UKRAINIAN WOMAN IN THE MODERN AGE

ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN WOMEN IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Edited by Lubov Povroznyk, M. A.

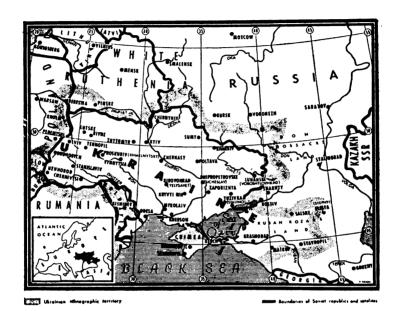
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THE MAP OF UKRAINE



A FEW FACTS ABOUT UKRAINE

Ukraine is situated in south-eastern Europe. From the Carpathians in the west its territory extends to the Kuban Province (Northern Caucasus) in the east, and from the Black Sea in the south to the Pripet marshes in the north. In the west Ukraine borders on Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary; in the south it is washed by the waters of Black Sea, the shore reaching from Northern Caucasus to the eastern bank of Danube, and farther southwest the boundary touches the autonomic Moldavia and Rumania.

The boundaries of Soviet Ukraine are not coincidental with the ethnographic borders of the Ukrainian people. Some lands of Soviet Russia (RSFSR), namely the southern parts of Kursk and Voronizh, and the Kuban Province (Krasnodarsky Kray), are component parts of the Ukrainian ethnographic territory. Also Poland retains Ukrainian provinces of Lemko region, Kholm, Pidlassya, and western part of Galicia. However, the Soviet government removed most of the Ukrainian population from these territories and resettled it in the U.S.S.R. and Western Poland.

Exclusive of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR), which comprises many non-Russian territories, the Soviet Ukraine is the largest state in Europe, with a territory of 240,000 square miles (including Crimea, 15,000 sq. mi., which was added to Ukraine on February 19, 1954), and her population numbers more than 50 million.

The largest cities of Soviet Ukraine are Kiev (capital, about 1,200,000 population), Kharkiv (just over 1,000,000 population), Odessa (800,000), Dnipropetrovske (600,000), Lviv (400,000).

The language of Ukraine is entirely different from Russian, and Ukraine's distinct character in religious, literary and artistic matters has done much to compensate her for the lack of natural frontiers.

The famous "black soil" of Ukraine has made her the scene of disputed agricultural settlement from the earliest times, but influences on the area have remained European.

At the time of the Viking inroads of the 9th century, Ukraine was first unified into a kingdom called Rus — a name later pirated by the Muscovites. Rus was based on Kiev and had as its emblem the Trident, reproduced on page 5. Kiev is thus an ancient centre of government and of culture.

This kingdom came under the influence of Byzantine Christianity, introduced into Ukraine-Ruś in 988 by Volodymyr the Great, and for many centuries Ukraine resisted pagan cults, this resistance leading to a deepening sense of religious responsibility. The rise of the Ukrainian Uniate Church, which after the long struggle following the fall of Constantinople, preferred, in 1596, alliance with Rome rather than subservience to Moscow, expressed this religious awareness which has persisted to the present day. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church both exist today in spite of violent persecution from Russian orthodoxy, which for many decades has seen in these Ukrainian Churches perennial sources of nationalism.

Principalities of Ukraine-Ruś were able, in the 13th century, to resist the Tartar advance, though Kiev finally fell to the Mongolian invaders. But, through the centuries in Ukraine legends and memories of the earlier kingdom nourished a longing for independence and an awareness of nationhood that found expression in the first Kozak State, Zaporozhian Sich, and again in the second Kozak State under the famous Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648.

Glance at the map will show why Khmelnytsky — as well as Mazeppa nearly 50 years later — looked to the Baltic and to the King of Sweden for alliance in withstanding the aggressive Muscovites, Poles and Turks, who were a constant threat to Ukraine. But Khmelnytsky's successors unfortunately started that series of political treaties with Ukraine's enemies which ended in her final betrayal and defeat in 1709.

Since then, Ukraine's bitterest struggle has been against Moscow.

When Ukraine emerges to periods of independence, she does so with a remarkable political maturity. When Hetman Khmelnytsky rallied all classes of Ukrainian people against Poland, the expulsion of the Polish armies meant also the expulsion of the landlords. This freeing of the land led to the equality of Ukrainian people in respect of law and property, a national institution of freedom of the individual which has permeated Ukrainian thought ever since. The

Kozak Council of 1709 — in exile at the end of Mazeppa's war against Peter I — adopted a Constitution of Ukraine against the day of liberation, legalising the establishment of a Kozak parliament of permanent legislative and controlling bodies, to which council the Hetman and his government were to be responsible. Ukraine's political insight is thus firmly rooted in personal freedom, individualims and the division of powers: there is in Ukraine no trace of the Russian mir; and the hardships and cruelties involved in forcing Communist collectivism on such a people can easily be imagined.

In the 19th century, there began the modern phase of the Ukrainian Liberation Movement. Ukrainian youth, chafing under the ignominy of Muscovite rule, formed liberal and democratic groups, aimed at rousing Ukraine into activity. The idea of national independence was carefully fostered by poets, historians, and writers, with the active support of the two Ukrainian Churches. Especially in Galicia was this Renaissance apparent, and its strength and solidarity was revealed to the world when, after the 1917 Revolution, the Ukrainian Central Council issued, on January 22nd, 1918, the Fourth Universal declaring Ukraine a completely independent state.

But after a short period of independence Ukrainians found they had to fight, not only Bolsheviks, but Denikin and Poles as well. By 1921, Soviet control of Ukraine had greatly increased, and Ukraine found herself once more partitioned and under foreign rule.

For a time, Moscow appeared to favour preservation of Ukrainian national culture, but after a few years she began a cruel policy of collectivisation and Russification that persecuted and frustrated every Ukrainian institution, and sought to root out all traces of Ukrainian nationalism.

The Ukrainian Nationalist Movement, however, continued to rally her people even under the worst terror, and sought every opportunity to consolidate its position in Ukraine. When the Germans marched against Russia in 1941 Ukraine was ready to assert herself, and on June 30th of that year, the Declaration of Independence was re-stated on the Lviv (Lvov) radio.

As a result of the second world war, Ukraine is once more under Russian domination, but the Ukrainian Liberation Movement continues, as it will continue, until Ukraine is once again in the hands of her own people.

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THE UKRAINIAN WOMAN IN THE LIFE OF COMMUNITY

Today, when all women have attained full rights as members of the community, there is hardly a civilized nation where the women do not take part in political and community life, and where they have no access to higher education.

It is sometimes hard to remember that not so long ago this was by no means the case, and to recall that most of the significant advances in the status of women — feminine suffrage higher education etc. have taken place in the last 100 years — often in the last 50 years.

Beginning in England in the middle of the last century, the fight for feminine emancipation has spread all over the world, and now, in most countries, has reached at least its major objectives.

THE UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

It is difficult to discuss the fight of the Ukrainian women in Ukraine, since their country was almost always under alien rule, so that not only the Ukrainian women, but the whole Ukrainian nation had no civil rights. Eastern Ukraine was under Russian rule, and here at times, even the Ukrainian language itself was prohibited. In this part of Ukraine, serfdom was not abolished until 1861. Even in the western part of Ukraine, under Austrian rule, serfdom was not abolished until 1848, and the people were poor and illiterate. Very few Ukrainians had any education at all — these being mostly the families of priests. (We should point out here that in Ukraine,

both Catholic and Orthodox priests are frequently married). The position of the Ukrainian woman was, consequently very low, particularly if she had the misfortune to be a widow or an orphan. However, in contrast to many other countries, where the official status of women was equally low, the Ukrainian woman was never a slave in her own family — the respect accorded her by her husband and children was traditional — so much so that it is quite possible that, had Ukraine not lost her independence, the Ukrainian women would not have had such a long and bitter fight for their own emancipation — which, indeed they achieved only for the short period of Ukrainian independence between 1918-1920.

The first to point the way to equal rights were Ukrainian women writers and poets like Natalia Kobrynśka and Olha Kobylianśka, who maintained that women had equal rights to higher education, and to lead their own lives and decide their own future. Ulyana Kravchenko, a talented woman poet, pointed out to Ukrainian women their duty to their country, and called the women to "new ways." Writers in other countries too, were calling upon women to fight for equality, and their voices also were heard in Ukraine.

Natalia Kobrynska, when at an age at which nowadays she would be attending a university, was among the first to demand for women the right to a further education. Under her leadership the inaugural meeting of the "Society of Ukrainian Women" was called in the town of Stanislaviv, in 1883. Eighty members were at once enrolled — women from all parts of Ukraine. Kobrynska laid great emphasis on raising the educational level of the members, realizing that, otherwise the scope of the Society's work would be extremely limited. With the co-operation and financial help of the woman writer Olena Pchilka, she produced, in 1887, a journal for women entitled The First Chain. This contained some works of famous writers, together with some serious ideological works by Kobrynska herself. Although the journal was of a very high standard, it was not received with any enthusiasm either by the Occupation press or by the bulk of the Ukrainian people, who were, on the whole, strongly opposed to the idea of an organized women's movement. Undaunted however, Kobrynska produced another women's journal — Our Destiny, and also several volumes of a "Women's Library." Once again, these met with little approval from the bulk of the people. Still undiscouraged, Kobrynska, together with several of her colleagues in the cause, called a Women's Rally in the town of Stryj, (1891), at which they demanded the right of higher education for women, and also stressed the need for Ukrainian nurseryschools for children below school age, since otherwise these children had to attend Polish nursery-schools.

The effect of this Rally soon became apparent. Within a few years Ukrainian women's societies were established in all the principal towns of Ukraine. Thus, to name but a few, there were the

"Ukrainian Women's Club" in L'viv, the "Women's Circle", in Kolomyia", the "Society of Ukrainian Women", in Peremyshl, and many others. The main object of all these organizations was the dissemination of knowledge among their members. Thus, in the rules of the "Ukrainian Women's Circle" in Kolomyia we read: "The Object of this Society is to foster further education, to strengthen and revitalize patriotic feelings among women, and to strive for a better life for them as members of the Community." This implied that in such women's societies there should be plenty of informative reading matter, talks and discussions on various subjects to acquaint the members of the progress of women in other parts of the world. The societies also pledged themselves to give financial and other help to those in need — especially to young students.

In the central parts of Ukraine, the reawakening of the Women's movement began as early as the 1860's when women tried to gain entrance to the Universities — some even going to Swiss Universities when no others would admit them. Sunday schools also began to be organized in the cities and towns, notably in Kyiv and Kharkiv — later, even in the villages. These must not be confused with the religious Sunday-Schools in England. The Ukrainian Sunday-Schools were literally schools held on Sunday, but a wide a range of subjects as possible were taught, especially those touching on the history and culture of Ukraine. The rapid growth of these schools soon alarmed the Russian government, and soon they were closed down by law and their organizers deported to Siberia.

In 1860, women actually won their battle for higher education, and were admitted to the University of Kyiv — but two years later, this privilege was withdrawn. In 1861, on the abolition of serfdom, many women, at the cost of great personal sacrifice, began to teach in small village schools all over Ukraine, in an attempt to raise the general standard of education. In 1870 postal courses were arranged to enable women to continue their studies at home.

Among the leading women at this time were Katya Holitsynśka, Nastya Hrinchenko and Olena Koroleva. Another was Dovnar Zapol'śka, who, during the years 1907-1911, ran the "Society of Working Women." During the same period there was formed the "Women's Society", which was devoted, chiefly, to caring for needy student and propagating patriotic sentiments among the Ukrainian masses.

The most active of the women's organizations at this time was the "Ukrainian Women's Club" in L'viv, led by such pioneering spirits as Maria Biletska, Konstantina Malytska, Hermina Shukhevych, Daria Starosol'ska, and many others. This Club began to build up women's cultural life and their position in the community, and to collect objects of historical and national interest, which were

to form a valuable asset of the Ukrainian National Museum. Under their initiative a Ukrainian Women's Co-operative organization was founded, entitled "Effort." This owned its own dressmaking establishments where women were taught, not only the basic skills of dressmaking, but also the more advanced branches — couture, designing and embroidery. This particular Club also organized a nursery-school for Ukrainian children.

In other towns, similar organizations established students' hostels, and creches for infants-in-arms. The Women's Co-operative Society also spread to other towns.

In L'viv there was also the "Ukrainian Girls' Circle" which fought for equal educational and political rights for women. In 1909 this circle amalgamated with the Club to form one body, known as the "Society", with a revised constitution which allowed its activities to be extended beyond the borders of Ukraine, and even as far as Praha and Vienna. Even in the remotest villages of Ukraine, women began to be influenced by the Society.

By now it was becoming apparent that war between Ukraine and Russia was becoming imminent. To prepare for this, organizations were established to train young people for future military service — and in these organizations, too, women played a major role. At the same time, the Society in L'viv began to organize courses in First Aid and Nursing. And when war came — the First World War and its aftermath, the Ukrainian War of Independence, women volunteered for service in the newly formed Ukrainian army — women such as Olena Stepanivna, Sofia Halechko, and many others. During the war, women carried out a wide-spread campaign of charitable work, distributing help where it was most sorely needed. Several Ukrainian women received the Medal of Merit of the Red Cross for this work.

AFTER THE WAR

The attempt to establish a free and independent Ukraine had failed; Ukraine was partitioned between Russia and Poland. Nevertheless the Ukrainian women did not lose hope in the ideals for which they had fought. When the Poles began to arrest certain Ukrainians whom they felt constituted a threat to the newly-formed Polish Republic, a committee of Ukrainian women under the leadership of Olena Kysilevska, was at once formed to plead the cause of the prisoners to the Polish authorities.

In Ukraine, as elsewhere, the First World War had meant the triumph of the cause of equal rights for women at least so far as public opinion is concerned. Instead, the Ukrainian women now gave themselves wholeheartedly to fostering national feeling, and to

giving moral support to all those under pressure from the Occupation authorities to renounce their nationality and religion.

In L'viv, now under Polish rule, the women's movement grew in strength. The Society now began to organize training courses for Nursery-School teachers. Now, too, women began to play a prominent part in other Ukrainian organizations — and many of these women were to pay for such activities with their lives, under the Nazi occupation.

The principal women's publications of this period were: "Woman's Destiny" and "Woman's Freedom" — both edited by Olena Kysilevśka; "New Home" — an illustrated journal published by the Women's Co-operative Society and edited by Lida Burachynśka, and "Woman" and "Ukrainian Woman" both published by the "Association of Ukrainian Women" (edited by Milena Rudnytśka and Olena Sheparovych respectively), the first number of these last being produced in honour of the 50th anniversary of the women's movement (1934).

Just at this time, such organizations as the "Association of Ukrainian Women of America", "Association of Ukrainian Women of Canada", the "Organization of Ukrainian Women of Canada", the "League of Ukrainian Catholic Women", and the "League of Ukrainian Women for Freedom" were coming into being.

The new Ukrainian women's journals not only were of great benefit to the Ukrainian women in Polish-occupied Ukraine — they also performed a valuable liaison channel with the transatlantic organizations.

WORLD WAR II

The second world war put an end to all activities for the women's movement in Ukraine. When Russia reoccupied western Ukraine, many of the leading figures of the women's movement were sent to Siberia. In the refugee camps of Germany, Austria and Italy there were vast numbers of Ukrainians — including women and children who had been taken as forced-labourers to Nazi Germany and the Nazi-occupied countries (including, alas, the Channel Islands where, eyewitnesses report, even little girls were to be seen among the gangs of labourers brought in to work on the Nazi underground constructions that were hollowed out of solid rock).

But even in the refuges camps, Ukrainian women began to organize themselves, and by December 15, 1945, there were 26 such organized groups in the various camps who, on that day, amalgamated to form "The Organization of Ukrainian Women in Foreign Lands" under the presidentship of Irene Pavlykovska. The main aim of this organization was to stop the forcible repatriation of Ukrainians to

the Soviet Union, but other activities included the publication of information leaflets on the Ukrainian problem. As the refugees were resettled in western countries, so Ukrainian Women's Organizations sprang up there, and in November 1948, representatives of these organizations held a World Congress of Ukrainian Women, in Philadelphia, USA. This Congress resulted in the foundation of a supreme co-ordinating body "The World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organization" the first president of this Federation being Olena Kysilevska. The main purpose of this federation was and is to help Ukraine in her fight for freedom, to give aid to those refugees still remaining in the camps, to work together with the free world against the menace of Russian Communism, and to explain the Ukrainian point of view to the world in general.

The Federation is in close contact with a number of other organizations — among which one may mention in particular the "World Movement of Mothers" headquarters of which is in Paris.

ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN WOMEN (A.U.W.) IN GREAT BRITAIN

Emigration of Ukrainian women to Great Britain started at the end of 1947.

At the beginning only single men were coming, but later on single women were resettled as well. After that the 1st Ukrainian Division of the National Ukrainian Army, about 8,000 men strong was transferred to England. The number of women therefore in comparison to men was approximately 5 per cent only. The lead to form A.U.W. came from the Board of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain. The first inaugural meeting of A.U.W. took place on 5th and 6th March, 1948 in London, and then the "Rules" of the Association were approved. Miss Olena Karpynec was elected the first President of the A.U.W.

The aims and tasks of the Association of Ukrainian Women in Great Britain are:

- 1) to represent the Ukrainian women among the Ukrainian community in this country, and to the Free World;
- 2) to co-operate with local Ukrainian organizations, and with similar Ukrainian Women's organizations in the Free World;
- 3) to give moral and material help not only to members of our own organization, but to all in need of help, so far as we are able;
- 4) to bring up the new generation of Ukrainian children, born in exile, in the love of our country and her traditions and culture.

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WORK FROM 1948—1955

The main task of the Council of A.U.W. at that time was to extend a network of branches throughout Great Britain. In the first year 6 and in the next year 9 Branches of A.U.W. were established. To strengthen the work of Branches and to show the significances of the organization the Conference was called in Bradford in October, 1951, where among other things were discussed the present position, the difficulties in work and the possible ways of realizing the aims of the A.U.W. in Great Britain.

The Members of the Council made many trips into the country to organize the new Branches of the Association, they developed and initiated work in other directions; the circulation of Ukrainian women's press was increased, publications for usual Ukrainian festive and commemorative days were distributed, and interest in the Ukrainian embroidery and Easter-egg painting was stimulated. The importance of the upbringing of the new generation was stressed especially strongly. Branches of A.U.W. celebrated the traditional festive days; St. Nicholas-day, Christmas Eve and Easter and the larger Branches held anniversary meetings in memory of Ukrainian heroines. Courses to teach Ukrainian embroidery and painting of Easter-eggs were organized and Exhibitions of Ukrainian arts were arranged — the Ukrainian Churches were decorated with Ukrainian embroidery made or donated by the A.U.W. Branches looked after sick Ukrainians in Hospitals and private homes. Contact with foreign and English women's organizations were established. This last work was successfully conducted by the Public Relations Officer of A.U.W. Mrs. Lubomyra Holubowycz, who extended the welfare work to include Ukrainians on the continent. The work of the following Branches at that time must to be mentioned: Ashton, Bradford, Bury, Manchester, Nottingham, Rochdale, Stoke-on-Trent and Todmorden.

Presidents for this period were:

Miss Olena Karpynec — 1948-1949,

Mrs. M. Dublanytsia — 1949-1950,

Mrs. A. Hortynska — 1950-1951,

Mrs. I. Vitoshynska — 1951-1953,

Miss A. Myroshnychenko — 1953 (resigned),

Mrs. H. Seś — 1954-1955.



"Orlyk" Ukrainian Dancing Group in Manchester.

WORK FROM 1955-1959

During the Presidency of Mrs. Olena Moncibovych the large-scale activity of the A.U.W. extended in different directions and in particular of the internal links of A.U.W. were consolidated in that time:

- 1) The registration of members of A.U.W. was carried out, membership-fees introduced, membership-cards were issued and all members were obliged to pay a regular membership fee.
- 2) The collection of Ukrainian Arts exhibits was launched on a larger scale, and two show cases with exhibits of Ukrainian Art were erected in London and Manchester.

3) Courses for nursery-instructors were organized (partly with

co-operation with the Ukrainian Teachers Association).

4) In the weekly paper of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Ltd., "The Ukrainian Thought" the "Women's Corner" was started. On the basis of the financial reserves of the A.U.W. it was possible to foster progress in many directions.

The next Council of A.U.W. maintained the work that had been begun. The younger members of A.U.W. got more experience in social work and the Branches were able to raise the level among their members and community. The most important problems was the **upbringing**, education and **preserving** for Ukraine the new young generation.

In 1959 the President of A.U.W. Dr. Irene Kaluzna took part in the World Congress of Ukrainian Women in New York, as the representative of Ukrainian Women in Great Britain.

Presidents for this period were:

Mrs. O. Moncibowycz — 1955-1957, Dr. I. Kaluzna — 1957-1958, Mrs. O. Rosnecka — 1958-1959 Dr. I. Kaluzna — 1959-1960.



The Committee members after its meeting 2. 9. 1956.

First row: (left to right) Mrs. O. Gocka, Mrs. H. Ses, Mrs. O. Moncibowycz and Mrs. L. Holubowycz.

Second row: Mrs. A. Ostapiuk, Mrs. O. Rosnecka and Mrs. T. Perebyjnis.



A course in the Ukrainian folk art of decorating Easter eggs.



Ukrainian Youth Association Orchestra in Bradford, Yorks.

WORK FROM 1960-1963

The Council continues to work to instil Ukrainian culture into the British-born Ukrainian children, who should from early child-hood to be taught the love of their country — thus forming firm roots of their character and outlook.

The cultural and educational work was extended by giving series of talks and reading of papers on educational topics. This work has been continued by teacher-members of A.U.W. in Nursery Schools and Sunday (Saturday) Schools of Ukrainian language. Many Branches organised dances, literary gatherings and other cultural meetings or festivities. Each Branch looks after one Ukrainian family that is in need — to give them full material and moral support.

This present year marks the 15th Anniversary of A.U.W. in Great Britain. At present it has 1170 members and 26 Branches, which are as follows: Ashton, Bolton, Bradford, Blackburn, Bedford, Bury, Coventry, Derby, Halifax, Gloucester, Huddersfield, Keighley, Leicester, Leigh, London, Manchester, Mansfield, Nottingham, Oldham, Reading, Rochdale, Scunthorpe, Stockport, Todmorden, Wolverhampton, Waltham Cross.



Ukrainian Dramatic Society after performance "The Guest from the steppe" in Bradford. (By courtesy of "Telegraph and Argus" Bradford)

Presidents for this period were:

Mrs. A. Ostapiuk — 1960-1961,

Mrs. O. Jenkala - 1961-1962,

Mrs. A. Ostapiuk — 1962-1963.



Mrs. Anastasia OSTAPIUK
President of A.U.W. in Gt. Britain.



A.U.W. in Gt. Britain Council after its meeting, 1963. (Absent: Mrs. L. Holubowycz and K. Finiw.)

The present members of the Council:

Mrs. A. Ostapiuk (President),

Mrs. O. Jenkala (Vice-President),

Mrs. M. Cebrij (Secretary),

Mrs. Z. Stecko (Assistant Secretary),

Mrs. T. Najdan (Organizational Officer),

Mrs. L. Markiw (Treasurer),

Mrs. N. Martschenko (Cultural Activities Officer),

Mrs. U. Andrushtchenko (Cultural Activities Officer),

Mrs. L. Deremenda (Assistant Folk-Arts Instructor),

Mrs. L. Stadnyk (Welfare Officer),

L. Powroznyk, M.A. (Press Committee Chairman),

Mrs. S. Drabat, and

Mrs. L. Holubowytsch (Members of the Press Committee).

Members:

Mrs: M. Kapustynska

Mrs. U. Polniak

Mrs. B. Krushelnyckyj

Mrs. K. Finiw

Audit Committee:

Mrs. Z. Holysh (Chairman),

Mrs. A. Hlozyk, and

Mrs. W. Sarantschuk (Members).



Ukrainian children in Leicester taking part in embroidery exhibition.
(By courtesy of "Leicester Evening Mail"



Ukrainian women taking active part in London's mixed choir.

THE PRINCIPAL UKRAINIAN WOMEN

WRITERS

One of the most interesting features of Ukrainian literature during its period of renaissance (i.e. at the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th) is the intensive part played by Ukrainian women-writers.

Ukrainian literature is still relatively unknown to the world at large, but the work that has been done so far, if not great in extent, has, nevertheless, shown, by translations and critical surveys, the value of this literature, not only for the Ukrainian nation, but to the literature of the whole world. Interest in Ukrainian literature is steadily increasing, as is shown by the ever-growing number of translations from the works of its leading figures such as Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Lesya Ukrainka — this last-named being, of course, a woman.

In this short review we shall try to present but a short selection of the most outstanding Ukrainian women who have earned a welldeserved and lasting place in the history of Ukrainian literature.

Marko VOVCHOK

Maria Vilinska-Markovych (1834-1907), known under the nomde-plume of Marko Vovchok, was inspired in her literary work by the powerful and turbulent wave of spiritual and ideological feeling caused by the creative work and heroic sufferings of Taras Shevchenko, the greatest of Ukrainian poets and the spiritual leader of the Ukrainian national resurgence.

She was married to Opanas Markovych, who was banished to Orel, in Central Russia, on account of his membership of the secret, liberal

"Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius." Thus the ideals of liberty and national self-determination permeate her work, as they do the work of so many Ukrainian writers, not as abstract concepts, but in a deeply personal way.

The appearance of her work "Folk Tales" in 1857 was received with great acclaim by the Ukrainian reading public, and Shevchenko himself wrote a poem in her honour hailing her as

...a kindly prophet

And a denouncer of cruel, wicked Insatiate men...

and calling her his "star", his "light" and his "daughter."

But her literary activity was to last only a few years. In 1867, the Ukrainian language was totally prohibited as a medium of creative writing, and of her melodious, often rhythmic, prose we are left with the product of only a few short years.

In addition to her short-stories Marko Vovchok is best known for her novel Marusya, which in a French translation by P. J. Stahl (whose name alone appears on the title-page of many of the 20-odd editions) has been described by a critic: "it illustrates magnificently the resistance of the oppressed of all countries in an unequal struggle and their heroism in the face of still worse calamities."

Hanna BARVINOK

"Hanna Barvinok", in real life Aleksandra Bilozerśka-Kulish (1828-1911) was the wife of the Ukrainian writer Pantaleimon Kulish, who was the founder of the "Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius." Through her brother, also a member of the Brotherhood, she came to know Shevchenko, whose return from banishment was the inspiration of her first short story "Evil but not without Good."

Her short stories appeared in a number of magazines — some of them under the pseudonym Andriy Nechuy-Viter. A complete edition of her short stories appeared in Kyiv in 1902.

Olena PCHILKA

Olena Pchilka (1849-1930) was the non-de-plume of Olha Kosach, the daughter of a well-to do family of landowners, who, after a good education in a young ladies' academy in Kyiv married Petro Kosach, a high official in the judiciary service. Their home soon became one of the chief centres of Ukrainian cultural life.

Olena Pchilka wrote poetry, short stories and dramas. She was well-known as an essayist, and respected as such even by those of her contemporaries who did not agree with her controversial ideas. She also edited a magazine "Native Land" and a children's monthly "Young Ukraine."

Although the literary fame of her daughter, Lesya Ukrainka was to surpass that of the mother, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that Olena Pchilka also has a prominent place, in her own right, in the history of Ukrainian literature.

She died in 1930, at the age of 81 years, and was arrested on her deathbed by the NKVD as an alleged member of the League for the Liberation of Ukraine. But, uncompromising to the end, she was considered too ill to be moved, and so died in her own bed — free and undefeated.

Natalia KOBRYNŠKA

Natalia Kobrynśka (1851-1920) was not only a pioneer of the women's movement in Austrian-held Ukraine — she was also a prominent woman writer.

She came of a priest's family, and was herself married to a priest, but when her husband died she returned to her father's home at the age of 31. Her father was a Member of the Austrian parliament, and Natalia frequently accompanied him to Vienna, where she became acquainted with many future leaders of progressive and liberal thought.

Her short stories won instant acclaim among Ukrainian literary circles, and the poet Ivan Franko (who ranks second only to Shevchenko in the Ukrainian literary hierarchy), strongly approved of them. She began to publish her stories in 1884 — the year after she founded the first "Society of Ukrainian Women." Her editorial work has already been mentioned.

Her short stories were published in magazines, separately, and finally in three collections Spirit of Time, Yadzya and Katryusha and Fairy-tales.

Ulyana KRAVCHENKO

Ulyana Kravchenko (1860-1947) was born Julia Shneider, in the town of Mykolayiv in western Ukraine. She became interested in poetry, her "secret rite" at an early age, and was soon to become an admirer of the work of Ivan Franko — an admiration which was later to develop into a deep and Platonic friendship between herself and Franko, in which each tended to inspire the work of the other.

Throughout most of her life, she was a schoolteacher, working in various places in western Ukraine.

Her first collection of poems **Primavera** (1895) at once established her reputation as a poet — and this reputation was further enhanced by her subsequent volumes of poems "For the New Way", "Anemonen" and "For the Journey." Much of this poetry was to "disappear" from the editions of her work published under the

Soviet regime, particularly those poems which deal with deep religious or patriotic sentiment.

In addition to her activities in the literary and educational field, she proved to be a devoted wife and mother. She died in 1947, a great-grandmother, aged 87.

Lesya UKRAYINKA

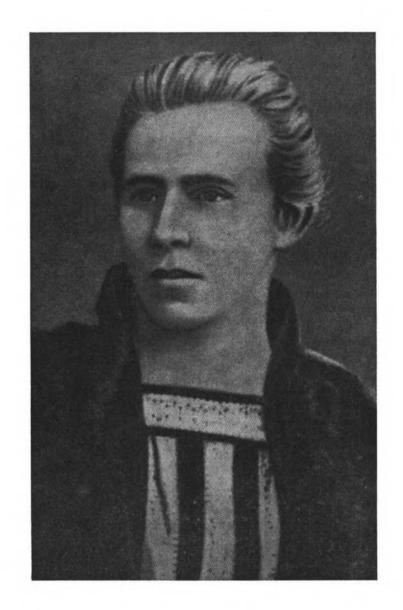
Lesya Ukrayinka was the pen-name of Larysa Kosach (1871-1913), the daughter of "Olena Pchilka." Encouraged to write by her mother, Lesya began to write for publication when she was only 12 years of age. Since within the Russian empire there was an official ban on the Ukrainian language, her work had to be sent to L'viv where, under the less harsh conditions of Austrian rule, publication was possible.

But shortly afterwards, Lesya became ill with T.B. of the bones. The rest of her life was a vain search for health, travelling from country to country in search of a hospital or spa where she might be cured. It was in vain! For the rest of her life she remained an invalid, nursed by her mother and, later, by her husband Klyment Kvitka.

Yet, in spite of illness and suffering, Lesya Ukrayinka continued to write her poems and, later, verse dramas. In defiance of the Ukrainian literary critics of the time, she chose her themes, not from the contemporary Ukrainian scene, but from the whole field of world history. Her purpose here was twofold — firstly to introduce the themes of Western literature into Ukrainian, so that Ukrainian literature might become an integral part of European literature. Secondly, since the historical or scriptural subjects she chose devolved almost entirely on the struggle of the oppressed against tyranny this was a useful way of discussing such themes, in spite of the strict ban on anything directed against the Russian regime. Even when she did write about the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, she set the scene at the relatively safe distance of the 17th century.

Yet Lesya Ukrayinka's work is not all politics (nor even disguised politics). One of the finest of her verse dramas is the lovely "Forest Song" the tender and imaginative story of a woodnymph who falls in love with a mortal.

With Shevchenko and Franko, Lesya Ukrayinka is considered to be one of the greatest of the Ukrainian poets. A selection of her poems, translated into English by Percival Cundy, has been published under the title **Spirit of Flame**. A further selection, translated by Vera Rich, will appear in 1964.



LESYA UKRAINKA

Olha KOBYLANŠKA

Olha Kobylanśka (1863-1942) who left the most prolific heritage of all Ukrainian women-writers, was the daughter of a cultured but poor family. Born and brought up in a small town in the Carpathian highlands she developed, at an early age an unusually vivid imagination, and would amuse her play-fellows for hours on end by telling them long stories that she made up.

She was educated at home, and, after finishing her studies she became strongly attracted to German literature — indeed at one time, she seriously contemplated writing in German. But her interest extended beyond the literature of any one country to the whole field of world literature — especially to the Romantics.

In her works she reveals a true mastery of poetical prose, particularly in her descriptions of her beloved highlands. Her heroes have a love of life and depth of emotion that is very characteristic.

In her personal life, she was a close friend of many of her contemporary Ukrainian women writers, and she was, moreover an ardent feminist.

Katrya HRYNEVYCHEVA

Katrya Hrynevycheva (1875-1947) was born in Vynnyky near L'viv, and educated in Krakow. She married an Instructor at the Teachers' Training College in L'viv, in which city she came into contact with such leaders of Ukrainian thought as Franko, Stefanyk, Hrushevskyi, Hnatyuk, Makovey and many others.

In 1909 she became editor-in-chief of the children's magazine The Bell.

Hrynevycheva's literary output was not large, but the quality of her work is very high. Her prose is remarkable for its elegance and balance, and the richness of its metaphors. She was greatly fascinated by the old Kievan princedom, and her interpretation of its past glories shows poignantly the deep longing of the Ukrainian people to have, once more, a sovereign state.

Olena TELIHA

Olena Teliha (née Shovheniv), (1907-1942) fled to Czecho-Slovakia in 1923, at the age of 16, when Russian Communist forces reoccupied Ukraine. Her father, who had been a Cabinet Minister during the rule of the Ukrainian National Republic, managed to obtain a University post, and the family settled in Czecho-Slovakia, where, too Olena married Mykhailo Teliha, a former freedom fighter.

In October 1941, Olena returned to Kyiv, which was under Nazi occupation. In secret she organized resistance work, openly she became chairman of the Ukrainian Writers' Association in Kyiv. On both accounts (since literature could be, and was, a powerful propaganda weapon) she was arrested by the Gestapo and executed in mid-February 1942.

The only complete manuscript of her poems, which she had just prepared for publication, was lost. Only a few poems of which her friends had copies survive. The manuscripts of these, after many adventures, were finally smuggled out to the west and published by her friend and co-worker O. Zdanovych, under the title "The Soul on Guard."

Contemporary Authors

In our short review, we can but enumerate the names of the leading Ukrainian women writers in exile, together with the titles of their principal works. The very number of them proves the vitality of the Ukrainian endeavour for the free expression of the ideals, values and emotions of a nation, impelled by an unconquerable urge towards ideological and national sovereignty. The list which follows does not even pretend to be complete, for it is extremely difficult to obtain complete bibliographical material, since the Ukrainian emigration in the free world is extremely widespread and somewhat scattered.

ANDIYEVSKA, Emma:

Birth of an Idol (Poems), Fish and Dimension (Poems), Corners behind the wall (Poems). The Journey (short stories), The Tigers (short stories), Djalapita (a novella).

CHERIŃ, Hanna:

Crescendo (poems), Black Earth (poems).

CHERNENKO, O.:

A human being (poems).

CHORNOBYTSKA, H.:

The gentle breezes (poems).

DIMA:

Transplanted flowers (play), The Instant, The Third Shore (poems).

DRAHOMANOVA, Oksana:

The Other Side of the World.

HOLOVINSKA, Maria:

Sefta, Chichka, The Hunchback (short stories).

HUMENNA, Dokia:

Children of the Milky Way (novel), The Illusion, Khreshchaty Yar, The Great Taboo, Eternal Fires of Alberta, Thirst, Amid the Skyscrapers, Many Heavens.

KALYTOVŠKA, M.:

Rhymes (poems).

KERCH, Oksana:

The Albatrosses (novel).

KHOLODNA, Natalia:

The Way of a Giant (biography).

KHRAPLYVA, Lesya:

In the darkness (short stories), Otaman Volya (novel).

KOROLEVA, Natalena:

The Ancestor (novel), Quid est veritas? (novel).

KOSOVICH, Maria:

A Sheaf of rays (poems).

KOVALENKO, Ludmila:

In Time and Space (plays), The Year 2245 (novel), Xanthippe (play), Olden Days (short stories).

KOVALŚKA, Maria:

Hanna (short stories).

KRAVTSIV, Melania:

The Way (novel), Kaleidoscope (short stories).

KYLYNA. Patrytsiya:

Tragedy of the Bees (poems).

LAHODYNŚKA, H.:

To sun and freedom.

LATURYNSKA, Oksana:

Enamel of kings (poems).

LUBŚKA. O.:

Ears of wheat (Poems).

MAK, Olha:

The God of Fire (novel), The Strange Man (novel), Where pathways lead (novel), Against convictions (novel).

MAZURENKO, Halya:

Cataracts (poems), Flames (poems), Pathways (poems), Jewels (poems).

OLENKO, Lesya:

Green Days.

OSTROMYRA, Maria:

Steer straight (novel).

OSTRYUK, Yaroslava:

The precipice (novel).

PARFANOVYCH, Sofia:

The mountains on fire, Other days, In the Forest, I love the grove, A Faithful Friend, At the Cross-roads, Kyiv, 1940.

SHUVARŠKA, I.:

Blending Gleam (poems), Sunday Morning (short stories).

STRUTYNSKA, Maria:

Storm over L'viv (novel), Dr. Baretskyi's Mistake (novel).

TSUKANOVA, Maria:

Lilac flowers (short stories).

VASYL'KIVSKA, Zhenya: Short Distances (poems).

VOVK, Vira:

Spirits and Dervishes (autobiography), Elegies (poems), Guiding Stars (poems), Black Acacias (poems), Youth (poems), Fairytales (poems), The Glazings (a novel).

YAROSLAVŚKA, Darya:

The Embrace of Melpomene (novel), Between the Banks (novel), Her New York (novel).

ZHURBA, Halyna:

The Faraway World (autobiography).

ZVYCHAYNA, Olena:

Peasants' Sanatorium (novel), Looking Back (novel), The Market Day in Myrhorod (novel), Fear (novel).

UKRAINIAN WOMEN IN THE

LIBERATION STRUGGLE

For over a century already the Ukrainian Nation has waged the struggle for its liberation from foreign oppression. This struggle grew from small beginnings, from cultural enlightenment and revival of interest in Ukrainian heroic past, Ukrainian language and literature, from the struggle for the preservation of the Ukrainian cultural heritage by peaceful means, to a widespread armed fight for national independence. In various phases of this long and hard struggle against ruthless regimes the Ukrainian women have played a considerable and important role. Side by side with men, the Ukrainian women took a lively interest in the nation's affairs and devoted their selfless work to the cause of Ukraine's freedom. Many of them sacrificed not only their careers and material goods, but their health, personal happiness and even lives. There is nothing strange in the fact that Ukrainian women took such an active part in the liberation struggle of the whole nation, for since the beginning of history the Ukrainian women enjoyed a considerable degree of equality with the men.

Women were never regarded in Ukraine as slaves, or inferior creatures. In the family the woman always enjoyed a position of equality with her husband, and even in public affairs women sometimes took a prominent part. In this respect an outstanding example is that of Princess Olha who in the middle of the 10th century was ruler of the ancient Ukraine — the Kyiv Ruś State. Later the Ukrainian Cossack women were famous as the Amazons of the steppes, and when occasion demanded, they sometimes took

part in the heroic defence of fortresses against the Tatars, Poles and Muscovites. When the Ukrainian State fell and the Ukrainian people were subjugated by foreign powers, Ukrainian women continued to bring up their offspring in accordance with the Ukrainian national traditions and in the patriotic spirit of love and devotion to their native country and nation.

When in the middle of the 19th century the first modern political groups began to be formed in Ukraine aiming at the emancipation of the Ukrainian Nation from foreign subjugation, Ukrainian women soon joined this national revival. Already in the 70's and 80's of the last century a number of Ukrainian women university students joined the revolutionary underground movement which aimed at the overthrow of the stifling Russian Tsarist regime and the liberation of the peoples enslaved in the Russian prison of nations. Some of them, like Sofia Perovska, gave their young lives for the cause. Other women took an active part in social, cultural and charitable work, often at great personal sacrifice and at the risk of persecution and reprisals on the part of the Russian Tsarist regime. At the end of the 19th century the first women's organisations were formed. At the beginning of the present century some Ukrainian women were active in the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party which carried on widespread underground political work aiming at the overthrow of the Tsarist Russian rule in Ukraine. On the other hand, a number of Ukrainian women, like Marko Vovchok, Olena Pchilka, Olha Kobylanska, Ulyana Kravchenko, and above all Lesya Ukrainka, joined the ranks of Ukrainian writers and with their poems, stories and novels helped to inspire the Ukrainian people to the struggle for their liberation.

In the Western regions of Ukraine which were under the milder Austrian rule the Ukrainian women's movement expressed itself not only in various women's organisations and press. On the eve of World War I many Ukrainian women joined a paramilitary organisation to train themselves for the coming fight for the independence of Ukraine. As soon as the war broke out these women volunteered to join a Ukrainian military detachment to fight side by side with Ukrainian men against the Russian oppressors. This unit became later one of the nuclei of the Army of the Ukrainian National Republic which was established after the outbreak of the Revolution in the Russian Empire in 1917. Among them the names of Olena Stepaniv, Sofia Halechko, Hanna Dmyterko and others are best known.

When the Ukrainian National Republic was set up in 1917 the Ukrainian women joined in the building of the new State in which Ukrainian women gained full political rights. Among the members of the first Ukrainian parliament known as the Ukrainian Central Council, there were 11 prominent Ukrainian women, including

Lyubov Starytska-Chernyakhivska, Zinaida Mirna, V. O'Connor-Vilinska, Sofia Rusova and others. A Ukrainian Women's National Council was formed in 1919 and its delegates took part in the Congresses of the International Women's Council in Oslo in 1920, the International Women's League in Geneva in 1921 and others. where they put forward the Ukrainian point of view. At the same time many Ukrainian women took part in the bitter war of survival against the hostile neighbours — the brutal Bolshevist Russia, the Russian imperialists of the white brand, and the Polish invaders led by shortsighted leaders. These women served not only as medical and auxiliary personnel in the Army and State apparatus, but also as courageous couriers, intelligence workers and sometimes even insurgents leaders. Thus a young girl, Vira Babenko, served as a courier between the Ukrainian Army Headquarters and an insurgent detachment behind the Red Russian lines; after several successful crossings of the lines she was finally caught by the Russian secret police and executed. Marusia Sokolovska headed a partisan detachment and was greatly feared by the Communist Russians.

After the defeat of the Ukrainian liberation fight in 1921, the struggle for independence did not cease but assumed different forms. It again became the struggle for the very soul of the Ukrainian Nation, for holding and advancing the Ukrainian positions in every sphere of life, in culture, science, literature, art, education, economics, politics etc.

It is impossible to enumerate all the devoted and prominent Ukrainian women who distinguished themselves in these fields. One name, however, stands out among others, that of the writer Lyubov Starytska-Chernyakhivska who in her fifties, belonged to the small circle of the leadership of the underground organisation, the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, which organised resistance against the Bolshevist Russian enslavers of Ukraine and prepared the Ukrainian people to an uprising. She organised the resistance among the Ukrainian writers and intellectuals. After five years of activity between 1925 and 1929 the secret organisation was discovered by the Russian GPU and 45 of its leaders including Starytska-Chernyakhivska were put on a show trial in Kharkiv in 1930. The GPU tried to break her by threatening to arrest her daughter who was enticed from Paris to visit her in the prison. When she refused to cooperate, she was sentenced to eight years of imprisonment and her fate is unknown. Her daughter was arrested, too, and died in prison. Many other Ukrainian women patriots perished in Soviet Russian prisons and concentration camps, during the collectivisation and purges.

Between the two world wars parts of the Western regions of Ukraine were occupied by Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. The Ukrainian resistance in these regions was led by the Ukrainian Military Organisation and later the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists. These organisations countered the terrorisation and oppression of Ukrainians by the Polish Government by means of underground political work and sabotage, as well as occasional armed actions. Among the women underground fighters, the most famous name is that of Olha Basarabova, who was arrested and tortured to death in a Polish prison, but did not betray the secrets of the organisation.

After the outbreak of the World War II, when Ukraine became the stage of the clash between the two most ruthless totalitarian imperialist powers, Bolshevist Russia and Nazi Germany, the Ukrainian women in the nationalist liberation movement courageously fought side by side with men against both enemies of Ukraine. Behind the German and later Russian lines Ukrainian women, together with men, organised resistance cells, published clandestine literature, took part in armed attacks on the enemy objects, looked after the wounded, served as intelligence and liaison personnel. Among the heroes of Ukrainian resistance at that time should be named the writer and a leading member of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists Olena Teliha, who was arrested and shot by the Germans in Kyiv in 1942, as well as hundreds of other patriots.

When the German invaders retreated from the Ukrainian territory and Ukraine again fell under the boot of the Bolshevist Russian barbaric rule, the resistance did not cease. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (U.P.A.) which was formed to fight the Germans now turned its weapons against the Russian invaders of Ukraine. This Army numbered at one time 200,000 people and was supported by the entire Ukraine population. In its ranks there were many hundreds of women. Their work in the underground Ukrainian Red Cross was of invaluable assistance to the struggle of the U.P.A. After the end of the war, when under the blows of the overwhelming forces of the enemy who had his hands freed, the U.P.A. was forced to act in small units and gradually change over from open armed struggle to underground fight, many Ukrainian women members of the U.P.A. and the O.U.N. had to share the hard life of the insurgents. living for long periods in damp and primitive underground hidings, suffering from shortages of all kinds, diseases, wounds, constantly hunted by the Russian security troops who showed no mercy to the insurgents. Some of them, captured by the enemy, were tortured in a terrible manner and often publicly executed. Many others preferred to commit suicide rather than to fall into enemy's hands when sometimes underground hospitals were discovered by the Russians. Thus, for instance, in the autumn of 1945 the Bolshevik troops advanced on a village in which an underground hospital was hidden. Most of the wounded were evacuated to a nearby forest. Only two badly wounded men remained and a nurse named Motrya volunteered to stay with them. Unfortunately, the enemy discovered the hospital, began to throw handgrenades inside and call for surrender. In order not to fall into the hands of the enemy and not to betray any secrets under torture. Motrya shot herself. On another occasion in January 1946, the Bolsheviks captured three nurses and two sick insurgents in the village of Ispas. When questioned they refused to disclose anything. They were then tortured and shot in public in front of their homes. Before their death they declared that they did not regret to die for an independent Ukraine and expressed the belief that others would continue their fight. There were cases when women insurgents took over command of small detachments when the leaders were killed in battle. Such was the case, for instance, with deputy group leader Mukha who belonged to the detachment of commander Yastrub. When in an encirclement the group leader Brel was killed she took over the command of the group and led it into attack to break out of the encirclement. Disguised as a peasant woman she, on another occasion, carried out a dangerous liaison mission between her unit and the High Command of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Ukrainian women helped the insurgents in every way, above all by supplying them with shelter, clothing and food at great risk to themselves. Thus, for instance, on 17. 4. 1946 three girls who were carrying food to the insurgents in a forest near the village of Strashevychi, Sambir district, were ambushed by the Russians. Although they were tortured in an inhuman way they did not betray the place where the insurgents were hiding. There are hundreds of a similar examples of heroic behaviour of Ukrainian women freedom fighters. When finally by 1951 the Bolshevik Russians managed to suppress in the main the open armed struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army by means of drastic measures of mass arrests, deportations and executions, the Ukrainian women prisoners in the concentration camps of Siberia were not broken in spirit, but took part in the strikes and uprisings behind the barbed wire in Vorkuta, Norilsk, Taishet and especially Kingir. In the latter place situated in Kazakhstan there broke out an insurrection on May 16, 1954, which lasted until June 26th, of the same year. On that day the Russians attacked with tanks and machine-guns the prisoners who barricaded themselves in the camp. At 7 o'clock in the morning of June 26th, 1954, 500 Ukrainian women prisoners, linking arms and singing patriotic songs marched unarmed against the approaching tanks hoping thus to stop their advance. But the Russian security troops drove the tanks into the ranks of women crushing them to death. The massacre continued for one and a half hours and hundreds of prisoners were killed. Similar cases of resistance were recorded in other places of imprisonment.

By this fearless behaviour the Ukrainian freedom fighters, including women, broke the myth that resistance to the Bolshevist oppression was impossible and struck fear into the hearts of the heirs of Stalin. They were compelled to introduce some changes into the Soviet terror regime and to release a number of prisoners. The solidarity of the Ukrainian nation has forced Moscow to make a step backwards in her attempt to destroy biologically Ukraine by wholesale deportations to Siberia. Though the triumph of Ukrainian liberation struggle still lies in the future, it will come as certainly as day follows night.

The sacrifice, the devotion, the toil and blood and sufferings of the Ukrainian patriotic women will not be in vain. A new generation of Ukrainians is growing that has been brought up on their glorious example. Both at home and abroad, Ukrainian women continue to make an invaluable contribution to the nation-wide struggle for the right of Ukraine to exist as a great and free nation, equal with other nations of the world. This aim illuminates also the work of the Ukrainian women in the Free World united in the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organisations. It tries to represent with honour not only the Ukrainian women abroad, but also the millions of Ukrainian women at home, who are unable to express themselves freely. To help Ukraine's freedom fight — is our most important task.

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