

an editorial feature

THE UKRAINE PERSECUTION AND DISSENT

by Bohdan Romaniuk

Mai Panchuk, as a member of the Soviet-Ukrainian delegation which visited our city a couple of weeks ago, strikes me as being very small, insignificant in fact. To call him a liar (for lack of a better word) would be a waste of breath a gutless gesture. But taken in the light of the political system he represents, both he, as a representative of that system and the policies of the U.S.S.R. itself, become extremely important.

Such statements as, "The quality of life in Ukraine is good to the extent that everything you want is there....There is no dissidence in the Ukraine and no one is thrown into jail or mental institutions." and, "Everything that you have heard from people over here or have read are lies," would indicate that Panchuk, in wholeheartedly denying what we in fact know to be true, is not only justifying but is readily condoning the repressive and brutal measures being taken in the Soviet Ukraine to maintain effective control over that country.

This includes perhaps the most bitter subject of dissidence in Ukraine at the present time the Soviet policy of Russification that is, the attempt to gradually erode away the Ukrainian nationality by suppressing the language, customs, traditions, and religion of the Ukrainian people, even going so far as to effect the systematic dispersion of the nation altogether.

For example, does it not strike us as odd that almost alone among the nations of the world, the population of Ukraine over the past 50 years has remained virtually static? Even the war losses of both world wars cannot account for such a halt in the rate of population growth. There are a number of factors which help to explain this phenomenon, all of which compose one facet of Russification:

1). The Great Famine of 1933-34 engineered by Stalin as part of his desire to literally wipe out that part of the Ukrainian population which most bitterly resisted his policies of farm collectivisation. Some 5-7 million Ukrainians perished as a result of this artificial famine.

2). The mass execution of Ukrainian political leaders and intellectuals during the Great Purge. An entire generation of national leaders was "eliminated" in this fashion.

3). The mass deportations of Ukrainians to Siberia, especially after World War II.

But while the Ukrainian population was being decimated and forcefully dispersed over the entire Union the country itself was witnessing a large scale influx of Russians to fill the vacuum which had been created. The Russian population in the Ukraine rose from 2.6 million in 1926 to 9 million in 1970. Meanwhile the Ukrainian population has remained virtually unchanged.

Today, however, unlike Stalin's time, slightly more covert methods are being employed to effect the colonization of Ukraine by Russians and the deportation of Ukrainians to other republics. Now it is achieved by the manipulation of work and residence permits which make it difficult for Ukrainians from the countryside to move freely into the cities, but easy to move into cities outside of the Ukraine. At the same time Russians are encouraged to settle in Ukrainian cities and are even given special assistance to do so. This practice is labelled "internationalism" by the Soviet-Russian government.

The effects of these policies can be seen everywhere in Ukraine. The teaching of the Ukrainian language has become non-compulsory in that country. Most high-ranking jobs in government, universities, factories, and collective farms have fallen to Russians. All government documents and legal papers are printed in Russian. Publications in the Ukrainian language are being curtailed with every new year. Even university entrance exams in most subjects must be written in Russian.

As a result, in the 1960's, for every 1000 Ukrainians living in Ukraine, there were eight Ukrainian students attending institutions of higher learning, while for every 1000 Russians living in Ukraine there were eighteen Russian students. Ukrainian is effectively becoming a second-class language in the very country of its conception.

Referendum

This Friday a referendum will be held which will decide whether the U of A will affiliate with the National Union of Students. Joining NUS will result in a small fee increase, 30 cents per student per year. We consider this small expense justified in light of the potential benefits of a nation wide organization of students.

Lobbying the various levels of government for a better deal in student loans, fees and summer employment can be much more effective if done on a national scale. The whole issue of financing our education, which now results

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Let us take a look now at intellectual dissidents in Ukraine. These people are neither reactionaries nor petty-bourgeois nationalists. Rather, they are for the most part, confirmed Marxist-feminists. And their only "crime" is their objection to the central government's policies regarding the national question and their desire to attain the liberty of word, speech and assembly, something which is already guaranteed them by the Soviet contribution, but which is not practiced in reality. They want an end to senseless repression.

Take the case of Yuri Shukhevych, who in 1948, at age 15, was arrested and sent to Siberia, not for any crime he had committed, but rather, because he was the son of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army which fought both against Hitler and Stalin in WW II. Yuri's father was killed in 1950.

But after Yuri's original 10 year sentence had expired, it was immediately renewed because he refused to be "re-educated." What this basically amounted to is that he refused to denounce his father's actions against Stalin's armies and accept the guilt of being proud to be Ukrainian. He was released about five years ago after serving nearly 20 years in prison. But on Sept. 12, 1972, in a closed trial, he was sentenced to 10 years of hard labor and 5 years in exile.

Yuri Shukhevych, now a man of 40 years, who has spent more than half his life in concentration camps, shall continue to suffer in silence and probably die in a prison camp, just for being the son of a Ukrainian Army General.

There is also the case of a 36-year-old history professor, Valentyn Moroz, who in 1966 was sentenced to 5 years of hard labor for "anti-Soviet propaganda." After his release for good behavior he wrote a bitter article criticising the Soviet state's theft of religious artifacts, including some one hundred icons, from the historic Ukrainian village of Kosmach.

Moroz wrote, "It is impossible to break a people or to make slaves of them until you destroy their traditions and trample their temples....Enlightenment, by Soviet terms, happens when a person is deprived of his traditions and heritage - and then given education. Enlightenment is when culture is not allowed to develop mutually from its core, but is stuffed into people under some five-year plan."

Moroz wrote this assessment in 1970 and because of it in November of that year was sentenced by secret trial to nine years of hard labor for anti-Soviet propaganda.

There have been other round-ups of Ukrainian intellectuals especially in the years 1965, 1970, and 1971-72. These years have seen a revival of Stalinist tactics employed to suppress the creative intelligentsia. But these measures are all in vain as Moroz states, "Nothing could have revitalized Ukrainian community life as effectively as your repressions. Nothing could have drawn as much public attention to the Ukrainian re-awakening as did your trials. You wanted to hide people in the forests of Mordovia. But instead you have placed them on a stage for the whole world to see...."

Two of the most important documents of the Ukrainian opposition to have reached the West in the 1960's are *The Chornovil Papers* and *Internationalism or Russification*. The first is a documentation of the farcical judicial procedures and brutal methods used by the KGB against intellectual dissidents. It was written by the young journalist, Uyacheslav Chornovil, who compiled his information from his personal experiences in covering secret trials for the Soviet State.

The second book was written by Pvan Dzyuba. It consists of a political explanation of the recent arrests in Ukraine and an analysis of the government's policy of Russification which Dzyuba calls "anti-internationalist, anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist." Both authors have subsequently been given prison sentences to 10 years imprisonment and exile.

The point of the matter is becoming clearer. It is not the oppositionists to the ruling class of the Soviet Union who are anti-Marxist-Leninist reactionaries, it is the ruling class itself which is

guilty of breaching the principles upon which the U.S.S.R. was supposedly founded.

According to Ted Harding, author of *The Political Struggle in Ukraine Today*, "Marx's idea of a communist society," as Dave Knight so vociferously applauded, "was that the majority, the working people, through their democratically elected representatives, must control and plan their economy and govern their society....Instead, in the Soviet Union, the workers have been politically expropriated "leaders" and their vast and slavish beauracracy and police. The workers are controlled by the KGB's administrated internal passport system, which decides their place of work and residence. KGB informers at factories vigilantly watch for political opposition.

"On the otherhand, it is the oppositionists like Dzyuba, Chornovil, and others who call for the application of Marxist principles." For example, Dzyuba in his book called for the propagation of the "ideas of Marxism-Leninism and world communism which are now concealed, evaded or falsified; we have to begin with the development of a communist understanding of internationalism. At the same time we must overcome the psychological inertia deriving from chauvinism, Great-Power ideology, national liquidationism, national boorishness and bureaucratic standardization."

It came as quite a blow to the Ukrainian intellectual community in the Ukraine and abroad to hear that Dzyuba had received a pardon from his 10 year sentence, after renouncing his former writings and promising to "correct his fallacies." This occurred exactly one week ago. And taken as a single isolated event most have good reason to be surprised at Dzyuba's complete change of character.

But taken in the light of the rash of persecutions, mock trials and "phony confessions" which have come into the spotlight this year, Dzyuba's renunciation hardly comes as a surprise at all. For instance, only a few months ago, a well-known Soviet-Russian dissident, Pyortr Yakir was quoted by a Western correspondent as saying "If they beat me, I will admit anything....You'll know it won't be the real me speaking."

Afterwards, when he was finally broken and "confessed" to "crimes against the state" along with Viktor A. Krasin, an economist, the element of surprise was gone. We know what they had to go through and therefore place no value whatsoever on the validity of their confessions and renunciations.

Dzyuba was the third prominent figure to break in the past few months. Others will no doubt follow. Men such as Andrei D. Sakharov, the famous nuclear scientist, and Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, the Nobel prize-winning novelist, have been under increased pressure to revise their opinions about the democratization of Soviet society as well. Will they too renounce their former views, and if they do, are we to believe they have done so of their own volition?

It is people such as these that Mai Panchuk is afraid of. And eventually it will be these same oppositionists of the Soviet Russian regime who will cause its future reform or even dissolution. A movement such as theirs will never be suppressed by physical violence. The massive workers strikes which occurred in Donetsk and Zdaniv in 1962, at the Kiev Hydro-Electric Station in 1969, the mass disturbances reported in Dnipropetrovsk and Dniprodzerzinsk in 1972, and the most recent strikes in Kiev in the late spring of this year shall continue and gain momentum. The movement for Ukrainian national autonomy and the re-birth of Ukrainian artistic, cultural and national life under a framework of democracy is not about to die. It lives and grows stronger every day.

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Letters



run the risks of losing the opportunity to help formulate NUS policy and weakening the bargaining leverage of NUS in its struggle to represent the needs and opinions of students. We urge you to get out and vote yes on Friday in your own interests.

Wayne Madden.

Blyth Nuttall

Ed Rep to Students' Council

Mental health

The Canadian Mental Health Association is a national voluntary citizens' association working to alleviate mental

illness and promote mental health. Every year, C.M.H.A. holds a six week blitz during which time candles, made by patients at Alberta Hospital are sold. The funds raised are very useful in the numerous rehabilitative programs sponsored for the mentally ill.

The next few Fridays will see students setting up booths at SUB to sell candles for this very worthy cause.

Mental illness is one of the leading disease conditions. It can only be prevented and treated if we all do our share. Won't you do your part to help us?

Buy a candle and -LIGHT UP FOR MENTAL HEALTH!!! You'll find it's all worthwhile.

Thanks

C. Remedios