

And during this period Ukrainians in Canada were also discriminated against, humiliated by their Anglo-saxon chauvinistic capitalist exploiters: they were the last to be hired and the first to be fired; they were looked upon as a lower race of people, uncultured rowdies; they were called offensive names.

But the Ukrainian immigrants, drawing strength from the great literary works of Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Lesya Ukrainka, did not submit to these indignities — they fought for their rights, for their national dignity; united into worker-farmer organizations, built their own progressive press, developed their national culture; united with Canadian workers of other national origins into trade-union organizations and fought together with them for their daily needs and interests; joined the ranks of their own political party which fought for the kind of Canada where there would be no exploitation of man by man.

Seventy years have now passed since the first Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada.

And when in 1951 the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration in Canada approached, the progressive Ukrainian community resolved to mark this occasion with a great holiday celebration across the country which would sum up Ukrainian cultural and educational as well as community achievement in Canada.

The 4th National Convention of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, held January 25-29, 1950, in Toronto, resolved to mark the 60th Anniversary of Ukrainian life in Canada.

The convention decision read that:

“The 60th anniversary of the life and creative labour of Ukrainians in Canada be celebrated in July of 1951,

firstly, by a grand all-Canadian festival of Ukrainian and Canadian song, music and dance, and secondly, by erecting in Canada a monument to Taras Shevchenko, a representation of the full stature of the great poet of the Ukrainian people and all its branches everywhere on earth, including Canada".¹⁴⁾

Immediately after the convention the AUUC began to work toward the realization of the convention decision. A National 60th Anniversary Jubilee Committee of people prominent in the Ukrainian progressive movement in Canada was formed. The committee issued an appeal to Ukrainians in Canada which declared that the whole month of June would be devoted to festive meetings and celebrations that would culminate in a national festival of Ukrainian music, song and dance in Toronto on June 30 and the unveiling of a monument to Taras Hrihorovich Shevchenko in Palermo, July 1, 1951.

The National Jubilee Committee also called on all Ukrainian Canadians to support with their own contributions a campaign for funds for the erection of such a monument:

"By building a monument to Taras Shevchenko on Canadian soil", said the appeal, **"we are at the same time building a monument to ourselves. In this way we are paying tribute to the Great Bard of the Ukrainian people and at the same time paying tribute to ourselves — for Taras Shevchenko was flesh of the flesh and blood of the blood of the Ukrainian working people. His monument on Canadian soil will remind future generations of the life, struggles and creative labour of the Ukrainians in Canada".**

The appeal also explained that there was a proposal to build a Shevchenko Museum alongside of the monument, which would house an exhibit based on the life and work of the poet as well as exhibits that would reflect the 60

14) Resolutions of the 4th National Convention, AUUC, Toronto, 1950.



The Shevchenko monument at Palermo just after the mighty crane had lifted it up to its pedestal (a single 10½ ton piece of granite). The statue itself is in bronze and weighs seven tons. This year, 1961, marks the 10th anniversary of the unveiling of the statue at Shevchenko Park in Palermo.

years of life and creative endeavour of the Ukrainian pioneer settlers in Canada.

“Years will pass, new people will come — new generations of Ukrainian Canadians. They will remember our great initiative with thanks. It will enter the future as a bright star, as a glorious cultural legacy. Visiting the monument and going through the museum, future generations will learn of the life and work of Ukrainian Canadians as well as the names of those who donated and collected funds toward this great cultural achievement — the monument to Shevchenko, to the everlasting glory of the Ukrainian people, their struggle for a better life and growth of peaceful, creative endeavour”.¹⁵⁾

The Ukrainian community from one end of Canada to the other responded to the Appeal with generous donations toward this great project.

Workers and farmers contributed \$10.00, \$25.00, \$50.00, \$100.00 and some even as much as \$1,000.00

Following the decision of the 4th National Convention of the AUUC, the National Shevchenko Jubilee Committee turned to the Society for Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries in Kiev, Ukraine, with a request for help in the project of creating a fitting monument. Complying with the request, the Ukrainian Society for Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries notified the National Jubilee Committee that the proposed monument would be built of marble and granite by outstanding Ukrainian sculptors and that the full cost of its building would be carried by the society, a gift from the Soviet Ukrainian people to the Ukrainians in Canada as a symbol of maternal love for sons and daughters across the ocean who, after many decades away from home, had not forgotten their own people in the most critical period of their history.

During the month of June, in all localities where there was a Ukrainian community, Jubilee celebrations were

15) “Ukrainian Life”, March 1, 1951.

held, sponsored by the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians. All these celebrations were carried through with the greatest success. Some 100,000 people took part in them.

The June celebrations culminated in the great national festival concert in the Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto on June 30 with 1,500 participants from all parts of Canada in the choral, musical and dance program.

The music festival was just an introduction to the great events of the next day, July 1, at Palermo — the unveiling of the monument to Taras Shevchenko.

July 1, 1951, remains a bright page in the rich history of Ukrainians in Canada. Some 45,000 people were present on this great occasion of the unveiling of the first monument to the great Ukrainian poet on the American continent.

When William Pylypiw, son of the first Ukrainian immigrant to Canada, cut the ribbon that unveiled the bronze figure, the massed crowd saw the monument of the great poet, in all its dignity, outlined against the bright blue sky and reflecting the rays of the warm summer sun. On a high granite pedestal stood the great Kobzar. In a dynamic pose, as though alive, he gazed forward, his far-seeing eyes looking ahead into future centuries.

A moment of deep silence fell on the crowd before a spontaneous burst of applause greeted Taras Hrihorovich Shevchenko on Canadian soil. The applause intermingled with the stirring words of Shevchenko's "Bequest":

Oh bury me and rise ye up
And smash your heavy chains
And water well with evil blood
The freedom of Ukraine.
And in the great new family,
The kinship of the free,
With kindly and a gentle word
Remember also me.¹⁶⁾

16) Translation by John Weir.



Close to 1,500 singers, musicians and dancers took part in the grand festival concert at the Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, June 30, 1951. The occasion was the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. On July 1 the monument to Shevchenko was unveiled in Palermo, Ontario.

Thousands of eyes then turned to the words on the granite pedestal. With great emotion the following words were read:

T. H. SHEVCHENKO

1814 — 1861

From the Soviet Ukrainian people
to the Ukrainian Canadians
Kiev, 1950

There was not an eye in that vast gathering that was not filled with tears of rejoicing. Could any one have thought that such a happy moment — the unveiling of a monument to Taras Shevchenko, would come about in such a far-away land as Canada? Could anyone have thought 60 years ago that the Ukrainian people, freeing themselves from social and national oppression, building their own independent state, would send to far-off Canada such a precious, unforgettable gift?

Chairman of the event, William Teresio, read the telegrams of greetings from the Slav Committee of the USSR in Moscow, the Ukrainian Society for Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries in Kiev, the Slav Committee in Czechoslovakia, the sculptors who created the beautiful monument, Makar Vronsky and Oleksa Oliynik, from various localities across Canada and the United States.

Greeting those present, Peter Prokop, secretary of the AUUC, said that the monument of Taras Shevchenko on Canadian soil would stand "as a symbol of the unity and brotherhood of Ukrainian Canadians with Canadians of all national origins, as a symbol of humanism and progress, as a symbol of the finest aspirations of humanity — the desire for peace and cooperation between all the peoples of the earth, and particularly between the Ukrainian and Canadian peoples".

Representatives of various organizations came up to speak one after another. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the monument from the Russian, Polish, Czechoslovak,

Yugoslav and Bulgarian-Macedonian organizations. Placing their wreaths they then greeted the occasion with warmth and emotion. These friendly, brotherly acts recalled the prophetic words of Shevchenko:

Let all the Slavs good brothers be
And sons of the Sun of truth!

Representing the United States League of American Ukrainians came the poet Mikola Tarnovsky and Frank Ilchuk. Mikola Tarnovsky addressed the audience with an eloquent speech in which he stated that **"the monument would be revered and loved by thousands of Ukrainians, not only in Canada, but in the United States, because there can be no borders that could prevent Ukrainian people anywhere from loving their brilliant poet, their fighter-poet."** He ended his greeting with a reading of his poem "To the Glory of Our Kobzar", which he dedicated to the occasion.

Wasył Swystun, chairman of the Society for Cultural Relations between Canada and Ukraine, finished his moving address with these words:

"Glory to those Ukrainians who took upon themselves the honourable task of placing this splendid monument to Taras Shevchenko on Canadian soil!

"Let this monument become a symbol of unity for all Ukrainians in Canada!

"Let this monument unite us forever with the great Ukrainian people!"

Matthew Shatulsky, in the name of the National Jubilee Committee, read a message of thanks to the Soviet Ukrainian people for their generous gift of the monument. The 45,000 people present at this great assembly greeted the message with cheers and applause.

On the first anniversary of the unveiling of the monument, the Shevchenko Museum was officially opened at a gathering on July 1, 1952, with some 10,000 people present. The museum displayed exhibits that reflected the life

and work of the poet as well as the life and work of Ukrainians in Canada.

The Ukrainian State Shevchenko Museum of the Academy of Sciences in Kiev sent 500 valuable exhibits relating to different periods of the poet's life and his work to the Canadian museum. Katerina Doroshenko, director of the Shevchenko Museum in Kiev, had this to say of the exhibit:

"The Kiev Shevchenko Museum sent the Canadian Museum 38 boxes of exhibits which depict very broadly the creative work of Taras Shevchenko and his revolutionary activity.

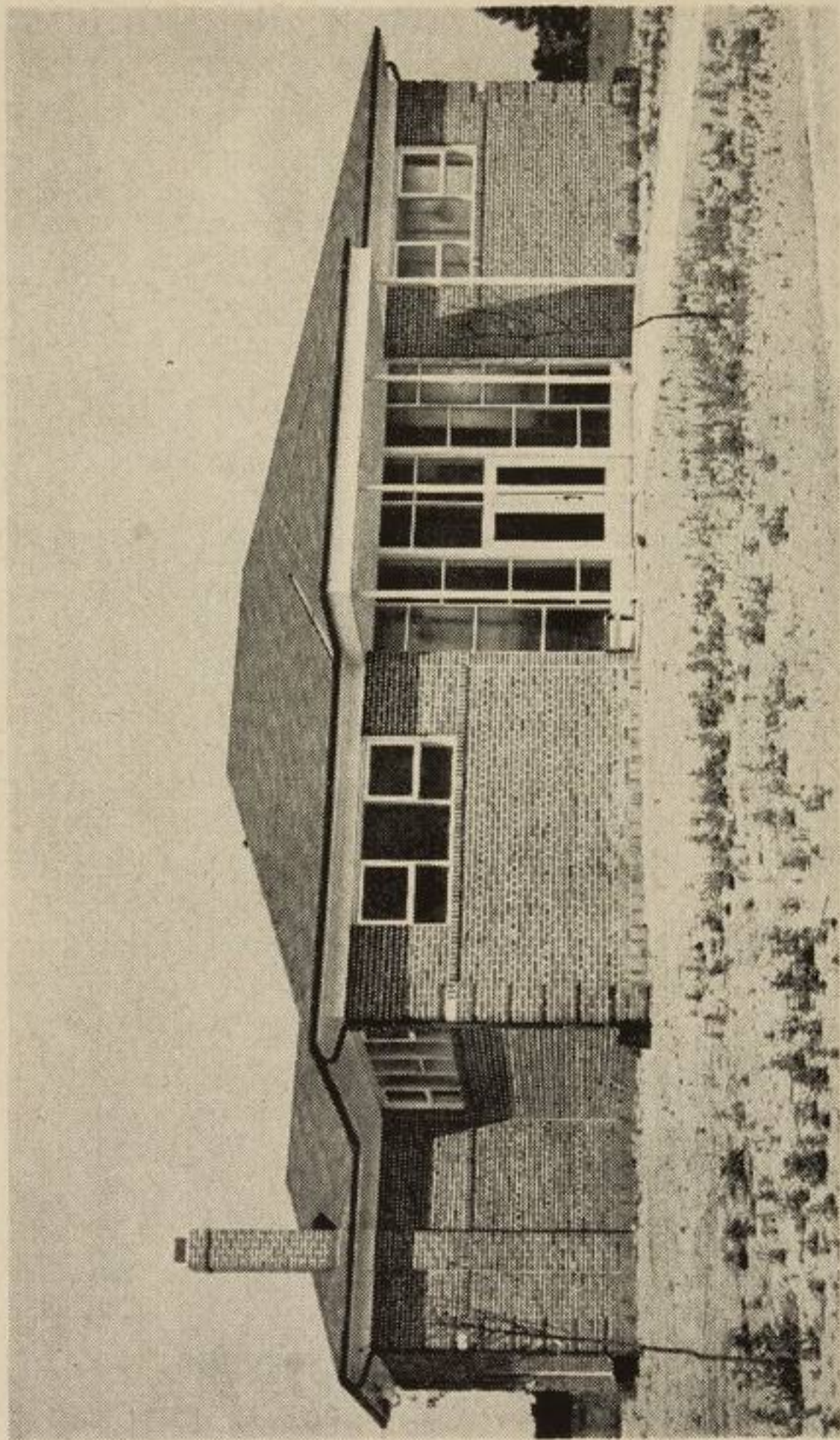
"Included are his literary works, reproductions of his paintings in both oils and water colours by contemporary Ukrainian artists as well as reproductions of photos and autographs, photo copies of archive documents, paintings, sculpture and musical compositions based on the theme of Shevchenko. Many of the exhibits and documents tell of the deep regard of the peoples of the Soviet Union for Shevchenko."¹⁷⁾

The museum also displays some unique exhibits presented by individuals.

The author of these lines gave (from his personal library) a five-volume collection of Shevchenko's works published by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in 1939 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the poet's birth. This particular collection has a very interesting history. In 1940, when the Canadian government interned a number of Ukrainian anti-fascists behind barbed wire, the set was sent to the concentration camp at Kananaskis. Having looked over the books carefully, the censor allowed them into the camp, stamping each volume "censored".

Isolated from the world in the Rocky mountains, living under difficult conditions, Ukrainian anti-fascists avid-

17) K. P. Doroshenko, "Shevchenko Museum in Canada," from "Questions Pertaining to Shevchenko," Vol. 1, Kiev, 1958.



The Shevchenko Museum in Palermo as it looked on the official opening date, July 1, 1952. The museum has three sections with exhibits relating to certain periods of the poet's life and work. The fourth is devoted to depicting the life and work of Ukrainians in Canada.

ly read Shevchenko's words, written while he was in exile, "I'm punished and I suffer, but I don't repent." They strengthened their resolve, lifted their morale, infused them with hope for the future.

John Navis, one of the founders of the Ukrainian progressive organizations in Canada, presented the museum with the book "**Chihirinsky Kobzar**", published in St. Petersburg in 1867.

Peter Prokop, secretary of the national executive committee of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, presented his book "**In Memory of T. H. Shevchenko**", which was published by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in 1939. This book had been presented to him by the eminent literary scholar, Academician A. Biletsky. During the German fascist invasion of Ukraine Alexander Biletsky's apartment in Kharkov was confiscated by the German troops and many valuable books in his library were destroyed. The above-mentioned book was left in a terrible condition, many of the articles having been cut out. Presenting the book to Peter Prokop, A. Biletsky wrote the following on the fly-leaf:

This book was part of the personal library of A. I. Biletsky in Kharkov during the fascist occupation, when it was 'trimmed' and censored for delivery to Germany (by order of Rosenberg's staff). They didn't manage to do this and the book was left behind as a "war invalid".

Sept. 8, 1946.

A. BILETSKY.

As an exhibit of the Shevchenko Museum in Canada, the book "In Memory of T. H. Shevchenko" now reminds visitors of how the German fascists mocked the memory of Taras Shevchenko. It must also be pointed out that Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists helped the German fascist invaders in their black deeds, for they acted as the "informers", pointing out and advising the enemy as to where and what to lay their dirty hands on.

Nick Hrynychyshyn, correspondent for the Ukrainian

progressive paper, "Ukrainian Word", visited Shevchenko's grave in Kanev during his stay in Ukraine in 1952. While there, he filled a little box with earth from the poet's grave and brought it back to Canada for the museum in Palermo. This priceless bit of earth reminds visitors of the native soil of their homeland soaked with the blood of Ukrainian people in their struggle for liberation; earth that Shevchenko watered with his bitter tears, bewailing the misfortunes of his persecuted and oppressed countrymen; earth which has enfolded the imperishable body of the great revolutionary-democrat who called on his people to sprinkle it with the blood of their enemies.

Three young willow trees are growing between the monument and museum in Palermo. The shoots were brought to Canada from the poet's grave in Kanev by Matthew Shatulsky. They are a symbol of the organic unity of our Canadian Palermo with Ukraine's Kanev.

An album of great historic worth forms part of the Canadian section of the exhibit. During the civil war in Spain in 1937-38, Canadian volunteers joined the Loyalist forces against the fascist Franco forces of reaction. They formed the T. H. Shevchenko company. Returning to Canada they brought with them an album containing drawings of the Loyalist army, signed by all the members of the company. Many of those who signed the album failed to return from the field of battle where they fought bravely under the banner of their militant poet.

Both the monument and the museum form a unit with the Shevchenko Park. The park was built and landscaped through the contributions and physical labour of thousands of Ukrainian Canadians. Full-grown trees, bushes, roses and shrubbery were purchased, planted and lovingly tended from the first day of its founding to the present day. Every weekend from early spring into late fall volunteer working brigades plant and tend the flowers, shrubs and grass. During the ten years of its existence the park has grown more beautiful with each succeeding year.



Hrihory P. Butenko, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Ukraine and Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR signs the visitor's book in the Shevchenko Museum. Beside him is Zinaida A. Lebedeva, Deputy of the Supreme Soviet. They were members of a Soviet Parliamentary group that visited Canada in 1959.

The path leading to both the museum and the monument has been beaten down by thousands of feet. Winter and summer, weekends and during the week, people from all parts of Canada, representing many nationalities — Ukrainian, Russian, Byelorussian, Polish, Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, Yugoslav, English, French — have visited Canada's Kanev to become acquainted with Ukraine's great poet, Taras Shevchenko.

Visitors from many other countries as well — the United States, Latin America, England, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union — have beaten a path to its doors and paid their respects to the bronze figure dominating the park. Many of them have laid flowers and wreaths at the foot of the monument.

After the excursion through the museum and signing the guest book, visitors leave contributions for the upkeep of this historic and cultural institution. Many learn here of the life and work of the great Ukrainian poet and fighter for the first time.

To further the knowledge and understanding of people visiting the museum, the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians issued a booklet "**A Lecture-Excursion**" in 1954, which gives a detailed account of the exhibits housed in the museum.

In order to acquaint people who do not know the Ukrainian language with Taras Shevchenko, the 60th Anniversary Jubilee Committee in charge of the erection of the monument and museum published a book, "**Bard of Ukraine**", written by John Weir, in which the author gives the biography of the poet as well as translations of several of his poems into English. This little book was beautifully bound and illustrated with reproductions of the poet's paintings and scenes from his life.

So, through the combined efforts of the Soviet Ukrainian people and the progressive Ukrainian Canadian community, a great cultural institution was built on Canadian soil — the Shevchenko monument, museum and park

were created, further honouring the memory of Ukraine's immortal bard.

Perhaps the finest explanation of the importance of this Ukrainian cultural institution in Palermo was expressed in the resolution **"Our Thanks to the Ukrainian People"** adopted by the 6th national convention of the AUUC in Toronto, Feb. 18-21, 1954.

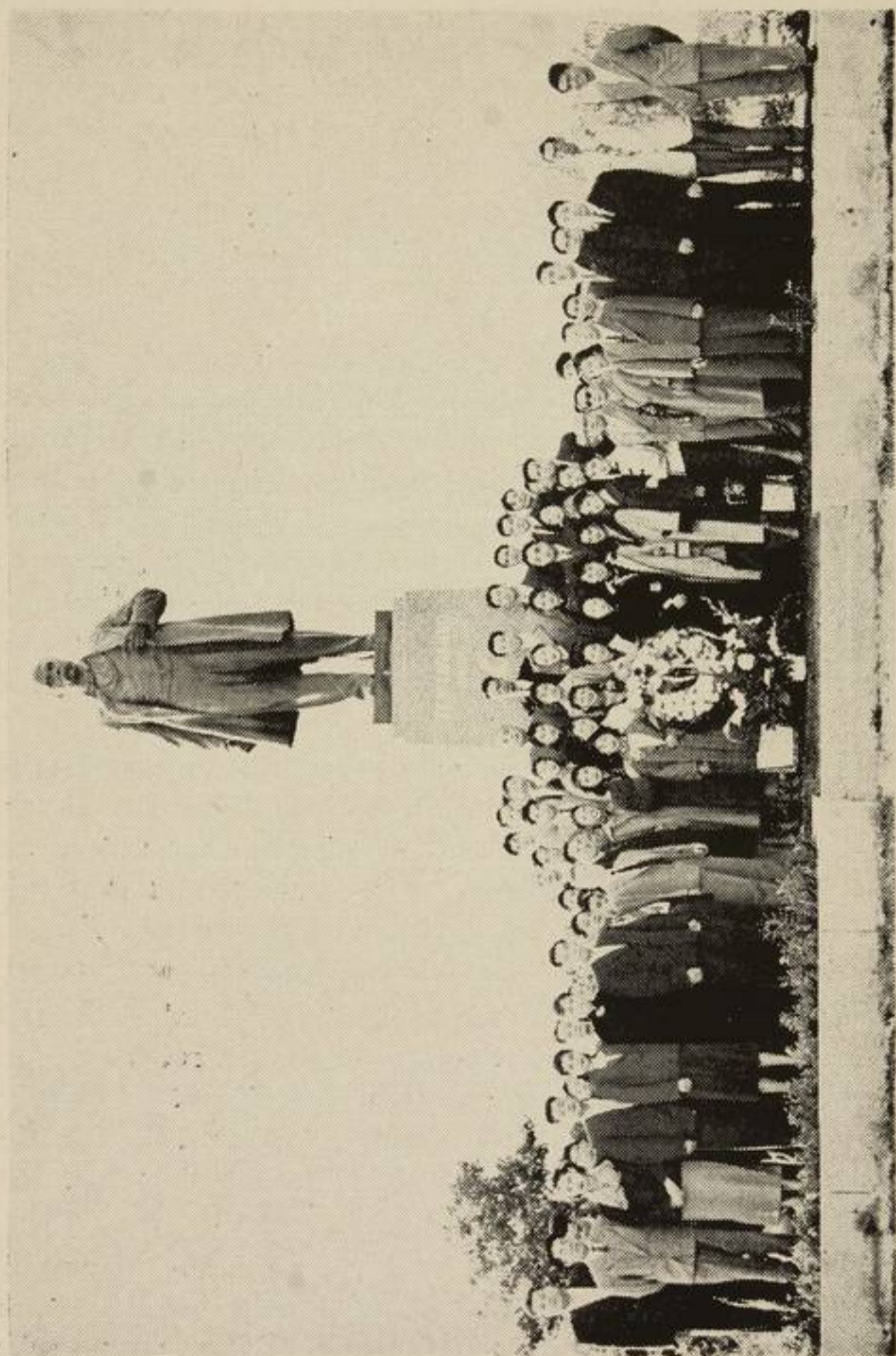
This resolution of thanks, sent to the Ukrainian Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, says in part:

"This Museum, which was built and officially opened in the summer of 1952, after our last convention, has been visited by many thousands of Canadians, not only Ukrainians, but people of other nationalities. Through the museum our sons and daughters who were born in Canada and Canadians generally will get to know the genius of Taras Shevchenko, the rich cultural heritage of the Ukrainian people. This will help to establish closer cultural relations and friendly ties between the Canadian people and yourselves, the people of Ukraine.

"Standing alongside the monument, this museum has become a sacred place, the cradle of Ukrainian culture on Canadian soil, a symbol of the friendship that unites us. We, the Ukrainians in Canada, will never forget that this great cultural treasure, this symbol of peace and friendship was realized thanks to you, our brothers and sisters.

"From the depths of our hearts we thank you, our friends of the Ukrainian Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the staff of the Kiev Shevchenko Museum, all the artists and workers responsible for the preparation of the priceless treasures received by us, and all the Soviet Ukrainian people.

"We pledge you that we will continue our efforts to strengthen the ties of friendship and brotherhood between our peoples, to make our contribution to the struggle for peace on earth."



The Chinese Peking Opera Ensemble visits the monument at Palermo, Ontario.

The Struggle for Shevchenko

The struggle for Shevchenko between the organized progressive Ukrainian community and the Ukrainian nationalists started from the first days of Ukrainian Canadian public and social activity. As was mentioned earlier, the T. H. Shevchenko Association, formed in Winnipeg in 1906, became a centre of struggle between those of its members who supported the position of international working class unity and those who saw only the narrow nationalist point of view.

The battle for Shevchenko was intensified after the appearance of the nationalist press — the Greek Orthodox "Ukrainsky Holos" (Ukrainian Voice) and the Catholic "Kanadsky Rusyn" (Canadian Rusyn). The nationalists supporting the "Ukrainian Voice" proclaimed Shevchenko a "national prophet" and every year bowed their heads before their image of "Father Taras". They ignored his revolutionary activities and works, selecting only such excerpts or phrases from his poetry that would seem to prove their contention that the poet was a "nationalist" and an enemy of the Polish and Russian peoples.

In the first years of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the Catholic clergy ignored the Shevchenko anniversaries. Only later, when they saw that the popularity of the poet was growing among Ukrainian Canadians and that ever greater numbers of people were reading his works, did they "recognize" Shevchenko. The Catholic priests turned the Shevchenko anniversaries into a farce in which they used his name and work to further their own ends.

Therefore, the Ukrainian workers and farmers organized into the Social-Democratic Party had to defend Shevchenko's honour and integrity against the profanation of both the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic groups.

The struggle for Shevchenko reached exceptional proportions in 1914 in connection with the 100th anniversary

of his birth. Nationalists of all shades agreed to mark this anniversary together. A joint conference of all nationalist groups in Winnipeg on Jan. 17, 1914 elected a committee which was to "prepare and give leadership to the general celebrations, announce the program and call on all Ukrainians to unite in marking this all-Ukrainian people's jubilee."¹⁸⁾

Ukrainian workers in the Social-Democratic Party refused to take part in the "joint celebrations" with the nationalist groups. "Robochy Narod", organ of the Federation of Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, in its editorial in the issue of Feb. 5, 1914, entitled "Our Stand", exposed the falseness of the nationalists and clergy who, in their appeal to Ukrainian Canadians for a joint celebration called Shevchenko "all-Ukrainian", saying that he "belonged to all of us", that "we are all one family". The editorial stated that these were all empty phrases, that Shevchenko belongs to the people, but not to their exploiters and the clergy. It pointed out, however, that the time would come when the whole Ukrainian nation would honour the great Kobzar **"but that then there would not be two classes — there would be no more gentry, no more overseers, no bloodhounds or tsars, but all would be equal citizens, free from exploitation and oppression."**

Although the nationalist groups elected a joint Jubilee committee they didn't mark the anniversary together as was originally planned, for at their very first meeting they broke up into two rival factions.

A meeting of the nationalist organizations, Feb. 8, 1914, proposed a general plan for the celebrations. This plan, however, was not accepted by the "joint committee". One group insisted that a Mass for Shevchenko's soul be held in the Catholic church. The editor of the Ukrainian Protestant paper "Ranok" (Morning), Mikhailo Hlova,

18) "Ukrainian People's Home Commemorative Book", Winnipeg, 1949.

protested against this proposal. He stated that it was not necessary to "hold a Mass for Shevchenko because he was a radical and a reformer, like Ivan Hus was for the Czechs."

The editor of the Catholic "Kanadsky Rusyn", Alexander Sushko, then demanded that M. Hlova be expelled from the committee for these words because he considered it "a dishonour to sit on the same committee with such people." When the committee refused to consider his request, he and other Catholic representatives left the meeting. After this the friction between the various nationalist factions grew daily, often attaining a very sharp character, bordering on street brawls.

The Catholics held their commemorative meeting on March 11, calling it a "Shevchenko Holiday". The meeting, however, said very little about the poet, but a great deal about their loyalty to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the British king and the representative of the Vatican — the Metropolitan Andrew, Count Sheptitsky. Reporting on the meeting the Greek Catholic press "Kanadsky Rusyn" wrote: "Hosannas followed hosannas in quick succession with all present singing with obvious emotion. They included their Majesties King George V and Emperor Franz-Joseph, the Metropolitan Andrew, Count Sheptitsky . . ."

Such was the treatment accorded Shevchenko by the Uniate clergy at the supposed celebration of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

On Sunday, June 28, the Greek Catholics paraded the streets of Winnipeg in supposed consummation of the "Shevchenko Jubilee". As the procession passed, supporters of other nationalist groups stood on the sidewalks shouting abuse at the parading clergy. The procession was to end in a mass rally, but the opponents of Greek Catholicism attacked the speakers on the platform with rotten eggs and broke up the meeting.

Nationalists from the so-called "Populist" group gave a Shevchenko concert on May 16, and on May 17, a demonstration through the streets of the city. Their placards and

banners endeavoured to portray Shevchenko as a narrow national poet and an enemy of everything Russian.

So that in Winnipeg there were three separate commemorative meetings marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Shevchenko — that of the progressive Ukrainian community organized in the Federation of Ukrainian Social-Democrats, and the Greek-Catholic and the so-called "Populist" groups. Only the first carried a truly people's character. Among all the Ukrainian newspapers in Canada only "Robochy Narod" gave the correct and truthful interpretation of the works of the poet and defined his place in the struggle of the Ukrainian people for social and national freedom.

After the Great October Revolution and the establishment of socialist rule in Ukraine, the struggle for Shevchenko in Canada grew even sharper. Ukrainian workers and farmers belonging to the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association marked the Shevchenko anniversaries annually with concerts, readings and discussion meetings. The libraries of the Ukrainian Labour Temples added new editions to their collections of Shevchenkiana, as well as new works on Shevchenko written by outstanding authorities on the poet in Ukraine. The nationalists, in their press, continued to present Shevchenko as a nationalist and the poet's words of condemnation of Russian tsarism they sought to apply against the new Soviet government. They resorted to falsification and fabrication of Shevchenko's works. They deceived Ukrainian Canadians, claiming that "the Bolsheviks" had censored the "Kobzar". But the progressive press retaliated by consistently exposing these lies, showing that in fact it was they and not the Bolsheviks who were falsifying and censoring Shevchenko's works.

Their hatred and malice towards Soviet Ukraine and the worker-farmer organizations in Canada was clearly shown in 1927 when the film "Taras Shevchenko", made in Ukraine, was being shown in Canada. Regardless of the

fact that the film had passed movie censorship Ukrainian nationalists informed the state police that the film "Taras Shevchenko" was propagating dangerous revolutionary ideas and should be banned from Canadian screens. In Winnipeg, a few minutes before the film was to be shown in the Ukrainian Labour Temple it was suppressed by the police who arrived with English translations of the text as it was prepared by the nationalists. The film was taken to the censorship board again and the latter, finding no verification of the allegations made by the nationalists, again released the film for showing which, naturally, did not please the nationalist "informers". The film proved to be very popular and was seen and enjoyed by tens of thousands of Ukrainian Canadians across Canada.

The nationalists stooped even lower in 1951 when the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians prepared to honour the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada by erecting a monument to Taras Shevchenko in Palermo. The monument was being sent as a gift from the people of Ukraine and in order to prevent it from reaching its destination the nationalists sent a delegation to the Canadian government asking that the erection of the monument in Canada be prohibited and that it be sent back to . . . Moscow. Their efforts were not successful and on July 1, 1951, in the presence of 45,000 people from all parts of Canada, the monument to Taras Shevchenko was unveiled at Palermo, a symbol of unity between Ukrainian Canadians and their brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists beyond the ocean went to great efforts to present Taras Shevchenko to Canadians and Americans in a false image. In the 1930's Dmiro Doroshenko—a former "minister" in the "government" of the tsarist general Paul Skoropadsky, who through the kindness and will of German imperialists announced himself as "Hetman of all Ukraine" in 1918, travelled widely through Canada and the U.S. During his tour he gave lec-

tures in which he misinterpreted the revolutionary work of Shevchenko, circulating his own offensive book about the poet which had been printed in the English language.

Here is just one example to what depths of distortion this nationalist "authority" on Shevchenko stooped to:

"In my opinion," wrote D. Doroshenko, "sufficient emphasis was not laid upon the fact that Shevchenko, during his visits to Ukraine, much frequented the society of Ukrainian nobles. . . In fact, his closest friends were among the members of the Ukrainian aristocracy. Their letters, their anxiety about him, and the steps they took on his behalf in order to alleviate his misfortune, prove their solicitude. They appreciated him especially as a national poet, and their influence on him was certainly important.

"Can we, as is only too often repeated by communists today, consider Shevchenko as an ideologist of the social revolution? Evidently not. Those who assert it quote certain passages especially from the "Testament" where the poet appeals to his countrymen 'to break the chains' . . . They do not wish to understand that Shevchenko was far from desiring a bloody revolution, but that he foresaw it menacing the dominating classes unless they made the decision to set the serfs free. He appealed to the whole Ukrainian nation, nobles and peasants, entreating the nobles to renounce their privileges and trying to bring about a good understanding between the classes."¹⁹⁾

Such is the false interpretation of Shevchenko and his work given to Canadian and American readers by Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists. They turn him from a revolutionary democrat into a servant of the gentry who called on "the whole Ukrainian nation", both aristocrat and serf, to conciliation — to class compromise.

In recent years, in particular, the nationalists have done much harm with their false interpretation of the poet.

19) D. Doroshenko, "Taras Shevchenko", New York, 1936, p. 50-51.

After the second world war, as we are well aware, many nationalist "literary authorities" who had lived in Western Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Germany, landed here across the ocean. Among them Leonid Biletsky. They brought with them whole suitcases of materials which they didn't succeed in getting published with Hitler's marks, because the war ended unfortunately for their financial supporters — the German fascists. Much of this "literary baggage" was brought over by Leonid Biletsky. And that which he wasn't able to publish for German marks, he succeeded in publishing for dollars. In 1952-54 the so-called "Free Ukrainian Academy of Sciences" published four volumes of his "Kobzar". These are heavy tomes, one-third of which are given over to Shevchenko's poetry and the other two-thirds to articles, commentary and explanations by Biletsky. There is no doubt that these are the most vicious volumes ever published on Shevchenko's work.

L. Biletsky, in his articles, also repeats the falsehoods of D. Doroshenko — that Shevchenko was the "dearest guest" in the homes of the biggest Ukrainian magnates and that "they, out of respect for the 'Ukrainian bard', held banquets in his honour."²⁰⁾

Portraying Shevchenko as a friend of the Ukrainian magnates, L. Biletsky practically crawls out of his skin to present the poet literally on every page of his "work" as an enemy and hater of all that's Russian. He writes that the poet reacted with hatred "toward everything that was connected with this nation — to Russian writers, critics and intellectuals."²¹⁾

Having slandered the poet, L. Biletsky then wants to "prove" that the representatives of the Russian intelligentsia also disliked the poet. This was necessary to "show" that there was no friendship between Shevchenko

20) "Kobzar", Vol. 1, 1952, Winnipeg, p. 37.

21) "Kobzar", Vol. II, 1952, p. 23.

and the Russian intellectuals, but to the contrary, there was mutual dislike. This nationalist "scholar" deliberately falsifies the facts, although he knows that between Shevchenko, the revolutionary-democrat, and the Russian revolutionary-democrats there were very close creative as well as personal ties.

But L. Biletsky is not satisfied with his lie that Shevchenko hated the Russian people and culture. He casts aspersions on Shevchenko's Russian work as well. He maintains that Shevchenko wrote "stories in Russian . . . to make money" and that they cannot be called national works.²²⁾

And what is more, in L. Biletsky's opinion, neither the stories, nor letters, nor the "Diary", written in Russian, determine Shevchenko's genius.²³⁾

In the fourth volume of his "Kobzar" L. Biletsky makes an attempt to hide his hatred of Shevchenko's Russian work. He puts forward the idea that Shevchenko stooped to "national treason" and that he "found himself at the crossroads", when he wrote in Russian.²⁴⁾

Examining Shevchenko's world outlook, L. Biletsky has this to say:

"Shevchenko's world outlook is completely Christian in character within the concept of Ukrainian national and historic Greek Orthodoxy".²⁵⁾

But so that the reader wouldn't think that Taras Shevchenko believed in a "Russian God", L. Biletsky devised for him a "Ukrainian national God". So he writes:

"The poet distinguished the true Ukrainian God from Moscow's Byzantium Sabaoth" and advised against praying to him, for he would deceive".

22) "Kobzar", Vol. III, 1953, p. 339.

23) "Kobzar", Vol. III, 1953, p. 341.

24) "Kobzar", Vol. IV, 1954, p. 338.

25) "Kobzar", Vol. IV, 1954, p. 357.

And further:

“ . . . Shevchenko sought for his own truly national (!) God. . . ”²⁶⁾

This is the extent of the insolence reached by our nationalist “scholar”. He strives to convince the reader that the poet hated “Moscow’s God”, but was enthusiastic about a “national Ukrainian God”. But Shevchenko, being a free-thinking individual, exposed the reactionary character of all religions, showed up all Gods and idols in all their nakedness, including even a “national God”. Didn’t he call on his countrymen not to pray and not to bow to anyone on earth, deeply believing in the day when the scarlet and purple robes would be torn into foot-cloths, when pipes would be lit from the thuribles and the aspergillus would be used to sweep out the new house?

L. Biletsky did more than his share toward distorting and misrepresenting the revolutionary content of Shevchenko’s work, to discredit his great stature, to ridicule his bright memory.

Other nationalist “Shevchenko experts” have also put their dirty hands on Shevchenko’s precious heritage. Yaroslav Rudnitsky went to considerable lengths to distort the revolutionary content of the poet’s work in his booklet “The Greatest Task Before Shevchenko Experts” which came out under the auspices of the notorious “UVAN” (“Free” Ukrainian Academy of Sciences) in Winnipeg, in 1958. He suggests that Shevchenko needs to be “gilded” and advises that “a thick (!) book be written and published about the ideology behind Shevchenko’s works”. This “thick book” must be, in his opinion, a “critical examination of all previous interpretations of the national and social content in Shevchenko”.²⁷⁾

Thus we can expect that the new attack on the work of Shevchenko will follow this pattern — the nationalist

26) “Kobzar”, Vol. IV, 1954, p. 384.

27) Yaroslav Rudnitsky, “The Greatest Tasks Before Shevchenko Experts”, p. 32.

“experts” will dress it up in their own method, will eliminate from it all its revolutionary fervour, will strive to put it into the service of those American interests who will not stint of their dollars to generously reward their servants for their falsification and distortion of the Kobzar.

As a matter of fact, nationalist “Shevchenko experts” are already making attempts to use the work of the poet in the service of American warmongers.

S. V. wrote an article in the Winnipeg nationalist paper “Ukrainian Voice” entitled **“Washington’s Vision of Shevchenko is Endeavouring to Promote the Idea That Shevchenko Admired American Democracy”**. S. V. wants to make of Shevchenko an apologist for “the American way of life”. Out of a revolutionary-democrat whose whole life had been dedicated to the fight against despotism, who branded all oppressors — the Ukrainian nationalists are trying to make a propagator of “American ideals” — the ideals of ruthless oppression of some 19,000,000 Negroes, the ideals of the lynch mob, the ideals of capitalist profit, the ideals of gangsterism. Futile endeavours! Taras Shevchenko was a people’s poet who hated all slavery — whether it be in feudal Russia or capitalist America. Superfluous are the efforts of the nationalist campaigners to whitewash the scandalous way of life in the land of their financial backers — the American bosses — with the words of Shevchenko. The word of the poet was, is, and always will be, a call to struggle against all oppressors, including among them American imperialists who have taken upon themselves the role of a world gendarme and an enemy of all that’s progressive and democratic.

Every nationalist group in Canada, however small, tries to claim Shevchenko as its own. There is a constant struggle between them around this question. It takes on sharper forms during the Shevchenko days. At their concerts or meetings every nationalist group speaker proclaims Shevchenko “their own” — a Petlurist, a Hetmanist, a Melnikivets, a Banderist, or what have you. In their

press and journals every nationalist group interprets Shevchenko's works in its own way — in conformity with their politics of the moment. Greek Catholic papers and journals portray him as an ideologist of class conciliation among Ukrainians, saying that he was a poet of both the poor and the rich, an "all-Ukrainian bard". For example, the Jesuit paper "Nasha Meta" (Our Aim) in Toronto, wrote that "the image of the Kobzar, the author of the Ukrainian nation (?) is cherished and loved equally beneath the low roof of the peasant and in the wealthy home, in the dark alleys of the worker's quarter and in the modern bourgeois suburb . . ." Supporting this theory, the Greek Catholic journal "Svitlo" (Light) wrote that Shevchenko called on all Ukrainians to "be agreeable with each other and let neither borders, nor parties, nor social status, nor governments, nor wealth separate us". And this is written about a poet whose whole life was dedicated to the freeing of the oppressed.

At the moment Ukrainian nationalists in Canada are preparing to erect a monument to Shevchenko in Winnipeg in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of his death.

The erection of such a monument in Winnipeg could be a noble and honourable event.

But the Ukrainian nationalists are not motivated only by the desire to pay tribute to the great Kobzar. They have something else in mind. They want, with the help of his name, which enjoys great popularity and respect among Ukrainian Canadians, to entice dollars out of honest and generous people. They announced a collection of \$1,000,000 out of which they propose to spend \$150,000 on the monument and \$850,000 on their cold war activities against Ukraine. Therefore it is completely understandable why Ukrainian Canadians are ignoring the appeals of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee and refuse to part with their hard-earned dollars to make up this "million-dollar fund".

Ukrainian nationalists in the United States, for the

same reasons, are taking measures to erect a monument to the Bard in Washington.

Ukrainian nationalists who live in Munich, West Germany, however, have let the cat out of the bag. They frankly admitted that the erection of a monument to honour Shevchenko's memory is not of primary importance to Ukrainian nationalists across the ocean, but that with the help of his name they hope to carry on their vicious propaganda against Soviet Ukraine. However, in their opinion, the Ukrainian nationalists in both Canada and the United States are making a mistake, because at this time they will not be able to take advantage of the poet to gain their own ends, for the Soviet state honours Shevchenko, publishes mass editions of his works, names universities, parks, streets, factories, collective farms after him, builds monuments to his memory, even presenting one to the Ukrainians in Canada. Therefore, they advise the Ukrainian Congress Committee in the United States and the Ukrainian Canadian Committee in Canada to give up all their plans for a monument to Shevchenko and build one to Hetman Ivan Mazepa instead.

The journal "Ukrainsky Samostynik" (The Independent Ukrainian) which is published in Munich, in its June, 1959 issue, carried "An open letter to the UCC of America and the UCC of Canada" giving them the following advice:

According to the recent announcement in the press, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America and the Ukrainian Canadian Committee have taken steps to erect monuments to the Ukrainian Kobzar, T. H. Shevchenko, on both Canadian and U.S. soil.

"While greeting the initiative of both committees for their success in consolidating their Ukrainianism in the two above countries, we feel it our duty to issue a warning of an ideological-political character and give our own proposals.

"It is our conviction that the efforts of both the UCCA and the UCC should be directed toward **the building of a**

monument in Washington and Winnipeg not to T. H. Shevchenko but to Hetman I. Mazepa”.

It is quite clear, from the above, what the Ukrainian nationalists are after — not to honour the memory of the revolutionary-democrat Taras Shevchenko, but that of a traitor of the Ukrainian people — Hetman Mazepa. But it is altogether logical for them to propose it, because for traitors the traitor Mazepa would have a greater appeal than Shevchenko — the fighter for people’s freedom.

A Kindly and a Gentle Word

As far back as 1907, when the paper “Chervony Prapor” (Red Banner) appeared in Winnipeg, its pages started to carry poems written by the people’s poet Dmytro Rarahovsky. From that time on all Ukrainian worker-farmer newspapers and journals carried the work of other worker-farmer poets, among them Mikhailo Harasimchuk, Jacob Manchurak, Andrew Ponur, Mary Vakaliuk, Dmytro Zakharuk, Ivan Mikitin, Ivan Petruk, Mikhailo Sribniak, Vasil Hutsuliak. All of them — toilers — workers and farmers. Many among them were self-taught, because it was only after they arrived in Canada that they learned to read and write in their own language — thanks to the Ukrainian progressive organizations and their press. All of them were brought up on the works of Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko. Reading their poetry, the influence and spirit of the great “Kobzar” and the great “Kamenyar” are felt. Often these worker-farmer poets quite literally lifted words from these great poets and incorporated them into their own poetry, having learned them so well that they had become an integral part of their own thinking.

Many of the poems show the definite influence of Taras Shevchenko. Particularly is this obvious in these verses written by Ivan Shymchyshyn: “Poviy vitre iz-za morya” (Blow, O Wind, From Beyond the Ocean), “Tuha

za ridnem krayem" (Longing for the Homeland), and "Dumki pro Ukrainu" (Thoughts of Ukraine).

Many of the poems written were dedicated to the memory of Taras Shevchenko. Dmitro Rarahovsky, in 1949, wrote his "Song About a Great Poet". In it he says, that in carrying out Shevchenko's "Bequest",

**. . . our brothers and our sisters
Broke their heavy chains,
The gentry and the nobles
They forever drove away.**

**Then Slavic lands unbounded
Were joined together too . . .
The dreams Taras had dreamed once —
They made them all come true.**

When Ukrainian Canadians erected the monument to Taras Shevchenko in Palermo, Ivan Shymchyshyn and Jacob Manchurak dedicated poems to this historic occasion. Ivan Shymchyshyn, in his poem "Good Ukrainian Children Honour Shevchenko" speaks of how beyond the mountains and oceans and the dark forests of Canada, Ukraine's children have honoured Shevchenko by erecting a monument to his memory.

**Between Hamilton — Toronto
There is a lovely park,
Taras Shevchenko towers
In bronze above its lawns.**

**This place we'll visit often,
With flowers dress its base,
In memory of our poet
We'll sing a song of praise.**

Jacob Manchurak also placed his laurel wreath at the base of the monument with his poem "We Won't Forget" in which, turning to the great Kobzar, he says:

**We, Taras, your name recall in loud and ringing
words . . .**



ІМ'Я В СІМ'І ВІДКРИТІ,
В СІМ'І ВОДНИЙ, ПОВІЙ,
НЕ ЗАБУДЬТЕ ПОМ'ЯНУТИ
ІМЕНА ТИХИХ СЛОВА.

М. Шевченко

1861-1961

**So future generations in some far future age
Won't forget your testament, its words of mighty
strength.**

In March of every year Ukrainians pay tribute to the memory of Shevchenko with concert and meeting. From stage and tribune his name rings out, arousing the people to struggle for freedom, peace and friendship. In honour of the Kobzar our Ukrainian Canadian worker poets write their praises to the fame of the immortal bard. Vasil Hut-suliak, in his poem "Taras Shevchenko", written on the occasion of the 145th anniversary of the poet's birth, had this to say of the great son of the Ukrainian people:

**Blow, O wind, across the ocean,
To my beloved Ukraine,
Carry my thoughts along with you
To Taras's grave.**

**There the nightingales' sweet songs
Echo through the grove,
While in Canada "My Thoughts"
We sing soft and low.**

Ukrainian Canadian worker-farmer poets, in writing of their native land, Ukraine, of their homesickness in a strange country, of the struggle of workers for freedom, friendship and peace, learned much from the revolutionary words and the noble ideals of their inspiring teacher — Taras Shevchenko. They gained knowledge from his work, accepted his ideas as their own, gained strength and courage in the struggle, followed the path he showed to a better future.



He Lives Forever

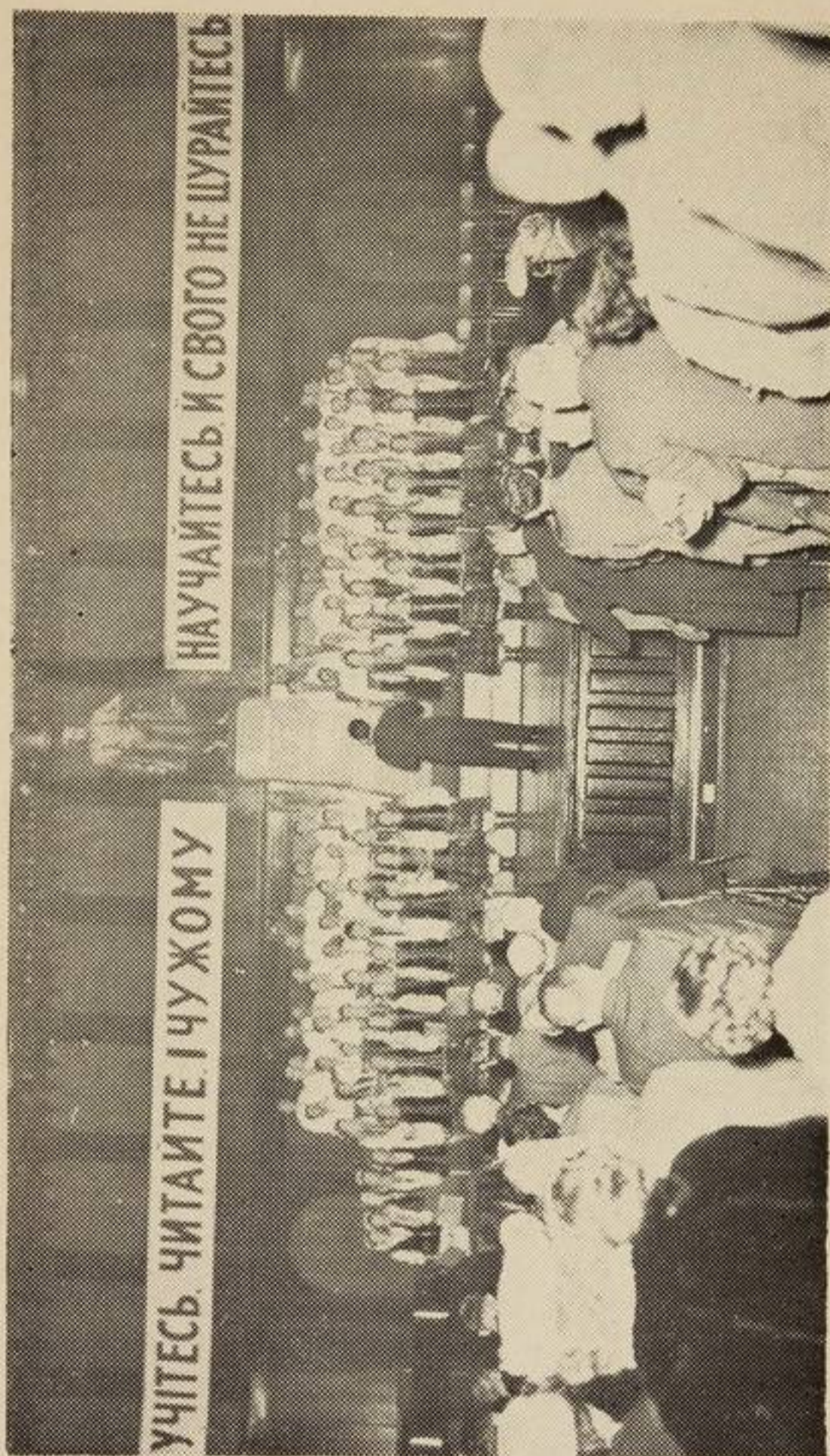
Seventy years have passed since the first Ukrainian immigrants landed on Canadian soil, many of them bringing Shevchenko's "Kobzar" with them. Difficult and thorny was the path they trod in those early years of struggle. Courageously and persistently they fought the forces of nature for their daily needs, and against the numerous oppressors who wished to take advantage of their ignorance in a strange land. They did not lose faith, but overcame all obstacles to win one battle after another. They chose Shevchenko's fighting slogan "**Struggle and you'll win!**" as their guide.

From the small immigrant groups of 70 years ago we now have large Ukrainian communities which play an important role in the economic, cultural and public life of Canada.

Though an integral part of the Canadian people, the Ukrainian Canadians, however, did not break their ties with the people of their native land. They carry a deep and lasting love for Ukraine which they continue to regard as their motherland, or as is the case for those born here, the land of their parents and grandparents. Ukrainian Canadians love and respect their Ukrainian culture and traditions, dipping deep into its treasures and transferring them to Canadian soil.

Taras Shevchenko also helped the Ukrainian immigrants in their years of struggle for national recognition. During their early years in Canada the immigrants suffered many indignities and humiliation at the hands of Anglo-Saxon chauvinists. This struggle was made more difficult by the attitude of the Uniate clergy who, on orders from the Vatican, continue to this day to call Ukrainians "Ruthenians".

Shevchenko's "Kobzar" helped to develop this national consciousness, helped the immigrants to recognize themselves as the sons and daughters of a great Ukrainian peo-



The cultural forces of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians in Toronto at an annual Shevchenko anniversary concert in Massey Hall.

ple. And the further Shevchenko's words spread among the masses of Ukrainian Canadians, the stronger became their sense of national consciousness.

The establishment of Soviet Ukraine also helped in this development. For the first time an independent Ukrainian state was set up. The Ukrainians could not now continue to feel a stateless people. The Ukrainian Soviet state, within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was, and continues to be, a strong attraction and an inexhaustible source of national consciousness.

But Shevchenko's works helped the Ukrainian immigrants to Canada in other ways as well. It was a very important factor in the development and the strengthening of their social consciousness. The Canadian bourgeoisie did their best to exploit the ignorant immigrant for all he was worth. The people, who read the works of Shevchenko, could not long remain in the status of slaves and their struggle and courage against their exploiters grew continually stronger and broader, demanding recognition and a better life. They learned that only a strong and united organization could help them better their lot.

Starting in the early 1900's Ukrainian Canadians marked the Shevchenko anniversaries in March of every year. They have become a part of the Ukrainian tradition in Canada. In the larger cities such as Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary — Shevchenko concerts are held in the largest auditoriums and concert halls of the city, with the participation of not only Ukrainians, but an ever-broader representation of the general public. Shevchenko concerts in these cities are considered outstanding cultural events in the community. They help to popularize the name of Shevchenko, the good name of the Ukrainian Canadians, bring honour to Ukraine and her people.

Through the efforts of the AUUC and other Ukrainian organizations Shevchenko concerts are often heard over the Canadian radio network through the CBC and

local radio stations. In 1950 the CBC carried a Canada-wide concert-drama dedicated to Shevchenko, the text of which was prepared by the Ukrainian Canadian writer Vera Lysenko.

In connection with the concerts the daily press also carries news and information about Shevchenko and his work.

Canada has done more, perhaps, than any other English-speaking country to bring its people translations of Shevchenko in the English language. Outstanding contributions in translation have been made by John Weir, A. J. Hunter, Florence Livesay, Honore Ewach, Mary Skrypnyk and others. Ukrainian Canadian poet, Mira Lazechko-Haas is also doing some work on themes based on Shevchenko's poetry. Besides the above, the newspaper "The Ukrainian Canadian", published in the English language, has done much to make Shevchenko known to many who do not know the Ukrainian language.

Indicative of the great love that Ukrainian Canadians bear for Shevchenko is the fact that many organizations, libraries, choirs and children's schools connected with the Ukrainian organizations carry the name of Shevchenko.

But the greatest event in the lives of Ukrainian Canadians was the erection of the monument to Shevchenko's memory in Palermo, Ont., in 1951 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the coming of Ukrainians to Canada, the creation of a park and then a museum in his name. This Ukrainian cultural institution on Canadian soil has fittingly been called the Canadian Kanev. Tens of thousands of people of many nationalities and from many countries have visited the park and museum in the ten years of its existence.

During the whole period of Ukrainian life in Canada Taras Shevchenko was with his people in spirit, taking his place in the foremost ranks of their life and struggles. And just as in the past, when he was the guiding spirit

in their life, so he remains today — a leader in their struggle for better tomorrows.

A great love and respect for Taras Hrihorovich Shevchenko warms the hearts and minds of all sincere Ukrainian Canadians — those who came to Canada years ago, and those who have already been born and grew up in Canada.

Taras Shevchenko has always been, is, and will be part of our lives as Ukrainian Canadians — he is our honour, our pride and our glory!

Toronto, Canada.

September, 1959.



