

# Correspondence

NOTE: Readers are welcome to comment on matters discussed in this journal. Letters should be addressed to the Editors, Problems of Communism, US Information Agency, 1776 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20547.

## UKRAINIAN DISSIDENTS

TO THE EDITORS: May I point out one or two misconceptions and imprecisions in Professor Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone's otherwise excellent and perceptive article, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR" (*Problems of Communism*, May-June 1974)? Referring to my article, "The Western Republics" (*Ethnic Pressures in the Soviet Union: Conflict Studies*, No. 30, London, December 1972, p. 4), she states that

"a number of . . . underground groups existed in the Ukraine in the 1960's, some as a continuation of wartime independence-seeking groups, as exemplified by the Ukrainian National Liberation Front" (p. 17). Actually, the Ukrainian National Front (its correct name) is the only group about which there is positive knowledge that it was "conceived as the continuation of the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists)" (see M. Browne, Ed., *Ferment in the Ukraine*, New York, Praeger, and London, Macmillan, 1971, p. 233). Professor Rakowska-Harmstone also adds that "the Front reportedly attempted to enlist Chinese aid to appeal to Western journalists to protest political arrests in the Ukraine in the summer of 1973," and further on (pp. 21-22) that "in at least one case, nationalist dissidents have sought Chinese approval," this time again referring to

my article, pp. 6-7. This is definitely a misunderstanding, which is to be found also in the work of certain other scholars.

The facts, as far as they can be ascertained, are as follows. The Ukrainian National Front, organized in 1964 and based around Ivano-Frankovsk in the Western Ukraine, was uncovered in 1967. Its members were given sentences of between 11 and 17 years (see Browne, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34), and there is no reason to suppose that any part of the organization has survived. Four years later, in 1971, a "Ukrainian National Front" leaflet was reported to have been distributed in the Soviet Far East, north of the Chinese border; though obviously produced by Ukrainians, the leaflet had a definite Chinese Maoist orientation, and it stated that the UNF was "composed of Ukrainian patriots, including Ukrainian Marxists-Leninists." Subsequently, sporadic broadcasts of UNF statements over Radio Peking have been reported. This fact, together with a detailed examination of the text of both this leaflet and an appeal by the UNF in the summer of 1972, lead to the conclusion that this particular UNF is apparently centered in China and most likely consists of Ukrainians resident there. There is so far no evidence of its being active in the Soviet Ukraine. There is

also no evidence whatsoever of any connection between this UNF and the Ivano-Frankovsk UNF of 1964-67 (see my article, pp. 6-7)—no evidence, that is, if one disregards their common name. But then, "National Front" is not an unusual appellation; it recurs, for instance, in the Estonian National Front formed in 1972 (see my article, p. 9). One would surely not suppose, on the evidence of the names alone, that the latter was connected with a UNF in the same way as, say, the Communist Party of Estonia and the Communist Party of the Ukraine are connected within the CPSU.

There also seems to be no *samizdat* evidence of any Ukrainian dissidents being connected with China or even favorably disposed toward Maoism; the few references to Mao's China found in Ukrainian *samizdat* are either neutral or critical, as for instance in Valentyn Moroz's "Report from the Beria Reservation," or in Vyacheslav Chornovil's 1968 letter (see Browne, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-52, 171).

Finally, Professor Rakowska-Harmstone remarks (p. 13) that "the formal complaint [against Piotr Shelest] was his hard-line opposition to the policy of détente with the West." Surely, in order to be called formal, a complaint (or a charge, or an accusation) has either to be

## CORRECTIONS

In Sergius Yakobson's essay-review, "The State of the Word" (*Problems of Communism*, November-December 1974), the editors inadvertently misidentified Nikolai Pogodin's play, *Kremlin Chimes*, as a novel (p. 49).

In the Correspondence Section of the same issue (p. 60), Professor Alvin Z. Rubinstein of the University of Pennsylvania is incorrectly said to be on leave at Oxford University; he is at Clare College, Cambridge University.

published in an appropriate formulation by the Soviet press or other media, or at least to be reliably known to have been voiced at a formal meeting of an appropriate political body. The former has not occurred, and there is no evidence of the latter. The one and only definitely known accusation against Shelest fully deserving to be described as "formal" is the scathing critique, mentioned by Professor Rakowska-Harmstone, of Shelest's *Our*

*Soviet Ukraine*, accusing him of placing "inordinate emphasis on the special features of Ukrainian history and culture" and thus giving comfort to "nationalists," and also charging him with the probably much more serious crime of "autarkism." It may perhaps be noted that the latter offense seems to be peculiar to Shelest, and the word had apparently to be coined to "fit the crime": "avtarkizm" does not occur in any of the largest and most

recent Russian or Ukrainian dictionaries, nor does "autarkism" in English ones.

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MS. HARMSTONE REPLIES: I am grateful for the clarifications provided by Dr. Swoboda on the subject of underground groups in the Ukraine, where data are scarce and frequently confus-

ing. In reference to Shelest's removal, the word "formal", to which Dr. Swoboda objects, was admittedly used imprecisely. What I meant to convey was that the "hard-line opposition" theory was the one originally accepted as valid by most Western commentators.

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