

UKRAINIANS ABROAD: NEWS AND VIEWS #148

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*** Thanks to Oleh Wolowyna.

1. Azerbaijan. "President's Wife Got Herself Acquainted with the Work of the Ukrainian Women's Business Club in Baku," *Ukrainian Government News*, 17 December 2019.

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During an official visit of the President of Ukraine to Azerbaijan, the First Lady Olena Zelenska met with representatives of the Ukrainian Women's Business Club in Baku.

The Ukrainian Women's Business Club chaired by the wife of the Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of Azerbaijan Lyudmyla Grebenichenko is a platform that generates creative ideas for a positive image of Ukraine in Azerbaijan.

The initiatives of the Women's Business Club include the Days of Ukrainian Cinematography in Azerbaijan, joint Ukrainian-Azerbaijani projects in the field of tourism and medicine.

Recently, the members of the club held a master class on the preparation of traditional Ukrainian dishes. Among the invited participants were the wives of ambassadors of foreign states accredited in Azerbaijan, heads of Azerbaijani cultural and educational institutions, journalists, representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora. According to the organizers, the event became a successful implementation of cultural diplomacy in practice.

The members of the club are also planning to hold the Ukrainian Fashion Weekend in Baku in spring 2020 and asked Olena Zelenska to support their idea and to unite efforts for a worthy presentation of Ukrainian designers, not only of clothes, but also of jewelry, ceramics and ethnic products.

The First Lady gladly agreed to the proposal: "Ukrainian fashion is a special page for me. I am trying to wear Ukrainian clothes during official visits and events. And when I am asked about the outfit I am extremely proud to name a brand from Ukraine".

The participants of the Women's Business Club also discussed with Olena Zelenska the prospects for the development of Ukrainian-Azerbaijani tourism. Ukrainian Truskavets is already a very popular tourist destination for Azerbaijanis, but the club members believe that other

Ukrainian cities should also be promoted for Azerbaijani tourists. In addition, women are convinced that Azerbaijan also has something to impress Ukrainian tourists.

“Your enthusiasm in the promotion of Ukraine, the desire to tell more about our homeland, to share our best is clearly felt. I wish you further inspiration,” Olena Zelenska said and thanked them for promoting Ukraine in Azerbaijan.

2. Canada. “The Many Stages of Chrystia Freeland,” *Hill Times*, 27 January 2020.

By Jeremy Kinsman

Veteran diplomat Jeremy Kinsman first met Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland over dinner at a mutual friend’s apartment in Moscow in the tumultuous early 1990s, when he was Canada’s ambassador to Russia and she was a young journalist. Since that moment, he has seen her dance on a tabletop at the Hungry Duck pub, provoke Vladimir Putin, finesse Donald Trump, and become the most powerful woman in Canada. It’s been a trip.

Jeremy Kinsman is a former Canadian ambassador to Russia, and the EU, and high commissioner to the U.K. He is a distinguished fellow of the Canadian International Council. This piece has been reprinted with permission from the January/February issue of *Policy* magazine, edited by L. Ian MacDonald. This piece was edited by Lisa Van Dusen.

Seeing Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland on Dec. 10, 2019, holding up the just-signed NAFTA II agreement in Mexico City on live television alongside President Manuel López Obrador, towered over by U.S. and Mexican negotiators, was a reminder of how very far she has come. Freeland was named foreign affairs minister in January 2017 to defend Canada’s vital interests against a hostile overturning of the very notion of North American cooperation by Donald Trump.

It was doubtful that anybody else in government had the chops, the knowledge, the chutzpah, and perhaps decisively, the status beyond Canada to effectively counter the bullying, grandstanding, and outright misrepresentation that can characterize White House negotiation in the age of Trump. With a superb professional team, Freeland pulled it off.

As evidence mounted over the course of the last year that the prime minister’s judgment could use buttressing from people with significant experience, he called on Chrystia Freeland to step up as a clear No. 2 in the country. He needs her help.

Given that the dangling question—how much farther can she go?—has only one answer, the situation is a bit delicate for both Freeland and Trudeau. In the meantime, it’s worthwhile to look back at who she is, where she’s from, and what she’s done.

I have known Chrystia Freeland since she turned up in Russia 25 years ago as a newbie reporter, stringing out of Kiev in newly independent Ukraine for several A-level U.K. publications. We first met her for dinner in Moscow at John and Elizabeth Gray’s, back when the *Globe and Mail* and every other Canadian outlet of consequence maintained a Moscow bureau to cover the monumental story of the end of communism, the Cold War, the Soviet Union, and, in effect, the

20th century. Canadians, especially—possibly because of the culturally and politically potent Ukrainian-Canadian community—had also to cover the new story of how an independent Ukraine was working out. This bright, Ukrainian-and Russian-speaking, high-energy, dauntless young woman fresh out of Oxford, a Rhodes Scholar from Alberta, was a real find.

She had come to Kiev to join her mother, Halyna, who was helping the Ukrainians draft their inaugural constitution. Both Chrystia's parents were legal professionals. Halyna was a scholar, who had met Donald Freeland at law school in Edmonton. He is also the son of a lawyer, whose family roots were on a farm in Alberta's Peace River district, though Donald earned his living mostly practising law in the provincial capital. Donald's dad had returned to Peace River from overseas war duty with a war bride from Glasgow. Grandmother Helen dressed Chrystia and her sister in kilts as little girls; Scottish blood mingles with Slavic in those ministerial veins.

But back in Moscow at the Grays, the dinner table talk wasn't about Scotland: it was all Ukraine. Chrystia was trying out the idea, then simmering in Kiev, that maybe Ukraine ought to hold on to its Soviet-legacy nuclear weapons to bargain for air-tight security guarantees from Russia, which clearly had trouble coming to terms with the idea of Ukraine as a separate state, no matter what deal Boris Yeltsin had struck with Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk to bust up the U.S.S.R. and thereby enable Yeltsin to replace Mikhail Gorbachev. For a Canadian ambassador then in the thick of a massive and costly NATO campaign to help Ukraine and Kazakhstan rid themselves of their worrisome "loose nukes," this was a destabilizing and unwelcome thought.

We settled warily but amicably, and parted as new friends. Ukraine did become officially a non-nuclear weapons state, and Chrystia soon after joined the swelling crowd of Westerners in Moscow, hired as a reporter by the *Financial Times*. John Lloyd, who was the *FT*'s Moscow bureau chief recalls, "It was very clear she was bright, driven to get the story right, always after the minister/official/dissident who could tell the story best. She was, of course a Ukrainian patriot: but she was clear about keeping her views out of the reportage."

And she did, doing excellent reporting from Russia, initially on the economic chaos that nobody understood, detailing how Western treasury departments and multilateral institutions (notably the International Monetary Fund) were whipping shock therapy on Russia—at the grotesque cost, as *The New Yorker*'s David Remnick put it, of "the destruction of everyday life."

There was an exuberance to Freeland. Montreal take-no-prisoners freelancer Sandy Wolofsky recalls our post-Chrétien visit "wheels-up" party in the unforgettable, Canadian-operated Hungry Duck pub, when Freeland was late-night dancing on a tabletop. Still, to quote Lloyd again, she came across as a young "woman of huge intelligence, energy, and good sense." When John Lloyd left Moscow at last, Freeland, still in her twenties, was named bureau chief for the *FT*.

She had been super-bright as a kid, winning a scholarship out of high school in Edmonton to a world college stint in Italy followed by a scholarship to Harvard where she studied Russian history. But she didn't surf her way through exams—she did all the work, all the way.

And so she did at the *FT*, in London, before being hired away to be deputy editor of the *Globe and Mail* in 1999, then heading back to the *FT* in London as its deputy editor. When a male

colleague 20 years older got the top job, Freeland went to New York as the *FT*'s U.S./Americas editor and columnist on international finance and business. In 2010, looking for new challenges, she got hired away as Reuters global editor at large, based in New York, and then spearheaded their leap into the new media world as editor of Thomson Reuters Digital. Her rise in journalism had been phenomenal. As a journalist, Freeland produced top-flight deadline copy that was out there for all to see. As an editor of top-flight operations, she got the best out of talented people and, said Lloyd, was "loyal up and down."

Along the way, she had married a soft-spoken, fine British writer, Graham Bowley (now with the *New York Times*, commuting to NYC from Toronto). Together, they have raised three non-passive children. But it would have been impossible without help, especially from her mother, Halyna, who, having done her best on Ukrainian constitution-drafting, moved into the New York household for her grandkids. When she tragically died a decade ago, it was "the Ukrainian ladies" of Nannies International who helped keep it all afloat.

Freeland somehow found time to write two big books. *Sale of the Century* (2000), about Russia's rigged privatizations, remains a must-read for those of us who still care about what the hell went wrong with the naive best intentions for Russia's forward journey from Mikhail Gorbachev's heroic acts that changed the world. *Plutocrats* (2012) is a sweeping survey of the landscape of international capitalism, in the wake of its breakdown, which exposed 2008's financial frauds, and led to the near-collapse of the global system. It is clear from her scathing narrative that Freeland is no neo-liberal.

So, she was super-busy. It wasn't her ambition to get into politics, but as she did tell me over some Chardonnay on a shared flight to Newark a decade ago, she wanted to come back to Canada. But Canadian media space doesn't offer many opportunities to operate at the very top. When the Liberals came calling, having done a big and ambitious book, and with enough-already of New York City, she wondered if public service could be a rewarding Canadian alternative.

Freeland agonized about running for office. The Liberals were in third place, going nowhere fast. But party politics is actually pretty close to the family bone. Halyna had run in Edmonton Strathcona in 1988—for the NDP! And father Donald Freeland's paternal aunt Beulah was married to long-time Peace River MP Ged Baldwin, who was Progressive Conservative opposition House leader for years.

She went for the Liberal nomination to replace Bob Rae in a byelection in Toronto Centre in 2013 and was elected to Parliament. It was around then that Ukraine began to boil. The Conservative Party had been trying under Jason Kenney's organization to break into the Liberals' traditional appeal to immigrant communities. The Canadian-Ukrainian community, more than a million strong, was a prime target.

Ukrainian Canadians, refugees from the Soviet Union's revolution and oppression, especially from the tragic Holodomor, the forced famine of the early 1930s that killed an estimated 3.5 million Ukrainians (and many Russians), are mostly sourced to Galicia, Western Ukraine. It was historically part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was more permissive of Ukrainian cultural autonomy and language rights than the Soviet Union, which repressed them. So, there is

ample historic, anti-Moscow nationalist sentiment in Lviv, which was the capital of Galicia, that still animates Canada's Ukrainian community.

When the Euromaidan protests broke out in 2014 between the wary union of reformist and nationalist Ukrainians and the Moscow-supported regime of Viktor Yanukovich, Stephen Harper, Kenney and the Conservatives chose the side of Ukrainian diaspora votes. Harper wouldn't shake Vladimir Putin's hand at a G20 meeting without (so he boasted to Canadian media) snarling, "Get out of Ukraine."

But the diminished Liberals had one Ukrainian/Canadian parliamentary card to play. They sent Freeland off to Kiev, where she encouraged the young reformers occupying the Maidan. Speaking the language, being a master communicator, owning an apartment with her sister, Natalka, overlooking the Maidan, she was a hit, carrying weight precisely because she was an old Moscow hand. The Russians noticed.

After the Liberals won in October 2015, Freeland was a shoo-in for a top economic portfolio. She must have been hoping for Finance. Over-reaching? Hardly—read her book. But Bay Street doesn't read books, so she became minister of trade.

There haven't been that many political leaders in Canada who actually had a record of running operations of consequence—Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin stand out. Freeland stood out in that first Trudeau cabinet for competence and experience, including a sound instinct for knowing whom to connect with and what made them tick.

Her biggest task was to deliver the CETA trade deal with the European Union. As a 21st-century economic partnership treaty that breaks new progressive ground, CETA makes the new NAFTA look almost clunky. It's said that it took seven years to negotiate. Actually, it began in 1972, but that's another story. Jean Chrétien reanimated it, Quebec premier Jean Charest forced the issue with France, and ultimately it fell to the Harper government to open formal negotiations. But it would take Freeland's leadership to pull off a complex and ground-breaking comprehensive deal through very hard work, superb personal connections with top Europeans, and political persuasion of parliamentary doubters in several capitals.

Cut to November 2016, and the world gets Donald Trump and his vow to tear up NAFTA. It was hard to imagine the all-important NAFTA renegotiation with the America Firsters under anyone else, and so she replaced Stéphane Dion as foreign minister.

At the top, it was Freeland head-to-head against U.S. Trade Representative Bob Lighthizer. They seriously underestimated her (always a plus for a negotiator) and weren't very nice, resenting her exceptional media impact, especially in Washington, D.C. Who the hell did she think she was? Only Canada's foreign minister. And she was about as good as any, ever. As John Delacourt recently wrote in *Policy* magazine, she never negotiated in public but somehow came out with all the good lines, that, bit by bit moved the political dial in our direction.

She was tough and she and her team were tough-minded enough to know Canada could live without a deal if we had to. It showed. In the end, it was Trump who ended up most needing the

win. It was Freeland who could say at the end win-win-win, and who made Bob Lighthizer dinner in her Toronto kitchen with the kids.

The U.S. deal was the essential national existential defensive save. It was historic. But as foreign affairs minister, she began some other things that are also very important. I thought they would rank her tenure with Joe Clark's and Lloyd Axworthy's as among the very best if she stayed to press these themes across the global board. They have laid the groundwork for her successor, François-Philippe Champagne, to pursue, especially mounting a like-minded rally in support of inclusive democracy and liberal internationalism. In the pro-Russian, anti-Western, pro-nationalism media out there she is caricatured as an adversary, a human rights interventionist.

In reality, her much-publicized stand in favour of Saudi women was not from some longstanding human rights vocation. She had been primarily an international business writer. But in the summer of 2018, the facts were eloquent and dark. University of British Columbia mentors reported that Loujain al-Hathloul, who had done a degree there while becoming committed to gender equity was being tortured back home for advocating women's rights. She wasn't a Canadian citizen but the news distressed Freeland, and when Samar Badawi, the sister of jailed and flogged blogger Raif Badawi, got arrested a few weeks later, the minister took a critical stand against Saudi behaviour on behalf of Raif Badawi's wife, Ensaf Haidar, who had fled to Canada for asylum.

Freeland believed the sincerity of our values was on the line. She wasn't content just to signal our virtue. She believed we had to help.

A tweet from our Embassy in Riyadh that they should at once release Samar Badawi provoked the Saudi theocracy to a massive over-reaction. Freeland was then slammed by some pro-business groups for letting do-gooder naïveté put Canadian jobs at risk. She didn't get much international support at first—until Jamal Khashoggi was butchered.

The experience was jarring. It made Chrystia Freeland want to use her ministry for value issues as well as macro-trade deals.

Trump's reversal of U.S. policy on human rights and international cooperation, notably climate change, as well as what he was doing to democracy's reputation were preoccupying other like-minded democratic leaders. Freeland found herself building a caucus, an informal alliance with her colleagues in Berlin, Paris, Stockholm, and elsewhere. Last year, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas invited her to address Germany's heads of mission from around the world. Germany awarded her the prestigious Warburg Award—for the first time to a Canadian—for steering Canada's firm commitment to multilateralism and to shared transatlantic values. He praised Freeland for standing by her convictions. "You are an activist in the best sense of the word—both principled and realistic."

She has tried to apply the rights and democracy value proposition to other relevant international conflict issues where Canada had some standing. But a few outreach efforts fell flat or didn't happen. For example, as minister, she didn't go to Africa. She would have, but had to triage her time. Overall, our relationship with Russia could scarcely be worse. It's partly their fault,

obviously. Chrystia Freeland actually did want to connect even though she was on their sanctions list. But when she did meet Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at a G20 event, Putin's well-known inner misogynist seems to have reacted badly to this rather small, very bright Russian-speaking minister setting out some ideas that weren't wholly congenial to Putin's souring world view. The relationship flat-lined near zero.

On China, the ruination of relations is not her fault. She wasn't part of the Meng Wanzhou ambush but has loyally defended what happened as respecting the rule of law. The cruel reprisal captivity of the two Michaels sears at her, as it should. China insiders confide that her Beijing counterparts respect her. Still, however the immediate hostage situation plays out, things with China have changed. We'll not be as friendly with Beijing as we once thought we would be, but nor can we be hostage to an emerging epochal duel for global leadership between the world's two biggest economies.

As last year produced government blunders and polls indicating minority government prospects, her own performance in the government stood out. As veteran Liberal strategist Peter Donolo puts it, "Her well-tuned sense of political theatre was a contrast to the slavish attachment to talking points exhibited by most of her cabinet colleagues," who seemingly hadn't been given her latitude. Once the election results were in, it became inevitable that she would be transferred out of foreign affairs because of the Alberta credibility deficit and the evident need of Trudeau to have a strong deputy.

It now makes her a potentially decisive figure across the Canadian landscape. Let's be candid. Her good judgment is going to be calling some big shots in this minority government, in place of big shots in the PMO calling them in the last one. When the ministerial mandate letters surfaced on Dec. 13, 2019, Freeland's described an unprecedented level of deputized executive power. Justin Trudeau ought to be the beneficiary, and good for him for understanding her value.

Howard Balloch who was a long-time ambassador to China, comments:

"Chrystia Freeland listens, deeply and intently, to as wide a spectrum of informed views as possible as she formulates her own." In this, she reminds Balloch of previous very successful foreign minister Joe Clark whose "same respect for both facts and the complex prisms that refract perception of those facts when seen from other cultures and backgrounds," also put him in charge of federal-provincial relationships at a vexed time in our history.

Let's hope it works out for Freeland, for Trudeau, and for the country; that the Peace River part of the Alberta girl clicks in enough to win back the public's trust that the government is listening while it leads.

Chrystia Freeland has risen to new heights. Everyone knows she may go higher. It's an impressive story. We should count ourselves lucky that she had a hankering for home.

Jeremy Kinsman is a former Canadian ambassador to Russia, and the EU, and high commissioner to the U.K. He is a distinguished fellow of the Canadian International Council. This piece has been reprinted with permission from the January/February issue of Policy magazine, edited by L. Ian MacDonald. This piece was edited by Lisa Van Dusen.

3. Canada. “Ukrainian Christmas Marred by Tragedy,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 January 2020.

By Maggie Macintosh
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THE Ukrainian community has the families of the 176 people who died in Wednesday's airliner crash in their prayers over the holidays.

Every person on board the Ukrainian International Airlines jet that crashed moments after it took off from Tehran was killed. Among passengers and staff, there were 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three Britons.

“We all should remember the victims of this event in our prayers and to not take for granted the people around us,” said Yuriy Kalistchuk, metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

“We should value people within our families and communities and realize that people are trying to do the best for their family and for their community — and to pray for peace in the world.”

The Boeing 737 crash occurred amid celebrations in Ukrainian households across the world.

Carolling and celebrations in the Orthodox Ukrainian community are underway, a day after Orthodox Christmas (Jan. 7), which is based on the Julian calendar.

Maria Bosak, former editor of the Ukrainian Voice newspaper, said she was devastated when she heard the news amid what should be a joyful time. Holding back tears, she said she found it difficult to express feelings about the extent of the tragedy.

“We have to pray for them. That’s what we have to do. We have to pray for them and their families,” Bosak said.

Ukraine’s ministry of foreign affairs put out a statement Wednesday, in which it said the country is committed to investigating the cause of the crash.

Iranian authorities initially suggested technical problems were the reason for the crash, but later said the investigation is ongoing.

4. Canada. “January Warmed with Fasting, Food and Family for Orthodox Christmas,” *Edmonton Journal*, 6 January 2020.

January warmed with fasting, food and family for Orthodox Christmas; On the Julian calendar, holiday falls nearly two weeks after Dec. 25.

By Liane Faulder

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Keeping traditions alive is at the heart of the Christmas celebration for Liliya Sokha, as her Ukrainian Catholic family prepares to celebrate Orthodox Christmas on Tuesday.

The holiday, which falls nearly two weeks after Dec. 25, sees Sokha and her husband, Ostap, and their children, Maksym, 7, and Emilia, 2, gathering around a festive table to enjoy a religious occasion that combines food, prayer and goodworks.

The Jan. 7 Christian holiday is tied to the Julian calendar that is followed by both Orthodox Ukrainian and Catholic Ukrainian congregations.

“Our family are practising Ukrainian Catholics, so Christmas is very important to us,” said Sokha, 38, who came to Edmonton from western Ukraine with her parents and sister when she was 22.

“And it’s one of the biggest feasts in Ukraine as well as in Edmonton.”

For the Sokha family, the fun begins on Monday night, Christmas Eve, when celebrants will gather at Sokha’s mother’s house for a 12-course, meatless, dairy-free extravaganza known as Sviata Vecherya, or Holy Supper. Participants will dress in traditional, brightly embroidered shirts, and the table will be decorated with candles and an embroidered centrepiece.

“It’s a ritual. When the first star arrives, all the family comes to the table and everybody prays and then it’s dinner,” said Sokha, who is active in the Ukrainian community in Edmonton, volunteering as a director of Alberta Provincial Council of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, as well with the Ukrainian Music Society of Alberta.

The 12 courses can represent, depending on who you ask, Christ’s 12 apostles or the 12 months of the year. The dishes include ancient recipes such as kutya, or boiled wheat mixed with poppy seeds, dried raisins, and walnuts - all sweetened with honey.

Other staples on the table are meatless cabbage rolls, and a variety of varenyky, or perogies. Sokha’s mother makes perogies filled with potato, potato and mushroom, and also sauerkraut. There are dessert perogies with poppy seeds.

Red borscht, fragrant with mushroom dumplings, will make an appearance, as well as a traditional bean dish with mushrooms.

“We have many different varieties of fish on the table, including smoked fish, fried fish, roasted fish and pickled herring,” Sokha said. “My dad loves the pickled herring.”

It's a lot of food. But guests are ready to tuck into a big meal as they have been fasting through the day, for religious reasons, and even reducing their food consumption in the days prior to Christmas Eve. Dead relatives are remembered by setting out a small plate of kutya for them during the meal, and in prayers.

Sokha's children particularly enjoy the annual Christmas Eve tradition of singing carols in Ukrainian. This is both because the youngsters love to sing, and because they are likely to receive a traditional gift of money from relatives for their efforts.

After supper, some of the adults may go to mass at Saint George Ukrainian Catholic parish at 11305 95A St. The whole family will go to church on Jan. 7, Christmas morning.

Christmas Day features another delicious meal that will include meat, dairy products and sweets, such as honey cake and pampushky, a doughnut filled with prune or sweet poppy seeds and sprinkled with icing sugar.

"Ukrainian culture is so rich with traditions and rituals," Sokha said.

5. Canada. "Healthy and Vibrant," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 December 2019.

By Cheryl Girard

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St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Parish thrives with help from young congregants

St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Transcona not only has a striking, towering exterior and a beautiful interior, it is also a vibrant and welcoming parish, according to David Kawaler, a member of the parish council.

"In this day where some parishes are beginning to feel the effects of reduced numbers, in particular the young families, St. Michael's is currently seeing a surge in young families joining the parish," Kawaler said. "We currently have over 20 young children that actively take part in the liturgy," he added.

"We had a lot of parents that wanted to bring their children up in this rite, so with the encouragement of our parish priests, we started to include more family involvement," said Marian Polakoff, the catechism co-ordinator.

"We do children's liturgy at the end of the month — and we try to encourage younger families to participate in the actual liturgy. We also have a children's choir," Polakoff said.

"Marian was a big part of that," Kawaler added. "Father Mark Gnutel (parish priest) and Father Alan Wizinsky (assistant priest) are also really big on ensuring that the children are included."

Both Kawaler and Polakoff were baptized at St. Michael's, grew up there and still live in Transcona. "A lot of us grew up in the church, making memories together, and we wanted that for our kids too," Polakoff said.

"I was born and raised in a faith-based family," Kawaler said. "So we just kept coming back and we wanted to instill the same in our children. I am married and we have two children. All of us are actively involved in the parish.

"The parishioners of the church are very dedicated and hard-working and keep the parish running," he added. The church also works in collaboration with St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Parish on Marcie Street.

Helen Kurylko is one of the older members and says she has been a member for roughly 65 years. "I think I'm one of the oldest members here," she said in an email.

"My husband and I were married in the little old wooden church, before this one was built... He was very proud of being a member and was involved in every aspect of the church," Kurylko added.

Paul Kurylko, who died in 2017, was "one of the founding members of the new building," Kawaler said, and "Helen is very active with the women's league and sits on council."

The church has had many devoted members. The St. Michael's parish history book says the population of Transcona was about 1,600 in 1912. As early as 1916, there were many Ukrainians in Transcona, most of whom worked as labourers in the local CN shops.

The first church was built on Wabasha Street in 1916. "It was the first Ukrainian Catholic church built on the eastern side of the city," Kawaler said. Wabasha was just a prairie trail for many years, with cattle grazing in the pasture northeast of the little church, the parish history book says.

Most of the congregations stood through 2½-hour services, as there were few benches back then. The sidewalk from Kildare was made of "locomotive coal cinders." Parish gatherings boasted home-cooked kobasa, cabbage rolls, perogies and more.

Mary Perch and John Gnutel recall that in the 1950s, the parish had many activities, dinners and concerts. The youth group had dances and volleyball and afterwards often walked to the Oxford Grill for chips and drinks.

"Most men worked at C.N.R. shops, C.P.R. or Tar and Chemical plant," they wrote. "The women worked in farmers' fields from spring to fall."

Times changed. The little church began to deteriorate and the parish grew. A hall was built next on Day Street and converted into a chapel until a new church, the current one on Day Street and Yale Avenue, was completed in 1965.

A Canadian architect with Ukrainian roots, Radoslav Zuk, was chosen to design the present church. His churches in Manitoba are distinctive, beautiful and contemporary.

The striking dome of St. Michael's has a commanding presence on the corner of Day Street. "The dome is shaped to represent the shield of St. Michael the Archangel," Kawaler said.

Inside, the physical layout of the church appears to be more traditional. But the bold, blue and gold mosaics that fill the interior are much more modern in appearance.

The striking mosaics and stained glass were designed by local artist Roman Kowal in the '80s. The talented artist, who died in 2004, was responsible for many other notable works in Manitoba. "He adorned our church with the most beautiful work ever," Kurylko said.

"We are deeply rooted in the traditions of the Byzantine Rite Liturgy," Kawaler said, but stressed that "we want everyone to know that all are welcome."

6. Estonia. "Thematic Highlights from Baltic Russian-Language Press 26 Dec 19," *BBC Monitoring European*, 7 January 2020.

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'Discrimination' in Estonian media

Ukrainians are discriminated against in Estonian media, mainly in Russian-language outlets, professor Yevhen Tsybulenko says in the documentary titled "Ukrainians in Estonia. New Residents", aired on the ETV+ channel. He notes that most Ukrainian immigrants in Estonia are highly-skilled workers, but the press - especially Russian-language publications - is full of stereotypes about Ukrainian labour. Ukrainians are frequently mentioned in press headlines in the negative context, Tsybulenko stresses. He says he cannot imagine a headline like "A Russian has exceeded speed" in Estonian media while not a week passes without headlines like "A Ukrainian was caught drink driving" or "A Ukrainian travels without a ticket". (rus.ERR.ee, 23 December)

7. General. "Ukraine's Population Fell Almost by Quarter since 2001: Census," *Brecorder.com*, 24 January 2020.

By Agence France-Press on January 24, 2020

KIEV: Ukraine's population has shrunk by almost a quarter since 2001, a new census showed Thursday, fuelled by migration but also because residents could not be counted in the separatist east and Moscow-annexed Crimea.

"There are 37.3 million people living in Ukraine," Dmytro Dubilet, the minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, said at a press conference, representing a drop of 11.2 million or 23 percent.

"That's the number of people who were physically present in Ukraine as of December 1, 2019," he added.

Ukraine's previous census in 2001 counted some 48.5 million inhabitants.

The latest census did not cover areas in the east that are under control of Moscow-backed separatists, nor the Crimean peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.

The figure also does not include Ukrainians who live abroad.

There are currently some 20 million women but only 17 million men living in Ukraine, the survey found.

A study by the Centre for Economic Strategy research centre found that 6.3 million Ukrainians left between 2002 and 2017, based on information from border officials.

Those leaving were most likely to head to neighbouring Poland and Russia to look for work, according to the study.

Before its 2014 annexation, Crimea had two million inhabitants while the overall population of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions was close to six million people before the separatist conflict broke out.

[*Business Recorder*: <https://www.brecorder.com/2020/01/24/564247/ukraines-population-fell-almost-by-quarter-since-2001-census/>]

8. Italy. “Badante or Dottoressa? A Case of a Ukrainian Woman in Italy,” *PoliticalCritique.org*, 26 December 2019.

EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

By Andriy Avramenko

After the World War II Italy, a traditional source of migration to the US, Argentina, Brazil and different Latin American countries, was experiencing a remarkable economic growth alongside with other Western European states, known as “Trente Glorieuses”. In 1990s Italian GDP per capita (PPP) was higher than similar indicators of France and the United Kingdom. In 2001 the average life expectancy surpassed 80 years. A spectacular economic growth resulted in a massive inner population displacement, a stark disparity between industrial North and more economically backward South and, in general, dramatically transformed Italian society. Post-industrial Italy faced the problem of population aging.

In 2000 the economy of Ukraine finally recovered after the decade of recession and market transition. Quite paradoxically, the scale of migration from the country rose rapidly alongside with national economy. Ukrainians were discovering new destinations for labour migration, namely the Southern Europe. In 2003 the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) for the first time included Ukrainians to its reports. At that time there were only 12 730 Ukrainian citizens in Italy. The next year, amid an unprecedented 11,8% growth of Ukrainian GDP, the number of Ukrainian migrants in Italy more than quadrupled, and over the 13 years grew in total 13-fold. According to the last official data there are approximately 239 thousand of Ukrainians in Italy, which makes them fourth biggest foreign group.

Although in Ukraine, especially its Western part, thousands of children have been raised without parent(s), the issue of mass-migration is not reflected in media, culture and public discourse, unlike the resettlement to the North America in the beginning of XX century. A family member working abroad has become an evident norm. However, this issue becomes more visible after all. For instance, in 2017 Italy and Ukraine co-produced comedy *Easy – Un viaggio facile facile*,

which received several international awards, not to mention Ukrainian domestic novels and films.

Ukrainian community in Italy drastically differs from other foreign groups by sex ratio: women make up more than 80%. They are also older than average non-EU migrants (average age of Ukrainians in Italy is 42.2 years, whereas for all non-EU migrants it is 31 years). The common occupation for women is care for elderly or cleaning. *Corriere della Sera* refers to a so-called ‘Italian syndrome’, while describing psychological difficulties experienced by badanti. Francesca Vianello characterized a typical trajectory and motivation of Ukrainian women: they usually perceive their relocation to Italy as a temporary (one-two year) remedy for earning enough money to support their families, sending children to the university etc. (Vianello, 170). This perception of self greatly shapes their existence abroad: Ukrainian women rarely invest in the improvement of precarious living conditions. And yet, the return home is permanently postponed to the undefined future, moreover as socio-economic situation in Ukraine remains difficult, despite some improvements. Even though these women may already have adult children or grandchildren, they primarily identify themselves as mothers to confirm family devotion and legitimize their absence.

However, some of them pursue a more stable life and try to bring their children to Italy. The awaited reunification after years of separation may not be as fulfilling as it seems. In this case, Ukrainian teenagers usually undergo a downward mobility from what Vianello calls “remittance bourgeoisie” in Ukraine to migrant working class in Italy with all its implications (Vianello, 174).

Sofia

The protagonist of this article represents rather an exception in the practice of young Ukrainian women in Italy. Sofia (name changed) was born in a small village in Western Ukraine. Having graduated in Psychology from a regional university, thanks to the family connections she started a job in a state employment centre in the small town nearby her village. Gradually she came to understanding that most of her coworkers stayed there just because they did not have any other options. After one year of meaningless and inefficient work she was so overwhelmed, that when she had an appendectomy it was interpreted as a sign for change: not only of the job, Sofia dared to emigrate, joining her mother who had been working in Italy as badante for many years.

“I did not know what to expect, – confesses Sofia – I just went away without knowing when I would come back and what would come next. It was a dramatic change, but I did not have a clear strategy and let things slide. That is exactly what happened: I ended up in a situation I could neither change, nor manage, I became illegal.” When Sofia parted to Italy, she knew that she would be illegal: “At the time, I was thinking it was the only possible solution to remain in Italy. That was the experience of my mother, my aunts, their friends. That is why I also thought I would do the same to wait afterwards for a possibility of legalization”.

She found herself in Milan, joining her relatives. The new life started with fascination: “At the beginning, it was a “tourist stage”, when everything is beautiful, new, everyone is polite and generally everything is much better [than in Ukraine]. Until the moment you realize that you

need to live somehow in this country.” First couple of months Sofia dedicated to studying Italian attending courses for foreigners organized by churches.

Without documents and sufficient language command she managed to find a job in a bar, where was underpaid upon the ground of being an apprentice. She admits that she did not miss Ukraine a lot, as she never perceived it as a “cultural motherland”, instead she enjoyed the atmosphere of Italy. But after 1,5 years of work she lost this job.

Then Sofia started working as cleaner, which lasted two years. After the social ambiance of the bar, cleaning all alone was very hard, she felt she was degrading. Sofia was dating an Italian and expected they would eventually marry. But this relationship broke up. She ended up depressed and alone face-to-face vital challenges. She recalls that back then she was thinking of going to university, but it took time to let herself pursue this step. There were no role-models around or people to consult with. On the other hand, returning to Ukraine for her would mean acknowledging her weakness and failure for all she had been fighting for so long.

It is the solitude which, in her opinion, is the most painful for illegal migrants: “I was very very lonely. I think all people without documents have this “complex of invisibility”. Wherever you go, you are not treated properly, you cannot work, have no rights and you limit yourself psychologically, feeling in distress. For four years I even did not leave the city, fearing of an accidental control. I could not practice psychology or things which I liked, even simply work as a waitress or obtain an official language certificate. After many efforts I was hopeless, my self-esteem was extremely low.”

Nevertheless, the desperate situation was at least partly eased by volunteers. Until recently, illegal migrants in Italy could benefit from services of different NGOs, either secular, or religious. Sofia received medical services from the NGOs Naga and Opera San Francesco. The latter even provided a possibility of psychotherapy, which helped to combat depression and dare to change her life again. By the way, since September 2018, when the so-called ‘Salvini decree’ came into effect, the position of migrants significantly deteriorated.

Sofia realized that she would not be able to bear such life for a long time and decided to “legalize” herself. She came back to Ukraine and applied to one of Italian universities. While waiting for all bureaucratic technicalities being resolved, Sofia went to Italy for a short-term work to earn some money for her initial period of studies. This time she was badante looking after a person with Parkinson disease. This experience definitely proved that this occupation is not for her at all.

Sofia decided to continue her specialization and was admitted to a Master’s programme in Social Psychology. She studies and works as babysitter. For the obligatory internship she found an organization helping women who suffered from domestic violence. At the interview she shared her story of being an illegal migrant, her experience at the employment centre and major in psychology were also useful. Thus, she was accepted for the internship.

She considers family factor and lack of self-confidence the common obstacles for Ukrainian women in Italy for searching a more qualified job. According to the data of Italian Ministry of

Labour and Social Policies, as of 2013, Ukrainian immigrants were relatively more qualified than other non-EU immigrants, 70% have at least secondary-level education, and 22% completed also tertiary-level education, compared to only 12% among other non-EU immigrants (Vianello, 167). Sofia asked her mother, a former math teacher, why she did not try to do something else. Because of fear, she replied. For instance, fear of lacking some terminology if she were a tutor. Sofia thinks many women share this problem – low self-consciousness and belief that woman needs to devote herself to family without looking for a better self-realization.

Sofia is trying to persuade other female migrants by her own example to believe in themselves and the possibility of positive change. She has no intention to come back to Ukraine, just as a temporary visitor. Still, in a big Italian city she strongly misses her rural vegetable garden. But now, when the borders are open for her, she always has an opportunity to come there for a holiday.

About the author

Andriy Avramenko is a Master's student in Sociology at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. His interests include social transformations and Central- and Eastern-European studies.

Credits: Originally published at Ukrainian “Political Critique” within journalist project on economic migration from Ukraine “The Paths of Labor”. The article first published at the Political Critique website within the framework of ‘Invisible Labour’ project, exploring causes and effects of mass labour migration from Ukraine, its economic, social and cultural implications both in Ukraine and in the EU.

9. Poland. “Poland Named the Largest Source of Remittances Sent by Ukrainians Living Abroad,” *TheFirstNews.com*, 14 February 2020.

BUSINESS

ANNE CHATHAM FEBRUARY 14, 2020

Poland is the largest source of remittances from Ukrainians working abroad. This reflects how many Ukrainians – around one million, according to some estimates – have found work in the country in recent years, drawn by the promise of jobs, higher wages and study opportunities.

Personal remittances account for a substantial part of Ukraine's GDP. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea and the start of the conflict in the Donbas in 2014, which destabilised the country and damaged its economy, more Ukrainians have gone abroad to seek work. Between 2014 and 2018, personal remittances to Ukraine as a share of GDP increased from 5.5% to 11.2%, according to data released by the World Bank.

Private remittances from Ukrainians working abroad amounted to \$11.98 billion in 2019, according to preliminary data from the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU). This was more than the bank had previously forecast and represented a 7.8% increase on the previous year.

Almost one-third of the remittances, \$3.8 billion, came from Ukrainians working in Poland, which has become a leading destination for Ukrainians in recent years. According to the NBU, there were almost one million Ukrainian citizens working in the country in 2019. This number has been cited in various estimates over the past few years, but is difficult to measure accurately.

Within Poland, Ukrainians are by far the largest group of workers from outside the EU. In 2018, over 70% of work permits issued to foreigners in Poland were handed out to Ukrainians. A much smaller share went to the next-largest groups: workers from Nepal, Belarus, India and Bangladesh.

After Poland, the next sizeable sources of remittances from Ukrainian workers were registered in the Czech Republic, Russia and the United States (roughly \$1 billion each), followed by the United Kingdom.

Of the funds transferred through official channels, almost three-quarters were sent in dollars, with most of the remaining amount in euros. Just a small percentage were transferred in other currencies.

According to the NBU's analysis, migration from Ukraine slowed somewhat in 2019 due to the strengthening of the hryvnia exchange rate. This increased real incomes domestically and helped reduce the wage gap with neighbouring countries, especially Poland, making emigration less attractive in financial terms.

[<https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/poland-named-the-largest-source-of-remittances-sent-by-ukrainians-living-abroad-10480>]

10. Poland. "Time for Assimilation?" *Polish News Bulletin*, 24 December 2019.

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If Poland wants to keep workers from Ukraine, it should change the approach and instead of relying on short-term work of seasonal workers, focus on assimilation. The following is a summary of a report on the subject.

The most popular destination for Ukrainian job-seekers is Poland, which in the recent years replaced the previous leader, Russia. What's interesting is that in opposition to worries often voiced in Poland, Poland and Germany are regarded by Ukrainian migrants as equally attractive. In a survey conducted by the Ukrainian job advertisement service OLX Rabota 46pc of Ukrainians named Poland as the place where they would like to work and Germany was named by 47pc of the surveyed. Czech Republic placed third with 35pc, Sweden fourth with 18pc and Israel fifth with 14pc.

Poland is the most attractive place for Ukrainian job-seekers. Almost a half of respondents would like to find a job in Poland. 6 out of 10 respondents declared that they already worked in Poland for a few months. Out of them 43pc worked in manufacturing and 23pc worked in construction segment. What motivates Ukrainians to look for work in Poland is above all the proximity to Ukraine (57pc of responses) and high salaries (60pc). 26Pc of the respondents recognized similar mentality as an important factor.

Yuriy Romanenko, the head of the Ukrainian Institute of the Future from Kiev, who in the middle of December visited Poland, recalled that in Warsaw he met his friends in Warsaw, young people above the age of 25. As he said, none of them wants to return to Ukraine.

The average age of a Ukrainian migrant worker is 25 to 54 years. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that less than a half of them - 43pc are married and have children. Up to a half of those who worked in Poland, but don't intend to come back to Poland justify the decision with psychological discomfort of separation from their family that they experienced during their stay abroad.

An average Ukrainian who wants to come to Poland for a short time is 50, lives in the countryside with family and kids and has high school education. At the same time, Ukrainians willing to stay and live abroad are young, around the age of 26, live in one of regional capitals. They are also well educated - they usually have university education and in comparison to the rest of Ukraine they generally earn a lot of money. Nevertheless, it is those, theoretically satisfied Ukrainians who want to leave for good.

The main source of information for potential emigrants are friends and relatives who have already worked abroad. In Ukraine information concerning work conditions in Poland coming from official sources is actually unknown and not available. If Poland wants to take care of further influx of Ukrainian workers, it has to assume a systemic approach to work agency, which nowadays in Ukraine is dominated mainly by frauds. Polish employers should get actively involved in the process of looking for employees already in Ukraine.

11. Romania. "Post-Revolution Romania, 1990: Thirty Years since Creation of the Union of the Ukrainians of Romania," *AGERPRES*, 14 February 2020.

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The Union of the Ukrainians of Romania (UUR) was established on December 29, 1989 and received the status of legal entity on February 14, 1990, according to the civil decision of the Bucharest District 1 Court, shows the work "Dictionar al partidelor si coalitiilor politice si al uniunilor etnice din Romania" (Dictionary of Romania's political parties and coalitions as well as ethnic unions) published by ROMPRES (1993).

UUR is an organization with an ethnic, non-governmental and non-profit profile, with legal personality acquired under Law no. 246/2005, with full autonomy, which carries out its activity in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and of the laws in force in Romania, of its status, as well as with the international documents regarding the rights of national minorities. At the same time, UUR is a parliamentary representative organization of the Ukrainian community and is part of the Council of National Minorities in Romania, and through its publications, it is also a member of the Press Association of the National Minority in Romania.

According to Article 62 of the Romanian Constitution and the provisions of the electoral laws of Romania, the UUR is an organization assimilated with political parties and organizations.

UUR's goals are to harmoniously collaborate with the majority population, with the other minorities in Romania, as well as preserving the Ukrainians' national traditions and customs. The logo of the organization includes an open book and a flaming torch above it.

The first Congress of the UUR was held in Bucharest on April 27-29, 1990, attended by 150 delegates and almost 50 guests. Stefan Tcaciuc, interim president until the date of the congress, was elected president for a four-year term.

On the same occasion, it was decided that the UUR should have five county organizations, as follows: the Banat Region, Bucharest and its surroundings, Maramures, Bukovina and Dobrogea. Each of the five counties had its presidency, elected by secret ballot, the county presidents also holding the office of vice president of the UUR. The National Conference of the UUR was due to take place once every two years, the first time being scheduled on April 25-26, 1992.

In 1991, the UUR became a member of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians based in Toronto, Canada. Currently, the UUR is also a member of the European Congress of Ukrainians, the Ukrainian Universal Coordination Council and the Ukrainian Liaison Office (“Ukraine - The World” Association).

Since its creation, the UUR official newspapers have been “Nas Holos” (“Our Voice”) and “Ukrainskei Visnek” (“Ukrainian Courier”). The first is a literary magazine, and the second can be considered a spokesperson of the UUR. Other publications supported by the UUR are “Vilne Slovo” and “Ukrainian echoes”, according to uur.ro.

The UUR was represented in the Romanian Parliament by Stefan Tcaciuc (born January 13, 1936, in Danilea commune, Suceava county; deceased July 27, 2005, Bucharest) in the 1990-1992, 1992-1996, 2000-2004 legislatures and part of the 2004-2008 legislature. After his demise, he was replaced by deputy Stefan Buciuta, who was also part of the 2008-2012 legislature. In his turn, Ion Marocico was the UUR deputy in the 2012-2016 legislature. From 2016 to the present, the UUR deputy has been Nicolae Miroslov-Petretchi, who is also the Union's leader, according to uur.ro.

According to the 2011 census, as many as 50,900 ethnic Ukrainians live in Romania. Of these, over 32 thousand live in the northern region of Romania, especially in the counties of Maramures and Satu Mare. About six thousand can be found in Suceava and Botosani counties, and in Timis and Caras-Severin counties there are over eight thousand. About one thousand five hundred ethnic Ukrainians live in Tulcea and Galati counties, informs romania.mfa.gov.ua. AGERPRES (Research - Horia Plugaru, editor: Liviu Tatu; EN - author: Simona Iacob, editor: Maria Voican)

12. Russia. “UNIAN Correspondent Asks Putin about Ukrainian Tanks in Kuban,” UNIAN, 19 December 2019.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin has answered a question from UNIAN correspondent Roman Tsymbaliuk who says that he has no problem working in Russia but if Ukrainian tanks had been in Kuban, Russia would have also changed its attitude toward Ukraine.

“Do you mean the [T-]72nd or the [T-]34th models?” Putin asked Tsymbaliuk at an annual press conference on Thursday.

The T-72 is a family of Soviet main battle tanks that first entered production in 1971. The T-34 is a Soviet medium tank, first introduced in 1940.

“The T-64 is our main battle tank. It is manufactured in the city of Kharkiv,” Tsymbaliuk answered.

“This is also a Soviet-made one,” Putin responded.

“Well, you also said you came from the Soviet Union,” the Ukrainian journalist told the Russian president.

On Thursday, December 19, Russian President Vladimir Putin is giving an annual news conference.

Kuban is a geographic region of southern Russia surrounding the Kuban River, on the Black Sea between the Don Steppe, the Volga Delta and the Caucasus, and separated from the Crimean Peninsula to the west by the Kerch Strait. Russia’s Krasnodar Krai is often referred to as “Kuban,” both officially and unofficially.

The Ukrainians in Kuban constitute a national minority, and the region as a whole shares many linguistic, cultural and historic ties with Ukraine.

Ukrainians first settled in the Kuban region in 1792. Until the middle of the 20th century, the majority of the population there identified themselves as Ukrainians.

13. Slovakia. “Politics: Reports on Politics Findings from Slovak Academy of Sciences Provide New Insights,” *Politics and Government Week*, 16 January 2020.

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Politics; Reports on Politics Findings from Slovak Academy of Sciences Provide New Insights (Scholarship and Power: “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” - An Academic Project in Slovakia Under the Communist Regime)

2020 JAN 16 (VerticalNews) -- By a News Reporter-Staff News Editor at Politics & Government Week -- Current study results on politics have been published. According to news reporting originating from the Slovak Academy of Sciences by VerticalNews correspondents, research stated, “This paper considers the relations between political power and scholarly activity during the period of the communist regime in Slovakia, then part of Czechoslovakia.”

Our news editors obtained a quote from the research from Slovak Academy of Sciences: “Taking the example of a research project on the Ukrainian minority, undertaken by the Slovak Academy of Sciences during the years 1954-70, the paper traces the relationships between scholars and politicians and among academic institutions in the Czech lands and Slovakia, and the interventions by political power in academic work. The author focuses on the following questions: how did the project originate, and what were its aims and results? In what political, economic and social context did scholars undertake the project? How did the power relations

between scholars and politicians develop and change in the course of the project? Why did political power intervene in research of the Ukrainian ethnic group? The paper draws upon M. Foucault's views on the exercise of power, develops questions of the legitimacy of power (R. Barker), conceives scholarly work as an activity of a certain kind (P. Rabinow), and concentrates on the actors in power relationships, their strategies and motivations. Empirical data for the answer to research questions were acquired from archival documents about the project and from interviews with scholars who had participated in its work."

According to the news editors, the research concluded: "The findings from analyses show what the specific possibilities and limits were for scholars functioning in the respective network of power relationships. They furthermore reveal a gamut of successful or unsuccessful strategies which scholars employed to bring about changes in the processes of the exercise of power."

For more information on this research see: Scholarship and Power: "Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group" - An Academic Project in Slovakia Under the Communist Regime. Slovensky Narodopis, 2019,67(4):441-462. (Slovensky Narodopis - <http://www.uet.sav.sk/?q=en/slovak-ethnology>). The publisher for Slovensky Narodopis is Sciendo.

A free version of this journal article is available at <https://doi.org/10.2478/se-2019-0026>.

Our news journalists report that additional information may be obtained by contacting Kilianova Gabriela, CSc., Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava.

Keywords for this news article include: Slovak Academy of Sciences, Politics.

Our reports deliver fact-based news of research and discoveries from around the world.
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14. United Kingdom. "Halifax Ukrainian Club Closes Its Doors after More Than 70 Years," *Halifax Courier*, 15 January 2020.

Tom Scargill

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The Halifax Ukrainian Club has closed its doors for the last time after more than 70 years.

Affectionately known as the Uky Club, the Association of Ukrainians in GB Halifax Branch has played host to events and gatherings of the town's Ukrainian community for decades.

But decreasing membership numbers have seen interest in the club dwindle in recent years, leading to financial difficulties.

Chairman of the club Bohdan Kurylak said: "The first Ukrainians arrived in Halifax in 1948 and the first premises were opened on Rhodes Street, close to St Mary's Church.

“Then around 50 years ago the community moved to its current home Fairfield House.

“Like a lot of second generation people in the community, I was taken to the club by my parents and enjoyed the events, cultural and educational aspect of it.

“But there is unfortunately no longer that willingness from the third and fourth generation to take on the mantle.

“I understand that people may have moved out of the area or gone off to university.

“We have seen membership numbers dwindle in recent years to 34, so the support base isn’t really there.

“There is still more than 100 Ukranian families in the Halifax area but they don’t use the facility like they used to for whatever reasons.

“It is now mainly used by the Asian community to hold weddings and other events so perhaps they could take over the building, who knows.

“Unfortunately outgoings are bigger than our income. That’s the reality.

“It’s a sad situation. We had to sell our church a few years ago for the same reasons.

“We could have downsized but the committee didn’t feel that was an option because we don’t feel the support base is there.

“We took the painful decision of closure at an EGM 18 months ago but the issue of lack of support started well before that and a decision had to be taken on the building’s future.

“We’ve lived a hand-to-mouth existence for some time with additional support and it’s been a really difficult balancing act and final decision for the committee.

“What we need to remember in all this gloom is that a community is about the people and not a building so we can continue as a community if the wish and will is still there.”

15. USA. “A Philadelphia Ukrainian Institution Has Stood Strong Long before Trump’s Impeachment Put Ukraine in the Spotlight,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 February 2020.

By Jeff Gammage

Roman Petyk jokes that the membership application at the Ukrainian Selfreliance Federal Credit Union consists of two questions:

Are you Ukrainian? If not, would you like to be?

It's a bit of whimsy from the board chairman of an institution that has stood near the heart of the Philadelphia region's Ukrainian community for nearly 70 years, from its founding by postwar refugees to this modern moment when President Donald Trump's impeachment trial has propelled Ukraine to the fore of the national conversation.

At the Ukrainian Selfreliance Credit Union — yes, Selfreliance is one word — depositors can get answers to their questions in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and English. If a member is at risk of bouncing a check, a staffer personally calls to alert him.

UKRFCU, as it's known, has 11,000 members and \$370 million in assets, up from 9,500 and \$262 million in 2014, and it gets an "A" health grade from DepositAccounts, which tracks the financial well-being of banks and credit unions.

It also faces real challenges at a time when the lending and banking industry has grown ever more competitive, and the Trump administration is trying to squeeze off the flow of immigrants to the United States.

More than half the UKRFCU membership immigrated within the last 30 years. Under Trump, Ukrainians have become one of the top groups resettled as refugees in the United States, for reasons that aren't fully clear.

"Our success depends to a large extent on the continued viability of the Ukrainian American community," Petyk said. "We have to worry that we're not going to have a continuing stream of new immigrants coming in. We pride ourselves on being able to help those people open their first savings account, buy their first car, buy their house. ... Now, there's this incredible hostility to immigrants."

That drives UKRFCU to aggressively seek new customers, partly by trying to offer better interest rates than larger competitors. It focuses on developing the kind of savvy digital presence younger customers want. And always on being integral to the community, spending about \$200,000 a year to sponsor and support everything from Ukrainian language schools to cultural events to sports leagues.

"Giving back is very important to us," said UKRFCU president Mary Kolodij. "Growth for the sake of profit isn't growth. I want us to grow. But I don't want to grow so big that we stop being a credit union, which knows its members and helps them."

Mary Kolodij, Ukrainian Selfreliance Credit Union president, and Anatoli Murha, vice president for retail operations and business development.

Another big goal?

"Ensuring that we're relevant now and in the future," said Anatoli Murha, vice president of retail operations and business development. "We have to continue to speak with our members: What are they thinking, how do they identify with being a Ukrainian American, and can we help with that? They want to see an institution that's going to help the community prevail and be active."

Today, 67,000 Ukrainians live in the Philadelphia region. Many are paying close attention to how their ancestral homeland — a nation of 44 million the size of Texas — has become central in the impeachment investigation and trial.

And reverberations continue from Iran's mistakenly shooting down a Ukrainian passenger plane that had just taken off for Kyiv, which killed all 176 people aboard in early January.

The credit-union story winds all the way back to 1947, when the Selfreliance Association of Ukrainian-Americans was established to help new arrivals in New York City. Chapters formed in other cities, and those service organizations sponsored credit unions.

It was an era when many traditional banks turned down loans to migrants who had no established credit history and lived in neighborhoods that lending executives saw as less desirable.

In 1952, according to a UKRFCU history, 233 Philadelphia Ukrainians pooled their savings and came up with \$52,000 to start the credit union. They offered more than loans. They offered access to the American dream.

UKRFCU now operates a main and branch office in Feasterville, three branches in Philadelphia, and one each in Jenkintown and Trenton.

"Even though it's called Ukrainian, they welcome everyone with open arms," said Gregory Wojcik of Abington, a 15-year customer who works in pharmaceutical sales. "They're great people to work with. End-to-end customer services, which is not commonly found."

Wojcik, of Polish descent, said an ethnic component was important to him in banking. It's not just that he can talk to tellers and managers in Polish, Ukrainian, or English — he speaks all three languages — but that credit-union operators share common community values of careful money management.

Credit unions and banks differ in subtle but important ways. Credit unions are member-owned, not-for-profit organizations, while banks are typically for-profit institutions that need to deliver returns to investors. Both accept deposits and make loans, though banks argue that they provide more services and products.

Of course, UKRFCU is small compared with such banks as JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo, which hold billions in assets. The Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union, based in New York, is believed to be the nation's largest ethnic credit union with 90,000 members and \$1.8 billion in assets.

Credit unions first took root in the United States during the Depression, when President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Federal Credit Union Act in 1934. The act established a regulated system that would help lower-earning people get credit.

Those early credit unions tended to be small, humble institutions, defined and limited by their “field of membership” — the legal definition of who was eligible to join. Typically, credit unions formed around a shared employer, school, church, or labor union.

Over time, credit unions have been able to expand those fields to where nearly everyone is eligible for membership. For instance, to join UKRFCU the connection can be as slight as having a library card from the Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center in Jenkintown, or taking classes at Manor College, which was founded by the Byzantine Ukrainian Sisters of Saint Basil.

“We service the community — and their friends,” Petyk said. “We understood people would have a natural affinity to an organization that spoke their language. But they weren’t just going to join an organization for that. We had to offer good products.”

Ukrainians have come to the United States in distinct waves, starting about 1870, when poor farmers were drawn by the promise of paying jobs. About 240,000 settled in eastern farmlands or the anthracite coal-mining towns of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. In the early 1900s, as many as 250,000 more arrived, working for steel- and glass-makers in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Detroit.

Ukrainian immigration paused at the start of World War I, and all but stopped after Congress set limits on migrants. At the end of World War II, tens of thousands of displaced Ukrainians came to this country. The Soviet-imposed Iron Curtain soon cut off immigration for four decades, ending only with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and official Ukrainian independence in 1991.

Today, about a million Ukrainians live in America. That includes 52,000 people of Ukrainian ancestry and an additional 15,000 Ukrainian immigrants who make their homes in Philadelphia and the surrounding suburban counties.

Many depend on UKRFCU.

When people ask, “‘Are you a Ukrainian organization?’ I say no,” said Murha, the vice president. “We’re first a financial institution. We are regulated. Second, we just happen to have the majority of our clientele are Ukrainians.”

16. USA. “Community Mourns Victims of Ukrainian Flight,” *SpectrumLocalNews.com*, 11 January 2020.

HUMAN INTEREST

Community Mourns Victims of Ukrainian Flight 752

BY HARRISON GRUBB SYRACUSE

The Ukrainian community in Syracuse came together to mourn the lives lost on Ukrainian International Airlines Flight 752. Saturday, a memorial service was held at St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church in remembrance of the 176 people on board.

“The service not only recognized the lives that were lost, but also prayed for the future of all of us as a community, as a world, that we can live in peace moving forward,” said Vice President of the Syracuse Branch of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, Greg Lisnyczyj.

The service included a special way to memorialize those lost on the plane.

“We had the flame of Bethlehem, from the Peace Light that was lit over the Christmas holidays. And from that candle, we actually lit a candle for each one of the victims to commemorate the peace that these holiday times were for all of us,” Lisnyczyj said.

Saturday’s memorial was held during Ukrainian school, giving children an opportunity to learn from the tragedy.

“This is a global issue, it’s a human toll. Even though they’ve been learning about the war in Ukraine that’s been going on since 2014, we wanted them to understand how violence and acts of war, even if at times unintentional, impacts innocent lives,” said Lida Buniak, president of the Syracuse Branch of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America.

Flight 752 crashed shortly after taking off in Tehran bound for Kiev, killing all on board. Iran says they unintentionally shot down the plane due to “human error.”

[<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/human-interest/2020/01/11/community-mourns-victims-of-flight-752>]

17. USA. “Impeachment Sets up Ukrainian Americans for 2020 Political Role,” *TheHill.com*, 8 December 2019.

BY LAURA KELLY

Ukrainian Americans, who have seen President Trump and GOP lawmakers repeatedly slam their former country as a center of corruption, could play a pivotal role in next year’s presidential election.

Highly educated and politically engaged, Ukrainian Americans have large population numbers in key swing states.

Most of the 1 million to 1.5 million Ukrainian Americans live in California and New York, but more than 100,000 reside in swing-state Pennsylvania — a state Trump won in 2016 by less than 45,000 votes. Another 64,000 people in Florida claim Ukrainian heritage.

Many of those U.S. citizens have seen an opportunity to raise awareness and understanding about their home country, but are anguished over attacks on Ukraine that took center stage in the House impeachment drama.

“I think people might worry and, justified if so, if this will affect U.S. and Ukraine relations in a negative way,” said Andrij Dobriansky, spokesman for the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest political advocacy organization for Ukrainian Americans.

Beyond the complaints about corruption, Trump has attacked a war hero from the Ukrainian American community while repeating debunked accusations that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 presidential election.

There is no comprehensive data on voting trends or political leanings in the community, though people active with Ukrainian American groups say many likely backed Trump in the 2016 election, which took place in the years after Ukraine ousted a pro-Russia president and saw Moscow take over the Crimea region.

President Obama's failure to visit Ukraine during any period of his presidency and the delivery of non-lethal aid to Ukraine's military, turned some Ukrainian Americans against the Democratic Party.

"The fact that Obama wouldn't go and visit Ukraine, especially during that critical period, that was a very big deal for us," Dobriansky said.

To date, about 14,000 Ukrainians have died in the fighting, with millions more made internal refugees. The Trump administration has provided lethal support to Ukrainian troops battling Russian backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

But a key part of the impeachment drama is the delay in security aid to Ukraine as Trump sought to get that country's leaders to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden.

Trump and Republicans also went after Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a career army officer with Ukrainian heritage who earned the Purple Heart serving in Iraq and immigrated to the U.S. from the former Soviet Union as a toddler.

Vindman, the director of European Affairs with the National Security Council, testified in front of House investigators last month that it was "inappropriate" for Trump to demand a foreign government investigate domestic political opponent.

The president, the GOP and right-wing media sought to undermine Vindman's credibility by raising charges of dual-loyalty with Ukraine and highlighting testimony by his superior of "concerns" over the army officer's judgement.

"We definitely drew a line," Dobriansky of the UCCA said, over the attacks on Vindman. "Especially since our organization includes the Ukrainian American Veterans, we've always had strong relations with law enforcement in this country, so a lot of our membership was very upset."

Interviews with people in the politically active Ukrainian American community say typically fervent and outspoken support for Trump has gone quiet over the course of the impeachment inquiries. People are not outright condemning the president, community members say, but they are not jumping to his defense either.

Also inflaming passions is the president pushing a false conspiracy that it was the Ukrainian government, and not Russia, that hacked the Democratic National Committee's server in 2016.

Many are equally unhappy with Trump's calls to invite Russian President Vladimir Putin to the U.S. and his generally favorable attitude toward the former KGB agent.

"For our community, the big thing is Putin coming," said Dobriansky, who suggested people would travel by bus to Washington to protest a Putin visit.

Opposition against Russia is possibly the strongest thread uniting the community. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union instituted a genocide of forced starvation — called the Holodomor — against Ukrainians for their refusal to join in collective farming.

"For even those people in the Ukrainian community who still support Trump, it most certainly is not without the awareness and the conviction of Russian meddling in the United States," said U.R., a self-described life-long Republican who is "shaken" by the revelations in the impeachment inquiry and Trump's general approach to foreign policy. He asked his name be withheld to protect the bipartisan nature of his work.

"In terms of my discussions, there are still some who are deeply committed to Trump. I think it's more hope than anything else," he said. "My informed guess would be that the vast majority of those have really abandoned the ship, so to speak."

Ukrainian Americans don't reflect the typical base of Trump supporters. While generally older — more than 60 percent are age 45 and older — they outperform the general U.S. population on education, wealth and home ownership, according to Oleh Wolowyna, director of the Center for Demographic and Socio-Economic Research of Ukrainians in the U.S. with the Shevchenko Scientific Society.

"Bottom line, all indicators, Ukrainians are way ahead of average U.S. population, especially education, that's the biggest difference, and interestingly enough females are doing even better than males," he said.

Yet many were drawn to voting for Trump in 2016 as a counter to a Democratic party viewed as swinging too far left. A strong economy, low unemployment and rolling back of federal regulations are domestic policies that continue to appeal to the community.

"They don't believe in welfare," Wolowyna said.

Democrats failing to identify strong foreign policy issues could be a missed opportunity to attract a base of not only Ukrainian Americans, but a wider swath of American immigrants from Eastern Europe equally concerned with Russian expansionism and Putin's threats to the U.S.

Dobriansky of the UCCA says that foreign policy has barely registered in most of the Democratic debates and Republicans may abandon mentioning Ukraine to avoid talks of the impeachment.

“I’m worried about Ukraine being forgotten on that side with the platform,” he said. “Then, with the president’s public statements, we’re worried he might veto any inclusion of Ukraine in Republican platform.”

[<https://thehill.com/policy/international/473436-impeachment-sets-up-ukrainian-americans-for-2020-political-role>]

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