

UKRAINIANS ABROAD: NEWS AND VIEWS #149

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13. USA. "A Treasure Trove of Ukrainian History and Culture in Connecticut," *Kyiv Post*, 5 April 2020.
14. USA. "Eastern Catholic Bishops in US Have Particular Pastoral Concern for Immigrants," *Angelus News*, 19 February 2020.

1. Doris Kule (1 January 1921–15 March 2020).

The Ukrainian Diaspora Studies Initiative (UDSI) at CIUS lost a close friend and supporter with the passing of Doris Kule on 15 March 2020. The UDSI is but one of many scholarly projects and programs across Canada that Doris Kule and her husband, Peter Kule, made possible through their generous philanthropy. Such contributions were recalled in several tributes. Dr. Lesley Cormack, dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta, described Doris as a “passionate and beloved community leader and a true champion of education,” who, together with Peter, “left an indelible mark on the University of Alberta through their generous support of world class, interdisciplinary research.” Rev. Dr. Peter Galadza, director of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at the University of St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto, noted that Doris Kule has been called the “Mother of the Sheptytsky Institute.” He mentioned the traits that marked her character as a teacher—her “kindness and eagerness to help others”—and that even today her “students recall her warm smile and soothing gaze.” Indeed, Doris put love into everything she did, be it receiving guests, volunteering at the church, creating art, tending to the garden, or working with others and sharing gifts. She will be missed.

May her memory be eternal! Вічна пам'ять!

Below is the obituary for Doris Kule that was posted on the homepage of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.

Doris Kule (1 January 1921–15 March 2020)

The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies is sad to report that Doris Kule has passed away peacefully in Edmonton at the age of ninety-nine following several weeks of declining health. She was born on a farm near Boian, Alberta, to Usten and Maria Radesh, who had immigrated to Canada from the Bukovynian village of Shubranets, now in Zastavna raion, Chernivtsi oblast. One of ten children (a sibling died in infancy), she was bright and athletic, and quickly became fluent in English. Eager to pursue an education, she completed nine grades at Bojan School and then attended high school in nearby Willingdon, after which she took teacher training at the University of Alberta. She then taught at rural schools in Derwent and Shalka, before deciding to move to Edmonton after visiting an older sister while on holiday in the city. It was there that she met Peter Kule (Kuleba) in 1943, a Public Accountant, and they married a year later. As a couple they worked hard together, Peter building a successful and innovative accounting practice and eventually becoming a chartered accountant. In the meantime, Doris pursued a career as an elementary school teacher in the Beverly district of Edmonton, until her retirement in 1974. Blessed with a kind and gentle nature, she was always fondly remembered by her students. As Peter’s accounting firm grew and his business interests prospered, the Kules began increasingly to turn their attention to philanthropy, focusing in particular on supporting educational endeavours, many in the field of Ukrainian Studies. In total, they have donated more than \$14 million dollars to post-secondary institutions across Canada, including a million dollars to

establish the Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre at the CIUS, along with an initiative devoted to studying the world-wide Ukrainian diaspora.

We extend our condolences to Doris's husband Peter and family members. May her memory be eternal - Вічна Їй пам'ять!

See also the following:

"Doris Kule," <https://edmontonjournal.remembering.ca/obituary/doris-kule-1078890311>

"Doris (née Radesh) Kule, March 15, 2020," <https://www.sheptytskyinstitute.ca/doris-nee-radesh-kule-march-15-2020>

"Condolences on the Loss of Longtime University Supporter, Dr. Doris Kule," https://www.macewan.ca/wcm/MacEwanNews/NEWS_DORIS_KULE_20

"Doris Kule (1921–2020)," <https://twitter.com/darelasn?lang=en>

"Doris Kule (1921–2020)," <https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/faculty-news/2020/march/post.html>

"Doris Kule (1921–2020)," <https://www.ualberta.ca/kule-folklore-centre/news/2020/march/doris-kule.html>

In 2009, the book *Champions of Philanthropy: Peter and Doris Kule and Their Endowments* was published. The table of contents can be viewed at:
<https://www.sheptytskyinstitute.ca/champions-of-philanthropy-peter-and-doris-kule-and-their-endowments/>

2. Australia. "The Halls Are Alive," *Age*, 14 March 2020.

Jenny Valentish

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From ethnic films to fight nights, tradition thrives in unexpected places.

The second-generation Europeans running Melbourne's community houses often discover strange detritus after hiring out the halls. Sequins. A trail of cacao. The ash of incense sticks. You never know what you'll find, because they've become the city's most versatile venues.

Centres such as Ukrainian House in Essendon and Estonian House in Brunswick West were founded in the 1960s and '70s by displaced persons who arrived in Melbourne after the Second World War.

Over the decades, membership has dwindled as new generations have been less emotionally invested in traditions from the old country, and so the halls are hired out as a revenue stream. Now they play host to sports clubs and random organisations with tight budgets.

The result is a fascinating mish-mash of European cultural events, ethnic festivities and Melbourne miscellanea. The Polish Club in Albion hosts the Annual Polish Sport Festival, an Eritrean festival and Diwali fireworks.

The Melbourne Latvian School in Elwood welcomes folkloric groups from the motherland and has squeezed in the ring of Underworld Wrestling. The Swiss Club in the city accommodates both yodelling groups and Melbourne International Comedy Festival gigs.

At the Amateur Fight Night at Ukrainian House, staged by the Victorian Amateur Martial Arts Association, young fighters compete in boxing, kickboxing and Muay Thai matches between blasts of rock music. It draws a mix of anxious relatives and members of various clubs who loom in groups, largely dressed in black. These monthly fight nights are split between a handful of Melbourne gyms, each hiring a different venue. George Kolovos, from a Greek immigrant family, has the Essendon turf. He's the owner of the Fight Club gym in the city, as the personalised number plate of his Benz testifies.

Kolovos first contacted operations manager Irene Stawiski at Ukrainian House in 2018, having used Parkville's Reggio Calabria Club for the previous 15 years. Asked what the hall's appeal is, he says: "It's a combination of things. Price is a factor. It's very hard to find a place like that - any hall usually costs thousands of dollars."

The Association of Ukrainians in Victoria charges between \$100 and \$130 an hour, depending on the bump-in time. Customers can get their own liquor licence or, occasionally, Ukrainian House will open its own bar and keep the proceeds.

Irene Stawiski doesn't attend that night; she's got to know Kolovos well and gives him the key. I meet her and welfare officer Theresa Jaworski in Ukrainian House's boardroom. They pore over a calendar to recall the varied third-party events they've hosted: computer swap meets; a record fair; a cooking school; SplashDance TV show dancers and a Grand Final footy screening. "We served meat pies and did all the really Aussie stuff."

"Last year we had a ballroom dancing workshop that was just lovely," Stawiski says. "And there's a new company that uses our commercial kitchen and coolroom, making concoctions for non-alcoholic cocktails."

"They were lovely," Jaworski says. "Days later you could still smell those beautiful scents and herbs."

"Previous to Fight Night we had Melbourne City Wrestling," Stawiski says. "I went to a couple of them and I was just amazed - you walk in and there's a full-on wrestling ring in the hall and they use the stage to walk up, like it's a catwalk. I wouldn't say I enjoyed it, but it was interesting."

It's down to Stawiski's discretion as to whether someone is accepted upon filling out the application form. "Unless it's something extraordinary, I don't tell the board," she says.

It often is extraordinary, though. Like the mystic fair, with psychics and tarot readers.

"The last New Year's Eve party was interesting. They're called The Tribe. They put down cushions and draped things around. There's a teepee and pyramids, things like that." She chuckles. "It's an alcohol-free one, but I'm not sure what there is apart from alcohol."

The Association of Ukrainians in Victoria receives a government grant for its senior citizens' club and makes the rest of its revenue from hall hire, fundraising events, membership fees and by selling the plot next door to a developer in return for units that they will rent out.

"We are a very organised organisation," Jaworski says with prim humour.

"When you consider that the founders came to Melbourne directly from a displaced persons' camp, from Germany, from Austria, from Italy, with nothing," says Stawiski, "and by 1950 they'd already formed an organisation. It would have taken countless hours of volunteer work. They didn't know the language or the culture, so they helped each other."

That's why it's important to Jaworski and Stawiski to uphold Ukrainian events, despite dwindling interest, such as the Malanka folk holiday and the Ukrainian Film Festival, coming up on March 20-21.

"Sometimes we think, is it all worth it?" Jaworski says. "Then we think, of course it is if it can capture people that only come occasionally to things that showcase the culture. We want to show that we are still a strong group."

A week after Amateur Fight Night in Essendon, Estonian House in West Brunswick is buzzing with a different kind of bash. The Sherpa Association of Victoria is holding its New Year celebrations, organised by Bam Gurung - though he himself is Tamu, not Sherpa. He's a restaurateur who owns Kathmandu Cottage in West Melbourne with his wife, Laxmi.

Nepal is now the fourth-largest source of migrants to Australia and once Gurung settled here he became a central figure in the local Nepalese community. Through his 17-year association with Estonian House, he has put on community events for different ethnic groups, such as Tamu Samaj Victoria, Magar Samaj Victoria, Himalayan Youth Foundation and some of the local Muslim community.

"We were born in multicultural," he says. "Nepal is a tiny country but there are a lot of cultures within it."

Before he moved to Melbourne, Gurung lived in Britain for 18 years, serving as a gorkha. Maybe that's where his formidable organisational skills come from.

For an event such as the Sherpa Association of Victoria's Gyalpo Losar - which featured a ceremonial puja (prayer ritual), opening speeches and cultural performances - he might facilitate the health and safety, the security, the music and the catering.

"Basically, anything that needs sorting," he says.

Eventually, Gurung hopes there will be a Tamu Cultural Centre in Melbourne, but the budget keeps being thwarted by rising property prices. In the meantime, Kathmandu Cottage has become an unofficial hub for Nepalese people, with Estonian House for special occasions.

Melbourne's Estonians share similarities with the Ukrainians - they started off with a smaller hall, then moved to a cinema that had previously been a theatre. Their membership numbers also dropped off post-1991, when Estonia established independence from the Soviet Union, as Ukraine did.

I visit the art deco building to meet Matti Kivivali, chair of the co-operative. He was born in Australia to Estonian parents who came over in the 1940s.

"I grew up doing the language school, kids' folk dancing, Scouts," he says. "My mother was a folk dancing teacher and I took over from her. Now my daughter teaches it."

Bernadette Pilli, chair of the Estonian Society of Melbourne, married into the community.

"My husband's mother did a lot of the catering here, and as an art student I needed money, so I would come here in my teens and wash dishes. In the '80s I joined the folk dancing troupe because I really enjoyed the colour and movement. Our children became a part of it as well," she says. "Those of us who aren't Estonians are almost like born-again Estonians because we have the enthusiasm."

Estonian House still has meet-ups for dancing, craft and choir, as well as its three main events: Independence Day, Christmas and Jaanipaev, but as Kivivali notes, "there was a time that this place was used twice a month for dinner-dances, theatres and shows. Now a lot of the sub-organisations have unfortunately disappeared."

To tone down the Estonian decor for external organisations - such as the coming Brunswick Music Festival and local school fundraisers - they moved their giant mythology murals of Kalev and Linda, who used to tower either side of the stage in the 500-capacity hall, to the upstairs balcony.

Kivivali is the one-man screening process for events and he's developed a sixth sense. "Years ago someone booked a tennis club fundraiser and it ended up being an under-age rave party with more than 600 people, jumping fences. The police were called out three times," he says.

"A lot of the others have been well managed by the local community groups who get their own security if need be. We've had quite a lot of Muslim women-only henna nights."

The upkeep of Estonian House is between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year. In 2013 they received a substantial state government grant, but funding for their own events programming is difficult, since Pilli says grants tend to be aimed at emerging communities. And so they hire out the hall for \$700 with a \$300 bond. “We haven’t adjusted it for some time because we’re trying to keep it accessible for the local community,” Kivivali says.

As Ukrainian House’s Irene Stawiski put it, “it’s our duty to help those emerging communities because we know what it’s like to start from nothing and we’d like to help them establish themselves”.

3. Canada. “Century-Old Ukrainian Labour Temple Getting Overdue Makeover,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 March 2020.

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By Solomon Israel

A major renovation is bringing one of the North End’s most recognizable historic landmarks into the modern era.

Once work on the Ukrainian Labour Temple has been completed, the neo-classical building at 591 Pritchard Ave. will be wheelchair-accessible for the first time in its 100-year history. The Association of United Ukrainian Canadians is spending \$1.3 million to upgrade the building, which is a designated heritage structure at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. Construction on the temple began in 1918 and was completed in 1919. At the time, the Free Press reported the building cost \$50,000, with funds raised entirely from Winnipeg’s 15,000-member Ukrainian community.

Association president Glenn Michalchuk said the temple’s inaccessibility has long been a concern for the group. They considered installing a ramp in the back of the building during the early 1990s, he said.

“It was just never pursued, because it wasn’t a good solution.”

Eventually, local architecture firm GW Architecture determined that an accessibility lift could be installed in one corner of the building, where McGregor Street meets Pritchard Avenue. The lift will bring visitors from that street-level entrance up to the temple’s cavernous main hall, and down to the basement bingo hall.

Association membership has declined over the years. Michalchuk said the group has about 50 members left in Winnipeg and several hundred across Canada.

But the hall has grown beyond its original role as a hub for Winnipeg’s Ukrainian community, he explained.

“The (association) has always been active culturally, and we still have the mandolin orchestra that performs out of there, we have a dance group, we have a choir,” he said.

“But over the years, also, the hall has been integrated more and more with the community — it hasn’t been solely devoted to the activities around our association.”

Various community organizations book the hall for meetings and events, but Michalchuk said the lack of accessibility has been an obstacle for some groups who want to use the space. “We hope in the future that making it accessible opens up those possibilities, to make it much more culturally and socially vibrant hall in the community,” he said.

Aside from the accessibility lift, the renovated temple will feature new accessible washrooms. The association is considering redoing an area above the main entrance, which houses storage space and offices, in a way that would allow more natural light into the lobby.

All of the windows are being redone, replacing the current thick, translucent glass blocks with windows similar to those on the original building.

“It’s always interesting to come up with the design for the windows, where you have to look at old photographs, old drawings,” said architect Giovanni Geremia.

“But then, there are still remnants of the (original) window elements still on-site.”

Traces of antique windows aren’t the only pieces of the past turned up by the renovation project. Vintage sheet music, old Ukrainian community newspapers, and even hidden interior colour schemes have all been uncovered as layers got peeled away.

“I found some literature and stuff, and some old election stuff tucked in the walls, all in Ukrainian,” said Jan Woycheshen, a project superintendent with construction firm M Builds.

“And some propaganda from back when the big strike was, because this was a meeting place for that.”

Other charming historic features were never hidden at all. On the balcony in the main hall, rows of fold-up chairs still sport hat racks for visitors to store their fedoras underneath. Antique reel-to-reel projectors still grace the hall’s projection room, and the basement bingo hall is home to a retro, diner-style lunch counter with an advertisement for bygone Canadian soft drink brand Pure Spring.

A bronze plaque that marked the Ukrainian Labour Temple as a national historic site was stolen from in front of the building in early 2019. The stolen plaque was never recovered, Michalchuk said, but the AUUC hopes to have a replacement installed by this fall.

“We did receive one phone call from a scrap metal dealer who said they saw something that looked suspiciously like a piece (of the plaque), and they wouldn’t accept it, but that’s all we ever heard.”

The renovation project began last fall, and Michalchuk said the AUUC hopes it will be complete by May or June.

“I think it’s a good news story for a part of the city that doesn’t have a lot of good news stories, that we’re here and that we’re here to make the hall available, and to have it as an ongoing concern — and something that all the city can be proud of.”

4. Canada. “Vernon Part of End of Internment Camp Ceremonies,” *Vernon Morning Star*, 24 February 2020.

June 2020 marks 100 years since the end of Canada’s first internment camps, including one in Vernon

MORNING STAR STAFF

It will be 100 years in June since the end of Canada’s first national internment operations of 1914-1920. Specifically, the 100th anniversary is June 20.

In total, 8,579 men, women and children were branded as “enemy aliens” and interned, including at a camp in Vernon at what is now MacDonald Park and W.L. Seaton Secondary School.

Among them were Ukrainians, Alevi Kurds, Armenians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Ottoman Turks, Polish, Romanians, Russians, Serbians, Slovaks and Slovenes, of which most were Ukrainians and most were civilians.

Many were imprisoned. Stripped of what little wealth they had, they were forced to do heavy labour in Canada’s hinterlands for the profit of their jailors. They were also disenfranchised and subjected to other state-sanctioned censures not because of anything they had done but only because of where they had come from, who they were.

“The history of Canada’s First National Internment Operations reminds us of the hardship caused when civil and human rights are violated, and of the need to continually work in their defence,” said Andrew Harasymiw, chairperson of the Endowment Council of the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund (EC CFWWIRF).

In May 2008, representatives of the Canada’s Ukrainian community reached an agreement with the Government of Canada providing for the creation of an endowment fund to support commemorative, educational, scholarly and cultural projects intended to remind all Canadians of this episode in our nation’s history.

Since its inception in 2008, the EC CFWWIRF has approved more than \$5 million in grants, in an effort to shed light on this tragic yet little-known chapter in Canadian history. The grant projects include historical exhibits, awareness campaigns and presentations, commemorative

plaques and statues, internee cemeteries, films, historical research, artistic endeavors, symposiums and educational resources, among others.

The EC CFWWIRF encourages all the affected ethno-cultural communities to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of Canada's first national internment operations within their communities on June 20, 2020. These cross-Canada events will honour those who were imprisoned, stripped of their wealth, forced to do heavy labour and disenfranchised.

"Although the internees are no longer with us, acts of recognition such as these commemoration events will honor their memory, their sacrifice and their devotion to Canada," said Harasymiw. "We will remember all of the men, women and children needlessly imprisoned during Canada's first national internment operations, especially on this occasion of the 100th anniversary of the end of the internment."

A ceremony will be held in Vernon in June.

5. General. "UWC Creates Task Force to Support Ukrainians Worldwide during COVID-19," *Ukrinform.net*, 1 April 2020.

By Iryna Shavlovska

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The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) has established an International Task Force to provide support to Ukrainian communities around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Global Ukrainian community is facing unprecedented challenges today. UWC established International Task Force to coordinate support for our communities in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic," reads the statement on the UWC website.

The Task Force, bringing together Ukrainian community leaders from all over the world, will closely work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, governments, international organizations and churches.

The Task Force will work to provide accurate and timely information; offer practical support to those who need it most; assist Ukraine in procuring much needed medical supplies and equipment through working with governments, suppliers and humanitarian organizations. At this challenging time, UWC President Paul Grod addressed the leaders of global Ukrainian communities.

"My sincere condolences to those who have tragically lost their loved ones. I pray for strength for those of us combating the disease or supporting family members. Faced with a new reality, we are still one global Ukrainian family, coming together to help those in need. We call on Ukrainian organizations worldwide to join this important effort," the UWC president stated.

6. General. "Ukrainians Working Abroad Likely Face More Hardships," *Kyiv Post*, 13 March 2020.

By Igor Kossov

The economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic may hit Ukrainians working abroad.

Tightened border controls will block many temporary or seasonal workers from traveling throughout Europe, potentially slashing their incomes, imperiling remittances back to the homeland — which accounted for 8% of Ukraine's economy last year.

Meanwhile, Ukrainians who live in other countries on a permanent basis said that, while their livelihoods are holding up, they are worried that mass panic and restrictive measures may whittle down their incomes in the near future.

Some 4 million Ukrainians are involved in labor migration, with some 2.7 million working abroad at any one time, according to the Centre for Economic Strategy in Kyiv.

A third are circular migrants, a fifth are short-term migrants and another fifth are long-term migrants. And an estimated 10 percent are illegal. Italy — the hotspot of the COVID-19 in Europe — is the third most popular destination with 11% of Ukrainian labor migrant workers after Poland (40%) and Russia (25%).

Labor migrants

Dmitry Sologub, the deputy chairman of the National Bank of Ukraine, stated that the pandemic may reduce the volume of remittances from Ukrainian labor migrants.

“We expect a slight decrease in remittances from Ukrainian labor migrants abroad, but it will be relatively smaller than the effect of significantly reduced travel from Ukraine,” he said.

According to the NBU, private transfers to Ukraine totaled \$12 billion in 2019, with a lot of it coming from Italy, Poland and other popular destinations for Ukrainian workers. However, experts told the Kyiv Post that this figure doesn't represent all the money Ukrainian workers send home. For one, a huge sum of foreign currency enters Ukraine unofficially and is not counted. On the other hand, a significant portion of foreign cashflows comes from offshore companies and not labor migrants.

Olga Kupets, a policy professor at the Kyiv School of Economics, said that countries that rely on Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans for seasonal agricultural work — demand which will start in spring — will suffer economically if border restrictions prevent largescale labor migration.

“When the time comes for the harvest of strawberries or parsley in Finland, who will gather it?” Kupets said. “If there is no alternative to Ukrainians and Moldovans, it may lead to a collapse for those countries that don't let them in.”

Ukrainians who travel to Poland for construction work may be facing uncertain times as well. Several Ukrainians told the Kyiv Post through social media that construction projects in Poland will soon be put on hold.

For many Ukrainians traveling to Italy on a temporary basis, the epidemic has hit them hard, said Tania Chopko, a home care worker living permanently near Verona in Northern Italy. She said that many Ukrainian workers who travel to Italy for up to three months are currently trapped behind Italy's closed borders, unable to return home in spite of their limited visa.

"I don't know what they are going to do," Chopko said.

Most Ukrainian employees who travel for temporary work go there on minibuses, which are often associated with semi-legal practices. Unverified social media reports mentioned that some drivers were giving their passengers fever-reducing medication to hide their symptoms and pass border checkpoints. This possibly allowed them to bring the infection from Italy back to Ukraine by hiding symptoms.

Kupets said that part of the blame was on Ukrainians who protest against infected people, frightening them into keeping the illness a secret.

Permanent residents

For more permanent Ukrainian residents of EU countries, the epidemic also created a wave of anxiety.

Ukrainians in Italy have been the hardest hit by the disease, which caused a nationwide lockdown. According to official statistics, close to 250,000 Ukrainians live and work in Italy, though some experts believe that number to be much greater.

Kupets said that most of these workers are women who are working as home attendants and nannies, and demand for their services should remain constant.

But Chopko begs to differ. She sees a devastating blow to Ukrainians' livelihoods in Italy. Many home care workers, she said, may wait out until their wards' death from old age, at which point they might move back to Ukraine.

"They don't see a future here," she said.

Ukrainians living in Poland had mixed replies. Some were cautiously optimistic, expecting the Polish economy and its Ukrainian participants to ride out the difficult period.

"At the moment, small-sized business has halted, including the real estate market," said Anna Pysanchyn, who works in real estate. She said many of her clients are delaying the closure of important deals until it is safer.

However, she believes the economy, including the labor and service sectors, will stabilize. “The epidemic does not pose an economic threat to Ukrainians,” Pysanchyn said.

Multiple Ukrainians were upbeat about the healthcare guarantees and paid leave that they can enjoy in the country, which compensates for some of the difficulties of the epidemic and associated health measures.

In particular, due to the closure of children’s institutions, working parents received additional paid leave from the state that both parents can share these days among themselves, said Grisha Polonsky, a financial manager for an oil and gas company in Warsaw. However, one beautician said she was fired after asking her employer about health insurance.

Several Ukrainians added that they can enjoy much better economic opportunities in Poland compared to Ukraine. People who spoke to the Kyiv Post from Poland would not consider returning to Ukraine. But some mentioned that they were worried about being able to visit and return to Poland without problems, following the massive airline cancellations and border closures.

However, others are worried much more. Anna Damorova, for example, who works as a waitress in Warsaw, said the panic has caused a sharp drop in food and restaurant service, with one establishment going from a daily turnover of about 5,000 zloty per day (\$1,300) to 1,700 zloty (\$430). She’s uncertain about her future if the situation fails to improve.

“They’re talking about closing the businesses,” she said. “There will be firings and us — foreign nationals — will be the first to be fired.”

7. General. “Diaspora Deputies: Should Ukraine’s Global Community Have a Voice in Parliament?” *Atlanticcouncil.org*, 12 March 2020.

UkraineAlert by Andrej Lushnycky

Over the past year, President Zelenskyy’s repeated statements about the importance of the Ukrainian diaspora have generated considerable interest and a sense of anticipation within Ukrainian communities around the world. This new focus on the diaspora was underlined by Ukraine’s Parliamentary Speaker Dmytro Razumkov during his early March 2020 visit to Switzerland, where he made it a priority to meet members of the country’s Ukrainian community and listen to their suggestions regarding ways to improve ties with Ukraine. Razumkov’s welcome gesture indicated an eagerness to hear from the Ukrainian diaspora, while also hinting at the untapped benefits Ukraine could enjoy from greater interaction.

Clearly, enhanced dialogue would be good for everyone. The administrative openness that is a staple of Swiss society has yet to take root in Ukraine, and this includes engagement with the diaspora. For example, the delivery of humanitarian assistance, a major source of frustration for Ukrainian communities abroad who have been sending aid to war-torn regions of Ukraine for the past six years, does not look destined to become streamlined any time soon, despite the urgency of those in need.

Nonetheless, this recent meeting left a palpable sense that closer ties should be forged with the Zelenskyy administration in order to have a more reciprocal and balanced relationship. The diaspora certainly has much it can bring to the table, including the kind of experience and know-how that could go a long way towards resolving many of the issues facing Ukraine today.

A closer relationship is long overdue. Ukraine's indefatigable diaspora is one of the country's greatest assets and most undervalued resources. With the exception of Israel, arguably no other nation can claim such an active, abundant, and devoted worldwide community working for the betterment of their motherland. One would be hard-pressed to travel anywhere in the world and not encounter people proud of their Ukrainian origins. Yet for some reason, the perception of the diaspora inside Ukraine itself is often mixed and still sometimes skeptical. For many years, the role of the diaspora in the nation's life has been downplayed by successive Ukrainian governments, when it should have been held up as a reciprocal source of pride for all Ukrainians. The issue is complicated by the staggering scale of human capital flight from the country since 1991. When Ukraine first declared independence from the Soviet Union, it had a population of over 50 million citizens. Today, due to waves of post-Soviet economic migration along with years of low birth rates, that number has fallen to an estimated 37 million inhabitants. The current administration now needs to give all those who have left Ukraine a good reason to return and invest in the future of the country. How can this be done?

President Zelenskyy has already unveiled a scheme offering cheap financing for returning Ukrainians who are looking to set up their own businesses in the country. This is a promising start, but it will not facilitate engagement with the wider diaspora.

In order to make the most of the opportunities presented by the diaspora, Ukraine should look to significantly enhance the global Ukrainian community's role in the country's development. The task of representing the diaspora has customarily been left to traditional organizations defending the interests of Ukrainians abroad such as the Ukrainian World Congress or national associations from countries with considerable Ukrainian populations. The time has now come to move this relationship to an entirely new level and establish parliamentary representation in Ukraine for the Ukrainian diaspora.

Such a move would not be unprecedented. This type of mechanism already exists in Italy, another country with a large and supportive community abroad. Since 2001, the Italian Parliament has had something they call "Circoscrizione Estero", which translates as "Overseas Constituencies". In practice, this means 18 seats reserved for Italians residing abroad. As Italy is a bicameral legislature, 12 seats are reserved for deputies and 6 for senators.

Nor is Italy the only European country with this type of representation. Since 2012, France has had something similar in their National Assembly, namely "Circonscriptions législatives des Français établis hors de France", or "Constituencies for French living abroad". In both cases, Italy and France determined that it was essential to find a way to enable their citizens overseas to be represented. This begs the question: what about Ukraine with its ever-growing international population? At what point will this become a priority for Ukraine?

Reviewing the existing French and Italian systems could provide the Ukrainian parliament with an organizational and legal basis for the introduction of diaspora MPs. The goal would be to develop adequate parliamentary representation for an estimated global community of more than ten million Ukrainians living outside Ukraine. Once created, these new diaspora constituencies would help to produce a more accurate and all-encompassing legislature reflecting the will of the nation. It would also energize new and competent democratic forces in Ukrainian politics. Ukraine has much to gain from such an approach. By granting the Ukrainian diaspora democratic representation in the country, the government would produce a dramatically more inclusive parliament and demonstrate that President Zelenskyy's vision of engaging the global Ukrainian community is genuine. Meanwhile, after decades of missed opportunities, the huge Ukrainian diaspora would finally be able to demonstrate just how much it has to offer Ukraine.

Andrej Lushnycky is the President of the Ukrainian Society of Switzerland.

The views expressed in UkraineAlert are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Atlantic Council, its staff, or its supporters.

8. Ireland. "Ukrainian Diplomats in Ireland Raising Funds for Hospitals in Ukraine," *Ukrinform.net*, 14 April 2020.

By Oleksandr Panasiuk

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The Embassy of Ukraine in Ireland is helping not only compatriots in this country but also, together with the Ukrainian community and the church, is raising funds for medical professionals and institutions in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has reported on Facebook.

"The Embassy of Ukraine in Ireland [...] holds consultations every day and provides all necessary assistance to Ukrainian citizens who are forced to stay abroad. In addition, Ukrainian diplomats, together with the Ukrainian community in Ireland, the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Dublin, and with the support of our compatriots, are raising funds for healthcare professionals and institutions in Ukraine," the report reads.

To date, Ukrainian diplomats have already assisted Kyiv Hospital No. 1, the military hospital and the hospital of the Ukrainian Interior Ministry in Kyiv, the children's hospital in Luhansk region, the infectious diseases department of a hospital in Kyiv region, and the Ukrainian Armed Forces on the contact line in Donbas.

9. Ireland. "Ukrainians in Ireland Hold Flash Mob against Russia's Occupation of Crimea," *Ukrinform.net*, 2 March 2020.

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By Olga Lobastova

Activists of the Ukrainian community in Ireland held a flash mob in Dublin city center on Sunday to mark the 6th anniversary of Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea.

"The Ukrainians in Ireland met in the heart of Dublin and joined the worldwide flash mob to remind the international community that Ukrainian Crimea had been occupied by Russia already for the sixth year," the Ukrainian community in Ireland posted on Facebook.

As noted, the flash mob was initiated and organized by the Association of Ukrainians in Republic of Ireland. Ukrainian and Irish writers Yevhen Khmil and Patrick Adamson attended the flash mob among others.

The activists reminded that Crimea is Ukraine, urged to raise the issue of the occupied Crimea at the next Normandy format summit, supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine and stated the need to further convey the truthful information about Russian aggression in Ukraine to the world. The flash mob participants also called for the release of prisoners held in Russia and spoke in support of ATR Crimean Tatar TV channel.

10. Poland. "Ukraine's Economic Growth May Spell Trouble for Poland," *Aljazeera.com*, 2 March 2020.

Could the two million Ukrainian migrants powering Poland's economy head home or to Germany?

By Maria Wilczek
2 Mar 2020

Warsaw, Poland - In recent years Poland has overseen one of the largest waves of migration in Europe. In 2018 it took in more workers from outside the European Union than any other country - mostly from Ukraine. The worry now is that they could turn back, or move on to Germany.

Nearly two million Ukrainian migrants have arrived in Poland since 2014. Many escaped their fledgeling economy and the war in Ukraine's east.

Since then they have created 11 percent of Poland's gross domestic product or GDP growth, according to the National Bank of Poland. Ukrainians have been crucial to plugging the labour gap as Poland faced its lowest unemployment in almost 30 years last year.

Yet now some fear that the tide could turn.

On March 1, Germany loosened its immigration rules to attract skilled workers from outside the EU. Yet while interest in Germany is growing, significant barriers for Ukrainian workers could slow the outflow.

More worryingly for Polish firms, Ukraine's economy is bouncing back, with real growth at 3 percent in 2019, according to International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts. With falling unemployment, now at 9.3 percent, Ukrainian firms are seeking workers.

"They are beginning to feel as though their labour market has been drained," according to Andrzej Kubisiak, a labour market expert at the Polish Economic Institute, a think tank.

Wages have been rising by 16 percent year on year, while inflation has slowed to 4.1 percent. As the Ukrainian hryvnia appreciates, earnings in Polish zloty are worth less.

As a result, interest in Poland, the Czech Republic and Russia has weakened, according to the National Bank of Ukraine's January report.

Yet experts reassure that the changes will not be sweeping. The "guest worker" model in Poland is evolving, as many Ukrainians move into higher-paid sectors and stay for longer.

Germans cast their nets wider

As of 1 March 2020, Germany has introduced the new Skilled Immigration Act for qualified workers from outside of the EU, raising concerns in Poland that Ukrainian migrants may want to go further westward.

With a shrinking pool of workers and a greying population, Germany is facing a shortfall of more than a million skilled labourers. To remedy this, the new rules waive the previous requirement of having a university or college degree and extend permission to a wider number of sectors.

Polish employers worry that German jobs could prove more lucrative for Ukrainian workers - in a recent survey 70 percent of Ukrainians said that higher pay would be the main draw, according to the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce.

A poll by EWL recruitment agency finds that a third of Ukrainians living in Poland are considering moving to Germany. Moreover, in an earlier report, Poland's central bank estimated that the number of Ukrainian workers leaving Poland for Germany could reach 25 percent by 2024.

Yet such fears are likely to be overblown. The migrant scheme in Germany earmarks workers who have vocational qualifications and speak good German - criteria which only 2.6 percent of Ukrainians working in Poland would meet, found a new study.

According to Krzysztof Ingot, head of Personnel Service, a Polish recruitment agency, the German labour market opening could only become worrisome if it expanded to the low-skill construction and industrial sectors. "We could then be looking at some 200,000 [non-EU] workers who will choose Germany over Poland."

Is it enough to bring them home?

Just outside Warsaw, the new Delphi Technologies electronics plant churns out car parts for producers across Europe. Since opening in September last year the company has been looking to fill at least 1,000 positions. Many workers came from Ukraine.

Vasyl Prysiashnyk works twelve-hour shifts as a machine operator. “Three years ago there was no work in Ukraine,” he told Al Jazeera. He will return when conditions improve. For now, his friends back home warn him that “the situation is not yet stable enough.”

Down the line, Lesia Korotchenko focuses on soldering bits to steering panels for hybrid electric cars. She also came to Poland three years ago, initially to work at a meat-processing plant, but switched to packaging, and finally to a better-paid electronics production job.

Korotchenko is not eager to leave. “Compared to Ukraine, everything is better here,” she says, musing about how she would soon bring her son to Poland.

Meanwhile, Natalia Baidyk, a 35-year old from Poltava in Ukraine manages fuel-pump production. A number of factors keep her from returning home: “First, wages need to grow further”. Next, she would like social services to improve, and third, for the political situation to stabilise.

“We call it economic migration, because economic rewards are the main motivations for workers to leave their country,” explained Andrzej Korkus who heads EWL, an agency recruiting Eastern European workers.

According to the EWL’s report, higher earnings are a key condition for returning home for three-quarters of Ukrainians working in Poland. A majority also list political and economic stability, followed by fighting corruption (41 percent). Just 10 percent of respondents say nothing could persuade them to go back to Ukraine.

Sentiments differ between sectors. “It doesn’t make sense for many programmers to leave [Ukraine], since they pay 5 percent tax”, said Oleh from Lviv, who works at a technological consulting company in Warsaw. “I tried to bring some of my Ukrainian friends here, but it did not make financial sense for them.”

Oleh came to Poland in 2011 to study and stayed to work. “Welfare levels are incomparably better here,” he told Al Jazeera.

Yet the discussion of whether to return to Ukraine is a continuing topic in his family. Asked if he would return, Oleh replied: “I have a number of well-defined parameters.”

The first is medical care. “I was recently in hospital for a couple of weeks. I received all the services needed, including tests and medication, without need to pay for any of them. At this time, that would still be unthinkable in Ukraine.”

Second, Oleh would like a comparable standard of life, and third, he would also like the consumer ecosystem to be more developed. For example, “No one takes out loans for a house in Ukraine, there is no mortgage market.”

From fields to factories

According to the recruitment agency Personnel Service, more than one-fifth of Polish companies now hire Ukrainian workers, but their model of employment is changing.

“Workers from Ukraine are increasingly hired in the service industry and more often in specialised positions,” Personnel Service’s Inglot, told Al Jazeera.

In 2014, almost half of Ukrainians in Poland worked in agriculture. The number dropped to 8 percent in 2018, as many newcomers moved into industrial production (from 12 to 39 percent), services (from 28 to 33 percent) and construction (from 14 to 21 percent).

Low-wage sectors are most exposed to labour outflow. “Workers come with higher expectations in terms of wages, working conditions and company benefits,” Korkus told Al Jazeera. For example, the meat-production sector “has seen a notable increase in Asian workers, replacing those from Ukraine,” he added.

But the guest worker model is changing, as many Ukrainians stay longer. “A few years ago, the core of our immigration was short-term”, said Kubisiak, under which citizens of former Soviet countries can work in Poland for six months without a visa.

While simpler and faster, in the long-term “this benefitted neither the company nor the worker. Companies had to train newcomers, while even the most ambitious workers were sent back home after six months. Companies also had to also do a lot of formal work to track worker permits”, Kubisiak told Al Jazeera.

Last year 330,000 Ukrainians received work permits, which allow employees to stay for 1-3 years, marking a rise of 92,000 since 2018. More permits were also given to Belarusians (7,900 more) and Georgians (4,600 more), according to new data from Poland’s Labour Ministry.

This has “allowed for rotation between companies and made it feasible to up-skill [through vocational training] and learn the local language,” causing more Ukrainians to stay for longer, added Kubisiak.

Moreover, last year a record number of companies in Poland were registered by foreigners, mainly Ukrainians and Belarusians - another sign that many link their future to Poland.

11. Poland. “Destination Wałbrzych: Is Ukrainian Immigration Fixing Depopulation?” *Cafebabel.com*, 20 February 2020.

Translation by: Francesca Paolini

Wałbrzych, a town in southeast Poland, is now dealing with depopulation. The phenomenon of Ukrainian immigration is helping to solve this problem. However, the immigrants' working conditions are still uncertain.

“Not only do we need the Ukrainian workforce, but so do their families. We need people who see our town as their new home.” These words were spoken by Roman Szełemej, mayor of Wałbrzych, a town located in the south-west Poland. In the last decades, the town has lost more than 30,000 inhabitants. In other words, Wałbrzych is one of the places in Europe, which is suffering from the depopulation phenomenon.

However, Wałbrzych has experienced golden age in the past. Its age of economic prosperity corresponds with its entrance into the Second Reich of the 15th century. During that period, the area became renowned for its mines as well as textile, glass and ceramic industries. To some extent, the current situation of crisis is the consequence of the way in which the transition from a communist economic system to a capitalist one was carried out during the 1990s.

After World War II, Wałbrzych underwent its first wave of depopulation on a vast scale. Many citizens migrated to Germany. However, the new migrants coming from the neighboring regions of Eastern Poland - which will become part of the USSR following the War - were transferred to Wałbrzych. During the communist period, the town maintained its prominent industrial identity with three operating mines and many factories. So how did the current crisis come about?

To some extent, this is a consequence of the way in which the transition from a communist economic system to a capitalist one was carried out in the 1990s. Due to this transformation, public businesses were at first privatized, and then shut down. A considerable proportion of the population lost their jobs. In order to prevent the social collapse, the Polish government created a special economic area, encouraging businesses and companies to invest in that region. Despite some positive outcomes, the manoeuvre did not manage to stop the ongoing drain of human resources.

A new life in Wałbrzych

However, a few years ago something started to change. A new wave of immigration reached the town. In contrast with the past, people are now arriving from beyond the bordering area in western Poland, especially from Ukraine. Today, more than 4,000 Ukrainians work and live in Wałbrzych.

Some of them came just for a seasonal stay, others considers it as a leg of transit, waiting to find a better life elsewhere. But there are also people who want to move in permanently. The latter group of people is also the main beneficiary of a few welcoming initiatives, such as the Polish language courses which take place inside the offices of the local authorities. Apart from this, the Ukrainians often gather at the Orthodox church: their community is now considerably bigger than in the past.

The new citizens are not only employed by the companies located in the economic area, but also in the public service sector, such as transportation. In all this, despite the words of the mayor

Szelemej, the local authorities have not yet created supporting or integration programmes addressed to their new inhabitants. For this reason, in order to meet the Ukrainian immigrant community, we have to go inside the factories.

Life stories

Before coming to Wałbrzych, Sveta was working in Poltava as a journalist, a town in the western central part of Ukraine. Because of the start of the War in Donbass, her days were soundtracked by the ongoing warplanes landing and taking-off at the military base close to the town. With the war nearby, Sveta could not live with her fear - that her two children would have to find themselves in a warzone one day. For this reason, when her husband found out that a Polish agency was employing Ukrainian citizens to work in Poland in the industrial sector, she decided to take that leap. At first, only Sveta's husband left. However, three months later, Sveta and their two children joined him. "We did not know exactly where we would have gone, but it did not matter. We only wanted to wake up without hearing the warplanes."

This is how Sveta's family got to Piaskowa Góra, an enormous housing complex in Wałbrzych, where hundreds of Ukrainian workers live. The agency moved them close by the Cersanit, a Polish factory that produces ceramic panels. Her husband is working in the warehouse, in the shipping department. Sveta, instead, is employed in the production line. She puts the glaze on polished ceramic items. "Life is tough. I am not working in my field. But this is still better to what I got used to in Ukraine," Sveta says. She explains that if she makes an error during the working process, the ceramic panel will become unusable. In order to get the minimum wage (10 złoty per hour), Sveta has to guarantee the success rate of 90 percent. In the case she does not manage to sustain this, the factory manager may reduce her monthly wage.

If Sveta is directly employed by her factory, she would earn more, given that the agency holds one third of her salary. Apart from this, her job consists in two working shifts made up of twelve hours, with the starting time at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., as if to say: the kilns of the company never stop. As a matter of fact, this kind of life only allows Sveta and her husband to see each other only on Sundays. They work on different working shifts to look after their children. A better life for them was everything we wanted. The eldest is attending a Polish elementary school and is now comfortable with it. The youngest is still in nursery school.

Even though she came to Poland eight months ago, Sveta is still waiting for her temporary residence permit which will allow her to travel. Having to wait for their documents is the main problem for the Ukrainians living in Poland. Some of Sveta's friends had to wait nearly two years. Solitude is their second problem: "I bumped into Ukrainian people only when at work for a couple of months. A few days before Easter, a friend asked me whether I would have attended the mass. I was shocked when I realized there was an Orthodox Church in Wałbrzych. I had never heard of it for months. How could this happen?" Sveta asks herself. As we talk, other members of the Ukrainian community are present among whom Mariusz Kiślak, a Polish Orthodox priest. "Unfortunately, the majority of the Ukrainian people living in Wałbrzych know nothing about the church. But when you are an immigrant, being part of a community which shares similar problems is very important," comments Sveta.

Becoming grandparents in Poland

Olga and Sasha live in Wałbrzych too. Recently they have become grandparents, but their grandson was born in Ukraine: his parents still live there. They tell their story during a meeting in the local authorities' office, where the immigrants have the chance to attend a Polish language course.

Two years ago, Olga and Sasha were still living in a small village in Crimea. They decided to move abroad since they wanted to save some money for their future. Sasha's brother worked in Wałbrzych as a bus driver. Given that the public transports service needed new workforce, Sasha decided to move. Olga, instead, worked as a vet in Ukraine, but had to find another job in Poland. Her educational qualifications were not recognized and not admitted. "I worked as a housekeeper in many chemists' places. But exactly today I got fired. Do you want to know why?" she asks me infuriated. "I was fired after having an argument with a pharmacist who works there. This person has been having a bad behavior towards me for months and for long I have not understand why. Then, all of a sudden, they scold me: 'My grandfather was killed by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in the Second World War!' UP[A] was, a paramilitary formation first, then it became a partisan one. They fought against the Nazi army of Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union with the aim to create an independent and united Ukrainian country. But how can I feel responsible for a story I have not even been part of?" asks Olga rhetorically. She made an official complaint by the chemist's management offices, claiming that this person did not have the right to mob her due to their family history. However, instead of solving the problem, she got fired.

Unfortunately, as absurd as it might sound, Olga's story is not the only case. In fact, many citizens in Wałbrzych are the descendants of families that were moved here after WWII and were from the Western regions bordering the Ukrainian territory. People still consciously perceive the troubled Ukrainian-Polish relationship in Wałbrzych deriving from this historical context. Luckily enough, contrary to Olga, Sasha is satisfied with his job as a driver. He works eight hours per day, six days per week. He plays the guitar in his free time and sings Ukrainian songs with his friends from the Polish language course. So, there is still room for a care-free life even in Wałbrzych. After all, Olga dreams of opening her Ukrainian restaurant: "I hope I will manage one day, be it in Wałbrzych or elsewhere, it does not matter."

The report is based on some interviews carried out with foreigners working in Wałbrzych, inside the framework of the project, Transeuropa Caravans. The protagonists' real names were modified due to privacy reasons.

12. Romania. "Post-Revolution Romania, 1990: 30 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)

13. USA. “A Treasure Trove of Ukrainian History and Culture in Connecticut,” *Kyiv Post*, 5 April 2020.

By Askold Krushelnycky.

The Ukrainian Museum and Library is located in Stamford, Connecticut. It is the oldest cultural institution established by Ukrainians in North America. It is dedicated to the collection, documentation, preservation and exhibition of artifacts and publications dealing with Ukrainian culture and heritage.

STAMFORD, Connecticut — A certainly priceless, often breathtaking, collection of Ukrainian cultural and historic artifacts – probably the largest outside Ukraine – is housed in an imposing 19th-century mansion in a city of just 130,000 people in the U.S. state of Connecticut.

Recently the *Kyiv Post* visited the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, about a 90-minute drive north of New York City – a trip well worth making for anyone interested in Ukrainian history or culture or that of the Ukrainian diaspora in North America.

The sheer number of items is staggering. The museum boasts some 7,000 folk artifacts including wood carvings, ceramics, klym handwoven carpets, embroidery, traditional costumes from different areas of Ukraine, musical instruments, and rich host of other eclectic and more commonplace items.

It has more than 3,000 paintings, prints, woodcuts, sculptures, many by Ukrainian artists who have achieved world-renown such as Yakiv Hnizdovsky, Ivan Marchuk, Oleksandr Archipenko, Serhiy Lytvynenko, Oleksa Hryshchenko (known as Alexis Gritchenko in France where he lived and achieved world fame).

Ukraine’s history is tightly connected to its Christian faith and Orthodox and Catholic churches, and that is something reflected in the museum’s collection of 1000 crosses, icons, church vestments, jewelry, and other religious items.

That intertwining of Ukraine’s history and Churches also led directly to the museum’s creation by a remarkable figure in shaping the story of the Ukrainian diaspora in America, Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky.

Bohachevsky (whose name is also spelled Konstantyn) was born in 1884 near the town of Zolochiv in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire and after World War I was incorporated into eastern Poland and is now part of western Ukraine.

He studied at universities in Lviv, Innsbruck, and Munich before being ordained in 1909. He rose steadily in the church hierarchy before World War I started in 1914, part of which he served as a military chaplain for Ukrainian soldiers in the Austrian army.

In 1923, after being ordained a bishop by the Pope in Rome, he was sent to minister to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church faithful in America. The previous head of the UGCC in the U.S. had died in 1916 and the church had slipped into disarray and was riven by internal disputes and competition for its parishioners' loyalty, particularly by Hungarian Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox influence's.

Creating the first Ukrainian cultural institute in America

Bohachevsky applied his considerable organizational talents, intellect, and an ability to project spirituality to placate and unite the disparate members of his flock.

By the time of his death in 1961, the inspirational Bohachevsky had forged the UGCC in America into a prestigious, vigorous organization with moral and political clout that was pivotal in keeping the Church alive when it was banned and persecuted in Ukraine during communist rule.

In the run-up to and after Ukraine's 1991 independence, the UGCC in America channeled considerable resources to rebuild the church in Ukraine.

Bohachevsky's seat of office was in Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania, the state that had attracted tens of thousands of the earliest Ukrainian immigrants to America.

They started arriving in Pennsylvania in the late 19th century, mostly Ukrainian Catholics from areas now in western Ukraine, because it offered plentiful work in the coal mines and steel mills that turned the state into an industrial powerhouse.

Connecticut and the area around Stamford drew immigrants because of industries like engineering, textile mills, stone-quarrying, and tobacco plantations.

Lubow Wolynetz is the curator at the museum where she started working part-time in 1982 and became so enthralled that she has been a driving force there ever since.

She said Bohachevsky bought the mansion, called The Chateau for the UGCC in 1933 from a wealthy businessman much reduced by the 1929 world financial crisis.

The stone building, with its turrets, gables and steeply pointed roofs, is described in Stamford's guidebooks as a "Second Empire style Villa." Its high, wood-paneled rooms with timbered ceilings and large windows, contain fireplaces big enough to park a horse and carriage in. It seems a perfect setting for a movie with a darkly gothic theme.

Furniture, chandeliers, clocks and other articles dating from the 18th and 19th centuries came with the property when Bohachevsky purchased it and remain there today. The Chateau thus not only functions as a space to display Ukrainian culture but is itself an enchanting example of a bygone American age.

Wolynetz said: “When Bishop Bohachevsky bought the estate he wanted a place for a seminary as well as a cultural center. What became the Saint Basil College Seminary, which still carries on its work, naturally, was the first priority because he needed priests educated here to serve the parishioners in America.”

He also started the St. Basil Preparatory School which operated between 1933-90.

She said the bishop realized that the first and second generations of children born to Ukrainian immigrants were being Americanized and assimilated and they had “no base where they could draw something of their heritage and he believed a museum and cultural center would help the community preserve that Ukrainian language, heritage and culture and develop intellectually.”

Wolynetz said Bohachevsky also wanted to create somewhere Americans could come to learn about Ukraine. The result was the first Ukrainian cultural institute in America.

Wolynetz said Bohachevsky, in his days as a theological student, had taken an interest in the UGCC’s work to create a museum in Lviv.

“Bohachevsky had taken courses about organizing and running museums. So he had some background and knowledge and basic information about museology which he transferred to here,” she said. “He threw himself into the project and involved talented clerics and lay people to advance it.”

One of the UGCC’s most venerated leaders, Metropolitan Archbishop Andrei Sheptytsky of Lviv, also enthusiastically supported the project. He donated a painting called “The Madonna of Saint George Cathedral” as an expression of unity between the church in Ukraine and America for the official opening ceremony in September 1937.

Bohachevsky commissioned and purchased some items but many were donated by individuals or groups from the burgeoning diaspora community. That process has continued throughout the years.

A collection that keeps growing

The museum has acquired such a huge inventory that it can only exhibit some 10 percent of it at a time on the first two floors of the building. The vast majority of the collection is stored elsewhere and exhibitions are rotated every year or so.

Many documents and books are exhibited or stored on hundreds of meters of shelving in a separate building, known as the Cultural Research Center, which formerly housed the preparatory school.

The museum itself displays many magnificent and rare publications including centuries-old bibles and religious texts from among the first printed on the territory that is Ukraine.

One book of theological instruction, on show in a glass cabinet, was printed in 1491 – one year before explorer Christopher Columbus reached America's shores.

Other documents include old banknotes, postage stamps, some of the oldest maps showing Ukraine, and historic official documents pertaining to the short-lived independent Ukraine in the years following World War One while it fought, as today, against Moscow's attempts to destroy it.

Many invaluable documents that testified to Ukraine's independence aspirations were destroyed after the nascent republic was defeated and torn apart in the interwar years. The victors wanted to eradicate evidence of Ukraine's separate history and nationhood. The Soviets continued those efforts during communist rule.

So the various works of art, artifacts, books, and documents brought to the West by politicians, military veterans, artists, writers, activists, academics and ordinary people who fled Ukraine after the embattled republic was crushed and swallowed up, gained immense importance in the struggle to keep alive the very notion of Ukraine and make it known to the world.

One of its most prized possessions is an 1840 first edition of Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko's collection of works entitled "Kobzar," which gave tremendous impetus to the 19th century efforts to awaken Ukrainian national identity.

The museum possesses many items that reflect various facets of Ukraine's, ultimately unsuccessful, 1917-21 fight for independence.

Their country's arguments for nationhood are contained in documents brought by diplomats of the Ukrainian National Republic, or UNR, to the Versailles Peace Conference, where the victorious powers redrew the world's political map.

There are petitions and pamphlets from diaspora organizations calling for Ukrainian independence addressed to American and world leaders, official papers, personal diaries, posters, chronicling the life and activities of Ukrainians in the "old country" and in the North American diaspora.

The museum has a fine display of uniforms, weapons, and military headgear used by Ukraine's fighters from that period.

A collection of nearly 200 colorful water paintings, by Mykola Bytynsky, himself a colonel in the army of the UNR, is likely the most complete record of the various types of military uniform worn by those who fought in Ukraine's first bid for independence in the 20th century.

His painstakingly-executed works show the warriors in the splendid uniforms of different services – infantry, cavalry, airmen, sailors – and variations depending on units and the fighter's rank.

After the fighting was over, Bytynsky was interned in Poland and later lived in Czechoslovakia until the upheavals of World War Two made him a refugee once more. He finally settled in Canada.

Another fascinating trove of images is 3,000 old-fashioned glass negatives of the type used during photography's early years that depict the life of a legendary Ukrainian military formation of those times, the Sichovi Striltsi.

Originally a rifle brigade composed of west Ukrainians in the Austrian Army during World War I, their training and battle-experience made them an invaluable, elite fighting unit for the UNR.

The prestigious Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society in New York City is cleaning, restoring and digitizing the unique photographs.

The museum's photographs from those turbulent times reveal surprises such as that many of the UNR's military, not only medical personnel but fighters including officers, were women, like infantry officer Handzia Dmytryk, who, after years of adventure, fraught with danger, moved to New Jersey in the U.S.

The museum in the future

The UGCC has always played the leading role in the development and finance of the museum and does so today. Wolynetz is in charge of the museum, a senior cleric, Monsignor John Terlecky, is director of the Cultural Research Center.

While the museum is opened most weeks from Wednesday to Friday afternoons and groups can also visit by special appointment, the biggest event is the annual Ukrainian Day Festival.

Wolynetz said that several thousand people – with or without Ukrainian backgrounds – attend the festival, always held on a Sunday in September, to watch concerts of traditional Ukrainian dancers and choirs, sample Ukrainian cuisine and visit the museum and cultural center.

She said that such events and sometimes others generate funds to help in the upkeep of the museum and cultural center. But Wolynetz said the biggest share of costs is covered by the UGCC's Stamford Eparchy.

Wolynetz was born in the western Ukrainian town of Delyatin in the Carpathian Mountains and her father, who worked for the railroad, organized a dramatic escape for his family and others in a train that sped westwards ahead of the advancing Soviet forces, responsible for terror and mass murder when they had occupied the area between 1939-41.

After a period in postwar refugee camps in Germany, the family arrived and settled in New York.

Her interest in museums began at the Ukrainian museum in New York City. She is an expert at traditional Ukrainian embroidery and her classes at that museum, which continue today, have taught hundreds over the years the skills to create their own intricate and beautiful embroidery.

She maintains her links with the New York museum which is often loaned items for its exhibitions by the Stamford Museum.

Wolynetz said that researchers, from Ukraine and elsewhere, frequently delve into the treasure house of Ukrainian history and culture that is the museum at Stamford and she is eager to extend collaboration with other institutions or individuals working to learn or spread knowledge about Ukraine.

She works with Ukraine's Churches, to transfer books, especially doubles, from the collection in Stamford to Ukraine where museums, schools, and other institutions can put them to good use.

She is also searching for more persons to work at the museum part or full-time.

Currently, two people from Ukraine assist Wolynetz – Anna Perekhodko, a professional, who has worked at museums in Kyiv, and Natalia Kyrych, who conducts tours and is learning about the myriad skills needed to keep a museum functioning.

“The collection is always growing,” she Wolynetz, “especially books but also other archival material like sheet music. And we get wood carvings, embroidery, kylyms, icons.”

Much material is being donated as some of the older emigres, who came to the U.S. as children or young people pass away.

Wolynetz' devotion to the museum is obvious and her enthusiasm is infectious. She laughs as she says: “It is a work of joy. I enjoy doing this.” But, at 81 years of age, she is conscious that she cannot go on forever.

One of her biggest concerns is the backlog in cataloging the ever-increasing number of items at the museum. “It is only partially properly cataloged. But a lot of it is only cataloged in here,” she said, tapping her head.

14. USA. “Eastern Catholic Bishops in US Have Particular Pastoral Concern for Immigrants,” *Angelus News*, 19 February 2020.

Hannah Brockhaus | Catholic News Agency

In the United States, Eastern Catholics face many of the same challenges as Latin rite Catholics, but the Eastern Catholic Churches are particularly concerned about growing anti-immigrant rhetoric and the plight of Christians overseas, a Ukrainian Catholic archbishop said Wednesday.

The U.S.-based Eastern Catholic bishops are in Rome for their ad limina visit to the Vatican and to the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul Feb. 17-21.

“I see [the ad limina visit] as a chance for discussion, but it’s also a chance for communion,” Archbishop Borys Gudziak, Ukrainian Archbishop of Philadelphia, told CNA Feb. 19.

The bishops met with a group from the Secretariat of State, including Cardinal Pietro Parolin and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Feb. 19 for an hour and 45 minutes. Their meeting with Pope Francis will be Feb. 20.

“When you meet your father and when you meet in the family, it’s important to discuss different questions and the issues that arise, but it’s also important just to be together. That’s what this ad limina visit is like and I think that’s what our encounter with the Holy Father will be like tomorrow,” Gudziak said.

The archbishop is the metropolitan for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the U.S. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is the largest of the 23 Eastern Catholic Churches.

There are eparchies of 10 Eastern Catholic Churches in the US: Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Melkite, Syriac, Maronite, Armenian, Romanian, Syro-Malankara, Chaldean, and Syro-Malabar. Many of these serve large immigrant populations.

Gudziak said some of the concerns shared by all Catholic bishops in the U.S., and which were discussed in Wednesday’s meeting with Parolin, are “for the poor of America, the spread of gender ideology, and the safeguarding of all vulnerable people.”

Another two issues of importance, he said, are how to support priests and “how to help young people meet Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.”

“We breathe the same air that Roman Catholics breathe in the United States,” the archbishop said. “People are on the same internet and drinking the same Coca Cola, so we share these concerns.”

The Eastern bishops, however, have a particular pastoral concern for Catholic “immigrants and ensuring clergy and structures for them,” he stated.

According to Gudziak, the political situation in the U.S., especially in regard to immigrants, was one of the topics discussed with the Secretariat of State.

Gudziak pointed out that the actions, behavior, legislation, and quality of rhetoric in the political-social sphere in the United States is “quite distant” from the concerns of Christ in the Gospel and from what the Church teaches.

“I think the divisions in society are creeping into the Church and we become polarized.”

He noted: “We’re not expecting politicians to be saints but there are significant flaws across the political spectrum, whether it’s pro-life issues or aggression toward immigrants.”

Gudziak explained that the situation of immigrants touches the Eastern Catholic bishops personally, since they lead “quintessentially immigrant Churches, and not only in the past but today.”

He estimated that around 60% of his flock are recent immigrants fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

“For most of us our lands of origin are enduring great suffering,” Gudziak stated. “[There is the] Russian invasion in Ukraine, in the Middle East the Christians are decimated and leaving, fleeing the danger.”

“So, immigration is kind of a matrix of our reality, of our pastoral life. And the growing harshness of the rhetoric and the legislation about immigrants in the United States is something we are very troubled about.”

“We asked that the Holy See be as prophetic about this as possible,” he added.

“They are human beings, endowed with human dignity.”

He said the U.S. government’s increased vetting and denial of visas has also made it more difficult for Ukrainian priests to come to serve the growing Ukrainian immigrant populations.

According to the archbishop, in the past, when people have been underserved by their priests, they have left the Church, many joining the Orthodox.

The Eastern Catholic Churches are the final group of U.S. bishops to make the pilgrimage. The U.S. bishops began their visits, which typically take place every five years, in November 2019.

On Friday, Archbishop Gudziak will preside over a Divine Liturgy at San Clemente al Laterano. The Roman church, he said, is an important place for all Eastern Catholics, but Ukrainian Catholics in particular, because of its connection to the legacy of St. Clement and to Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who brought the Gospel to the Slavic people.

“We will be praying for our Churches, our eparchies, our clergy, and our faithful, and young people...”

According to Gudziak “we’re living in a time of radical cultural change and there needs to be what Pope Francis calls a pastoral conversion.”

One of these changes, he explained, is the lack of a shared anthropology: “There isn’t one understanding of what a man or a woman is, marriage. If you don’t have common denominators in society around one of the most fundamental questions, what is humanity, there’s a lot of chaos.”

“Catholic teaching is pretty clear on these issues,” he said. “The Church needs to be a community of those who listen to the Word of God and share it in authentic friendship. We need to make sure the doctrine is correct; We also have to live very much according to what we preach.”

He said the abuse crisis is an example of this difference between “our sermons and our corporate culture.”

The bishops discussed at the Vatican “the fact that this is God’s Church,” he noted. “Really hoping that this time is a time of purification, where we’re losing illusions, any kind of hope that there’s a triumph in this world that we’re going to enjoy.”

“We are called more and more to swim against the current.”

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