

Ukrainian National Council

The Ukrainian Problem

**Published by the Information Service of the Executive
Committee of the Ukrainian National Council**

In Exile 1949

P R E F A C E

In the course of World War II Soviet Russia has conquered the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and is ruling these countries through Communist governments. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Western Ukraine and Western White Russia (Byelorussia) have been directly incorporated into the Soviet Union. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Eastern Germany became 'satellites'.

Now when the Soviet armies are standing in the heart of Europe the truth about Communist dictatorship has come to the knowledge of the European peoples. It can be hoped now that the voice of the Ukrainian people who first had to begin the struggle against Russian Communist imperialism as far as 1917 will be heard. The civilized world did not pay much attention to the Ukrainian fight for liberation in 1917—1920 and to the developments in Ukraine under Russian Communist rule. The Ukrainian problem was looked at in the world as an 'internal Russian affair'. This was a fatal mistake. With the help of Ukrainian resources Russian militarism and imperialism has been strengthened and the consequences are now being felt throughout the whole of Europe and the entire world.

In this pamphlet some facts are submitted to explain the problem of Ukraine, the problem of that people the famous French historian Charles Seignobos wrote about: "Here is the most oppressed nation" (*Les Annales des Nationalités*, Paris, 1913).

INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

December, 1949.

The ancient name of the Ukrainian Nation was "Rus" (as a collective name) and "Rusyn" (Latin "Ruthenus") as the name of the individual.

The name Rus was used in the beginning for the tribe of the Polyans near the city of Kiev on the Dnieper River. When the rule of the "Russian" Princes had spread over other territories inhabited by the ancestors of the Ukrainian nation between the Don River and the Carpathian Mountains this name was accepted for the whole State. The Finnish tribes on the Oka and Moskva Rivers that were later colonized, gradually took the name "Rus" as subjects of the "Rusyns", the Kievan Princes. Usually these territories united under the rule of the Princes (later Tsars) of Moscow were called the "Muscovite State" and the subjects of the Tsar the "Muskovite people"

The Ukrainian patriots refused to recognise the name "Rus" for the Muscovite State for a long time. Thus we read in the anonymous "Istoriya Rusov" (History of the Ruthenians) which has been written in the second half of the 18th century:

"It is known that we were formerly what the Muscovites are actually (ruling nation. Editor.); government, priority, and even the name Rus have passed us to them, and we are for them like a byword among the heathen."

The word "Ukraine" is very old. The name "Rus" was of political origin, was brought into the territories subordinated to Kiev by the rule of the Princes and the Church hierarchy. The name "Ukraine" is truly popular. It can be traced back to ancient times in Ukrainian popular songs, in historical tales and legends. We find the name of Ukrain in the Hypatian Chronicle (for the first time in 1187).

The Ukrainian nation (Ruthenians) which had lived for millenniums on the territories between the River Don and the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, has rendered Europe a great service. The knight armies of the Princes of Kiev, Chernigov, Galicia and Volhynia in heroic exploits defended their country against the nomad hordes, and for centuries did not allow the wild Asiatic tribes to enter Western Europe. The powerful Tartar horde coming from the interior of Asia destroyed the Ukrainian capital Kiev and other cities and devastated the country in 1240.

After the destruction by the Tartars in the 13th century, the Ukrainian public life was concentrated in Galicia and Volhynia. In the 14th century, Galician territory was annexed by the Poles after the dynasty of the Galician Princes, the descendants of Vladimir the Saint, had died out. Volhynia and other parts of the Ukrainian territory weakened and devastated by the Tartars, came under the rule of Lithuanian Princes. The Lithuanian State was the immediate continuation of the political and cultural tradition of the Kievan State. The official language of the Lithuanian State was White-Ruthenian and Ukrainian.

With the coming of the Tartars the complete separation of the northern principalities of the former State of Kiev (Suzdal, Ryazan, Moscow, Tver) from Ukraine took place. Under the rule of the Princes of Moscow who "collected the country", a peculiar system of a centralized state, modelled after the pattern of the eastern despotisms of that time, arose. Of the liberal constitution of the Kievan State, where the Prince was only a servant of the State and had to reckon with the will of his subjects, — knights and townsmen (viche), in Muscovy there was not the slightest sign. The Government of the Princes of Moscow imitated the despotic system of the Tartar "Golden Horde".

The oriental despotic features of the political and economic order of the Muscovite State gave the central government a tremendous power

that was used for the enslavement of all social classes and for the seclusion of the Muscovite people from Western Europe.

The present Communist Government has received the tyrannical tradition from the Tsars of Moscow. Soviet propaganda consequently glorifies one of the most cruel tyrants of universal history—Ivan the Terrible—in its press, literature and radio. No less is the glorification of Tsar Peter I, the founder of modern Russian imperialism by the Russian Communists. Here the Bolsheviks have found their corresponding Russian national tradition.

The development of Ukraine and White Russia under the rule of the Lithuanian princely dynasty and later in the Polish State went, contrary to this Muscovite oriental despotism, in the common European direction. The social classes were not enslaved by the State as they were in Russia. The nobility could influence by its diets the policy of the State; the townspeople had, likewise, their self-administration secured by the laws.

The neighborhood of the Tartars was an obstacle to the normal development of Ukraine. The Tartars captured people from Ukraine and sold them into slavery in the oriental markets.

In spite of this permanent danger from the steppe and under these extremely difficult conditions the Ukrainian nation did not abandon its cultural activity.

Schools, literature, printing developed in Ukraine. The learned Arab, Paul of Aleppo, who visited Ukraine in 1654, wrote in his memoirs that education was spread among the Ukrainian people, and that even the Ukrainian women were literate. Academies have also been founded in Ukraine and were the models and sources of education for all Greek-Orthodox Slav peoples. Ukrainians studied at the Universities of Italy, France, Germany and other countries.

Against the Tartar hordes the Ukrainians created an organization of its own—the Cossack Army. From the middle of the 16th century on, the centre of the Ukrainian Cossack Army was in the fortress "Sich" southward of the Dnieper Cataracts. From this the name of "Zaporovian Army" arose ("porohs" are the rocks in Dnieper). The Zaporovian Army performed great deeds in fighting the Tartars; its exploits are glorified by the genial Ukrainian, N. Gogol, in his well-known novel "Taras Bulba" (written in Russian).

Eastern Ukraine, which had belonged, after the Tartar ruin, to the Lithuanian State, was through the Union of Lublin incorporated by Poland (1569). The Polish Government planned to abolish the Ukrainian Cossack Army, and to make the Cossacks serfs of the nobility. The relations between the Polish Government and the masses of the Ukrainian people deteriorated in consequence of the religious persecutions of the Greek-Orthodox Ukrainians by the Catholic Polish State. For these reasons (in 1648), the great Ukrainian revolution against Poland broke out under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1648 to 1657), the Hetman, Commander in Chief of the Cossack Army. This revolution separated Ukraine from Poland.

In 1654 Bohdan Khmelnytsky concluded a treaty with the Tzar of Moscow. This treaty secured for Ukraine its own army, administration and independent foreign policy.

Under the protectorate of the Tzar of Moscow, Ukraine did not find the security for its liberty, prosperity and progress. When it became evident that the Tzar of Moscow tried to reduce or abolish the rights of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Government of B. Khmelnytsky planned the annulment of the alliance with Moscow.

Against the Ukrainian aspirations for independence, Poland and Moscow acted in common. By the treaty of Andrusov of 1667, Ukraine was divided among these countries on the Dnieper line. The western Ukrainian territories (Volhynia, Galicia, and others) remained under Polish rule. Ukraine to

the east of the Dnieper remained under the protectorate of the Muscovite Tsars, preserving restricted autonomous rights, with an elected Hetman as head of the Government.

Tsar Peter I planned the abolition of the remains of the autonomous order of Ukraine on the eastern bank of the Dnieper. In order to defend the freedom of Ukraine, Hetman Ivan Mazepa concluded an alliance with the Swedish King, Charles XII, against Russia in 1708. The battle of Poltava (1709), fatal for Ukraine and Sweden, put an end to the plans of the Ukrainian patriots to renew Ukrainian independence. Nonetheless, for decades, even in the second half of the 18th century, the members of the Ukrainian Government which went into exile in 1709, continued in various countries their diplomatic action for the defence of the Ukrainian independence.

During the 18th century Ukraine lost under Muscovite rule all its national rights. After the dismemberment of Poland at the end of the 18th century all Ukrainian territories except Galicia, Bukowina and Carpatho-Ukraine became provinces of the Russian empire. The Ukrainian nation under the rule of the Russian Tsars was sentenced to political death.

The Tsarist Government forbade the use of the Ukrainian language in schools, offices and even in Church. The printing of Ukrainian books and newspapers was forbidden by a special "ukas" (order) of the Tsar (1876). In this state of cruel enslavement Ukraine remained under the rule of the Tsars until the revolution of 1917. Only in the Ukrainian provinces of Austria (Galicia and Bukowina) the Ukrainian cultural and political life could develop. The example of the Ukrainian movement in these western parts of Ukraine influenced the resurrection of the political life of the Ukrainian subjects of the Russian Tsar. Thus the Tsarist government in World War I had the aim to annex Galicia and Bukowina in order to root out "Mazeppism".

After the downfall of Tsarism in 1917, the Ukrainian nation at once declared its right for national self-determination. The first revolutionary Parliament of Ukraine—the Ukrainian Central Rada (Council)—declared the independence of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic in Kiev on January 22, 1918. Against this democratic Ukraine the Russian Communist dictatorial government waged war.

After the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy the Ukrainians of Galicia declared, on November 1, 1918, the independent Western Ukrainian Democratic Republic. By the act of January 22, 1919, in Kiev, the union of western Ukraine with the eastern Ukrainian Democratic Republic was proclaimed.

This happened in the time of struggle of the Ukrainian nation on all fronts; in the north against the attacks of the Russian Communist army, in the south-east the war against Russian Tsarist generals was fought out, in the west the Ukrainian army had to defend its territory against the forces of restored Poland. Until 1920 the army of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic fought for the independence of the Ukrainian nation.

In 1921 Soviet Russia and Poland divided, by the treaty of Riga, the Ukrainian provinces among themselves (the Riga frontier). The government of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic in exile did not cease to protest before the civilised world against the enslavement of Ukraine by foreign States.

From the time of occupation of Ukraine by Soviet Russia the Russian Communist government annihilated millions of Ukrainians by mass arrests, deportations into concentration camps, executions and famine.

At the end of 1920 there were not less than 40,000 Ukrainian partisans in Ukraine who fought against the Russian Communists as an organised force.

The Soviet Russian Government took advantage of the horrible famine of 1921/22 in Ukraine and succeeded in strengthening its rule there. A drought in the fall of 1920 and spring 1921 was followed by a bad harvest, and a great dearth of food arose. A real famine began. Though in Ukraine in autumn, 1921, millions of the Ukrainian population were starving, the Russian Government, nevertheless, **took away from the hungry regions the rest of the food stocks, and exported them to Russia.** This inhuman policy of the Russian Communists roused the attention of foreigners who stayed at that time in Ukraine. The American historian, H. H. Fisher, writes in his book on the famine of 1921/22 that the representatives of the Soviet Russian Government demanded resolutely that it was "necessary to request the A.R.A. (American Relief Administration) not to split its forces, but to **concentrate them entirely on the Volga area**". Professor Fisher remarks in his book:

"The policy of the Communist Party with respect to the Ukraine famine presents many curious aspects. Not only did the Moscow Government fail to bring the Ukrainian situation to the knowledge of the American Relief Administration as it did other regions much more remote, but it actively discouraged . . . anything likely to bring the Americans in contact with the Ukraine . . . Before the A.R.A. had begun its operations (January, 1922) the Moscow and the so-called Kharkov Government did not undertake anything serious for the aid to the hungry people of Ukraine". (H. H. Fisher, "The Famine in Soviet Russia", New York, 1927.)

The representative of the Relief Committee, of Fridtjof Nansen, who was in Ukraine at the beginning of 1922, gives the following facts on the famine:

"Eight million souls are starving in the south of Ukraine. Two and a half million of them have absolutely nothing to eat. A further two and a half million are feeding themselves on substitutes, such as hay, dried plants, etc., but are not getting any normal meals; three million have some supplies, but in such small quantities that they will soon be reckoned in the first and second categories. It may be said that before the end of April, 7 million souls will come under these two categories. About 700,000 little children who have been brought into municipal asylums do not receive more than one-fifth of the normal portion. Child mortality is tremendous. It reaches 50 per cent. In Zaporozje, one million souls are literally starving, 60 per cent are children. Cannibalism is spreading. Ten thousand people die in Zaporozje daily. All the cattle and the horses have been devoured." (La famine en Ukraine, Geneve, 1922).

The horrible famine in Ukraine, aggravated by the special "hunger policy" of Soviet Russia helped the Russian Communists to destroy the partisan movement in Ukraine and to strengthen their regiment.

The policy of collectivization and industrialization started in 1929 with enormous demands on Ukrainian national economy. Moscow used the Ukrainian national economy predominantly for the industrialization of Russia. The production of the heavy industries in Ukraine gave in 1931 63% of the whole output of coal, 83% of the production of coke and 77% of iron ore of the USSR (Izvestia, Moscow, March 1, 1932). "The production of the Ukrainian plants solves the entire problem of metals in the whole Soviet Union" — the Kharkov Communist wrote on October 13, 1931.

The forced collectivization of the Ukrainian agriculture, started in 1929/30, caused horrible devastation among the Ukrainian peasants. Not less than 200,000 farms were destroyed, their property was taken into the collective farms (Communist, Kharkov, December 21, 1934). The owners of these farms, the so-called "kulaks" were deported together with their families into the North of Russia, where they mostly died of hunger and disease caused by forced labour. If one counts a normal Ukrainian peasant.

family at least 6 persons the number of those ruined and destroyed by this collectivization reached 1,200,000 persons. In reality the number of the victims of Stalin's "General Line" was much greater.

This „liquidation of the kulaks as a class“ has not only taken the lives of millions of Ukrainian farmers: it has destroyed the best elements among the peasants. These peasants were no "exploiters": they were able farmers who tilled their land in the sweat of their brows and produced grain for their families and for the market. Due to this absurd and cruel "liquidation of the kulaks" the shortages in the supply of agricultural products grew enormously.

The economic and national oppression of Ukraine was felt also by the Ukrainian Communists. They saw the pernicious results of forced collectivization in Ukraine. The Ukrainian peasants, though terrorized by executions and deportations, had no desire to work for the Soviet Russian dictatorship. In 1931/32 the plan for the delivery of grain for the Soviet State was not carried out in Ukraine; the cultivation area disastrously diminished. But Moscow's demands on Ukraine grew steadily. In summer, 1932, Molotov and Kaganovich arrived in Ukraine from Moscow in order to demand from the Communist organization in Ukraine the increase of grain delivery.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union passed a resolution of non-confidence to the leaders of the C. P. of Ukraine of January 24, 1933, and "strengthened" the directory of the Communist Party in Ukraine with Stalin's agents, headed by Postyshev. Postyshev directed the repressions, particularly against Communists of Ukrainian nationality. By arrests and executions of Ukrainian Communists, Postyshev wanted to terrorise the entire Ukrainian population which was listening to the oppositional attacks of the Ukrainian Communists against the policy of Moscow.

Moscow's fears of the Communist opposition in Ukraine are shown by the dimensions of the "purge" which had been made among the Communists in Ukraine in 1933. During 1933, 35.5 per cent. of the members were expelled from the C.P. of Ukraine ("Communist," 1, 2, 1934). In some regions, for instance, in that of Kiev, half of the members were expelled from the Communist Party. Many Communist organisations in villages ceased to exist and were replaced by "political detachments" sent from Russia. In the course of 10 months in 1933, in Ukraine, 237 secretaries of Committees of the Communist Party, 279 presidents of Rayon Executive Committees, and 158 presidents of Rayon Control Commissions were dismissed ("Izvestia," Moscow, 28, 11, 1933).

The purge in the public institutions of Ukraine was directed principally against the Ukrainians. The Communist Mykolenko, the former director of the Ukrainian National Library in Kiev, declared before the purge commission in 1933:

„I am being persecuted, because my name ends with "ko", because I am a Ukrainian" (**The First Results of the Purge**; Moscow, 1934).

The purge in Ukraine was taking place in the conditions of a famine more terrible than that the Ukrainians had known in 1921/22. If the famine of 1921/22 was caused by extraordinary drought and bad harvest, and was only increased by the exploitation of the Soviet Russian Government, the famine of 1932/33 in Ukraine and the North Caucasus **was created by Moscow according to a plan made in advance**: on the corpses of millions of Ukrainians (in the population of the North Caucasus the Ukrainians had a majority) the Soviet Russian Government wished to found its forced collectivization.

The reaction of the peasants in Russia and Ukraine with regard to the collectivization was different. The Ukrainian peasant is attached to his own

land in another way than the Russian. In Russia the remainder of the primitive "obshchina," a system in which the whole land belonged to the community, every member of which received at periodical partitions allotments of land according to the number of "souls" or "eaters", still existed. For this reason the Russian peasant did not cling to his land, for he did not know how long he could till his allotment. Besides, the peasants in Russia, who were accustomed to obedience during the half of a millennium by the tyrannical regime of the Tsars, obeyed the order of the Soviet Government almost without resistance and went into the collective farms. The Ukrainian peasant, freedom-loving, with a feeling of personal dignity, refused to go into the collective farms, for he rightly regarded them as a worse economic system than serfdom was. Moscow knew the free, inflexible character of the Ukrainians and organised therefore the famine in Ukraine in order to break the resistance of the peasants. For this purpose all food the Ukrainian peasant population possessed was, in the course of 1932/33, taken by force through the Communist administration. These food stocks were exported to Russia or abroad. As the consequence of this a terrible famine began in Ukraine. The well-known American journalist, W. H. Chamberlin, calls it "political famine".

Though rumors about the starving of the Ukrainians went abroad, Moscow stubbornly denied the fact of famine in Ukraine. To prevent the world from learning the true conditions in Ukraine the Moscow Government in 1933 forbade foreign journalists to enter Ukraine.

The hunger catastrophe of 1932/33 was so great that the population of Ukraine died in masses, and cannibalism and necrophagy spread among the people. The peasants of Ukraine, weakened and decimated by the famine, were forced to enter "voluntarily" the Soviet collective farms. Though the harvest of 1933 was good, millions of Ukrainians did not live to see it.

The dimensions of the devastations of Ukraine by the famine "organized" by Soviet Russia were carefully concealed by the Russian Communist Government, and are even now a kept secret. Only by chance some foreign correspondents learned about the results of this famine in Ukraine. W. H. Chamberlin writes in his book, "The Confessions Of An Individualist," New York, 1941, on the famine of 1933 as follows:

"There were many rumors of mass starvation, especially in the normally rich farming regions of Ukraine and the North Caucasus. The impression that something very abnormal was taking place in the villages was strengthened by the fact that the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs had introduced a new rule forbidding journalists to travel in Russia without special permission—a permission which was never granted when Ukraine and the North Caucasus were mentioned as destinations. The official explanation of this ruling would have deserved an international mendacity prize. It was that the presence of foreign correspondents would disturb the harvesting operations. The ban on journalistic travel was suggestively lifted after the new harvest had been gathered in—after there had been an opportunity to bury the corpses and to remove the outward signs of the famine."

The American journalist Walter Duranty "optimistically" estimated the number of the victims of the famine in U.S.S.R. in 1933 as 5 million people. Of course, the principal part of these victims were in Ukraine, against which the Russian Communist regime is carrying its special policy of extirpation.

The Soviet Russian Government began to fill the Ukrainian territories depopulated by the famine with colonists from Russia who were not infected by "Ukrainian separatism."

The Russian Communist Government covers its policy of national oppression and economical exploitation of the Ukrainian nation with the label

"Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic," which has been declared to be one of the Republics of the Soviet Union. The western territories of Ukraine—Galicia, Volhynia, Bessarabia, Bukowina—were annexed by Poland and Rumania and suffered from a policy of denationalization and economical exploitation.

Against all these foreign regimes the Ukrainian nation fought in various forms and by various means. During World War II Ukraine was the object of German imperialism. Against German occupation as well as against Russian Communist Government the Ukrainian nation fought during the last war in organized uprisings. Especially the struggle of the Ukrainian Partisan Army has not stopped.

In consequence of World War II all Ukrainian territories have been occupied by Soviet Russia. In the whole of Ukraine Communist terror rages. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians had to leave their native country to save their lives from this terror.

The Ukrainian nation living under the totalitarian regime of Soviet Russia cannot express its political will freely. Under these circumstances the organized Ukrainian emigration has the right and the moral duty to defend the interests of its nation before the world. Therefore, on July 16, 1948, the representatives of the political parties from all Ukrainian territories united and established the Ukrainian National Council as the representation of the Ukrainian nation in its struggle for independence.

In its declaration to the Ukrainian nation the Ukrainian National Council, defining its aims, said:

"Clinging to the acts of the restoration of the Ukrainian national state the Ukrainian National Council has decided to reorganize the State Centre of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic and to create a renewed Executive Committee responsible to the National Council.

"The Ukrainian National Council announces before the whole civilised world its unanimous protest against the foreign rule of Russian Communists in Ukraine, and states that this present Soviet government has no right to speak in the name of the Ukrainian nation.

"The Ukrainian National Council declares that the so-called government of Soviet Ukraine is only a puppet of the Russian Communist Government, which rules the Ukrainian nation only by the force of arms and the means of terror.

"Until the time when the Ukrainian nation will be able to express its will freely on its own soil, the interests of the Ukrainian nation before the world shall be represented by the State Centre of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic, which in due time has received its mandate from free elected Ukrainian legislative institutions of the independent democratic Ukraine . . . The Ukrainian National Council will oppose any kind of totalitarian and dictatorial aspirations and will stand for the equal status of all citizens of Ukraine regardless of their nationality, race or creed."

With the creation of the Ukrainian National Council the Ukrainian national movement takes on a new phase in the political history of the Ukrainian nation. The enslaved Ukrainian people in the home country as well as the numerous masses of Ukrainian emigrants in the countries of western Europe and America listen to the voice of the Ukrainian National Council. In the struggle of democracy against Russian Communist totalitarianism the Ukrainian nation chose its place on the side of the democratic nations. The wide territory of Ukraine with its fertile soil, its mineral resources and its industrious population might play an important role in world economy for the peaceful development and progress of mankind. But now Communist Russia exploits the iron ore of Krivoy Rog, the coal of the Donets Basin, the manganic ore in Nikopol and the oilwells of Boryslaw for its war industries. Without Ukraine the Russian Communist militarism and

imperialism could never have such an impetus, for it would be deprived of its economic basis. **Therefore the Ukrainian problem is one of the key problems of eastern Europe.** The support of the national self-determination of the Ukrainian nation is the support of the democratic development of eastern Europe and through this of the whole world.

We cannot hope very much for the success of a democratic development of Russia after the downfall of the Communist dictatorship. The tradition of absolutism, tyranny and imperialism, created through centuries of Russian history, cannot be forgotten so easily and replaced by a democratic ideology. For this reason the peoples living in the vicinity of Russia should unite their forces for the common defence of their liberty and their independence from the Russian threat.

Russian imperialism, which after World War II devoured a great part of Central and Southern Europe, has not stopped in its campaign, but is ready to "liberate" other peoples and territories in Europe, Asia and other continents alike. The hope that Soviet Russia might be appeased by negotiations and concessions, and that in this way her ambitions would be restricted, is groundless. Only force and resolution on the part of the democratic Great Powers can stop the pressure of Russian expansion and save civilised mankind from the terrible danger of an everlasting enslavement in the Soviet world State. For the defence of their national and democratic rights against Russian imperialism, all freedom-loving peoples of the world should unite their forces, especially with the peoples of Europe in the forefront.

The Ukrainian nation which has been the first to fight under the banner of democracy against Russian Communist dictatorship from December, 1917, wants to take part in the democratic transformation of Europe in the interest of world peace with equal rights.



