

UKRAINIANS ABROAD: NEWS AND VIEWS #150

Compiled by Serge Cipko, Coordinator, Ukrainian Diaspora Studies Initiative, CIUS (Email: scipko@ualberta.ca).

18 July 2020

1. Argentina. “With Union and Innovation, Small Mis[iones] Yerbateros Bring Out Quality Badge,” *CE Noticias Financieras*, 26 June 2020.
2. Argentina. “The Incredible Story of the Russian [*Mate*] That a Couple Created after Fleeing the Soviet Union to Argentina,” *CE Noticias Financieras*, 21 June 2020.
3. Australia. “Ties to Home: Ukrainian History Celebrated,” *Launceston Examiner*, 5 July 2020.
4. Australia. “Andrews’ New Minister under Fire for Red Army Praise,” *Herald Sun*, 21 June 2020.
5. Canada. “‘I Want People to Know She’s More Than a Hashtag’: Family Remembers Regis Korchinski-Paquet,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 June 2020.
6. Canada. “Many Ukrainian-Canadians Served with Valour,” *Edmonton Journal*, 8 May 2020.
7. Finland. “Finland Expecting 15,000 Ukrainian Seasonal Workers – Prystaiko,” *Ukrainian News*, 4 May 2020.
8. General. “The Pandemic Has Returned Migrant Workers to Ukraine. Will They Stay?” *OpenDemocracy.net*, 24 June 2020.
9. General. “Ukraine Needs a Whole New Approach to Labor Migration,” *Atlantic Council*, 4 June 2020.
10. General. “Ukraine’s Trapped Migrant Workers Look for Roads Back to Europe,” *Politico Europe*, 31 May 2020.
11. Poland. “Poland Needs Migrant Workers. The Pandemic Has Kept Them Away,” *Foreign Policy*, 29 June 2020.
12. Portugal. “Foreigners in Portugal at an All Time High,” *Portugal News*, 26 June 2020.
13. United Kingdom. “Tribute Is Paid to a Stalwart Member of Keighley’s Ukrainian I don’tCommunity,” *Keighley News*, 8 May 2020.
14. USA. “Ukrainian-American Leaders Discuss Highlights of Last 30 Years, Future Goals,” *Kyiv Post*, 30 May 2020.

1. Argentina. “With Union and Innovation, Small Mis[iones] Yerbateros Bring Out Quality Badge,” *CE Noticias Financieras*, 26 June 2020.

Copyright © Content Engine LLC

“People who choose to take a good [yerba] mate choose natural ‘parking’ [*estacionamiento*], and we have that since the cooperative was founded, in the year 1960.” The phrase of José Luis Semienchuk, manager of the Cooperative Las Tunas, located in the missionary town of Apostles [Apóstoles, Misiones], fully explains the permanence in the time of the entity and the product it produces.

Neither the economic crises nor the strong competition involved in the presence of large brands in the market managed to overshadow the imprint that its founders printed on it. “The Cooperative was created in 1960 by farmers, descendants of Polish and Ukrainian immigrants, who came to these lands back in 1900, and who, in the face of the difficulties they had, decided to arm it to jointly sell the product, the yerba, the matted yerba. They were other times: there were no roads, no electric power, it was hard to come and go by car to Apostles, which is only 12 kilometers from here. First a dryer was rented, and at the age of two work began to be worked with a catre dryer of its own; another important step took place in the 1970s when the mill was set up and the brands Las Tunas and First Colonos were registered. There were many more cooperatives in the area, which unfortunately are gone, and we went from the initial 16 partners to the current 85, and we continue to develop yerba mate with the same care as then” says Pedro Ricardo Korol, president of the entity.

On the way traveled, several obstacles. “Economic crises and measures such as the ban on harvesting - that was, I think, in ’66 -, which represents the economic discontinuity of weed, caused the settlers to move to the center and north of the province. Another factor that motivated the migration of farmers was the situation of the soils, since in this area the grasslands were burned since the time of the Jesuits and that has an impact on their fertility, in addition to having the characteristic that they are shallow. All of this affected the growth of the cooperative at the time,” the leader recalls.

The matte yerba [yerba mate] it processes comes from small family chakras [chacras/farms]. “They are producers of 25 or 50 hectares of land, but within those 50 hectares they have 5, 10 or at most 15 hectares of [yerba], and that also influences the performance of the Cooperative, because the volume that is received and processed is not much, but it is the profile that we chose to care for,” he emphasizes.

In this context, one tool they found to position the product was the Esperanza Yerbatera Consortium, which brings together 11 entities under the goal of working together to expand sales. “We produce a million and a half kilos, and alone we represent almost nothing in the domestic market, but under the figure of the Consortium - now a little delayed by paperwork - we have higher volume and we are more competitive,” Semienchuk says.

Quality that endures

As long as you come and go, if there is one thing that is not discussed, it is quality. “We take care above all of the quality, which allows us to stay in the market. There is yerba mate that offers price, and there is yerba mate that offers quality; we offer both: quality and prices,” Korol stresses.

That quality starts in the chakras and lasts until the last matte. “Our settlers know how we take care of [yerba], and with that care enters the raw material into the sapeco and drying, then goes to natural parking, where it is between 15 and 18 months, and only then reaches the package. That gives it a special, more natural flavor,” Semienchuk emphasizes.

In the same vein and under the objective of generating social, environmental and economic benefits, the Cooperative incorporated a chip burner in the dryer, which confers uniformity in the drying of the product; a guiche, crack trawls and an electronic scissors, tools that improve the working conditions of the tareferos, all granted by the National Institute of the Yerba Mate (INYM).

From producer to consumer

The Las Tunas Cooperative receives 1 million 500 thousand kilos of green leaf from its partners annually and produces between 20 and 25 thousand kilos of yerba mate that are marketed in different places in Argentina under the direct selling modality, that is: from producer to consumer. “Our biggest market is the rest of the country and not Missions, because of the number of brands here it is difficult to place our product. We work with low volumes and to remedy the cost of shipping, what we do is we take the yerba mate to Buenos Aires, where we have a warehouse, and from there we ship to different provinces. This is easier and cheaper for us: if we did it from Las Tunas, the value of the [yerba] package would be increased by 100 percent. And what is working most for us today is the online sale-based on the Capital and direct shipments to customers, without intermediaries”, explains the manager.

The large fairs, including Matear, organized by THE INYM, are the ideal stained glass window to add consumers. “We participate,” Semienchuk continues, “in many events in Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Corrientes; we did this with support from INYM and the Secretary of Family Agriculture, and it is very important because it allows us to contact directly with consumers, to whom we can explain in a personal way the goodness of the product.”

As a novelty, the Cooperative Las Tunas now also produces yerba mate for tereré [mate-related beverage served cold]. “It’s a pre-chopped [yerba], it’s not the traditional courte or ground. It is designed for children and young people who take tereré, but we know that there are those who choose it to take hot mate and among these we have a very special client, who is ‘the’ [famous musician] Chango Spasiuk”, celebrates Semienchuk.

What is the key to maintaining vitality, and continuing despite adversity? we asked “Joselo”, the nickname of the manager in the entity. “It is the will to work and not to lower our arms, to always keep in mind, mainly in difficult times, that we must move forward because there are partners and customers who are waiting for our work and our product,” he replies, revealing the commitment and responsibility intact with the challenge assumed.

[*Factiva description*: CE NoticiasFinancieras (NF) aggregates translated breaking business, financial, and economic news from across the entire Latin American region. Formerly known as NoticiasFinancieras. Country of origin: United States. Publisher URL: <http://icrowdnewswire.com/> Web Address: <https://contentenginellc.com/>. For a similar article in Spanish, visit: <https://www.inym.org.ar/en/las-tunas-una-cooperativa-que-suma-consumidores-con-calidad-y-vanguardia/>]

2. Argentina. “The Incredible Story of the Russian [Mate] That a Couple Created after Fleeing the Soviet Union to Argentina,” *CE Noticias Financieras*, 21 June 2020.

Copyright © Content Engine LLC

The dark car was slowly approaching the headquarters of the Argentine embassy in Moscow. The police fences prevented all direct contact and the area was guarded by civilian-clad K[GB] agents.

Suddenly, a young man appeared running and jumped over the vehicle:

-Ambassador, ambassador, I am Argentinian, I want to speak with you!... Please listen to me!...

The driver, surprised, braked suddenly. The ambassador leaned over to see what was going on. And the guard stationed at the embassy door reacted immediately to suppress the intruder.

In the late 1960s, under the rule of Leonid Brezhnev, such an episode was inconceivable in the USSR. The lone protester knew this and that’s why he kept screaming in Spanish:

-Please, ambassador, don’t let them take me!... I want to tell you something important!

The appeal worked, because the diplomat - understanding the language - prevented the soldiers from sending the boy, who at full speed took advantage of those seconds:

-My name is Vladimir Vaveluk, I was born in Argentina, I want to return to my country! I have all the papers to travel with my wife and children!... Every time we want to come to the embassy the police stop us from passing through!...

For months, several Argentines had tried to start the repatriation process. But it was impossible for them to approach their country’s embassy in Moscow. In many cases, those who traveled from other places were taken off the train and returned to their homes:

-They gave them away, Julio, they gave them away. There were spies in their workplaces, in colleges. In my dad’s case, [it] was a fellow student who was actually a KGB spy. He found out my father was going to the embassy and alerted the police. That’s why they got off the train.

Oliek Vaveluk tells me this from Russia. He is 60 years old, born in Kiev and lives in Nizhny Novgorod, the city of 0 - 3 against Croatia. 13,800 kilometres from Buenos Aires, the son of that audacious lone protester evokes his father’s epic:

-As it was impossible to do the procedure, for a week he studied the route that [the] Argentine ambassador [took] to arrive at his office. That's why a desperate card was played and when the car was stopping its march [he] jumped and started screaming in Spanish to get attention...

The first image of this chronicle is the foretaste of a story of love and political persecution, illusions and disenchantment.

Since I'm not afraid at all to be classified as a spoiler, I warn the reader that this story is going to end much better than it started.

But let me go presenting all the characters and placing them in the plot, to know what they have to do with the beautiful Russian matte [*mate*/gourd].

In principle: how had the Argentine Vladimir – [a barely] Creole name - come to the Soviet Union and why did he want to get out of there?

The Russian matte, created almost by chance at a Fair of Nations in Palermo

After the [First and] Second World War many Russian and Ukrainian immigrants had arrived in Argentina. But then a campaign by Stalin's government encouraged them to return. The promise of a home and a safe job excited them. So several families came back. Some testimonies found in the archives reproduce the scenes recorded in the port of Buenos Aires, where the enthusiasm of those who departed mixed with the cries of those who warned them that everything was a hoax.

Oliek confirms to us that this was the way:

-My dad was Argentinian, he was born in Berisso. His parents were Ukrainians, a family that had emigrated to Argentina to escape the war. But when Stalin started with the propaganda of a new country, saying "come back, we're going to give you a house, we're going to help you", my father's father decided to bring the family back. They made all the preparations and in the end they took a boat and all went to Russia... After a month and a half on the boat, I think it was 1954 or 1955, when they got off the boat they realized they couldn't go where they wanted but sent them to a town called Rovno [Rivne, Ukraine]... The older brothers were taken straight from the ship to the army, no matter that they were foreigners. Already at that moment my dad wanted to go back to Argentina... Everything was very different... For example, he saw how they treated women and that [had an effect on] him... For him, accustomed to Argentine customs, the woman was like a flower, which had to be treated delicately, cared for, protected... And [he] saw that in the USSR women greased the wheels of the railway or pushed the wagons with heavy luggage... He caught a desperation and wanted to leave, but he couldn't because they wouldn't let them out. He was just able to escape in 1971...

But what happened between 1955 and 1971 in Vladimir's life, which happened between that early disappointment and the reckless leap over the ambassador's car that allowed him to return to Argentina?

He tried to adapt to the life of a country he didn't feel like his own. Political changes - Malenkov instead of Stalin, Khrushchev replacing Malenkov, Brezhnev succeeding Khrushchev - did not change his dissatisfaction with the regime. He had never joined the Communist Party, although that harmed his professional development. [His] son Ol[i]ek's words allow us to better understand him:

-There, at that time, to enter the faculty and make a career you had to enter the Communist Party... So he had no chance. But he always had the great advantage that besides Russian he spoke perfectly in Spanish. And that wasn't common. That's why he was chosen to study at a spy school...

-A spy school?

-Yes, to send spies, there were few, twelve people...

In this complex system, officials who would be to carry out diplomatic missions were likely prepared in this complex system. However, the consequence of this specialized training did not have the result of their mentoring.

However, it was a stage that forever changed the life of that Bonaerense [of the province of Buenos Aires] boy.

It is that one of the subjects of the course was Russian Literature and in charge of the chair was a young teacher named Valentina.

Blonde, clear-eyed.

We don't have any data on the [knowledge] Vladimir acquired about [To]lstoy or Chekhov's work, but we know that one day he invited Valentina to a student dance.

They fell in love. And they never split up again.

Valentina Oleinik was Ukrainian. Although this information is recorded with the reservations imposed by the comment of [her] own son Oliek:

"I tell you the truth Julio, I don't know well to this day. My mother never liked to talk about it... I know that she was born in 1938 supposedly in St. Petersburg, but I don't know for sure... What's more, I don't even have her birth certificate...

Valentina and Vladimir's son Oliek tells his story and that of the Russian mate. In many family histories something similar happens. The time elapsed through one or two generations is more than enough to blur memories. And in more than one case, that inaccuracy is an episode balm that memory prefers to avoid. But there are indelible anecdotes:

-What I do know is that she was in the Leningrad blockade of 1941... She was taken out of St. Petersburg when she was 4 years old, when the war was over, the whole blockade passed there...

Many years later, when I was already a man, my mother would say to me “You don’t know what it’s like to be in St. Petersburg and you don’t know if you’re going to die today or tomorrow... That’s why you have to be always grateful to the day you live...”

That ability to enjoy every moment is acquired after great suffering. Valentina went through this painful learning in the communist regime and it is Oliek who resumes the story:

-As I told you, my mom was a professor of Russian literature... She taught at a school until she was kicked out, because a student had the maximum grade in a composition she had made about Dostoyevsky... But since in the USSR it was an author who was forbidden my mother [was] called... and [she] can’t put that [grade]... She said how not if he wrote everything perfect... Then they sent her out of school and she had to make a living selling milk... You see Julio, how many stories are behind the Russian matte...

Yes, of course, this is the Russian matte chronicle. But let’s not get ahead of ourselves.

Now we have come to the time when Valentina and Vladimir are about to leave Russia.

-What they went through I don’t want them to anyone... And the history of the USSR’s escape is a separate chapter... God exists, that’s why we were able to get out... We were about to go to prisoners at the border...

-The embassy helped my parents... The papers were made, the paperwork, as appropriate... and we were finally able to get out... Th[ose] two, my brother Paul, who was also born in Kiev and I... My sister and the others went out afterwards... I was a kid and this story I knew when we came to Argentina... That was taboo, nothing was spoken, you could not criticize the Russian government, or anything... My grandfather who was older retired to go to Argentina had to stop working for five years and was only able to go to Argentina in 1990... And when we traveled there in 1971 my mother wanted to take a picture of him as a souvenir, but as he was in the military uniform they said no, that it was forbidden... It seems like a very silly detail, but these things were happening...

-And what happened at the border?

-On the border, in the city of Chop, we had an inconvenience that almost ruined everything. My parents had sent a container with two drawers before we left for Argentina. My father went to Leningrad, passed the container through customs and they closed it in front of him. To all this, they had a friend who had also wanted to leave the USSR, which they caught with two hundred dollars in their pocket, when they could only take out \$100 per person, that’s all. Then they told [her] to sign a piece of paper saying [s]he was [bringing] them by mistake so [s]he could [continue the] journey. She signed the paper and at the same moment she was imprisoned... [Sh]e spent ten years in Siberia... [After ten years, she was released] and lived in Kiev. [She] was friends with my parents and told them this story and my parents knew that they should not accept anything, that what the KGB said was a lie... And so it was. At Chop’s border they stopped my parents and [said] they had contraband in the container, that [they were] smuggling, a vidia leaf [sic], that artificial diamond tool that cuts glass... But they were told to sign a piece of paper and

they were going to let them out. My father told them that they had put it and he didn't want to sign nothing... We were held in three days in prison, insisting... I remember they completely stripped us naked, checked everything, found nothing... until they let us out... We took a train to Yugoslavia, from there we move to Italy and in Genoa we embarked on the Eugenio C... There we were just able to breathe... we were already traveling to Argentina! And on March 15, 1971 we arrived at the port of Buenos Aires.

Valentina and Vladimir left the USSR with just two hundred dollars in cash. But when they arrived at the port of Buenos Aires they no longer had them because they had spent them in Italy:

-They used them to buy my brother and me clothes... What we were bringing and wearing was a disgrace... They arranged for us to be more or less well dressed...

They arrived with no money and no contacts. But they made it through:

-Argentines do not know the country they have... And they don't value it... We arrived with nothing and immediately received help... In Argentina people are very generous, very open... A lady who was also travelling on the boat, who treated my parents in the two weeks of sailing, introduced them to an Argentine who lent them a house in Lanús [in Greater Buenos Aires]... He also got my father a job... what the Argentinians did for us, I'm never going to forget!... They gave us furniture, beds... It was all a surprise to me, because in the USSR what was shown about Argentina was just the squalid villas [shanty towns or slums]... I thought I was going to get to a place where there were Indians with arrows... and when I saw that all the houses had a bathroom, that they had showers,,, I couldn't believe it... And my father hadn't told me anything because we were kids and if we got to talk, they could put him in jail, directly... That's why I love Argentina very much and although I live here in Russia and my nationality is Russian, Argentina is a very big piece of my heart...

The family started a new life. Vladimir began working [i]n a foundry and then moved on to Sancor. Until he became the regular translator of diplomatic meetings, press conferences and visits by Russians to Argentina.

Valentina, for her part, set up a sewing workshop. And after a while she was already a saleswoman at the exhibition of Russian agricultural machinery that had been installed [i]n the South Coast.

The years passed, the relatives who had stayed in Russia arrived, the children grew up and married.

In 1988 Valentina and her children decided to sell Russian handicrafts. They never imagined that soon after the story of the Russian matte would begin:

-In October 1990 we participated in the Fair of Nations organized by COAS and which was held in the Rural de Palermo... We sold Russian handicrafts, made with Siberian linde[n] and with the [Khokhloma] technique... With a bright color... It is a tradition of the time of [Tsar Peter I], of a city called Semyonov... All hand-painted and baked at 120 degrees temperature for four days, so

it looks like a porcelain... At that fair we sold vases, salad bowls, spoons, containers with lids, altarpieces...

Oliek remembers perfectly what happened:

-It turns out that I [consume] almost three litres of matte per day... And Viviana, who was my wife at the time in Argentina, is also very *matera*. The point is that one day we were going to take matte and realized that we had the [yerba], the bulb [mate straw], the thermos... but we had forgotten the matte [gourd]!... We were desperate because we couldn't take mate... Among all the pieces we had there was a vase that was not sold at all, it was half like a matte but a little taller and fatter... but it was a vase! My wife asked my mother if it could be used, if she could hold the hot water to [prepare] mate... My mom said yes [...] Viviana put her [yerba], hot water and we started taking mate... People saw us and started ordering that item... they all sold out, in two days there were none left! After that my mother had the idea of developing it and calling it Russian mate... she was born by that chance!

Vladimir as Gorbachev's translator

The following year Valentina traveled to Russia, went to the factory and commissioned different models. Sales multiplied. The event was repeated at successive fairs. And also at the Puerto Madero Exhibition of the Americas in 1992. At that time the factory in Semynov officially named the product as a Russian matte and offered it in the international catalogues.

Oliek knows the process perfectly:

-The factory is huge... In furnaces, which measure more than six meters by five, with huge turbofans, production has several stages. There are two thousand turners, and the [mates] enter the furnaces four times three days after each painting, so that it is not toxic... It is the same technique that they use to manufacture matrioshkas... It seems a lie, but from that chance at the Fair of Nations, the Russian matte was born, which today is sold all over the world.

The success of the Russian matte was dizzying. Valentina was at the forefront of a family-growing entrepreneurship. The [yerba mate] company Amanda commissioned a thousand mates for an advertising gift campaign. It was already necessary to establish a place of sales, because with the presence at the fairs it was not enough.

So in 1993 they opened the first business on the first floor of the Pacific Gallery, but soon they got a boy. They then moved on to Sarmiento 2174 and with the name "From Russia with Love", although that stage was also brief:

-We bought a place very close to there, in Sarmiento 1942... It was a unique place in Buenos Aires...

[...] Entering "From Russia with Love" was entering an amazing, colorful and charming world.

The designs created in the distant Semyonov glowed on the ledges, where Russian [mates] shared the spotlight with hand-painted handkerchiefs, spoons, altarpieces with religious icons and pots of different sizes. [It] had an art workshop...where a young Russian woman named Natasha taught how to paint flowers with enamel, according to the technique of the Zhostovo school.

We were many times there, where Valentina and Vladimir recommended the virtues of buckwheat, known as [alforfón] in Argentina and called grechka in Russia.

Their hospitality allowed us to enjoy some meetings behind closed doors, outside of business hours, where cordiality was accompanied by caviar, vodka and music.

Finally, after so many *sinsabores*, the creators of that Russian matte that was born by chance, had their own place.

-From that moment on, I could tell you from 1992, 1993... they began to live life... They deserved it... They never complained, never wept at anyone, they did everything with their sacrifice. After all that happened, they had their prize...

Oliek rounds out the story and completes [it thus]:

-My father died in September 2018, at the age of 84. My mother, a month later, when [she] was 80.

They had all been through it. Together. They couldn't be apart too long.

[For a Spanish-language version of the article, visit: <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2020/06/21/la-increible-historia-del-mate-ruso-que-una-pareja-creo-despues-de-huir-de-la-union-sovietica-hacia-la-argentina/>]

3. Australia. "Ties to Home: Ukrainian History Celebrated," *Launceston Examiner*, 5 July 2020.

Copyright 2020 Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited. www.examiner.com.au.

By Frances Vinall

Irene Murfet is thankful every day that her parents chose to come to Tasmania after World War II.

Ms Murfet is a member of the state's Ukrainian community, a rich culture that has been captured in [the] new coffee table book *With Ukrainian Greetings*.

Ms Murfet's mother, Stephanie Fedyk, was kidnapped by German soldiers and taken as a prisoner of war when she was only 13 years old.

She met her future husband in the prison camp in Germany.

The pair fled Europe - after seeing Ukraine subsumed into Stalin's USSR after the end of the war - in 1948.

"They decided they'd get as far away from there as possible, and they spotted Tasmania," Ms Murfet said.

"They were one of the first lots to come out.

"I often say to mum: 'the best thing you and dad ever did was decide to come to Tasmania. It's the best place in the world'."

But the young couple never saw Ukraine again.

"Mum will be 92 in September, and she hasn't been home since 1948," Ms Murfet said.

Despite that, Ms Fedyk taught her children Ukrainian language, songs, dances, and values.

The Ukrainian families mostly lived near each other at St Leonards, where a community centre was established.

Ms Murfet said all the second-generation children grew up together.

It's an upbringing captured in *With Ukrainian Greetings*, which includes photos of the children in Ukrainian dress learning folk traditions.

It is filled with personal stories, history, documents, a timeline of important events for the community, and artwork.

The 142-page, hardcover book is decorated with a traditional yellow pattern.

It is so named because "with Ukrainian greetings" is a complimentary closing remark in formal Ukrainian correspondence.

As well as a record of the Tasmanian Ukrainian community, the book is a celebration of what they have achieved.

The first generation migrants moved to a completely foreign country where everything was unfamiliar, and forged fulfilling lives for themselves.

Association of Ukrainians in Tasmania president Marina Ladaniwskyj said about 40 families moved to Launceston, working in the mines, timber industry, railway and farming.

"Community members worked hard and forged connections with other migrant communities groups, mostly Eastern European," she said.

“They believed that their hard work and their investment in their children’s future through education was a mark of appreciation for the re-settlement assistance provided by the Australian government.”

Of the original group of Ukrainian post-war migrants in Launceston, Ms Fedyk is the only one still alive and living in the town.

Her daughter, Ms Murfet, was born in Launceston, and it is Ms Murfet’s dream to visit Ukraine herself.

Her second cousin, with whom she speaks frequently on the phone, is getting married this year. They speak in Ukrainian, which Ms Murfet said was “just wonderful”.

Ms Murfet had planned a trip for this year to see the country for the first time, visit family, and attend the wedding.

Her sons, who have also never been to Ukraine, were going to go with her.

She wept when the trip was cancelled because of COVID-19.

“[My second cousin] was crying on that end of the phone and I was crying on my end of the phone ... but it is what it is. What can you do?” she said.

“It was always my one wish to go.

“I was terribly upset that I couldn’t go, terribly upset.

“And my cousin said, ‘You know what I’ll do? In two years time, my husband and I will renew our vows just for you and the Australian family, so you can come to Ukraine and see us get married.’”

She beamed.

“So, fingers crossed,” she said. “Fingers crossed.

“My son knows it’s my dream, and he said if you’re still OK and if you can still travel, we’ll all go. It would be really nice.”

‘With Ukrainian Greetings’ can be purchased for \$48 + postage by contacting the Association of Ukrainians in Tasmania via email at ukesintas@gmail.com.

4. Australia. “Andrews’ New Minister under Fire for Red Army Praise,” *Herald Sun*, 21 June 2020.

By JOHN MASANAUSKAS

Herald Sun - Online

© 2020 News Limited. All rights reserved.

A newly appointed Andrews Government minister is under fire over insensitive comments praising the ruthless Red Army of Soviet communist dictator Joseph Stalin.

Victorian communities who suffered under communism are outraged that Local Government Minister Danny Pearson suggested that Red Army generals be memorialised among migrants who suffered persecution abroad.

Mr Pearson, who was elevated to the ministry last week after the sacking of disgraced minister Adem Somjurek, made the comments in state parliament in 2015 while debating a veterans' bill.

Referring to a proposed persecution memorial in Melbourne by then Opposition Leader Matthew Guy, Mr Pearson said he was surprised that Mr Guy "did not talk about the great contribution the Red Army made in supporting Western liberal democracy by ... destroying fascism".

"We are all the beneficiaries of the great contribution the Red Army made (such as) Marshal Georgy Zhukov, who won the Order of Lenin ... it is important that the contribution of the Red Army be acknowledged," he said.

The USSR initially had a secret deal with Nazi Germany, which precipitated World War II when both dictatorships invaded Poland from either side.

The Soviet Union only joined the Western allies after the Nazis invaded it in 1941, and then forced brutal communism on many eastern and central European nations for nearly 50 years.

Mr Pearson told the Herald Sun yesterday: "These comments were made a few years ago, about the need to recognise the perspectives and contributions multicultural groups make to Victoria – something I continue to believe in."

But Mr Guy, whose Ukrainian relatives suffered communist persecution, said Mr Pearson's comments were disgusting and obscene.

"For this man to be promoted to the ministry shows how insensitive Labor is to the horrors of communism, and to the millions of people killed by communists, and whose families now live in Australia," he said.

Association of Ukrainians in Victoria president Slawko Kohut said he was dumbfounded by the comments, especially as Melbourne's main Ukrainian community centre is in Mr Pearson's Essendon electorate.

"Millions of Ukrainians died in a famine engineered by Stalin in the 1930s, so the community is shocked and hurt that a member of parliament could be so naive that he'd want to put up a monument to the Red Army," he said.

Last week, communities linked to the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania commemorated the 79th anniversary of mass deportations of innocent people to Siberia by the Soviets.

Australian Lithuanian Community Association president Tony Cibiras said the Red Army's occupation had devastated the Baltics.

"The unimaginable terror it inflicted on the populations in these territories is not to be forgotten," he said.

State Liberal frontbencher Tim Smith said it was outrageous that Premier Daniel Andrews had appointed a Red Army sympathiser to his ministry.

"Imagine what would happen if he appointed a Nazi sympathiser," he said.

5. Canada. "‘I Want People to Know She’s More Than a Hashtag’: Family Remembers Regis Korchinski-Paquet," *Globe and Mail*, 11 June 2020.

*‘I want people to know she’s more than a hashtag’: Family remembers Regis Korchinski-Paquet
Thousands have invoked her name during marches against anti-Black racism and police abuse,
but those close to her don’t want her death to overshadow the vibrancy of her life*

Published June 11, 2020 / Updated June 12, 2020

By Patrick White

Peter Korchinski walked solemnly into Tom's Place this week to look for a dark suit for his daughter's funeral.

A greeter handed him a surgical mask and hand sanitizer and referred him to a salesman, who eyed the customer's white T-shirt. On the front, it bore the face of a young woman he recognized from the news along with a hashtag, #JusticeForRegis. On the back was a raised fist surrounded by the words BLACK LIVES MATTER.

He had some notion of who this customer was and peppered him with polite questions without the usual small talk. Black or brown shoes? Pocket square? What colour tie?

It was all too much.

"I'll let you decide," said the customer, Mr. Korchinski, lowering his mask to be heard. "Just do the best you can."

On May 27, his daughter, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, fell from a 24th-floor balcony in Toronto while in the company of police who had been called to help her. The province's police watchdog is investigating. A private funeral was held on Thursday.

In the days since her death, thousands of people have invoked her name during marches against anti-Black racism and police abuse in cities across the country. Her family supported those demonstrations, but with reservations about her manner of death overshadowing the vibrancy of her life.

“I just wish my sister was here and wasn’t the name behind this movement, to be honest with you,” said her eldest sister, Shyna Beals. “And I want people to know she’s more than a hashtag.”

She was born on Oct. 4, 1990. Regis is Mr. Korchinski’s middle name. Some friends and family said it was a boys’ name and urged the couple to change it. But her mom, Claudette Beals-Clayton, insisted.

She had two older sisters and, eventually, two younger siblings, a sister and a brother. An active child, Regis often needed night-time car trips to get to sleep. Later, she parlayed that energy into Ukrainian dancing and gymnastics, winning countless competitions.

In high school, she put family first. “When I got into Grade 9, she went around saying ‘Nobody better mess with my brother,’” said her little brother, Reece Korchinski-Paquet. “And they didn’t. Without that I would’ve had a hard time.”

From an early age, Regis had questions about race. Her dad was a direct descendant of Ukrainian settlers and her mom was Black with Mi’kmaq ancestry. “I’m white and she’s darker than all my other kids, so she’d ask ‘What’s that all about?’” Mr. Korchinski said. If her parents couldn’t supply answers, she consulted her Ukrainian grandfather, her Dido. “Race has always been a big issue for me feeling like I need to be a different colour to fit in,” she recounted in a Facebook post. “My Dido helped me to see that although I am darker skin I am the same as anyone because in Gods eyes each of us are equal.”

After high school, Ms. Korchinski-Paquet held an array of jobs, working for a computer security company, then a deli counter. But around five years ago, she was diagnosed with epilepsy and found it difficult to maintain a job. She had a seizure at work and another on a streetcar.

The seizures came every couple of weeks. There were warning signs when one was about to strike. She would become irritable and demanding. Afterwards, she would feel exhausted.

The condition only strengthened her appreciation for family. On a sibling WhatsApp group chat, she was the first to post every day with an upbeat, “Good morning, I love you.”

“We heard that every morning,” said Ms. Beals, the eldest sibling. “She was full of compliments.”

On Aug. 9, 2017, her Dido died and she had three back-to-back seizures. At the hospital she angered some police by telling them to get away from her. It would take her white father to defuse the situation.

“I could tell they were getting angry and wanted to do something,” Mr. Korchinski said of the police. “I had to explain that she’s had a seizure, she’s not herself right now. And the cops would always listen to me. And I was always there for her. And then this time, I wasn’t there. And that’s what’s really bugging me right now.”

On a warm Wednesday morning two weeks ago, Ms. Korchinski-Paquet suffered another seizure. When the symptoms abated, she shared a Caesar salad and some lemonade with her dad. Groggy and hot, she reclined on the couch. Her dad got a fan and positioned it to blow on her face. Then he left for Markham, just north of the city, to pick up a dehumidifier at a family member’s home.

He was there, 45 minutes away, when the call came. Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s mother had contacted police to help calm her distressed daughter and take her for mental-health treatment, according to a family statement. Ms. Korchinski-Paquet died during the interaction.

“A call for help ended with my sister dying,” Ms. Beals said.

With a navy blue suit selected, Mr. Korchinski emerged into the sun outside Tom’s Place and tore off his surgical mask. He needed to breathe. Shyna, Reece and two grandchildren joined him on a nearby park bench. They laughed and cried telling more Regis stories, like the Christmas she scoured Toronto toy stores for Shopkins to give a niece in Nova Scotia, where shops had run out of the toys. Or her compulsive cleanliness. Or her recent longing for motherhood. “She started talking about having kids just in the last six months,” Ms. Beals said.

And they talked of how hard it was to hear people chant her name during a peaceful march and how great it was that their Regis had brought all those people together just like she’d always done for the family.

“It’s tough to hear name, but it’s also helpful,” Mr. Korchinski said. “I’ve seen the mayor and the police chief just refer to her as a 29-year-old woman. Her name is Regis. Just say it. Just say it.”

At a family funeral on Thursday, Mr. Korchinski listened in his new suit as a pastor spoke of Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s devotion to the church and her mother sang a hymn. The most heartbreaking moment for him came when his granddaughter Nalaya stood and addressed Ms. Korchinski-Paquet directly. “I was crying so much I didn’t catch everything,” Mr. Korchinski said. “But she said ‘Thank you for telling me you love me and for telling me that I’m a strong, Black woman’”

*** To read a statement by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies on racism, visit:
<https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-institute-of-ukrainian-studies/news-and-events/news-at-the-cius/2020/july/speaking-of-racism-.--.html>

6. Canada. “Many Ukrainian-Canadians Served with Valour,” *Edmonton Journal*, 8 May 2020.

By Lubomyr Luciuk

Private Nicholas Osadchuk was serving with the Winnipeg Grenadiers when he was killed in action defending Hong Kong on Dec. 23, 1941.

Infantryman Michael Zhdan was captured. He perished as a PoW in Japanese captivity.

Flight Sgt. Steven Lucyk served with the RCAF's 76 Squadron, as a wireless-air gunner. On Nov. 3, 1943 his heavy bomber, a Handley Page Halifax V, took off from Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, one of 589 aircraft raiding Dusseldorf. He went into battle with Flight Lt. D. E. Hicks, Sgt. T. W. Davis, Sgt. R. W. Elder and Sgt. G. Morrison. A German night fighter shot them down. He was buried in the Rheinberg War Cemetery. Aged 25, he left behind parents in Krydor, Sask., along with three brothers and five sisters. Before going to war he was a teacher. My friend, Rev. Dr. Stan Lucyk, remembers being taught by his cousin Steve in Whitkow's one-room school house. Cpl. R.I. Firman was serving with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles when he fell in battle in Normandy on June 8, 1944. He was 21. He left behind his wife, Vera Jean.

RCAF Warrant Officer Peter Wynnyk was a navigator on an Avro Lancaster with the 166 Squadron. His plane took off from Kirmington, North Lincolnshire, on a night raid over Karlsruhe on Dec. 4 1944. He almost made it back. While attempting to land they crashed at Brocklesby Park. He was buried in Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery, aged 30. He left behind his parents in Stry, Alta.

Walter, his brother, survived the war. His brother's son, Paul, another friend, would become a lieutenantgeneral, serving as commander of the army and, before resigning in 2019, vice-chief of Canada's defence staff.

What do the fallen have in common? They were young. They volunteered. They fought for this country. They left behind grieving parents, brothers, sisters, wives, and children. And they were all Ukrainian-Canadians.

An admittedly incomplete list records 3,830 Ukrainian Canadians wounded or killed during the Second World War. This Almanac of the Ukrainian Canadian Servicemen also heralds more than 200 mentioned in the dispatches or otherwise distinguished with medals for heroism and valour - during the Dieppe Raid, at the breaching of the Gothic Line in Italy or during the bombing campaign against Nazi Germany.

One of the latter, another RCAF navigator, was Joseph Kohut, aged 29. He enlisted in Yorkton. Flying with an elite Pathfinder squadron, Kohut completed 38 missions over enemy territory. Despite being severely wounded by shrapnel he stayed at his post, making sure the bomb load fell on target. Then he fell unconscious from a loss of blood. Kohut received a Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantry under fire.

Having faced more than a little prejudice in Canada before the war, many Ukrainians in uniform felt they needed to stick together overseas. By 1943, they had set up the Ukrainian Canadian Servicemen's Association with its own "London Club" in the vicarage of St. James's church, Sussex Gardens, London.

While most of the 35,000 who served abroad went home when the war ended, a few elected to stay, for hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees in western Europe needed their help. Creating the Central Ukrainian Relief Bureau, they remained "in the field" until 1952, rescuing thousands of displaced persons from forcible repatriation to the Soviet Union. Those DPs resettled throughout the free world. My parents found asylum in Kingston, Ont.

In 1995, we unveiled a bilingual plaque at the UCSA's former HQ. Yet that did not seem sufficient. After all, if not for the sacrifices and service of these Ukrainian-Canadians in uniform, we would not be here. Eventually, we decided to commission a commemorative stainedglass window for St. James's. Over more than two years, we raised the funds needed, entirely through public subscription. We worked closely with the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain and the diocese of St. James's.

Everything was ready for a service of thanksgiving on May 8, 2020, the 75th anniversary of VE-Day, Victory in Europe Day.

You don't need me to remind you about why that didn't happen. But rest certain that, sooner or later, this memorial will be unveiled and blessed, to evermore remind the faithful and passersby of who these Ukrainian-Canadians were and what they did.

A man I knew and much admired, Flight Lt. Bohdan Panchuk, once described his fellow Ukrainian-Canadians in uniform as "the heroes of their day." They were.

We shall remember them.

Lubomyr Luciuk is a professor of political geography at The Royal Military College of Canada.

**7. Finland. "Finland Expecting 15,000 Ukrainian Seasonal Workers – Prystaiko,"
Ukrainian News, 4 May 2020.**

(c)2020 Ukrainian News Agency. All Rights Reserved. <http://un.ua/>

By Andrii Zheltov

Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Vadym Prystaiko has said that Finland expects 15,000 Ukrainian seasonal workers this year.

This is stated in the message of the press service of the Cabinet of Ministers following the results of the meeting between Prystaiko and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Finland to Ukraine, Paivi Laine.

“Finland is experiencing an acute shortage of labor for seasonal work. Ukrainian workers have proven themselves very well. They are responsible, decent, hardworking and we will be glad to have the opportunity to bring them back to work in agriculture and forestry and other fields this year,” said Laine.

Prystaiko noted that Finland annually attracts from 12,000 to 15,000 Ukrainians, in particular, to work on agricultural machinery and later harvesting berries.

The Vice Prime Minister also added that the government’s office is currently considering requests from Austria, Finland, Denmark, Norway and other countries.

As Ukrainian News Agency earlier reported, on May 1, during a briefing, Prystaiko announced that he was predicting the departure of thousands of Ukrainians for seasonal work abroad.

8. General. “The Pandemic Has Returned Migrant Workers to Ukraine. Will They Stay?”
***OpenDemocracy.net*, 24 June 2020.**

Ukrainian labour keeps several European economies afloat. But after migrants returned home during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kyiv is now reluctant to let them depart again.

By Kateryna Semchuk
24 June 2020

“When the borders open, I’ll pack my husband’s suitcase and send him to work. How else can we feed the family?” asks Maryna, who lives in Mizhhirya, a mountain village in Zakarpattia.

This western region of Ukraine borders four EU member states, and for its residents labour migration is often the only way to survive. Maryna, 18, and her husband are trying to raise their one-year-old son on a meagre salary - a hard enough task without the instability of a global pandemic.

COVID-19 has brought life to a standstill in Ukraine, presenting many labour migrants like Maryna’s husband Mykola with an impossible choice: stay overseas and work in dangerous conditions; lose their job and sit out quarantine, unemployed, in a foreign country; or return home where no work awaits them.

“We hope we’ll overcome this virus, because nobody has cancelled bills for gas, electricity or water,” exclaimed Maryna in an online interview. “How are we supposed to pay them? People can’t continue like this for much longer.”

As the continent cautiously emerges from isolation, countries across Europe desperately want to restart their economies - as usual, with migrant labour from the continent’s eastern half, particularly Ukraine.

But the issue of migrant worker safety during a global pandemic has remained largely unanswered, and the Ukrainian government is reluctant to let migrant workers leave again - for more reasons than one.

Needed but neglected

In early March, as Italy's COVID-19 mortality rates rose to more than 1,000 per day, countries across Europe began to impose quarantine. Ukraine followed suit on 25 March, when prime minister Denys Shmyhal announced that the country would close all its land borders starting from 27 March.

A few days later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that Ukraine's borders would remain open to passengers in private cars, and those travelling to the EU would have to have work visas or hold residency permits. But Ukrainians working abroad - often in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Latvia - had already started rushing home, fearing that they would be unable to enter the country at a later date.

In April, Ihor, 48, returned from Slovakia to Zakarpattia because his three month visa-free stay in the EU was coming to an end. In Slovakia, he had worked at a reinforced concrete factory outside Bratislava. Once lockdowns began, Ihor says, he had to wear a mask at work, and says he was paid less for a much heavier workload in his eight hour shift.

Other migrant workers started worrying about being trapped overseas with a work permit near its expiry date, or lost their jobs and could not afford to stay in a foreign country without their job. In rare cases, employers who had to shut down their businesses then evicted Ukrainian workers, whom they had housed and fed at their own expense.

Ukrainians working in restaurants, hotels and transportation have looked for other work since lockdown kicked in, says Oleg Borisov, an expert on labour migration and a member of the Ukrainian Trade Union of Construction and Building Material Workers.

"These Ukrainians have temporarily changed their profile to cleaning and technical work," Borisov continues. "Construction workers have switched to another mode of operation. Those employers who managed to adjust their workspaces to safety guidelines kept working. But they found other problems: how to accommodate people, how to reduce the number of residents in dormitories and hostels, how to organise shifts."

The majority of migrants in Poland work under temporary civil law contracts rather than employment contracts, which means that they often have few rights in emergency situations.

Vitaliy Makhinko, chairman of the Ukrainian Migrant trade union in Poland, says his organisation has received complaints from migrant workers about being fined for leaving their jobs in Poland early, or not being paid for work done.

"When Ukraine announced a few days in advance the closure of its borders, people began to leave their jobs and close their contracts," Makhinko says. "Under their fixed-term contracts, if

the worker does not finish his work, he can receive a large fine. A vast number of Ukrainians [in Poland] haven't been paid for the month of March, some because they were working illegally."

Can Ukraine compete with Europe for its own citizens?

During his inauguration speech last summer, President Volodymyr Zelenskyi vowed to bring back more than five million Ukrainian working abroad with a mix of financial incentives and tax breaks. Nearly a year on from this promise, a small number have returned, but not as a result of the Ukrainian government's proposal.

"We want to try and retain people in Ukraine... There's plenty of work here," stated prime minister Shmyhal in an interview in April, claiming that two million Ukrainians working abroad had already returned due to the pandemic.

Vitaliy Makhinko, from the Ukrainian Migrant trade union, believes it's impossible to make estimates with any certainty. Some experts, such as demographer Ella Libanova, gave alternative estimates, claiming that between 450,000 and 500,000 migrants may have returned.

"There's no data on migrants. Alongside workers, many students have also returned from abroad. How can we separate them from [labour] migrants in the statistics?" Makhinko asks.

Remittances from migrant workers are an important source of income for Ukraine. In 2019, Ukrainian labour migrants transferred more than US\$12.2 billion to Ukraine, amounting to 7.8% of the country's GDP. This is a record number since the National Bank started maintaining statistics in 2015. Most of the money - \$3.68 billion (almost 31% of all funds transferred into the country) - came from Poland.

But the Ukrainian government has temporarily banned migrant workers from leaving the country during quarantine, including refusing permission for European countries to transport Ukrainians for seasonal work in charter planes - causing a sizable public scandal in the process.

As a result, there's a hostile mood among some Ukrainian migrant workers towards government efforts to prevent them from leaving the country. They have few job prospects, and cannot receive state financial assistance for temporary unemployment (most of them never get an employment contract). Those who want to go back to work, or those who planned to go for seasonal work abroad in May in any case, are travelling anyway - even if a taxi journey is much more expensive than traditional transport.

"There are no offers on the Ukrainian labour market for returning migrants," Oleg Borisov says. "In addition, they cannot do the same work they did abroad - service, care, construction and agriculture - because those sectors aren't as developed here as in Europe."

Lack of workers on EU farms

Europe wants Ukrainian workers - even more so, it turns out, due to the pandemic. The number of available migrants from the poorest countries inside the EU like Romania and Bulgaria is not

sufficient, and some EU states are trying to bring Ukrainians to their countries to harvest crops. Around 200 Ukrainians, despite the official position, have already flown to Finland for seasonal work - on a charter flight organised by a Finnish company looking for workers. Ukraine has received similar diplomatic requests from Germany, Italy and Poland. The authorities agreed to consider every application from each country separately in order to permit migrant workers to travel.

But the Ukrainian government is reluctant. In April, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated it is 'illogical to organise mass charter flights at the same time to export Ukrainians to countries where pandemic is ongoing'.

Poland appears to be the most interested in Ukrainian workers, as the majority of them were already working there before the pandemic (almost 12% of all workers). Poland has the most liberal legislation of work permits for Ukrainians and relies on them heavily, with a National Bank study estimating their contribution to 11% of Poland's GDP between 2014 and 2018.

"Their [Europe's] worst situation will be better than our good situation. Migration will increase, according to my predictions"

Poland has adjusted quickly to new challenges of the pandemic, permitting Ukrainians whose legal stay has expired to remain in the country legally. The Polish government has authorised the issue of working visas via post, facilitating the employment of foreign workers while maintaining commitments to safety.

Beginning from 22 May, seasonal workers have been exempt from the mandatory 14-day quarantine in Poland. Before crossing the border, each traveler is registered and their temperature is taken. In another beneficial move, the Polish state has said it will pay for mandatory COVID-19 tests of seasonal workers.

But even with all these facilitations, it is much less than what Poland needs, says Mirosław Maliszewski, head of the Union of Polish Fruit Growers, in an online discussion about the number of Ukrainian who have already received working visas. Maliszewski is concerned that what the Polish government is doing about the lack of seasonal workers will not be nearly enough:

"If visas are issued at such a pace as they are today and only those who received a visa with a work permit can cross the borders, even then Poland still will not be able to supply with employees so much as one large municipality. I know that in Poland there are districts where 4,000 workers come to harvest strawberries each year."

Good effort

It is hard to say whether Zelenskyi's desire to return Ukrainians to Ukraine is motivated by political expediency or concern for the prosperous new Ukraine he says he will build for them.

In June, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a law on “protecting migrant workers and combating fraud in employment abroad”. Thus, Ukrainians who migrate for work will no longer have to pay fees to employment agencies for vacancies, and companies that violate the law will be subject to fines.

Vitaliy Makhinko believes that the number of Ukrainians migrating for work will likely increase, even with the ongoing pandemic. “Their [Europe’s] worst situation will be better than our good situation,” he says. “Migration will increase according to my predictions. Take, for example, an [ongoing] increase in offers from northern Europe.”

The Ukrainian government’s desire to curtail emigration is understandable - the mass outflow of labour could have negative consequences for the country in the future. Migrants do not pay taxes in Ukraine, but receive certain forms of social assistance from the state, such as sick and maternity leave, compensation for injuries at work, as well as pensions. In addition, there is often no mechanism for credit programmes, even with legal employment abroad. Another issue of concern is the fact many Ukrainians working abroad are employed outside their qualifications or in low-skilled jobs.

Ukraine lacks a policy on migration, let alone a strategy. As a result of the coronacrisis, the number of people unemployed has reached half a million, according to statistics by the Ukrainian State Employment Center, and the only active sectors are logistics, security and trade. Ukraine needs a real strategy for encouraging its citizens to return, including programmes to build industries and jobs. And that’s many years of hard work.

9. General. “Ukraine Needs a Whole New Approach to Labor Migration,” *Atlantic Council*, 4 June 2020.

UkraineAlert by Lesia Dubenko

Over the last six years, the unprecedented flow of Ukrainian labor migrants to the European Union has attracted a great deal of attention. However, this trend has yet to produce a comprehensive institutional response from the Ukrainian authorities. As the coronavirus lull gives way to a new wave of migration, now is the time for more coherent policies that can help Ukraine better understand the underlying issues driving labor migration while safeguarding the country’s workforce.

Since 2014, labor migration has become an increasingly important factor contributing to Ukraine’s economic growth. According to World Bank data, remittances to Ukraine in 2019 reached around USD 16 billion, which is more than 10% of the country’s annual GDP. Nevertheless, the outflow of workers is widely recognized as problematic, with local businesses often unable to fill vacancies and some of the most affected rural areas experiencing seasonal depopulation.

The issue has been on the political agenda since 2015, when the Ukrainian parliament adopted the Law on External Labor Migration. This was followed by the 2017 Strategy of State Migration

Policy until 2025, which contained a set of ambitious goals such as “creating the necessary conditions for the return and reintegration of Ukrainian migrants into Ukrainian society.”

Two years later, the incoming government of new Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy went even further and unveiled a range of specific measures to entice Ukrainian workers home. These included the creation of new jobs and the launch of long-term, low-interest loans for small and medium-sized businesses.

Then came the coronavirus crisis.

Following Ukraine’s decision to close the country’s borders, many labor migrants rushed home, creating a potential watershed moment for officials to take advantage of. However, despite talk from Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal of the government’s desire to keep returnee workers in Ukraine, a new exodus is already gathering momentum. Neither the lockdown nor the health-associated risks of working in manual, low-paid sectors deterred Ukrainian labor migrants from boarding the first charter flights to the United Kingdom, Finland, and Poland in May.

At present, it is clear that the vast majority of Ukraine’s multi-million strong migrant labor workforce would rather return to the EU than take advantage of the various initiatives currently being offered by the Ukrainian authorities. Ukraine’s apparent inability to retain its workers will likely be further exposed in the coming months as many potential labor migrants are already eyeing the opportunity of working in Germany, which has recently relaxed its work permit rules for non-EU nationals. Back in 2019, 45% of Ukrainians working in Poland confessed that they were considering taking a job in another EU country, mostly in Germany.

The fact that Ukraine is struggling to keep hold of its workforce spells trouble for the country’s damaged economy. The causes of this negative trend include the seemingly perennial mood of distrust between Ukrainian society and the government, which serves to undermine official initiatives designed to encourage workers to come home. Meanwhile, widespread corruption and low salaries further complicate the matter.

The challenge currently facing the Ukrainian authorities is twofold. Kyiv must strike a balance between safeguarding the interests of workers travelling to the EU for employment, while at the same time looking to tempt them to build their futures in Ukraine without resorting to Soviet-style restrictions.

As Kyiv confronts the issue of the country’s departing workforce, it is not yet clear who within government has ultimate responsibility for labor migration policies and their implementation. Even though Ukraine’s Ministry for the Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture officially oversees this matter, the Cabinet of Ministers and a selection of individual ministries are also regularly involved, as are local authorities across the country.

Most recently, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration was forced to step in and help coordinate the departure of chartered flights carrying seasonal workers to EU destinations. In order to correct this institutional confusion, the Ukrainian branch of the International

Organisation for Migration has proposed the creation of “a powerful and effective coordination mechanism” between the various different government agencies.

Another key task facing the Ukrainian authorities is the quest to understand why the country’s labor migrants believe the grass is always greener elsewhere. Is it really just a matter of higher salaries and better working conditions? Are long-term prospects a significant factor? What would convince these migrants to remain in Ukraine instead of departing? Serious research is required in order to identify answers to these important questions and draw the necessary conclusions.

The Ukrainian government could also consider launching detailed information campaigns about the pitfalls of working abroad. To date, there is no comprehensive guide available outlining the common hazards that Ukrainians may face when seeking employment in the EU, such as deportation or a lack of access to social security.

Labor migration is a long-term challenge for the Ukrainian authorities that they cannot afford to ignore. The good news is that the debate within Ukrainian society is already lively and the issue is high on the domestic political agenda.

In the months and years ahead, addressing Ukrainian labor migration will inevitably be a matter of trial and error. The government requires a far better understanding of the factors driving migration, and also needs to develop a much more coordinated institutional response. Ukrainian workers cannot be forced to remain in Ukraine, but the country’s future development will depend on its ability to convince enough Ukrainians that they have a bright future at home.

Lesia Dubenko is an analyst at Europe without Barriers, an NGO that specializes in issues related to freedom of movement, migration, visa policies and border security.

[<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-needs-a-whole-new-approach-to-labor-migration/>]

10. General. “Ukraine’s Trapped Migrant Workers Look for Roads Back to Europe,” *Politico Europe*, 31 May 2020.

5/31/20, 12:00 PM CET / Updated 6/2/20, 7:19 AM CET

‘There’s plenty of work in Ukraine too,’ government says, in a push to stop drain of labor abroad.

By Lily Hyde

KYIV — Across Europe, lockdown measures to contain the coronavirus pandemic have walled countries off from the foreign labor on which they typically rely, leaving them scrambling to find workers to harvest fruit and vegetables.

One major source of that labor, Ukraine, is not keen on filling that gap.

In mid-March, the government urged all foreign workers to return home before borders closed and they became stranded away from their families. An estimated 2 million Ukrainians who were making a living in Europe and hurried back now find themselves stranded at home, cut off from their source of revenue as authorities enforce strict new rules about who is allowed out of the country.

The move is not just about coronavirus. It's part of a broader policy to stop the drain of Ukrainian labor and talent abroad.

"We want to try to keep people in Ukraine, and will make every effort to do so," Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told Ukrainian media in late April. "There's plenty of work in Ukraine too."

Vyacheslav, 29, was working in the Czech Republic when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy announced the lockdown and urged citizens to return before the borders closed for all passenger transport. When his train ticket, and then a replacement plane ticket were canceled, he got a lift home via Austria and Hungary, chasing border crossings that were still open.

Today, like many who rushed home, he's not happy to be back in his village of Nyzhne Selishche, but finds himself with dwindling options to get back to work outside Ukraine.

"Everyone's sitting at home waiting," he said. "I can't go back. The Ukrainian government will apparently let me go, they say they aren't keeping anyone here, but at the same time I understand that I can't go because I haven't got the documents to show I'm working."

* * *

Ukrainians make up the largest group of labor migrants in the EU, with the biggest numbers in Poland, Italy and the Czech Republic. They also send the most money home. According to the World Bank, 2019 remittances were the highest in Europe at nearly \$16 billion — 10 percent of Ukrainian GDP. In western Ukraine, where Vyacheslav is from, migrant workers are thought of as a valuable resource; one village even erected a monument honoring zarobitchany, as they are called in Ukrainian.

Zelenskiy sees it differently. The comedian-turned-politician made the return and integration of the estimated 4 million Ukrainians who work abroad a pillar of his presidency, stating in his inaugural speech last year that "each of us is a migrant worker — the one who couldn't find himself at home," and inviting Ukrainians to "come to Ukraine not to visit, but to return home."

His government has introduced schemes to entice workers to stay, such as assistance for small and medium businesses and a large-scale construction program to create jobs. But Ukrainian salaries remain among the lowest in Europe, and corruption is endemic. The job market is precarious, something the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic risks aggravating.

If Ukraine so far has fared reasonably well in the epidemic — it has confirmed 644 deaths and 21,500 infections — lockdown measures that ground life to a halt have left their mark on

employment. More than 2 million people have lost their jobs, are on temporary forced leave or in hidden unemployment, according to Shmyhal.

Workers will keep looking for work in Europe because they can earn 10 times as much as they would in Ukraine and the work is more reliable, according to Vyacheslav. “They know they have work there today and tomorrow, whereas at home they are always looking and looking after every short job.”

In the midst of the pandemic, the lure of better-paying work is clearly still high. Recruitment company Gremi Personal, which organizes work for Ukrainians in Poland, has had over 4,000 calls to its hotline since early April, according to founder Evgenij Kirichenko. Some 67 percent of Ukrainians who left Poland because of the quarantine measures now want to go back, he said.

But with land borders still closed, companies like Kirichenko’s are in a bind. In April, charter flights of Ukrainian workers to Finland and the U.K. were prevented from taking off by the Ukrainian border guard. One flight was refused permission to take off for nine hours while passengers who had come from all around the country with legal agreements to work on British farms milled about the airport, with little respect for social distancing.

The incident was a public relations disaster. The government quickly scrambled to clarify its position: Workers are permitted to leave the country, but only if they can prove they have a minimum three-month contract, guaranteed medical insurance (covering COVID-19), accommodation and organized transport there and back.

“No one is prohibiting the departure of seasonal workers from Ukraine, but the government seeks to protect both workers themselves and citizens who will come in contact with them upon their return,” the deputy prime minister’s Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration — which is responsible for coordinating organized transit of workers — said in written comments to POLITICO.

The conditions placed on the workers’ right to leave the country — which critics say contradict the constitution — are justified by legislation on infectious diseases to prevent the spread of the virus, according to the deputy prime minister’s office.

The result is that while workers are, on paper, free to travel abroad, most of them are forced to stay home, as the new criteria are difficult to meet. Most people are used to making their own travel arrangements there and back; some have work contracts that are shorter than three months or don’t include accommodation. Many people, like Vyacheslav, worked without contracts at all.

The government’s new regulation “strongly affects people’s rights to freedom of movement and right to leave the country,” said Pavlo Kravchuk, communications manager for the Ukrainian civic organization Europe Without Barriers. “This is perceived as an assault and causes strong mistrust of government attempts to regulate the situation.”

Gremi Personal says the company is following the new rules and ensuring its clients meet the criteria for contracts and insurance set by the government. Last week, its first charter flight of

178 workers left for Poland, where they will spend the first two weeks in quarantine. Other companies have organized charters of several hundred workers to Germany and Austria, with flights to Finland, Denmark, Norway and the Czech Republic also under discussion, according to the deputy prime minister's office.

* * *

Back in western Ukraine, a green light for certain officially sanctioned flights won't help Vyacheslav or anyone he knows.

Vyacheslav found his job in a pharmaceuticals warehouse in Prague via a long-established network of middlemen and women who organize short-term work for western Ukrainian migrant workers. The "clients" arrange accommodation and take a percentage of the worker's salary, which is paid in cash to avoid tax both in the country where they work and back home.

Workers don't sign contracts, nor do they want to. "They don't want to be tied down," said Vyacheslav.

Most people go for regular short-term jobs, often staying for less than the three months allowed under the visa-free regime introduced by the EU in 2017 (only Poland allows Ukrainians to work legally during this period).

Migrant workers have long been hostile to the idea of contributing to Ukraine via state coffers, feeling they get nothing in return. "They say they work in a foreign country and Ukraine does nothing to provide for them, so why should they pay taxes?" said Vyacheslav.

The state attitude has traditionally been equally negative, perceiving labor migration only as a threat in terms of lost workforce, taxes and population.

Kravchuk of Europe Without Barriers said he hopes the lockdown will prove to be an opportunity for authorities to rethink that attitude and win over workers by protecting their rights and working conditions both at home and abroad.

For now, however, the key preoccupation of migrant workers in western Ukraine is how to circumvent the new barriers to their mobility. On social media channels, they're setting up chains of cars to carry them from border to border or hitching rides with long-distance truck drivers. Waiting out a return to normal isn't an option — quarantine or no quarantine.

[[www.politico.eu https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-ukraine-migrant-workers-trapped/](https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-ukraine-migrant-workers-trapped/)]

11. Poland. "Poland Needs Migrant Workers. The Pandemic Has Kept Them Away," *Foreign Policy*, 29 June 2020.

Despite the government's anti-immigration rhetoric, many Polish businesses rely on workers from other parts of Eastern Europe.

By Maria Wilczek

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're making some of our coronavirus pandemic coverage free for nonsubscribers. You can read those articles [here](#). You can also listen to our weekly coronavirus podcast, *Don't Touch Your Face*, and subscribe to our newsletters [here](#).

WARSAW, Poland—In late May, a Ukrainian plane landed on the Warsaw airport's idle runway. An ambulance hurried across the apron. Each of the arriving 178 Ukrainians were ushered through checks—temperatures first, then papers. Six buses were waiting to take the workers to houses and hostels around Poland, where they would spend a mandatory two weeks in quarantine before taking up jobs in manufacturing and logistics.

After the Polish government introduced some of Europe's toughest lockdown measures in mid-March, an estimated 150,000 of the million or so Ukrainians living in Poland—its largest migrant group—left the country. But now, as the Polish economy begins to recover from the recession induced by the pandemic, businesses are scrambling for the foreign workers they have come to rely on, seeking ways to either bring them back or find replacements. The difficulties they are facing in doing so have exposed the limitations of Poland's short-sighted migration model.

In recent years, Poland has become the European Union's largest importer of foreign workers. In 2018, the most recent year on record, Poland issued 635,000 first-residence permits, a fifth of all such documents issued in the bloc. Since 2014, nearly 2 million Ukrainians have taken up roles in agriculture, construction, production, and logistics. Businesses are scrambling for the foreign workers they have come to rely on, seeking ways to either bring them back or find replacements.

They are the ones who have kept Poland's economy humming, despite an aging society, plummeting birth rates, and large numbers of Poles emigrating to other parts of the EU for work. As a result, the unprecedented wave of arrivals has been widely accepted by Poles—in contrast to other Western countries where immigration has conjured up native resentment.

These economic imperatives have at times clashed with the hostile anti-immigrant attitude taken by members of the nationalist ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party. The Polish government under PiS has been at loggerheads with the EU over Brussels' position on accepting asylum-seekers within the bloc. In early June, along with six other member states in Eastern Europe, Poland railed against the “cultural experiment” of relocating “illegal immigrants” inside Europe ahead of the EU's new Pact on Asylum and Migration expected this summer.

But after borders closed this year, many have had trouble entering Poland. International air and rail travel, which have been suspended since mid-March, are only gradually being restored. Many land border crossings remain sealed off, and open ones often allow only passenger cars to come through, said Tomas Bogdevic, director of Gremi Personal, the recruitment agency that organized the recent flight. “As you know, not everyone has a car,” he said. Other crossings have been costly to reach with much of Ukraine's internal connections suspended, and many migrants are grappling with the problem of where to spend the two weeks of mandatory quarantine upon arrival. The Polish consular system has also halted the flow of workers, having only resumed issuing visas May 4 and prioritizing a handful of sectors.

Some businesses have leaned on idle workers already in Poland. “Heading, gutting, filleting, and smoking,” human resources chief Martyna Lukomska said, listing jobs at the BG Production salmon processing plant. The company in the seaside village of Ustronie Morskie has plugged gaps with 180 workers from Indonesia and the Philippines who were let go from warehouses and restaurants during the pandemic. “The agencies we work with transferred the workers from IKEA, KFC, and McDonald’s to us,” Lukomska said. She has also been working with the seaside hoteliers chamber to borrow furloughed cooks and cleaners.

Farmers have felt even greater urgency to recruit seasonal farmhands. One blueberry producer from the southern village of Olchowiec hires 800 workers every year. Back in 2014, 90 percent of them were Polish and just 10 percent were Ukrainian. By last year, almost all came from Ukraine, the company’s hiring specialist, Yosyp Gusak, told Foreign Policy. This year, a completely new group has joined the berry farm: A 10th of current pickers are students from India, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda who had their university courses moved online because of the coronavirus. “When they have classes, they leave the field for an hour or two and then return to work,” Gusak said.

More than a quarter of foreign workers in Poland met the growing demand by changing their employment sector during the first month of the pandemic, according to a survey by EWL recruitment agency. But replacement workers are only some consolation. “It is not just numbers that matter but also the skills,” said Agnieszka Kulesa, a labor economist at Warsaw’s Center for Social and Economic Research. “When Poles travel to Germany year on year to pick asparagus, they become more efficient than a novice German worker would be,” she said. British farmers have flown in planes of Romanians to train their green native pickers this year. “Speed really is of the essence when it comes to strawberries,” Kulesa said. The pandemic also laid bare some of the deeper issues of Poland’s management of migration.

The Polish government appears to have taken note and recently loosened quarantine rules for foreign farmhands, allowing them to begin work right away under special sanitary conditions. On May 28, a drive-thru testing site opened for seasonal workers in Grójec, the apple-growing capital of Poland. Seasonal workers will receive state-funded tests, which have not even been granted to teachers, who returned to schools in late May. “I think this emphatically shows the situation on the labor market,” Kulesa told Foreign Policy.

While the gaping seasonal holes have been plugged, the pandemic has also laid bare some of the deeper issues of Poland’s management of migration.

The current system is geared primarily toward short-term work. Citizens of Ukraine and five other former Soviet countries can work in Poland for up to six months without a visa. This has always been a concern for business leaders. The country’s overreliance on a single source of foreign workers meant that its labor force could easily dry up if the political, economic, or social conditions changed. This is precisely the problem that the pandemic exposed.

When the pandemic broke out, many foreign nationals rushed home over fears of being stranded in Poland jobless and penniless. The potential impact on businesses that rely on short-term labor forced the government to extend legal stays. “Poland is repeating the mistakes of Germany’s

guest-worker programs in the 1970s by treating migrants as [temporary] labor,” said Cezary Kaźmierczak, president of the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers.

But the nature of migration to Poland is changing. Last year, the government granted almost 40 percent more work permits to Ukrainians than the previous year, allowing for stays of up to three years. Many of those migrant workers, however, are moving into higher-paid sectors such as industry and services, and the share of Ukrainians working in agriculture in Poland halved in the four years after 2014.

“Many of them are working below their qualifications, which leaves them with a lot of room for promotion,” said Tomasz Wróblewski, president of the think tank Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Last year, a record number of the new companies registered in Poland were set up by foreigners. “Such workers are incredibly valuable, and the government should be doing all it can to retain them in Poland,” said Wróblewski, who suggests creating a path to achieving full settlement rights.

Yet the question of integrating newcomers continues to be swept under the rug. After coming to power in 2016, PiS annulled the previous government’s migration policy document and began working on its own blueprint, with a focus on repatriating the Polish diaspora. However, a leaked draft of the interior ministry’s new migration policy stirred up controversy over extensive assimilation plans, a chapter on the risks of Islam, and the suggestion of a special tax for the childless. “Everything was meant to happen quietly,” Kulesa said. “When the project became loud, the government abandoned its plans. Since then, it has fallen silent on migration.”

[<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/29/coronavirus-pandemic-poland-ukraine-migrant-workers/>]

12. Portugal. “Foreigners in Portugal at an All Time High,” *Portugal News*, 26 June 2020.

The foreign population residing in Portugal increased in 2019 for the fourth consecutive year, totalling 590,348 citizens, the highest figure recorded by the Foreigners and Borders Service since its emergence in 1976, revealed the SEF.

“In 2019, for the fourth consecutive year, there was an increase in the foreign resident population, with an increase of 22.9 percent compared to 2018, totalling 590,348 foreign citizens holding a residence permit, the highest value recorded by SEF, since its emergence in 1976”, indicates the Immigration, Borders and Asylum Report (RIFA).

According to SEF, Brazilians remain the main foreign community resident in the country, representing 25.6 percent of the total last year, the highest figure since 2012.

At the end of 2019, 151,304 Brazilians lived in Portugal, followed by Cape Verdeans (37,436), British (34,358), Romanian (31,065), Ukrainian (29,718), Chinese (27,839), Italian (25,408), French (23,125) and Angolan (22,691).

The RIFA highlights the increase in citizens from the United Kingdom and Italy, in this case due to the citizens of Italian nationality being native of Brazil.

The report found that immigrants live mainly on the coast, with 68.6 percent registered in the districts of Lisbon, Faro and Setúbal, totalling 405,089 resident citizens, while in 2018 there were 330,763.

The SEF report also reveals that the increase in new foreign residents, registering a 38.7 percent rise compared to 2018, a total of 129,155 and more than double (110.3 percent) in relation to 2017.

This security service justifies this increase with the growth of new titles issued to citizens of Brazilian nationality (37.8 percent of the total), a total of 48,796 Brazilians seeking Portugal in 2019 to join the family, work and study.

2019 also saw an increase in immigrants to work from India (4.9 percent) and Nepal (3.9 percent).

According to RIFA, in 2019 16,849 Nepalese and 17,619 Indians lived legally in Portugal. Speaking to journalists after the presentation of the RIFA, the Minister of Internal Administration said that the report proves that Portugal is “an attractive country in which the economy, security and the way it sees migration as a regular phenomenon positively had a very significant impact”.

“Between 2015 and 2019 the number of foreigners in Portugal increased by around 200,000. This means that it was this positive migratory balance that allowed, for the first time since 2009, the Portuguese population to have grown in 2019”, said Eduardo Cabrita. Meanwhile, Portuguese nationality requests in 2019 reached the highest number of the last five years.

More than 74,000 foreign citizens applied for Portuguese nationality in 2019, the highest value of the last five years.

The RIFA report states that 74,116 requests for the acquisition of Portuguese nationality were registered, with “a significant increase compared to the homologated period (2018) of 79.4 percent”.

The report states that SEF issued 70,529 opinions, 68,116 of which were positive and 2,413 negative.

According to the document, those who most acquired Portuguese nationality in 2019 were those from Brazil (22,928), Israel (18,433), Cape Verde (6,472), Angola (2,993), Ukraine (2,738), Guinea-Bissau (2,538) and Turkey (1,629).

“The sharp growth in requests for citizenship from citizens of Israel and Turkey, will be associated with the publication of the addition to the 2015 Portuguese Nationality Regulation, regarding the naturalisation of foreigners who are descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews”, the document reads.

SEF stresses that most requests for acquisition of Portuguese nationality are related to naturalisation (68.9 percent), followed by marriage and de facto union (13.3 percent) and original attribution (11 percent).

Regarding the acquisition of nationality due to marriage or de facto union, SEF points out that applications are submitted by nationals of Brazil (5,215), Venezuela (709), Angola (610), Cape Verde (599) and Ukraine (337).

The RIFA also indicates that, in these types of cases, there are a large number of foreign citizens who, not being residents of Portugal, apply for nationality at the Portuguese Embassies and Consulates in the area of residence.

In this area, SEF issued 9,270 opinions, 9,199 of which were positive and 71 negative.

13. United Kingdom. “Tribute Is Paid to a Stalwart Member of Keighley’s Ukrainian Community,” *Keighley News*, 8 May 2020.

© Copyright 2020 Newsquest Digital Media

By Alistair Shand

TRIBUTE has been paid following the death of a stalwart of Keighley’s Ukrainian community.

Peter (Petro) Szczur was a founder member of Keighley Ukrainian Association and had been its chairman for over 30 years.

He died – aged 94 – at Laurel Mount Nursing Home in the town, with son Stephen at his side.

Mr Szczur was born in Western Ukraine but left the family home during the German occupation, heading to the UK – via Rimini in Italy – at the end of the Second World War, with fellow Ukrainians and other nationalities.

He settled initially in Norfolk, and then moved to Keighley in 1950.

On his arrival in the town he immediately immersed himself in community activities, promoting awareness of Ukrainian culture, heritage and history and highlighting human rights violations by the Soviets in his homeland.

After studying draughtsmanship at Keighley College, Mr Szczur worked at Prince Smith and Stell in the town as a technical inspector of machinery.

Following the firm’s closure, he joined Airedale Hospital where he became affectionately known as ‘Peter Porter’. He worked at the hospital for over 25 years, until his retirement.

During his working life he also became an interpreter – utilising his Ukrainian, Polish and Russian language skills for various services, and latterly asylum seekers.

He married his late wife Lisa, an Austrian whom he met in Keighley, in 1952.

Mr Szczur was instrumental in setting-up a Ukrainian Saturday school – where he was one of the many teachers – and the Ukrainian Youth Association, which taught children to preserve their heritage through dance, song and maintaining traditions. The youngsters took part in events including Keighley Gala.

He was also a member of male voice choir Duma – which was the oldest-established Ukrainian choir in the UK – and sang with Manchester-based Homin, performing at the Royal Albert Hall.

Following Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991, Mr Szczur had a visit from his brother – who he had last seen about half a century earlier – and he travelled with his son Stephen on an emotional journey to his former family home.

After his wife died in 2004, Mr Szczur learned how to use a computer and helped by his long-time friend Ihor Rojko, compiled a book about the history of the Ukrainian Association in Keighley. The book, published in 2008, immediately sold out.

Nick Lajszczuk, a friend of Mr Szczur and fellow member of the Ukrainian Association, pays tribute.

“Peter's work within the Ukrainian community has left a legacy which will last for generations,” he said.

“The community will be forever indebted to Peter for his commitment to Ukraine and work – not only his work for the community at large, but his efforts to ensure that generations born outside Ukraine were able to appreciate and understand their heritage and pass this down in turn to their children and generations to come.

“He will be sadly missed.”

Mr Szczur leaves his son Stephen, daughter-in-law Karen and granddaughters Helen and Sarah.

14. USA. “Ukrainian-American Leaders Discuss Highlights of Last 30 Years, Future Goals,” *Kyiv Post*, 30 May 2020.

By Askold Krushelnycky.

Editor's Note: The Kyiv Post's Washington, D.C., correspondent Askold Krushelnycky spoke to all presidents of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America in the past 30 years, including the organization's current leader. All told the Kyiv Post that the organization's priorities are to help Ukraine during this time of war against Russia and to encourage new Ukrainian immigrants who have come to the U.S. since independence to join UCCA. They talked about what they achieved during their terms and the hardest challenges they faced.

Askold Lozynskyj was UCCA president from 1992 to 2000. Before that, he was executive vice president from 1988 to 1992. As the elected president became seriously ill, Lozynskyj was effectively in charge since 1990. Thus he has experience at the helm of UCCA in both the pre- and post-Ukrainian independence periods. He also served as head of the Ukrainian World Congress from 1998-2008.

He said his greatest early challenge was to get U.S. recognition of Ukraine's independence at a time when the American president, George H. W. Bush, gave his infamous "Chicken Kyiv speech" in August 1991 urging that Ukraine remain in a union with a liberalized Russia.

He said he and his colleagues "worked like bees" to push Washington toward recognition of Ukrainian independence on December 25, 1991, more than three weeks after the referendum when Ukrainians had voted overwhelmingly to go their own way.

He is proud of projects initiated during his presidency that remain to date: election monitoring in Ukraine; national annual observance of the Holodomor on the last Saturday in November, including at one of America's most important religious shrines, St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City; getting Congress to pass annual monetary assistance to Ukraine.

A particular interest of his was "the Ukrainianization of Ukraine through cinema." Under his auspices, UCCA funded four films about Ukraine's history – the last, about Symon Petliura who led the Ukrainian independence struggle from 1917-1922, came out in 2019.

Lozynskyj said that, while in private meetings with Ukrainian presidents, UCCA criticized the country's rampant corruption: "We did not pile on regarding these issues in the Western press."

Lozynskyj, a lawyer by profession, has written prolifically about Ukrainian history and that of the Ukrainian community in the U.S. He told the Kyiv Post that America's wartime president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and many within his administration were sympathetic to Russia or wary of angering Moscow, and thus reluctant to support Ukrainian independence. That attitude lingered for many years after the war ended in 1945.

Lozynskyj said that throughout its existence, UCCA not only had to respond to lies and propaganda emanating from the Soviet Union and Russia but also hostile lobbying by the Russian community in America who called Ukraine "Little Russia" and the independence struggle the work of "some arrogant Galician aggressors, instigated by Polish and Austro-German enemies."

Lozynskyj said the U.S. State Department was reluctant in the 1960s to support independence claims by Ukraine, Armenia, or Georgia, which they referred to in documents as "traditional parts of the Soviet Union."

He said that the presidency of Ronald Reagan between 1981-1989 saw "a change in tone if not in substance in American-Soviet relations and dialogue."

UCCA worked to secure a White House meeting with Reagan in 1983 for Jaroslav Stetsko, a leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and representative of a substantial portion of the Ukrainian diaspora in the West. He had been imprisoned by the Nazis after proclaiming Ukrainian independence in 1941.

Reagan assured Ukraine and others under communist tyranny "...you are not alone. Our message to you is that your struggle is our struggle, your dreams are our dreams, someday you will also be free."

But even with the proclamation of independence on Aug. 24, 1991, the White House and State Department were wary of giving full-throated support to Ukraine. President Bush's 1991 "Chicken Kyiv speech" had unsettling echoes of the American official attitudes from earlier decades.

Lozynskyj singled out for their "foresight and perseverance" UCCA's earliest leaders such as the first president, Stephen Shumeyko, and successors Lev Dobriansky, Dmytro Halychyn, and Ignatius Bilinsky.

Lozynskyj believes every UCCA president has to tackle "challenges that are primarily internal. Including involving the new wave of post-independence immigrants from Ukraine in serious community activity; organizing locally into communities – all politics is local – and fundraising as well as budget balancing. These may sound mundane issues but they are the underpinning of a strong community."

Mychajlo Sawkiw, Jr. (UCCA president 2000-2008)

Mychajlo Sawkiw, Jr. was UCCA president from 2000 to 2008. He called the 2004 Orange Revolution that led to Viktor Yushchenko's election as president the most challenging issue during his term as president: "The Ukrainian community had never witnessed such a popular peaceful civic uprising in Ukraine. It was a true testament to the people of Ukraine and their wherewithal to withstand injustice and vie for true democracy."

He said the Orange Revolution inspired the Ukrainian community in the U.S. and "that led to reuniting the community and re-enveloping organizations into the UCCA representative structure."

As a direct result, some 2,500 Ukrainian-Americans went to Ukraine to participate in election monitoring groups, something he considers one of the highlights of his presidency.

Among UCCA's major achievements he listed the outreach to U.S. elected officials throughout the organization's eight decades and that is the field he has distinguished himself in as director of the Ukrainian National Information Service (UNIS), UCCA's communication arm, since 1996. He headed both structures during his term as UCCA president.

Sawkiw said when he took on the UNIS role "it was a formidable time then as Ukraine was in the midst of denuclearization and strengthening its democratic institutions. Building a network

of Friends of Ukraine was vital to promoting Ukraine's bilateral partnership with the United States.

"Almost immediately, UNIS assisted in the formation of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus in 1997, which serves as a conduit for congressional lawmakers to enhance the cooperation between the two countries."

He said that communicating with American politicians and officials was of critical importance "at a time when Ukraine is under constant siege by Russian kinetic and hybrid warfare."

Sawkiw said Ukrainian and American values intersect because both emphasize freedom and democracy. The message to American lawmakers, he said, must be to enhance [military and political] support for Ukraine to repel Russian aggression as that benefits and protects the entire world, not just Ukraine.

Tamara Olexy served as president for two terms, from 2008 to 2016.

She said: "I think the most challenging issue during my presidency was the backsliding of democracy in Ukraine under the regime of pro-Kremlin President Viktor Yanukovych that led to the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 – and the loss of so many innocent lives. It was the first time since World War II that we had to deal with direct Russian aggression, or as I call it – war, on the territory of Ukraine, not to mention Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea. After 23 years of independence, our brethren were called to stand and fight to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we, as their voice before the U.S. government, had to do all that we could to help them protect that sovereignty."

Olexy said Ukrainian-Americans "responded like never before – with an enormous outpouring of support – from millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, to hundreds of protests and meetings – all in an effort to aid our brethren and freedom fighters in Ukraine."

She said during that time UCCA worked hard to successfully gain bipartisan support for Ukraine that remains strong today.

She said that one of UCCA's enduring tasks had always been to make available truthful and accurate information about Ukraine and she is proud that an English language scholarly journal 'The Ukrainian Quarterly' is still published 75 years after the first edition appeared.

Olexy laments that links between Ukraine and her diaspora communities around the world, including UCCA, have not been as close as they could have been.

"Unfortunately, I don't think Ukraine took advantage of its organized diaspora, especially early on when they could have used the assistance on various levels.

"I hope Ukraine comes to look at us as partners (Zakordonniy Ukraintsi) and understands that we in the diaspora not only have a long-term commitment to but love of Ukraine and I suspect that most would be more than happy to assist their homeland, homeland of their forefathers."

Andriy Futey was elected UCCA president in September 2016. His term should have ended this year but it has been extended because of COVID-19 until elections take place in 2021.

He told the Kyiv Post he considers one of UCCA's priorities is to advocate the positions and concerns of the Ukrainian-American community to elected officials at federal, state, and local levels and, crucially, to garner support for Ukraine to counter Russian aggression.

He is also determined to unite the entire Ukrainian community by encouraging back to the fold organizations that may have left or that were never members of UCCA and reaching out to entirely new groups.

Futey believes that UCCA's future, to a great extent, depends on the "third wave" immigrants who have settled in the U.S. since Ukraine's 1991 independence.

During his term, he has visited parts of the country where there are flourishing Ukrainian communities that were not part of the original East Coast and Midwestern states core from which UCCA sprang. These include the southern states of Georgia and North Carolina which have booming Ukrainian populations. He said the city of Atlanta in Georgia alone has a thriving 35,000-strong Ukrainian community.

The West Coast too has attracted many Ukrainians. Futey said Portland in Oregon has 75,000 Ukrainians while Sacramento in California boasts the largest Ukrainian language Saturday school pupil numbers in the US. Many Ukrainians have also settled in Arizona and Texas.

He said: "My job is to tell them that they have a place in UCCA. The new immigrants are a huge asset and my desire is that we all work together in a coordinated manner. My message to them is that we are much more effective if we work together. Everybody has something to bring to the table."

During his addresses to Ukrainian communities, he urges members to get more actively involved in American politics and to themselves run for elected office. "It's about time we had our own Ukrainian-American congressmen or Senators. Other people have been very supportive and helpful. But we need our own elected officials."

At this time, Futey believes, UCCA's first priority is to help Ukraine combat Russian aggression by informing American politicians and people about Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

He said that Kremlin propaganda is rife in American media which often repeats Russian lies because of naivety or willingly.

Futey anticipates that in this U.S presidential election year, Russia will ramp up false accusations that Ukraine tried to influence the 2016 presidential elections against current U.S. President Donald Trump. Moscow is already trying to resuscitate a negative narrative concerning Trump's

presumed presidential rival, Joe Biden, which gave Ukraine an unwelcome central part in last year's impeachment proceedings against Trump.

"Russia continues to kill our brothers and sisters, continues to politically persecute minorities in Ukraine such as the Crimean Tatars," said Futey. "Russia is the aggressor, Russia continues to destabilize not only Ukraine but the Free World and wants to re-establish the Russian Empire thereby subjugating many nations and countries. It is in the national security interests of the United States to assist us to fight the war against Russia. Russia will not stop at Ukraine unless forced to. Ukraine is, unfortunately, the front line."

He said UCCA works to persuade the U.S. to strengthen sanctions on the Russian Federation and continue its strong bipartisan support for Ukraine and for the American administration to provide Ukraine with weapons for its military as well as training and inclusion in multi-country exercises.

"That is a message I think that has been well-received by the administration and on a bipartisan level in the U.S. Congress," said Futey.

Fair Use Notice: MAY CONTAIN COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL THAT IS REDISTRIBUTED FOR PERSONAL, SCHOLARLY USE ONLY. Ukrainians Abroad: News and Views is a single emission e-mail to a limited number of scholars and professionals in the area of Ukrainian studies who have requested receipt of the list for scholarly and educational purposes. Ukrainians Abroad: News and Views is distributed on a completely volunteer basis. The editor believes that the use of copyrighted materials therein constitutes "fair use" of any such material and is governed by appropriate Canadian and International law.

Serge Cipko
Coordinator
Ukrainian Diaspora Studies Initiative
Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre
Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
4-30 Pembina Hall
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta,
CANADA T6G 2H8
Email: scipko@ualberta.ca

To subscribe to "Ukrainians Abroad: News and Views" or to unsubscribe, send an email message to scipko@ualberta.ca.