

The Resurgence Of Ukrainian Nationalism

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ALTHOUGH the Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe after the Russian Soviet Republic itself, and possesses clearly defined frontiers, a national language, and a historical tradition—it even glories in those supreme attributes of modern statehood: a national flag, a national anthem, and a place at the United Nations—few westerners ever think of it as a state. The reason is that the Ukraine, all appearances to the contrary, is not really a state at all but that curious entity, a “Union Republic” of the U.S.S.R. In other words, it is a mere territorial unit of the last of the great colonial empires. And, in the world of cant we inhabit today, this is sufficient to render it of no interest whatsoever to western opinion. The granting of independence to an unviable patch of African jungle or a remote coral atoll is a matter of incomparably greater import than the continuing thralldom of many ancient European nations. And in this great struggle against the remnants of western colonialism, progressive people all over the world warmly welcome the support and fervent anti-colonial devotion of the greatest and most oppressive colonial empire of them all.

Nothing can better illustrate the nature of this totalitarian oppression and the obduracy of the struggle against it than the recent history of the Ukraine. After breaking away from Russia in 1918, the Ukraine

remained independent for only two years—two years of ferocious civil war. The comparative tranquillity of Lenin’s “New Economic Policy” in the 1920’s—gradual economic and social resuscitation, and even a marked cultural renaissance—was cut short by Stalin’s momentous decision in 1928 to collectivize the countryside. In the space of six or seven years the country’s population declined by one-tenth—surely a record for a time of peace.

Khrushchev’s Purge

The Communist authorities have seen to it that the outside world knows hardly anything about this aspect of Soviet history. Only the barest facts have emerged: at least four million Ukrainians perished in the artificially created famine of 1932-1933, more than two million more were deported to Siberia, and hundreds of thousands were executed or died in prison. The Ukrainian intellectual elite was already all but exterminated by the time the Great Purge of 1936-1938 began to sweep through the land. By early 1938, after Nikita Khrushchev, who knew the Ukraine well from his early years as a mechanic in the mining camps of the Donbas, had been sent by Stalin to take over, every member of the Ukrainian S.S.R.’s Central Committee and its government, every departmental head and police chief, every regional and district party sec-

retary and council chairman, every industrial director and administrator, almost every writer, journalist, and scholar of repute, had been arrested—and most of them executed.

Small wonder that the German armies that poured into the Ukraine in June, 1941, were welcomed as liberators. The Ukrainians soon realized their mistake: the National Government established in Lvov (in the recently annexed Western Ukraine) under Stepan Bandera was dispersed after a few days and its members arrested. Once again the Ukrainians took to arms simultaneously against two of the world’s most formidable powers. They were led by the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the UPA (Ukrainian Rebel Army) under the command of General Roman Shukhevych.

From 1944 onward, the Ukraine, and particularly its western regions, became the arena of a relentless struggle between the guerrilla detachments of UPA and regular divisions of the Red Army and the security forces. Prisoners were tortured and killed, hostages executed, villages destroyed, whole populations resettled by the Russian troops. It was one of the bitterest guerrilla wars of our time, comparable in scale to Vietnam. But the West, of course, heard little about it—nor did the Soviet peoples themselves know much more. I discovered the truth only by accident in the fall of 1946, after demobilization from the Red Army. In the course of a two-week train journey through the Ukraine from west to east, it became clear that the whole western area, with the exception of the railways and the large towns, was under the control of the Banderovtsy, as they were called.

Against a determined, ruthless totalitarian enemy like the Russian Communists, no resistance movement can continue indefinitely. In March, 1950, General Shukhevych was killed in action; soon afterward the organized guerrilla operation was finally crushed.

NOTHING, it seemed, not even Stalin’s death, could revive national feeling after twenty years of fearful bloodletting. But slowly, painfully, the Ukraine began to rediscover itself. A new generation had

to grow up and nearly fifteen years had to pass before Ukrainian nationalism could flare up again.

In the post-Stalin period, the party's "Marxist-Leninist nationalities policy" has been undeviatingly pursued through every twist and turn of politics. Its essence is the gradual assimilation of national cultures within one single Soviet (and obviously Russian) culture, the gradual adoption of the Russian language by the nationalities of the U.S.S.R., the elimination of non-Russian (and especially anti-Russian) national traditions, and the eradication of "bourgeois nationalism." But the new Soviet leadership was in no position to apply Stalin's methods of naked terror: the aim was to be achieved by "peaceful" means of infiltration, encroachment, and re-education.

The methodical dilution of the Ukraine's ethnic composition, by settling large numbers of Russians in the cities and encouraging the "voluntary" migration of Ukrainians to the Virgin Lands and elsewhere, has resulted in Russians' making up about half the urban population. The towns have become largely Russian in character. Ukrainian national culture has been systematically reduced to an inferior status. As a result of unrelenting pressure upon schoolchildren and their parents, by 1966 about one-third of all pupils attended Russian-language schools. In that year only thirty-five per cent of the total circulation of periodicals was in Ukrainian, and the proportion of book titles printed in Ukrainian gradually decreased from a 1930 high of eighty-four per cent to forty-one per cent in 1965.

It would be blind to deny that the upheavals of the past half century have wrought profound and lasting changes in the Ukraine—changes not only in the national or social composition of the population but in its world outlook and in the very nature of its national consciousness. For better or for worse, the Ukraine is today far more open to non-Ukrainian influences than in any previous period. In this sense, I suppose, one can speak of the Bolshevik nationalities policy as having been successful. But, as with so many other Communist "successes," this one has created prob-

lems more acute and more dangerous for the régime than the original unsatisfactory situation it was designed to remedy.

THE OLD-STYLE romantic peasant nationalism has been replaced by the modern, ideological nationalism of an industrialized, urbanized, and literate society. Whereas the national movement of the 1940's acquired most of its impetus, together with its leaders, from the western regions—the historical Galicia—which had never been part of the Russian Empire and regarded all things Russian with incomprehension and hatred, the present generation of nationalist Ukrainian intellectuals are products of a Soviet education and of a newly homogeneous Ukrainian nation. They are steeped in Russian culture no less than in their own. In their underground writings they quote Herzen and Chernyshevsky as often as Shevchenko or Ivan Franko, and invoke the names of Sinyavsky and Daniel much more frequently than those of Bandera or Shukhevych.

The new movement of national protest has developed under the influence of the explosive events of the last fifteen years. The emergence, for the first time since 1917, of a genuine independent public opinion, which Stalin's discredited and enfeebled epigones have been unable to suppress, coincided with intensified efforts at Russifying the Ukraine. The resultant reaction in the Ukraine is, in the words of the young Ukrainian literary critic Ivan Dziuba, "a spontaneous, multiform, widespread, and self-generating process: a nation trying to defend itself against the obvious prospect of disappearing from the human family."

As Dziuba points out, the new movement of national resistance appears in a variety of forms: in conspiratorial anti-Communist organizations, in the semi-underground world of the young writers, and on the official surface of Soviet life, where it receives occasional backing even from otherwise reactionary figures of the literary establishment.

One can find parallels for much of this in the present Russian cultural ferment. But the feelings of the Ukrainian intellectuals are much more clear-cut, their demands much more definite. And unlike the Rus-

sians, the Ukrainians have a positive program: national integrity and national independence. As a program this may sound terribly unsophisticated (as were the programs of every other national-liberation movement in this century), but it does provide a concrete rallying point for men of widely differing social backgrounds and political convictions—something the Russian protesters, in their tortured search for "legality," "democratization," or "Leninist ideals," have so far been unable to achieve.

Poet and Prophet

Like any other similar movement, this revived Ukrainian nationalism has retained many traditional features. Perhaps the most striking link with the past is the fact that once again the central figure of the national upsurge is a poet—a poet of rare talent, Vasyl Symonenko, who died, aged twenty-nine, in December, 1963. He has already become a legend in the Ukraine: the great hero figure of the young generation. The Communist authorities, who mistrusted and abused Symonenko in his lifetime, are now attempting to claim him as their own. Many of his verses have been posthumously published in a mutilated form, and an official Symonenko cult is being fostered, with very little success.

Communist anxiety about the rapid and "unhealthy" growth of Symonenko's unsponsored popularity became apparent after the publication abroad of some of the boldest of Symonenko's suppressed poems, together with his diary in 1965. The government's alarm, as well as the young people's enthusiasm, is easily understood when one reads lines such as these (from "Granite Obelisks"), referring to the Ukraine after forty-five years of Soviet rule:

"In the cemetery of bullet-riddled illusions
There is no longer any room for graves.
Billions of faiths—buried in the soil,
Billions of happinesses—smashed to smithereens . . ."

At a crowded literary meeting in Kiev in January, 1965, in honor of Symonenko's thirtieth birthday, Ivan

Dziuba, a close friend of the dead poet, openly declared, in the presence of the "Republic's" official ideological leaders: "Vasyl Symonenko is first and foremost a poet of the national idea. . . . It is real for us today, and it represents the concept of a fully sovereign state and cultural existence for the Ukrainian socialist nation." Words like these had probably not been heard in public since the liquidation of the Ukraine's independence.

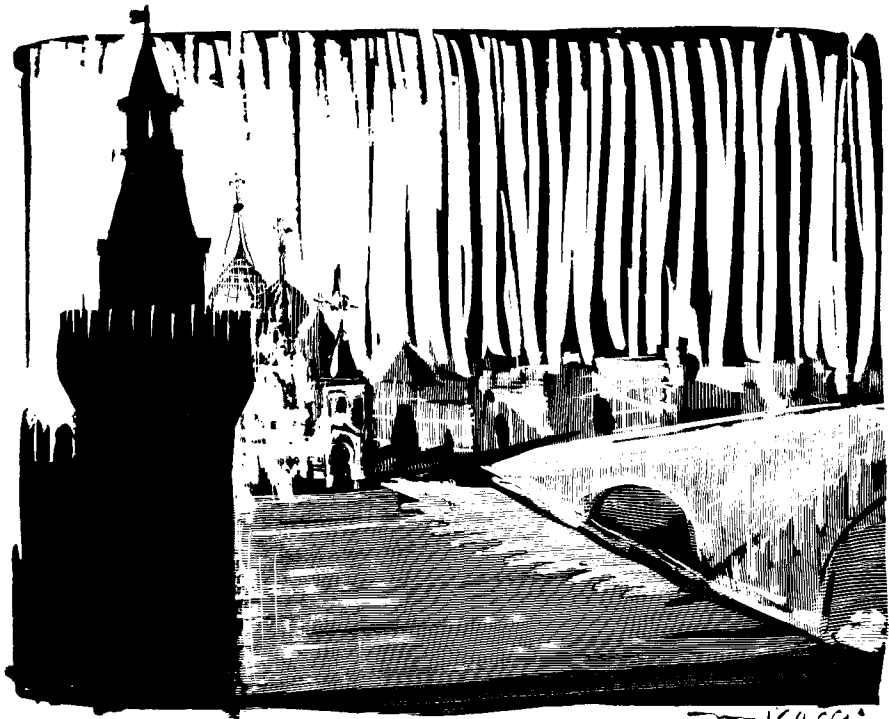
The challenge was taken up. Soon a group of Symonenko's associates, including Dziuba and the critic Ivan Svitlychny, were arrested on charges of having smuggled the poet's manuscripts to the West and held in custody for several months. But the time-honored remedies of the KGB seem to have little effect nowadays. In September, 1966, after his release, Dziuba delivered a sensational speech at Babi Yar, where the Nazis had massacred sixty thousand Kiev Jews twenty-five years before.

This remarkable speech provides clear proof (as do a number of other documents) that the new Ukrainian national movement, so far from being anti-Semitic—as it had been, frequently and notoriously, in the past—is making common cause with the Jews, in whom it sees another minority subjected to even harsher oppression by the common enemy, who had long derived profit from pitting the two peoples against each other. "Babi Yar," declared Dziuba, "is our common tragedy."

Also, Dziuba spoke of Communism and Nazism as being two almost identical manifestations of a single phenomenon—a fact that has long been clear to thinking Soviet citizens but has yet to be grasped by western "progressive" intellectuals, forever petrified in their anachronistic concept of "Left" versus "Right."

Fascism neither begins nor ends in Babi Yar. Fascism begins in disrespect for man, and ends in the destruction of man, in the destruction of nations—though not necessarily only in the manner of Babi Yar.

The names of Symonenko, Dziuba, and some of their friends have broken through the totalitarian barriers of silence and become renowned throughout their land. But until quite recently the police-state authorities were still able to prevent



the public from knowing anything about the hundreds and thousands of people who were being arrested, tried for nationalism before secret tribunals, and silently sent away to prison or prison camp or even executed. And all this at the very time that the western world was busy congratulating Khrushchev for having done away with political trials!

TODAY the Soviet régime can no longer sustain this monstrous edifice of hypocrisy. For the first time in years it has become possible to reconstruct a detailed (though obviously far from complete) record of recent terroristic measures against Ukrainian nationalism.

After a few years of relative quiescence, large-scale arrests began once more in December, 1958, when the KGB uncovered an illegal United Party for the Liberation of the Ukraine, organized by a group of young workers and students in Stanislaviv (now Ivano-Frankovsk).

The arrest less than two years later of members of the Ukrainian Worker-Peasant Alliance was a more serious affair. In some ways their secret trial in Lvov became a turning point in the Soviet authorities' treatment of Ukrainian nationalism, because the men on trial had themselves been trusted members of the Communist elite. One can imagine

the fury of the KGB when it discovered that exemplary Soviet citizens, trusted guardians of law and order, had established an illegal organization to prepare the Ukraine's secession. Their draft program, couched in impeccable Marxist-Leninist terms, was a scathing indictment of the régime: they accused the Soviet government of responsibility for the murder of millions of persons, for mass famines, for suppressing the Ukrainian language and transforming the Ukraine into an economic appendage of Russia. "In some respects the Ukraine's position today is far worse than it had been under the czarist régime—in reality she is a colony of Moscow." The chief victims are the peasants, "who are suffering social, economic, political, and cultural persecution, whose position is no different from that of serfs in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries."

All the accused stubbornly maintained that there was nothing illegal in conducting peaceful propaganda for secession—a right specifically granted each Republic by Article 17 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. This claim aroused considerable hilarity among their judges, who asked them to stop playing the fool: as educated men, they knew perfectly well that the constitution existed solely for the edification of the out-

side world. The sentences were appropriately savage—as much as fifteen years in prison camp.

When, a few months later, the KGB uncovered yet another illegal organization in Lvov, the sentences were even harsher. At the trial in December, 1961, of twenty young workers and peasants, members of a Ukrainian National Committee, two youths were sentenced to death and shot. Ten years was the lightest sentence handed down to any of the twenty.

The 1966 Trials

These three secret political trials were probably the most important held in the Ukraine between 1958 and 1964. But lesser secret trials for “criminal nationalist propaganda”—also unknown in the West (or the Soviet Union, for that matter)—took place in almost every large Ukrainian city. Yet nothing seemed to help: unrest was growing and dissenters becoming bolder. Meanwhile, with Khrushchev’s downfall, the government was going over to its new, tougher line. What was needed, the KGB decided, was more of the same medicine. And in August and September of 1965, a wave of arrests on an unprecedented scale was carried out throughout the Ukraine. Dozens of young intellectuals—university lecturers, teachers, poets, journalists, and scientists, many of them already well known through their writings—were pulled in; hundreds more were interrogated and received final warnings.

The victims were tried, one by one or in small groups, early in 1966. The sentences were mild by Soviet standards, in most cases five or six years’ hard labor. But then, none of the defendants were charged with anything more serious than reading or disseminating “subversive nationalistic writings”—including President Eisenhower’s speech at the opening of the Shevchenko Memorial in Washington and the text of a message from Pope John XXIII.

The new series of repressions has proved to have been the Communists’ biggest mistake. Instead of shutting up the opposition once and for all, it opened a flood of publicity such as had never been seen before. The trial dates became known to the public in advance; crowds be-

sieged the courtrooms, shouting protests and bickering with the guards; the prisoners were greeted with flowers and cries of “*Slava!*” (“Glory!”). The trials themselves, held with a complete disregard even for the provisions of Soviet law, ended in convictions, but their effect was the exact opposite of what had been intended. They evoked discontent and



protest even among elements that had hitherto never wavered in their loyalty to the régime. The Ukraine was now well and truly aroused from its forty years of terrorized slumber.

WORST OF ALL from the authorities’ point of view, the 1965-1966 arrests resulted in the veil of totalitarian secrecy being finally torn away, and the outside world receiving its first real insight into the Ukrainian situation. A twenty-nine-year-old journalist, Viacheslav Chornovil, who had been sent to cover some of the trials for Kiev radio and television, was asked to make a false deposition against four of the accused who had been friends of his. He refused to comply and was indicted for doing so. Deeply shaken by what he had witnessed and experienced, he set about collecting every scrap of information he could find concerning the trials.

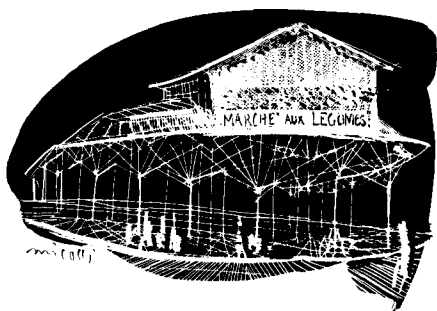
In the summer of 1967 a copy of Chornovil’s *White Book* was smuggled abroad. It was published in Ukrainian early this year in Paris under the title *Woe from Wit*. The

book contains biographies of twenty of the men and women arrested and tried in 1965-1966, together with a number of documents: excerpts from the court proceedings, letters from camp, unpublished manuscripts, etc. It is probably the most important source book on the Ukraine in many years, and its facts have been confirmed and complemented by a huge amount of new material that is now pouring out of the Ukraine—and from the Russian prisons and prison camps where Ukrainians are held.

As to the author, Viacheslav Chornovil, only those who have lived under Soviet rule can fully appreciate the incredible courage needed to tell the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party to his face: “The greatest material saturation without the unfettering of thought and will is not Communism. It is merely a large prison with a higher ration for the prisoners. . . . Maybe our generation will live in a *proclaimed* Communism, just as we now live in a *proclaimed* sovereign republic, have *proclaimed* freedoms, and a *proclaimed* socialist legality?”

Chornovil knew the risk he was taking, and he paid the price: arrested last August, he was tried on November 15—one week after the worldwide celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution—and sentenced to three years’ hard labor for anti-Soviet propaganda. (Apparently his sentence was then halved under the jubilee amnesty.)

All the available evidence shows that the ever-increasing tempo of repression has failed to cow the Ukrainian people. Much has changed, and the wheel cannot be turned back, whatever the desires of Stalin’s successors. The essence of this change was best formulated by the historian Valentin Moroz in his letter from prison camp, graphically entitled “Report from the Beria Reserve”: “The present events are a turning point: the glacier of terror which had firmly bound the spiritual life of the nation for many years is breaking up. As always, they put people behind bars, and as always deport them to the East. But this time these people did not sink into obscurity. In the last decade, for the first time and to the great surprise of the KGB, public opinion has been aroused.”



On the Barricades Of Paris

EDMOND TAYLOR

THOUGH President de Gaulle imperturbably left on his long-scheduled state visit to Romania the morning after the huge, unprecedented student-worker street demonstration of May 13 in the heart of Paris, it was already clear by then that his régime is facing not merely a political but a revolutionary crisis comparable to the one that brought it to power exactly ten years ago.

Paradoxically, it was the endlessly chanted slogans of the demonstrators—"De Gaulle Resign, De Gaulle Assassin, Ten Years, That's Enough, Happy Birthday, General"—along with the red or black anarchist flags flaunted in front of the City Hall and Prefecture of Police that probably symbolized the Fifth Republic's best chance for survival. Up to the May 13 demonstration, an unopposed and therefore pacific march of several hundred thousand men, women, and children from the Place de la République on the Right Bank to the Place Denfert Rochereau on the Left, it was possible to believe that the disorders of the previous "Red Week" in the Latin Quarter were due essentially to the government's heavy-handed, inept reaction to the student unrest that a few campus extremists were trying to fan into rebellion. Though that view did not adequately explain, for example, how the students happened to be

equipped—according to *Le Figaro*—with a pneumatic drill to help them dig up cobblestones for their barricades, and with expensive battery-powered bullhorns for calling the lycée students out to join the fun, it was evident that the government had bungled its original attempt at repression on May 4.

When the rector of the Sorbonne, with government approval, closed down the university and called for police to invade its sacred premises in violation of a six-hundred-year taboo, merely because a few hundred students were holding a routine protest meeting in the courtyard and arguing among themselves about what acts of defiance they might commit, he inadvertently lined up all the students with the leftist extremists who had organized the protest.

WITHIN a short time, indeed, not only all the students in France but most of the intellectuals and eventually a large majority of public opinion manifested disapproval of the government's attempts to preserve order in the streets of the capital. In the absence of Premier Georges Pompidou, who was visiting in Iran and Afghanistan, President de Gaulle's ministers—of course with his approval, to say the least—heroically but unwisely refused to yield to the inevitable. When the Premier returned, however, he consulted with

de Gaulle, then made a brief radio talk to the nation that was in effect an unconditional surrender to all the students' demands, including the release of foreign and nonstudent demonstrators already convicted by the courts for various offenses. The public heaved a sigh of relief and commentators hailed the beginning of de-escalation in the conflict between authority and the forces of revolt. Thus the May 13 demonstration, accompanied by a general strike, came as a shock.

From the first it was evident that the victory of the student revolutionaries was conceived as a beginning, not an end. The public's response to the slogans of the marching students and workers grew steadily cooler as they became increasingly political and revolutionary in character. Accompanying some of the picturesque student delegations were hawkers selling a special issue of the new student paper *Action*, announcing that by decision of the chief national student and teaching unions the universities throughout France would be occupied by the students but would not function "normally" until the Minister of the Interior and the Paris Prefect of Police had been forced to resign. The front page carried the banner line "The Streets Will Conquer," and the back page instructed readers to organize action committees. One banner I saw being carried by an unidentified group said "Organize Self-Defense Groups."

Even more ominous was the systematic use being made of inflammatory rumors and accusations. I saw placards calling for revenge for "our dead," although no fatalities had yet been reported. Others asked, "What happened to the wounded who have disappeared from the hospitals?" As the parade was ending the false rumor was launched that one body of marchers was wheeling to descend on the Elysée Palace. Unquestionably expert and ruthless revolutionary agitators played a big part in organizing the demonstration and in at least some of the earlier Left Bank riots. They had more experience and a more professional staff, not to mention funds, than any student extremists are believed to possess.

Naturally, the disciplined masses of the Communist-controlled Con-