The Formation of a Transnational Diasporic Belonging in the Ukrainian Emigration

Simone Attilio Bellezza
Department of Social Sciences, University of Naples "Federico II"
sabellezza@gmail.com

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Introduction

This paper will be a first attempt at drawing a history of the evolution of national belongings in the Ukrainian diaspora in the West during the Cold War period. It is worth clarifying from the beginning that a complete history of the different communities of Ukrainian abroad is still to be written: Ukrainian-Canadians have produced what is probably the largest amount of studies concerning their history in their homeland of adoption; Australia and the USA, for different reasons, have produced relatively less. From the point of view of this research, however, these differences will have to be considered both as a clue and as an effect of the evolution of diaspora communities in different regions. Nonetheless, I believe that trying to outline a pattern of the evolution of the feelings of national belonging in the Ukrainian diaspora is possible as well as necessary in order to think more generally about the history of the Ukrainian nation and to address the general question of national belonging in modern history.

Emigration: a common starting point?

In his seminal synthesis of the history of Ukrainian diaspora, Vic Satzewich rightfully identified three migratory waves from Ukraine to Western countries: the first occurred at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when a part of the poor peoples of central and eastern Europe went to seek better opportunities for life on the American continent (Satzewich: 2003: 26-48). It was during this period that the Ukrainian communities in Canada and the USA were born: the national belonging of Ukrainian peasants from both the Tsarist and the Habsburg empire were still indefinite,[1] but these feelings were corroborated by the experiences abroad, which included a great deal of economic exploitation and racism (Kuropas: 1972: 37-42; Hryniuk: 1991: 3-16; Petryshyn: 1991: 17-29; Luciuk: 2001b: 11-25).

The second wave consisted mainly in people fleeing from the part of Ukraine under Soviet rule: they mainly moved to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Germany and other European countries. This was not a labor migration as the previous one, but mainly a political migration, which brought an entire ruling class abroad: the people in this group considered themselves to be the genuine representatives of a captive nation and felt the responsibility of keeping the national culture alive while fighting for the liberation of their homeland. Sometimes, in the Eastern regions of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, where Ukrainians were a majority of the population, they do not even consider themselves abroad. It was in this context, worsened by the repressions of the new national states of Central and Eastern Europe, that the democratic and socialist faction gave way to the

[1] The best heuristic paradigm to understand this indefiniteness is the idea of "national indifference" conceived by Tara Zahra, Peter Judson, and Jeremy King (Zahra: 2010; Miller: 2019).

radical and right-wing faction of Ukrainian nationalism, which braced weapons during the Second World War under the banners of the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) (Armstrong: 1990; Motyl: 1980; Liber: 2016; Shkandrij: 2015).

The third wave of immigration occurred after the end of the conflict and had quite a specific characterization: first of all, the great bulk of the people fleeing from the Soviet Ukrainian republic were people who had been in various ways involved in the Ukrainian underground during the war. Their political beliefs had been corroborated by first-line activism and the consequences of violence (both acted and suffered). Many of those who later migrated to North America and Australia made another common experience, that of the refugee camps for displaced persons in post-war Europe: Ukrainians who happened to be outside the borders of Soviet influence had to face the threat of being "repatriated" to Soviet Ukraine, even against their express will. As the USA and Great Britain took some time to become aware of the hostility of the Soviet Union and review their policies towards refugees, Ukrainians in the camps worked hard to organize themselves, get in touch with the Ukrainian communities abroad, lobby and negotiate with the British and American governments. Also because of these efforts, since 1946 various resettlement schemes were put into action and by 1952 almost all displaced Ukrainians were moved to their new countries of residence (Senkus Boshyk and Isaijw: 1991; Dyczok: 2000).

Members of the third wave were therefore unified by a shared experience of war and imprisonment, which also testified to an unusually intense political commitment. Their arrival not only increased the number of Ukrainians abroad, but also changed the evolution of national identities of the diasporic communities. Before analyzing how national belongings changed through time in the USA, Canada, and Australia, it is worth noting also that, in all three periods, migrants came mainly from the Western regions of Ukraine, which were economically depressed, but also those most connoted in national terms, especially after the awakening of the Ukrainian nation at the beginning of the 20th century (Adams: 1963).

Hyphenated Ukrainians

According to an almost mythological story, the first Ukrainian settler in America was an Orthodox priest, reverend Agapius Honcharenko, working as a teacher in California between 1865 and 1867, where he moved coming from Russian Alaska. However, the great bulk of the first wave of Ukrainian migrants arrived in the last quarter of the 19th century and settled down mainly in the North-Eastern regions of the USA (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, all the New England, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, and Oklahoma) (Spasyk: 1950). Although they mostly came from agricultural regions, Ukrainians were able to find jobs in big cities, so that this migration coincided for them also with urbanization: in these metropoles Ukrainians occupied the lower steps of the social pyramid, as miners or workers in the industrial sector or in the most humble professions of city economy (Palij: 1954). Despite the economic hardness, Ukrainians were quick in organizing their own community: the Ukrainian National Association was established in 1894 (already with 475 regional branches) and it published a newspaper in Ukrainian (*Svoboda*) and an English journal (*Ukrainian Weekly*), which were later merged into a single publication (Palij: 1955).

Ukrainian migrants and especially their children were therefore exposed to the "forced Americanization" of the late 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century: this

meant that from the very beginning the Ukrainian community had to address the problem of settling into the new society, the question of cultural assimilation and of maintaining a relationship with the motherland and its original culture. During this period the Ukrainian community showed features that were typical of many migrations: second-generation Ukrainian-Americans were immediately stigmatized as problematic, also because the mainstream American culture was partly imbued with the racist ideas that people with an Anglo-Saxon background were somewhat superior to the others. These Ukrainian-Americans tried to fit in into the American culture to the point of rejecting anything Ukrainian and causing a complex conflict with their parents. In addition, because of the racism of American society and of their disadvantage economic situation, integration was difficult and second-generation Ukrainians were often associated with the criminality of poor neighborhoods of the big American cities. Joseph Roucek, summarizing the research on the "second generation" wrote:

> These "marginal Americans" lack a spiritual solidarity with old world culture; but, in many cases, they find little opportunity for participation in American culture. Part of the damage produced by the old-fashioned sort of Americanization is that they have destroyed the loyalties and values that might have facilitated the cultural development of young people who find themselves between the worlds, without being quite a part of either. [...] A serious situation arises when children reared in immigrant homes break from the old-world traditions because they have acquired American standards and behavior patterns. [...] The second generation then produces its own kind of culture. In fact, the second generation is not a group culturally adrift with neither the culture of their parents nor of their new environment to guide them, but is a group with a very definite culture, a culture of a socio-economic level that is determined by irregular, poorly paid employment and results in broken homes, inadequate education and recreational opportunity, and a general stunted environment. And this culture determines for its inhabitants, whatever their activity, a high crime rate. (Ruchek: 1945: 57 and 63)

The question of how to preserve the original culture of the Ukrainian community and how to integrate it by making it participate in the creation of the celebrated melting pot certainly did not concern only the Ukrainian community and, in those years, this difficult situation was common to many ethnic minorities. However, it was not until the 1920s that Ukrainian-Americans could begin to formulate an original solution: in addition to the reduction of migration flows from Europe, the decades between the two world wars also saw a reformulation of the practices of Americanization of the several ethnic groups that by then constituted the majority of the American working class (Barrett: 1992). "The original impulse" of this liberal Americanization "combined a cordial acceptance of much of the ethnic cultural inheritance of these newcomers even as it vigorously promoted a core of American values thought to be the key to the future well-being of the immigrants. It wishes to accelerate political empowerment and social mobility by insisting the American civic norms and the English language be adopted. And it was vigilant to defend the immigrants from exploiting 'scamps'" (Graham and Koed: 1993: 36).

Ukrainian-Americans enthusiastically welcomed this new trend and quickly re-imagined a new role for Ukrainian culture within the wider American culture and politics. Young people now seemed to play a different role, that of new promoters of the preservation of the original Ukrainian culture, as it appears in this article taken from the *Ukrainian Weekly* of 1935, which allegedly reports the words of an "unusually active in American-Ukrainian life" young girl: after complaining that the old-style Americanization consisted in "putting too much emphasis on the economic elements of life and the ignoring of the deeper spiritual values of life," the unnamed girl observed that America itself had started to notice the negative results of such an attitude and that it was trying to repair the damage.

> Today, however, a new conception of American life and the new evaluation of immigrant gifts to it is causing America to show an unprecedented interest in the cultural treasures of her citizens of foreign extraction. A new and more meaningful American life is arising, one that includes the best elements that each nationality that has made America its new homeland can offer.
> Here is then a splendid incentive for us, young American-Ukrainians, to study the Ukrainian language, history and customs, and thus become better acquainted with our Ukrainian background. America demands this of us, in order that we may help to enrich her cultural life. From the very start, American has shown particular attention to the various manifestation of Ukrainian culture. We should take care that this interest does not diminish, but that it should constantly find something new and finer of Ukrainian life to dwell upon. (Ukrainian Weekly: 1935)

According to this reasoning, seemingly supported by the governmental policies, Ukrainian-Americans should preserve and cherish their original culture as one of the components of the multi-faceted wider American culture: the 'gift rhetoric' was directly inspired by the book *Immigrant Gifts to American Life* by Allen Eaton, a long-time member of the Oregon legislature and close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt (Eaton: 1932; on Eaton see Van Dommelen: 2004). Americans of Ukrainian descent carried on with this commitment despite the fascination for the apparent successes of the Soviet Union in the 1930s, the propaganda done by the American Slav Congress, and the ban on the news of the famine in Ukraine by the American media.

Ukrainian-Americans decided to tie the meaning of their contribution to the American culture in the sense of a political and civil commitment, almost as if being Ukrainian-American meant being a politically committed citizen. For example, Stephen Shumeyko, in an article published in the *Ukrainian Quarterly* in 1944 wrote that the Ukrainian-American press: "on one hand, has helped to make him [the Ukrainian-American] a better American citizen, by constantly impressing him with his duties and obligations as such. On the other hand it has always fanned him the ever present desire to help his kinsmen in Ukraine to win their national freedom and independence" (Shumeyko: 1940: 50). In another contribution the soon to be elected president of UCCA and WWII veteran Lev Dobriansky wrote about the "natural" compatibility of Ukrainian and American cultures in an article suggestively entitled "Ukrainian Rivulets in the Stream of American Culture:"

> Ukrainian culture in its development in Eastern Europe has been a mainstream flowing into the ever-expanding reservoir of the culture of Western Society with its deeper fundamental of moral life and intellectual outlook. This basic truth represents the great historical chasm between Russian culture with its characteristic Asiatic orientation and Ukrainian culture with its typical Western ties. [...] Sharing with American culture in the deeper, resourceful springs of the still greater Western culture, of which both are vital parts, Ukrainian culture, insofar as they express it, each in his own way and according to his own talent, is a natural ally of the American cultural outlook and its democratic affirmation of the basic principles that make of man, Man, not animal. A reading of Ukrainian history teaches also this truth. (Dobriansky: 1947: 55 and 61)

With this article Dobriansky substantially iterated a very popular trope, that of Ukrainian culture (let me use this expression from the text) as an integral part of Western civilization, opposed in its basic principles to Russian culture, which would instead draw inspiration from Asian despotism. The arrival of the third wave of Ukrainian immigrants after the Second World War corroborated the political vocation of the Ukrainian community, fully integrating it into the dynamics of the cold war.

It was the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the organization founded in 1940 to coordinate all the Ukrainian associations and organizations in the USA, that elaborated a very specific identity for Ukrainian-Americans: under the direction of the newly elected president, Lev Dobriansky, the UCCA published in 1951 a short pamphlet

summarizing the history of Ukrainians in the U.S.A. and stating their role within American society:

> There are duties far more costly than donations for you as a Ukrainian-American. [...] As a Ukrainian-American you are called upon work at a job which knows neither fatigue not clocks nor paydays. It is not just the Ukrainian cause; it is not just the cause of America. The way of life of our civilization and all it stands for is the job. [...]
> It is precisely because of your dual nature as an American and a Ukrainian that this pamphlet was deemed worthwhile. [...] The identity of the ideals of America and of Ukraine, the similarity of their respective struggles for liberty and their common cradle in western civilization are historical truths. And it is the current turn of history which has shouldered you as a first-generation American of Ukrainian descent with the duty of assuming your role as an invaluable American citizen. In view of her threat to the western way of life, your duty to spread the truth about Soviet Russia and Ukraine has become more than a job. It is now nothing less than a mission. You must be something more than the average civic-minded American citizen. You must become the American counterpart of those Ukrainians fighting desperately behind the Iron Curtain, sooner or later joined by all the liberty-loving peoples of the world. (UCCA: 1951: 62-63)

This was the version of the Ukrainian-American identity supported by the UCCA: a very specific version, whose defining characteristic was the political commitment in the Cold War for Ukraine's liberation struggle. Obviously, a lot remained outside this 'official' definition: in part it was the result of the evolution of the feelings of national belonging in the American context and in part it welcomed the instances of the third wave of Ukrainian migrations, the most politically committed and which had fought for national liberation in the years of World War Two. It is worth noting that, perhaps in an attempt to hold together these two constituent parts of the new Ukrainian community in the U.S.A., the expression that was used to refer collectively to all Ukrainians abroad was "Ukrainian emigration:" clearly there was a feeling of a wider community, which crossed national borders and included also Canadian-Ukrainians.

Multicultural Ukrainians

The story of the Ukrainian community in Canada is somewhat similar to the story of Ukrainians in the USA but the differences are also striking: Ukrainians peasants coming from the Galicia and Volhynia mainly moved to the prairies in the central regions of Canada (Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan), where they became farmers and quite often the first colonizers of those territories (Lehr: 1991: 30-52). They did not have to integrate in a pre-existent social pyramid but built one from scratch as pioneers. However, they could not rely on integration policies like the 'melting pot' ideology but had to abide by British rules (Hryniuk: 1991; Petryshyn: 1991). The evolution of the Ukrainian community as a constituent part of Canadian society came to an abrupt stop at the beginning of the First World War, when thousands of the Ukrainian colonizers, who were mainly coming from the Ukrainian regions of the Habsburg empire, were considered enemy aliens and were therefore interned for no other reason than their origins (Luciuk: 2001a).

In the 1920s and 1930s Canadian Ukrainians resumed the work of colonization and development of the prairies: among many of them emerged the need to form organizations that could help them in times of difficulty. These decades saw the expansion of left-wing associations, among which the most popular was the Ukrainian Labor Temple Movement, constituting the most solid network of solidarity and conservation of Ukrainian identity in Canada in the interwar period. As sometimes these associations had direct or indirect contacts with the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Canada, the question of the loyalty of Ukrainians to Canada was periodically raised in the public debate: both Lubomyr

Luciuk and Rhonda Hinter, who thoroughly studied this period, agree however that Ukrainian Canadians never perceived themselves as agents of Sovietization in the West, and it was instead thanks to the expansion of these organizations that a specific sense of belonging to a Ukrainian-Canadian community, separated from the motherland but united but by a common memory and social activism, began to develop (Luciuk: 2001b: 26-55; Hinter: 2018: 50-102).

In my opinion World War Two constituted a key moment in the formation of a distinct Ukrainian-Canadian identity: the British empire was asking Ukrainian Canadians to declare their loyalty to Canada first and to reject both the Soviet and the Nazi political discourse. In order to get this goal, the British-Canadian government, similarly to what it was doing with other East-European ethnic groups, engaged in a negotiation with the representatives of the Ukrainian community to marginalize the extreme fringes of both political tendencies, left and right. In this effort to 'Canadize' Ukrainians were involved politicians and intellectuals of great cultural value, like Tracy Philipps and Watson Kirkconnell, one of the fathers of Canadian Slavic studies. The result was the creation in November 1940 of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, a new umbrella organization for Ukrainian associationism which was partly successful in marginalizing the Ukrainian Labour Temple Movement. Kirkconnell told in very explicit terms his commitment in this sense in a series of pamphlets that were together propaganda and an autobiographical account of a work of socio-cultural engineering. He concluded one of these works as follows:

> Much hope may be placed in the Ukrainian Canadians of the second generation, fine young people who at their best feel that they are Canadian first and yet cherish at the same time a dream of Ukrainian liberty in Europe, not as an ancestral legacy of hate but as an ideal towards which, even in Canada, they can work by cultivating Ukrainian unity and developing a mature appreciation of Ukrainian culture. Whether out of the present war and the breaking of nations there can emerge an independent Ukraine in Europe, remains to be seen; but the Ukrainian Canadians feel that they can help towards that consummation by collaborating, in a war as in peace, towards the unity and well-being of Canada. (Kirkdonnel: 1940: 30; see also Kirkonnel: 1943; Dreiszinger: 1991; Luciuk and Kordan: 1987; Kordan 2001; on the UCC see Genus: 1982)

Displaced persons who moved to Canada after the war were therefore integrated in a society where Ukrainians had won a full place. Even if this third wave was numerically limited (nearly 35,000 new arrivals in 1947-1952 on a total Ukrainian population of almost 400,000), it had a consistent influence on the community: the new arrivals were in fact people with a high level of education, who went to settle mainly in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, regions that previously had a very small Ukrainian community. They revitalized the old associations and founded new magazines, claiming a new public role for the Ukrainian language: this commitment was a clear consequence of the experiences of war and refugee camps (Stebelsky: 1991). This strengthening allowed the Ukrainian Canadian community to play fully, in the following decades, the role of "third element" in the opposition between English and French speakers: of course this expression usually means all the different national groups living in Canada either than the British and the French. However, after being slowly integrated into the state administration in the 1950s, the Ukrainians became the most politically active component of the third element, contributing in a decisive way to the elaboration of Canadian identity not as a duality, but as a "mosaic of nations" characterized by "unity in diversity," as the ideology of "multiculturalism" states. Throughout the 1960s – particularly in their contribution in the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism – great intellectuals and politicians like Jaroslav Rudnyckyj, Manoly Lupul, and Paul Yuzyk , while acknowledging a leading role to the Anglo-French duality, claimed a founding role for the nationalities of the third

element as well, asking for similar rights to develop their ancestral culture (on multiculturalism see Bociurkiw: 1978). As senator Yuzyk put it:

> They are therefore builders of Canada, along with the British and the French, and collectively can be regarded as the Third Element. During the past hundred years Canada has gradually evolved into a multicultural nation. On the basis of the B.N.A. Act, she is still officially bilingual, but in reality she has become multicultural, displaying the principle of "unity in diversity" and that the whole is greater than its three component parts. […]
> Canada with her variety of peoples cannot permit an understanding of "democracy" which disregards other cultures and languages. Recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world; this recognition must be made secure in Canada for all Canadians regardless of race, creed, colour, nationality, ancestry or place of origin. (Yuzyk: 1967: 3 and 80)

Hence the decision of the multicultural policy to implement the teaching of almost all the languages of the third element in schools as well as at universities, and to foster the development of institutions and associations for the preservation of the cultural heritage of each national group present on the Canadian soil. Multiculturalism claimed superiority over the American "melting pot" because, while the latter meant a de facto assimilation into a bigger culture, the former fostered integration with respect to the various components, which remained distinct. It is worth noting that, during the battle for multiculturalism, Canadian Ukrainians elaborated a specific "pioneer myth" which made them a constituent component of the Canadian nation, while differentiating them from all the other communities of the diaspora, though preserving a Ukrainian connotation (Lalande: 2006). This meant that, according to Yuzyk, the mission of the Ukrainian-Canadian was twofold with one goal in the international arena (like Ukrainian Americans) and one specific function in Canadian society:

> The defense of freedom and democracy must be the cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy, in which because of their background the Ukrainian Canadians should be playing an increasing role; […] The mission of the Ukrainian Canadians also includes the perpetuation of the consciousness of cultural values in the development of the Canadian nation. Their fate is bound with the fate of the Third Element, which has been noted, has won a definite place and some recognition in Canadian life. This Third Element can serve as a bridge between the two founding elem[e]nts and the unifying force that will help to build a stronger and a more forward-looking Canadian nation in the next century of our existence. (Yuzyk: 1967: 91)

Though partially different, both the Canadian and the American versions of Ukrainian migrants attributed particular importance to the specific function of Ukrainians in the Cold War scenario and insisted on the preservation of the ethnic component of Ukrainian emigration at the expense of other identity factors. Canadian Ukrainians, however, have a stronger perception of their specificity, which in the following years would emerge in the character of their institutes of culture and scholarly research: as noted by Thomas Prymak, both American and Canadian Ukrainians founded branches of the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences and of the Shevchenko Scientific Society and both created new high level university institutes (the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies). But the former focused on European Ukrainian topics, while the latter "produced a whole string of publications dealing with Ukrainian Canadian topic issues" leaving the Ukrainian American experience widely unexplored (Prymak: 2015: 265-278; Lupul: 2005).

Attempts at Building a Diasporic Unity

Despite their differences the American and Canadian Ukrainian communities were willing to collaborate and eager to find a political minimum common denominator for their action on the international arena. On this level, to the differences in the evolution of the feelings of national belonging in the various countries were added the rivalries among the many political factions.

This was the condition highly criticized by Clarence Manning on the occasion of the inauguration (16 June 1957) of the Shevchenko memorial monument in Soyuzivka, a Ukrainian cultural center in the New York state: he celebrated the event as "it gave the opportunity for Ukrainians of all groups and all parties to come together under its auspices to commemorate the father of the Ukrainian movement of independence." Manning noted that the leadership of the organizations who built the monument, the Ukrainian National Organization and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America were organizations "which can truly speak for all groups of patriotic Ukrainians without regards to political affiliations, either here in American life or in Europe" and auspicated that this spirit of unity would lead the further development of the Ukrainian emigration (Manning: 1957). Reuniting around the figure of Taras Shevchenko, however, had a rather weak significance: the national poet was a sufficiently neutral and general symbol, with only vague political consequences on the practical political choices the Ukrainian community could have taken. Henceforth, the difficulties were so great that a true international coordination emerged only at the end of the 1960s with the creation of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians (WCFU): already the contemporaries expressed their dissatisfaction for the outcome of the First WCFU, which took place in New York on 12-19 November 1967 and whose only shared ideological and political reference was the commemoration of the 1917 national revolution (Prokop: 1968). The Congress, however, marked the in a certain sense formal birth of a Ukrainian diaspora: one of the most important speeches was read by John Syrnick, a key figure in the Ukrainian Canadian community (then vice-president of the UCC), who talked about "Ukrainians in Their Countries of Residence." Talking about the evolution of the Ukrainian communities, Syrnick stressed that "we are seriously threatened but the assimilation of our youth" into the culture of the hosting countries. He thought that one of the main reasons resided in the behavior of the precedent generations:

> But it seems to me that too often in every occasion (when it is appropriate as well as when it is not) we freely use expressions such as "emigration" and "emigrants." We often call ourselves "political emigration," even if in a literal sense we are not an emigration, and these terms – clearly – cannot find a meaning for our youth, that belongs to the second and third generations and was born outside Ukraine. Moreover, these accents are for them incomprehensible and even outrageous. Our youth cannot make sense of these declarations looking at its own and even at our status of citizens of Canada, FRG, France or any other country where our youth was born. Calling ourselves "emigration," we push our youth away from ourselves, because thanks to their citizenship through birth they grow more and more attached to their country of birth and they want, legitimately enough, become its fellow masters. We do not have to call ourselves "emigration" to interest ourselves in the fate of the Ukrainian nation. On the contrary, our voice in defense of the rights of Ukraine will be even stronger if we will raise it from the position of our state citizenship. The voice of a master is always stronger than the voice of a subordinate or a temporary guest.
> To get closer to our youth and get in touch with it, we must obliterate this barrier and join our youth on the terrain of a common citizenship. [...] We must create for our diaspora its own "Credo" of infringeable laws. (Syrnyk: 1969: 122)

Syrnick went on writing down this "credo" which enjoyed great success to the point of being published separately as a booklet, also in English translation. The first two points of this credo were:

1. I am a citizen of the country of my birth. As her citizen, I shall respect her democratic freedoms. In the event of dangers from outside, I shall defend my country with my life and my wealth. I shall use those rights and privileges which my country gives to her citizens,

remembering at the same time that these rights and privileges place upon me certain obligations. I shall, therefore, participate in the many areas of my country's life: in politics and economics, in school system and education and in all the spheres of her life

2. Beside the citizenship of my country I have, in addition, my separate spiritual citizenship. This is my "hole of holies". I am a Ukrainian and at no price shall I deny my Ukrainian spirituality. I cannot deny my Ukrainian heritage any more than I can deny my parents – otherwise this would imply that I never had parents. I can change citizenship by taking up residence in another country and accepting a new citizenship, but I cannot change my national heritage. (Syrnyk: 1974: 1)

Syrnick also stated that the tasks of the Ukrainian diaspora were "help Ukraine and preserving Ukrainian spirituality" which each diasporic Ukrainian could do in agreement with the obligations of his/her citizenship. The diasporic community was born this way, identifying an identity that was composed of two parts: the first, that of Ukrainian spirituality, remained fixed and common to all because it had been inherited from common origins; the second, that of the new civic and political citizenship, depended on the state of residence, imagined however within the front of western democracies. Unity in diversity, one might say, noting that it was not by chance that it was a Canadian Ukrainian the first to single out the multicultural and transnational character of a diasporic identity. In the following years the younger generations of American and Canadian Ukrainians created many youth and student organizations or revitalized the old ones by stressing the importance of the full development of Ukrainians in their new countries: as Jurij Savicky, founder of the New York City Ukrainian Student Hromada, put it: "the Hromada should provide students with creative alternatives to replace the traditional heavy emphasis on nationalism and patriotism to the exclusion of all else" (Savicky: 1968: 4).

The most innovative feature of the young diasporic Ukrainians at the beginning of the 1970s was the creation of a transnational Committee to Defend Soviet Political Prisoners, whose main objective was not Ukrainian independence, but the respect of human rights, especially civic and political rights, as a pre-requisite for any subsequent development. The Committee had an elastic structure, able to accommodate different political stances and even differences in the way its members intended their political commitment to the Ukrainian cause: the defense of human rights, a typical feature of the political culture of younger generations in the West in the 1960s and 1970s was a universal ideology reuniting Ukrainians living in different continents (Bellezza: 2019; see also Moyn: 2010 and Eckel and Moyn: 2014). The importance of the younger generations in pushing the whole Ukrainian diaspora community into embracing the cause of human rights is evident in the memoirs of Christina Isajiw, who recounted of how her early commitment in Amnesty International in the 1960s led her to involve the whole Ukrainian diaspora (Isaijw: 2014): one of the key figures that she was able to recruit in this process was Paul Yuzyk, who from January 1972 led the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights at the WCFU and got the entire Congress to take on the tactics of the struggle for human rights, including setting up a specific office in New York to interact with specific UN agencies (Svitovyi Kongres Vil'nykh Ukraïntsiv: 1986: 193-196 and 359).

The level of genuine commitment to the cause of human rights however varied in the different political and geographical groups, and that will allow to analyze one more case of how the Ukrainian diasporic identity was performed during the Cold War.

Diasporic Multiplicity

The Ukrainian community in Australia was relatively new: some Ukrainians had moved to Australia since the second half of the 19th century, but they were very few and integrated

into the rest of Australian society, losing their Ukrainian identity. It was only after WWII that a considerable amount of Ukrainians (more than 15,000) moved from Europe to Australia: these were usually less educated and poorer than those emigrating to North America and were forced to accept to work for the Australian government for two years (usually in construction) before getting Australian citizenship. With no help from preceding emigrations, Australian Ukrainians had to build community institutions from scratch and only with their forces (Martin: 1964). The 1950s and 1960s were formative years, when Australian Ukrainians created their organizations including schools, youth groups, etc. with a strong duality and rivalry between the Melbourne and Sydney communities. Perhaps due to geographical isolation the debate about the community in Australia was characterized from the very beginning by the idea of ghetto: this "spiritual ghetto" was not meant as a separation from the rest of Australian society (which seems to miss in this reasoning), but from the rest of Ukrainian society. Australian Ukrainians thought that they were too interested in the competition internal to their community and that would lead them to loose contact with the rest of the diaspora and with mainland Ukraine, favoring integration into Australian society (Tserkva i zhyttia: 1973). The Australian Ukrainian press looked with perplexity at the policies of the "melting pot" and of "multiculturalism" (that was on its way of implementation in Australia as well) and used to divide the diasporic community into what it called "emigrants" and "settlers":

> It is generally believed that the notion of "emigrant," or even the unclear definition "political emigrant," is tied to the closest spiritual connection with Ukraine, and primarily to the factor that has always been, is and will be the first criterion of nationality – language. The notion of "settler" is tied already with the great problem of natural assimilation, with the most important question whether there will be or not a free Ukrainian community in the world. (Kedryn: 1974)

The Ukrainian community in Australia did not seem to have been able to come up with a solution to this issue other than resistance to a process that was thought to be both negative and inevitable. The key factor seemed to be the preservation of the language. Australian Ukrainians devoted themselves to this purpose in two ways: on the one hand the use of the Ukrainian language was promoted by a propaganda campaign that often linked it to a divine element ("The Native Language is God's Order" or "The Native Language is a Gift from God") (Metropolit Maksym: 1972; Tserkva i zhyttia: 1973). On the other hand, they first engaged in teaching Ukrainian as a private subject and later in its official recognition as a subject for the Higher School Certificate (obtained in various states between 1973 and 1975); afterwards they established specific centers of Ukrainian studies at prestigious universities (Monash University in 1983, Macquarie University in 1984). At the same time, the Ukrainians of Australia were engaged in the struggle for the liberation of the Ukrainian motherland: in consonance with what was happening on the diasporic debate, the struggle for the defense of human rights was the main weapon used to weaken Soviet dominion over the Ukraine. At the beginning of the 1970s various committees for the defense of human rights were founded by the Ukrainian communities in Australia: however, many of these committees used to organize activities "in defense of human and national rights,"[2] revealing that the way human rights were conceived was particular. The emphasis put on the national question with respect to the more general issue of rights was explicitly revealed: for example, Catherine Hluchanic, a leader of the Ukrainian students movement in Melbourne and daughter of Andrij Hluchanic, first head of the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Ukraine of Melbourne, wrote in an article in 1970:

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[2] Like the "Day of Human and National Rights" organized by the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Ukraine of Melbourne on 12 May 1974.

> Youth in general is ideologically instructed, it is worrying about the injustices inflicted to other individuals or peoples. But why should the Ukrainian youth worry only about the atrocities inflicted to the Asian or African peoples, and not the ones suffered by the Ukrainian people? (Hlukhanich: 1982)

The activism for the defense of human rights in Australia took a particular fade: it stressed the colonial character of the Soviet state, because it was considered an extremely deleterious accusation for the international image of the USSR which sought instead to be accredited as the champion of the decolonized countries. This strategy was explicitly asserted by one of the most important figures in the Australian Ukrainian activism, Michael Lawrisky, who in his *Australian Ukrainian Review*, an English-language quarterly that he had founded to raise public awareness of the Ukrainian issue, wrote:

> Kremlin strategists know that they can live with the image of a totalitarian regime […] They can even live with the image of being virulently anti-Semitic […] but in the second half of the 20th century what the Soviet Russian Empire can't live with is the image of a colonial power. (Australian Ukrainian Review: 1982: 12)

Australian Ukrainians were aware of the specificity of the way in which they had understood the battle for the defense of human rights and aware of the debate within the Ukrainian diaspora, a debate that in a way entailed different conceptions of belonging: whether diaspora Ukrainians were first and mostly Ukrainian nationals or political activists, whose beliefs could precede a belonging to the Ukrainian nation. This debate emerged in another Australian Ukrainian journal of the 1980s, *Ukrainian Issues*, whose goal was to spread the knowledge of Ukrainian culture, including that produced in Soviet Ukraine. The December 1986 issue presented an interview with Christina Isaijw that quite directly addressed the point:

> Q. There has always been a section of the Ukrainian community which has said that human rights should take a second place to national rights. […] I think it is an issue that exists in the community. I think those people who make this issue controversial would say that the national right of self-determination is the one right above all. And no doubt there are a lot of good arguments o support that.
> A. No doubt. Self-determination is at the base of the cultural and national rights of any national entity within the Soviet Union. But when we talk about human rights we are talking about the rights of the individual. Therefore, it is the individual who would ultimately vote upon any national autonomy of a given sector of Soviet society. (Ukrainian Issues: 1986: 6)

For the core supporters of the movement for the defense of human rights within the Ukrainian communities in Canada and the USA individual rights came first, but this difference in evaluation did not prevent collaboration with other members of the diaspora with different opinion on this issue. It was indeed this very debate, among Ukrainians living in different countries and with different political views, that demonstrated the existence of a Ukrainian diasporic community. According to Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou, diasporas are

> viewed as spaces of communication, as 'contact zones', as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other' […] Far from being an emblem of the unity of a dispersed people with an imagined homeland as point of reference, diasporas thus become […] an expression of fragmentation, of the multiplicity of loyalties and belongings. (Isabella and Zanou: 2016: 6-7)

In this paper I have tried to show how a Ukrainian diaspora emerged as the concrete history of the attempts at building this space of communication among actors who had elaborated different ways of belonging to the Ukrainian nation, a transnational dialogical community that has one of its fundamental characteristics in its multiplicity.

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