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**Mykola Khvylovy and the Ukrainian Renaissance**

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**Mykola Khvylovy and the Ukrainian Renaissance**

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## **Dedication**

For Yeva.

## **Abstract**

### **Mykola Khvylovy and the Ukrainian Renaissance**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

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This thesis examines the 1917 to 1920 Ukrainian Revolution, literary activity in post-Revolutionary Ukrainian, and the works of the eminent Ukrainian writer, Mykola Khvylovy in order to better understand how a short-lived Ukrainian cultural and literary renaissance took shape and how it was suppressed by the Communist Party. My paper is divided into three major parts, which address the Ukrainian Revolution, policies of the Soviet state regarding Ukrainian cultural and literary development, and the literary works of Mykola Khvylovy.

In my first three chapters I undertake a fairly detailed analysis of the Ukrainian Revolution. Due to the complexity of the topic, I have divided it into three parts. In these three chapters, I explore the ways in which the Ukrainian intelligentsia sought to establish an autonomous Ukrainian state and how their attempts to create their own vision of an independent Ukraine were ultimately thwarted by foreign aggressions. Despite the utter

chaos that characterized the Revolutionary era, the Ukrainian intelligentsia sought to establish a sovereign Ukrainian state.

In chapter four, I examine the Soviet policy of Ukrainianization and its ideological antecedents in order to determine the ways in which it both contributed to and undermined attempts to foster Ukrainian political, literary, and cultural expansion. In the early years following the Ukrainian Revolution, first the Bolshevik party, and then the Soviet state recognized that it was imperative to gain support from the Ukrainian population. For a brief time a Ukrainian cultural and literary renaissance flourished, until the Soviet state ultimately proscribed all activity which did not occur under the aegis of the state.

In the fifth chapter, I examine literary activity in Soviet Ukraine and the role of Mykola Khvylovy. By looking at the relationships among literary organizations and their connections to the Soviet State, I want to understand how Ukrainian literature was circumscribed by an increasingly repressive Soviet state. Lastly, I want to examine the literary life and works of Mykola Khvylovy in order to demonstrate his importance to this era, which has come to be known as “executed Ukrainian renaissance.” By analyzing Khvylovy’s polemical pamphlets and prose, I attempt to explain the author’s literary ideology and his vision for a new Ukrainian literature. In a close reading of Khvylovy’s *Ia...Romantika*, I consider aspects of the protagonist’s a psychological rupture, which reveals his self-doubt and uncertainty with the new revolutionary order.

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**Dedication:**

For Yeva.

The years 1917 to 1920 in Ukraine were an extremely complex and brutal period, during which time Ukraine sought to assert its right to exist as a sovereign nation. The Ukrainian Revolution was representative of a desire among the Ukrainian intelligentsia to establish an autonomous and independent state. Unlike the 1917 Russian Revolutions which had a social and political character, the Ukrainian Revolution was a battle fought primarily for national liberation. The Revolutionary forces in Ukraine were not Communist, but chiefly national. Though the primary focus of my thesis is on literary activity and the Ukrainian writer Mykola Khvylovy, it would be difficult to approach the topic without viewing it within its historical context. As George Luckyj wrote, “(d)evelopments in Soviet Ukraine can be properly understood only when they are seen against the background of history.”

The Ukrainian Revolution was the catalyst for an unprecedented amount of creative energy, underpinned by the idea that Ukraine, for the first time in its history, had an opportunity to assert its autonomy, both politically and culturally. The Revolution represented an attempt by the intelligentsia to define a Ukrainian national and cultural identity which was distinct from Russia. If we can regard “the age-long Russian-Ukrainian relations...as a stream in which the Ukrainian and Russian currents intermingled and often vehemently opposed each other, then this period marks a strong upsurge of the Ukrainian tide, a flood stemmed only by force.” This renaissance in Ukrainian political, cultural, and literary life was suppressed and then crushed by the presence of multiple foreign armies in Ukraine. Ultimately, the Red Army defeated the other occupying forces in Ukraine. The Bolsheviks crushed the political ambitions that many Ukrainians had for an independent Ukraine. In the absence of real political

autonomy, Ukrainian cultural and political identity often found expression through literature and literary activity.

In the literary sphere, the Ukrainian writer Mykola Khvylovy is widely recognized as the most outstanding representative of his era. His prose and polemical pamphlets challenged a traditional discourse on Ukrainian literature, which for centuries had characterized Ukrainian literature as “little Russian.” Khvylovy propounded a path for Ukrainian literature and cultural identity which called for a break from its historically-subservient relationship to Russia. For his efforts Khvylovy was denounced by the Party and ultimately harassed into committing suicide. Although his name was deleted from the public record after his suicide, for many Ukrainians, Khvylovy became an icon, who symbolized self-sacrifice and an unwillingness to abandon his ideals in the face of an ever-more repressive Soviet regime. As George Grabowicz has written, Khvylovy was the one writer, “who like a lightning rod attracted, focused, and transmitted the enormous energies of his day—and the energies and powers of interpretation of succeeding generations.” While Khvylovy’s polemical pamphlets demonstrate his literary ideology and vision for a new path for Ukrainian literature, a common theme in his prose concerns the profound sense of disillusionment that the author felt by what he recognized as a betrayal of Socialist ideals by the Soviet regime. His attempts to reconcile his strident beliefs in the aims of Communism with the brutal reality that Communism manifested produced in Khvylovy a psychological rupture, which is evident in his novella *Ia...Romantika*.

Under state surveillance even prior to 1930, Khvylovy stood on the brink of a psychological breakdown. Correspondence from GPU informers attested to Khvylovy's despondency and his suicidal ideation. In 1927 a GPU agent informed his handlers that Khvylovy was "ready to commit suicide in order to show what is really happening." The self-referential aspects of Khvylovy's prose, notably in *Ia...Romantika*, underscore the author's psychological crisis. In his final creative act, Khvylovy scripted his own suicide. As his invited guests gathered in an adjoining room, Khvylovy shot himself in the temple. His suicide note referenced the arrest of his close friend and fellow writer Mykhailo Yalovy:

Arrest of Yalovy - this is the murder of an entire generation ... For what? Because we were the most sincere Communists? I don't understand. The responsibility for the actions of Yalovy's generation lies with me, Khvylovy. Today is a beautiful sunny day. I love life - you can't even imagine how much...

What is striking about Khvylovy's suicide and what makes it especially poignant is that it was, paradoxically, an act of selflessness. His suicide was not an admission of personal defeat; it was an act symbolic of defiance, which demonstrated Khvylovy's willingness to die before surrendering his principles. Khvylovy's friends also understood the nature of his internal crisis.

After Khvylovy's death, his compatriot, the Vaplitan writer, Maik Iohansen, asserted that:

(Khvylovy's) "I" split—and there was a horrible internal collision between the “communard” and the Ukrainian. The Ukrainian revolted and...Khvylovy knew and understood that his act would literally have international significance. At his death Khvylovy was peaceful and happy. So, he knew how his act would be interpreted and what his shot signified.

By examining in detail the years 1917 to 1920 in Ukraine and the literary activity that took shape after the revolution, I want to attempt to understand better the ways in which a Ukrainian political renaissance took shape, how it was affected by the presence of foreign armies on Ukrainian soil, and finally how these forces impacted Ukrainian autonomy. In the absence of political independence, ideas concerning Ukrainian cultural identity were preserved in the period of literary organization that followed the Ukrainian Revolution. During this brief period of relative freedom, Ukrainian writers sought to expand the discourse on Ukrainian literature and culture. Ultimately, however, many their ideas were deemed to be “deviationist,” and as Ukrainian autonomy was denied in the political sphere, so too were freedoms were curtailed in literary expression. Mykola Khvylovy was the one Ukrainian writer in the 1920s that most clearly embodied the idea of Ukrainian cultural and literary identity. His demise became symbolic of the Party's attempts to liquidate any manifestation of independent Ukrainian thought. By providing the historical context for an examination of literary activity in Soviet Ukraine, we are able to appreciate better the forces that were at work to both promote and undermine Ukrainian national and cultural autonomy. In order to better understand the how

Ukrainian national identity came to be expressed in the literary activity of the 1920s, it is necessary to first examine political developments in Ukraine after the fall of the Russian Empire, which culminated in the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state.

Diametrically opposed to the Russian revolution in its aims, the Ukrainian revolution, which took place between 1917 and 1920, was a catalyst for creative expression in the both the literary and political realms. While the Revolutions in Russia took on a social and political character, in Ukraine the struggle was waged primarily as a war for national liberation and secondarily as a proletarian revolution.<sup>1</sup> The Ukrainian Revolution presented the opportunity for the establishment of the long-held dream of Ukrainian statehood.

The Revolution was an extremely complex period in Ukrainian history with multiple actors vying for control of the country. It did not occur over night, but rather over several years, during which time various foreign armies occupied various parts of Ukraine. I will focus primarily on three key forces and the interactions among them: the Ukrainian government in its various forms, the Bolsheviks in Ukraine, and the peasant population in Ukraine. My intention is to demonstrate and analyze several key points: that Ukrainians, in the form of the Central Rada, immediately sought to establish an autonomous Ukrainian state, but that they did so carefully, without the intent to destabilize or break away from Russia; that the Ukrainian and Bolshevik governments were incompatible for various reasons and that the Bolsheviks sought to destroy any independent Ukrainian state; that the peasants were a destructive force with no political

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<sup>1</sup>Luckyj, George. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1990. 6.

or social ideology who played a major role in the fate of revolutionary governments. This relationship among the three was further affected by a rapidly changing and extremely complex environment, marked by competing Ukrainian governments, peasant uprisings, and foreign invasion.<sup>2</sup> In the final assessment, I attempt to demonstrate that the relationship among the peasantry and with the Bolshevik and the Ukrainian government played a decisive role in both the establishment and destruction of the Ukrainian state.

In order to describe more clearly the complicated chronology of the revolutionary period, I have used Dr. Paul Magosci's method of dividing the revolution into three phases and analyzing each separately. The first phase, spanning from March 1917 until April of 1918 covers the time of the establishment of the Central Rada until its abolition by the Hetmanate; the second phase, April to December 1918, covers the time of the Hetmanate; and lastly, the third phase, January 1919 until October 20, 1920, when the Soviet government finally established itself throughout the country.

### *Establishment of the Rada*

The Ukrainian revolutionary era began on March 13, 1917, after the Romanov dynasty fell and the Provisional government came to power in Russia. The Central Rada, a council representing various Ukrainian political parties and social organizations was headed by Mykhailo Hrushevsky. The Rada became the nucleus of a nascent Ukrainian government which urged the Provisional government in Russia to approve the idea of Ukrainian autonomy. When the Rada convened on 19-21 April, 1917, with 900 delegates

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

from all parts of Dnieper Ukraine<sup>3</sup>, it immediately passed a resolution for the autonomy of Ukraine within Russia<sup>4</sup> and proclaimed in its First Universal, on June 23, 1917, the right of the Ukrainian people to “manage its own life on its own soil.”<sup>5</sup> The Rada stopped short of declaring full independence at this time, choosing to establish a Ukrainian state, “(w)ithout separating from all of Russia, without breaking with the Russian state.”<sup>6</sup> The Rada’s pronouncement of Ukrainian autonomy was met with shock by Russians in Kiev and Petrograd. <sup>7</sup> According to the Russian press, the Rada’s proclamation was “criminal,” “a stab in the back to Russia,” and a “strike to the revolution.” <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Russian Provisional government responded a month later by sending a delegation headed by Aleksander Kerinsky to Kiev. There a compromise was reached whereby the Rada would make no further demands for autonomy until the convocation of an All-Russian constituent assembly. In the meantime, the Rada’s newly formed General Secretariat, led by Volodymyr Vynnychenko, was granted limited authority over five

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<sup>3</sup> Dnieper Ukraine refers to the territory that roughly corresponded to the area of Ukraine within the Russian Empire.

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, this entailed the separation of nine Ukrainian provinces into a special administrative area.

<sup>5</sup> First Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada. in Hunczak, Taras and Roman Sol’chanyk eds. *Ukrains’ka suspil’no-polytychna dumka v 20 stolitti: dokumenty I materiialy*, Vol.1. 295-298. Cited in Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996.475.

<sup>6</sup>First Universal, Hunczak, Taras, 1932, and Von der Heide, John T. *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*. Harvard University Press;Cambridge, Mass;: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977.382-385.

<sup>7</sup> Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996.472.

<sup>8</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro *Istoriia Ukrainy, 1917-1923 rr*. Uzhhorod:Svoboda, 1932.,95.



Ukrainian provinces.<sup>9</sup> Recognition by the Provisional government raised the prestige of the Rada and further legitimized its authority.<sup>10</sup>

Ukrainians endorsed the Rada and largely rejected Bolshevism. Shortly after it was established, the Rada enjoyed considerable peasant support due to its willingness to address crucial land concerns. For the peasants, the primary concern was not nationalism or autonomy, but rather in obtaining additional land.<sup>11</sup> As George Luckyj has noted, results of the elections to the 1917 Constituent Assembly reveal broad support for the Rada among the Ukrainian population.<sup>12</sup> While in Russia forty percent of the votes to the Constituent Assembly were for the Bolsheviks, in Ukraine the Bolsheviks garnered only about 10 percent of votes cast.<sup>13</sup> According to election returns, the Ukrainian parties outgained the Bolsheviks by a wide margin in all but one (Kherson) of the nine Ukrainian districts polled.<sup>14</sup> Reflecting on the strength of Ukrainian nationalism in his study on the election, Oliver H. Radkey noted that “(h)owever one may estimate the strength of Ukrainian separatism, no one can deny that Little Russian particularism has real force behind it.”<sup>15</sup> While support for the Bolsheviks in Russia grew rapidly—the Bolshevik

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<sup>9</sup> The Rada’s Second Universal, issued on July 16, outlined the compromise with the Provisional government. The five provinces included in the Secretariat’s control were: Volhynia, Podolia, Kiev, Poltava, Chernihiv.

<sup>10</sup> Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996. 477.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 477

<sup>12</sup> Luckyj, George. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1990. 7

<sup>13</sup> Radkey, Oliver H. *The Election to the Constituent Assembly of 1917*. Cited in: Liber, George. *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923-1934*. New York;Cambridge [England];: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 28.

<sup>14</sup> Radkey, Oliver H. *The Election to the Constituent Assembly of 1917* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.79.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* 17-18

party grew from 24,000 to 350,000 members between February and October alone— in Ukraine, membership was only about 22,000 by August of 1917.<sup>16</sup>

On the night of November 6, 1917, the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional government in Russia. They then used the Second Congress of Soviets<sup>17</sup>, which met in Petrograd, to establish the new government in Russia. The Council of People's Commissars, as it was known, was led by Vladimir Lenin, with Leon Trotsky as commissar for foreign affairs, and Joseph Stalin as commissar for the nationalities. In Ukraine, the Bolsheviks hoped to repeat their success by using the workers' soviets to spread Bolshevism.<sup>18</sup> However, when the Congress of Soviets met in Kiev on December 17, 1917, the Bolsheviks, who had around 100 of 2,500 delegates, realized that they were far out-numbered by supporters of the Rada.<sup>19</sup>

The Bolsheviks made a tactical retreat to Kharkiv, where on December 25, 1917, they established the Soviet Ukrainian government, known as the Ukrainian People's Republic of Soviets. The new government, led by the People's Secretariat, consisted of twelve members, all of whom except one were Bolshevik.<sup>20</sup> Receiving support from the Russian Soviet army, including a detachment of the Red Guard, the new Soviet Ukrainian government undertook a campaign to weaken the Central Rada and the Ukrainian National Republic and advance into Ukraine. The Russian Soviet government had denounced the Rada as reactionary and was opposed to the Rada's claim of authority over

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<sup>16</sup> Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996. 478.

<sup>17</sup> The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which met from November 7–9, 1917 ratified the revolutionary transfer of state power.

<sup>18</sup> Subtelby or Magosci

<sup>19</sup> Magosci, 481.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 481

Ukrainian units in the Russian army and to its recognition of the Don Cossack Republic,<sup>21</sup> which was then becoming a center of counter-revolutionary activity.

As Mikhailo Hurshevsky described:

...bands of Bolshevik soldiers and Red Guards consisting of armed laborers and others in the service of the Bolsheviks, instead of going on to the Don to fight against the counterrevolutionists as they had said they would do, began to advance along the railroads into the heart of Ukraine, carrying their poisonous propaganda to the provinces of Poltava and Kherson;...(A)s soon as the Bolshevik bands arrived, various groups, mostly Jewish and Russian, caused insurrections in the cities at the stations along the railroads. Under the influence of their propaganda revolts broke out in the Ukrainian regiments newly organized or taken over by patriots; the soldiers were told that the struggle was against the capitalistic Central Rada and for the socialization of Ukraine. Many Ukrainian soldiers, or Kozaks as they were called, either joined the Bolsheviks, declared themselves neutral, or simply deserted their regiments and went home...<sup>22</sup>

One day after the Bolsheviks took control of the government in Russia, the Ukrainian Rada, on November 08, 1917 condemned the coup and announced its intention to resist any similar attempt in Ukraine. The Rada and the Bolshevik government were incompatible from the outset,<sup>23</sup> and despite early cooperation, they remained in opposition throughout the revolutionary period in Ukraine. On November 09, 1917, the Bolsheviks, representing the Russian Republic issued “The Declarations of the Rights of the People of Russia,” which stated:

“The Councils of the People's Commissars, resolves to base their activity upon the question of the nationalities of Russia, as expressed in the following principles:

1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.

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<sup>21</sup> The Don Cossack Republic was an independent self-proclaimed anti-Bolshevik republic, which existed during the Russian Civil War after the collapse of the Russian Empire from 1918 to 1920.

<sup>22</sup> Frederiksen, O. J. (ed ), and Mikhailo Hrushevsky. *A History of Ukraine*. New Haven: Yale University Press., 1941. 535.

<sup>23</sup> Reshetar, John Stephen. *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. Web. 91.

2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state.
3. The abolition of any and all national and national-religious privileges and disabilities.
4. The free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia. <sup>24</sup>

In spite of these stated beliefs, the Bolsheviks never supported Ukrainian nationalist ambitions and had no intention to let Ukraine become an independent state<sup>25</sup>. Rather, Lenin's idea of national self-determination "became an important tactical weapon of the Bolsheviks."<sup>26</sup> It was Joseph Stalin, who later, in 1918, reiterated an important qualification to Lenin's theory: only the toiling masses, and not the bourgeoisie, could legitimately exercise the right to national self-determination. <sup>27</sup> Stalin's qualification to Lenin's theory provided the ideological justification for the attack on the Rada and Ukrainian National Republic. Moreover, "The Declarations of the Rights of the People of Russia," was a meaningless document anyway since most Bolsheviks could not even comprehend of a sovereign Ukrainian territory and were hostile towards its proponents. Mykola Skrypnyk, the most prominent of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks stated:

"For the majority of our Party members, the Ukraine as a national unit did not exist. There was Little Russia, an inseparable part of one unbreakable Russia; something not clear by its very nature; by its relations with Russia; as well as by its territory and by its language. As a last resort, a considerable part [of our Party members] recognized the existence of Little Russia, and some even of the Ukraine, but only within the framework of the so-called Western Lands, i.e., Kien, Volyn, Podolia, and Poltava Gubernias. Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, the Donets and the Krivy Rog Basins, because of the knowledge

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<sup>24</sup> "The Rights of the People of Russia" *The Nation* . Vol. 109 Jul.-Dec. 1919.

<sup>25</sup> Sullivant, Robert S., 1925. *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine, 1917-1957*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Luckyj, George. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1990. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Stalin, Joseph. *Sochinenie* V.4. Moscow: Gosudarstvenoi Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1947. 31.

of the strength of the working class [there] and its Bolshevik Party, [were considered] a territory beyond the Ukraine. That territory had to be set against Ukraine.<sup>28</sup>

In response to the “Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia,” the Rada issued, on November 20, 1917, its Third Universal, which established the Ukrainian People’s Republic in federation with Russia and other nationalities of the former Empire. The Third Universal, with its provisions for land redistribution, abolition of capital punishment, and the safeguarding of minority rights, proved to be a potent counter-measure to Bolshevik propaganda in Ukraine.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, strikes, person and domicile, and the right to employ local dialects and languages were deemed to be achievements of the Revolution, which must be protected.<sup>30</sup>

Ukraine’s policy towards national minorities, adhering to the principle of “national-personal” autonomy proclaimed in the Third Universal, afforded rights to all national minorities living in Ukraine.<sup>31</sup> Mykhailo Hrushevsky noted that, “(t)hrough the Central Rada the Ukrainian people gave a striking and concrete example of their desire to allow all national minorities the opportunity to pursue their own national development

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<sup>28</sup> Skrypnyk, Mykola. *Statii i Promovy* Kharkhiv: Derzhavne Vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1930, I. 290-91. Cited in: Dmytryshyn, Basil. *Moscow and the Ukraine, 1918-1953*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1956. 24-25.

<sup>29</sup> Luckyj, George. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1990. 7

<sup>30</sup> Reshetar, John Stephen. *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. 90.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 90

and the preservation of their culture.”<sup>32</sup> The Third Universal affirmed, “Let it be known that we recognize the right of the Russian, Jewish, Polish, and other people for nation-personal autonomy in order to secure for themselves the right and the freedom of self-rule in questions of national life.”<sup>33</sup>

### *Soviets declare war on Ukraine*

As tensions grew between Petrograd and Kiev, the Bolsheviks sent an ultimatum demanding the Rada allow the free passage of the Red Army through Ukraine in its offensive against the White army. The Rada’s rejection of the ultimatum and its decision to continue to disarm Red Army soldiers in Ukraine led to a declaration of war by the Soviet government.<sup>34</sup> The Bolsheviks, who viewed those involved in the Ukrainian movement as “enemies of the people,”<sup>35</sup> marched on Kiev in early 1918. In response to the continued Bolshevik invasion, the Rada issued its Fourth Universal, which proclaimed the existence of an *independent* Ukrainian National Republic.<sup>36</sup> By virtue of its proclaimed sovereignty, the Ukrainian National Republic was in a position to reach a

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<sup>32</sup> Hrushevsky, Mykhailo “Speech on National Minorities” in Lindheim, Ralph and George S.N. Luckyj eds. *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine : An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996. 240.

<sup>33</sup> Third Universal, Hunczak, Taras, 1932, and Von der Heide, John T. *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*. Harvard University Press;Cambridge, Mass;: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977.385-390.

<sup>34</sup> United States. Congress. House. Foreign Affairs. *Favoring the Extension of Diplomatic Relations with the Republics of Ukraine and Byelorussia., Hearing Before..., 83-1, July 15, 1953*. 103.

<sup>35</sup> Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996.481.

<sup>36</sup> Reshetar, John Stephen. *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. 111.

separate peace with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk and secure recognition of its independence.

After the proclamation of the Fourth Universal, the Bolsheviks redoubled their efforts to reach Kiev. As John Reshetar, Jr. has noted, “(t)he determination of the Rada to make a separate peace...accelerated the Soviet invasion since such a treaty would have deprived Russia of badly needed grain by diverting it to the Central Powers.”<sup>37</sup> The so-called Ukrainian army, loyal to the Soviet Ukrainian government, was composed nearly entirely of Russian troops and was commanded by the Russian officer Mikhail Muravyev.<sup>38</sup> Claiming that they were liberating Ukrainians from the control of the bourgeoisie, the Bolshevik Ukrainian army “abolished Ukrainian newspapers and...not only executed members of the Ukrainian and Russian bourgeoisie, but also Ukrainian communists and radicals who used the Ukrainian language.”<sup>39</sup> On February 7, the Rada was forced to flee the Bolshevik advance on Kiev and took up residence in Zhytomyr, Ukraine.

### *Brest-Litovsk*

Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks negotiated to end Russia’s involvement in World War I in the town Brest-Litovsk, where Leon Trotsky claimed to speak for the entire former Russian empire.<sup>40</sup> The Bolsheviks desperately needed to secure a peace in order to

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 113.

<sup>38</sup> Manning, Clarence A. *Ukraine under the Soviets*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1953.26.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 27

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 27?

solidify their authority in Russia.<sup>41</sup> For the Central Powers, it was vital to close the war on the eastern front and to secure foodstuffs and raw materials, which they intended to obtain from Ukraine. The Central Powers thus welcomed delegates from the Ukrainian National Republic to Brest-Litovsk. A separate treaty was concluded with the Ukrainian government on February 09, 1918, some 10 hours before Kiev fell to the Bolsheviks.<sup>42</sup> According to the provisions of the treaty, both the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Powers agreed to recognize Ukraine as an independent state.<sup>43</sup> Soviet Russia also agreed specifically to "conclude a peace at once with the Ukrainian National Republic" and "to clear from the territory of Ukraine of all pro-Soviet troops."<sup>44</sup> The Central Powers agreed to return all Ukrainian prisoners of war and equip them for self-defense and in any struggle which might occur with the Bolsheviks. However, the implementation of these provisions was contingent on the Ukrainian government's ability to fulfill its treaty obligations, which included the supply of 1 million tons of grain to the Central Powers by July 31, 1918.<sup>45</sup>

### *German occupation*

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<sup>41</sup> Donaldson, Robert H., Joseph L. Nogee, and Vidya Nadkarni. *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*. Fifth edition. ed. Armonk, New York; London, England;: M.E. Sharpe, 2014. 48.

<sup>42</sup> Reshetar, John Stephen. *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. 115.

<sup>43</sup> Frederiksen, O. J. (ed ), and Mikhaïlo Hrushevsky. *A History of Ukraine*. New Haven: Yale University Press., 1941. 538.

<sup>44</sup> Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996. 485.

<sup>45</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, 1882-1951, and Simpson, G. W. (George Wilfrid). *History of the Ukraine*. Edmonton: Institute Press, 1939. 357.



Under threat from Bolsheviks and amid chaos in Ukraine, the Central Rada realized that it could only survive with German aid. Ukraine's position "was that of a state which voluntarily though reluctantly (agreed to accept a) great power's protection with the inevitable imposition of certain restrictions on its sovereignty."<sup>46</sup> On February 23, the Rada issued the following declaration to the Ukrainian people, explaining its decision to allow the Germans to enter Ukraine:

...In order to put an immediate end to the pillaging of the Ukraine and to make possible, upon the conclusion of peace, immediate promulgation of laws to deal with the conditions of workers, the Council of People's Ministers has accepted the military assistance of the friendly powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary...

They are coming to the Ukraine to suppress disorder and anarchy and to establish peace and order...They are coming purely to help our Cossacks who are staunchly defending our country, our land, and our freedom from the armed attacks of the Russian government, The Council of People's Commissars, which, like the old Tsarist government, wished to subject the Ukraine to the authority of Russian capitalists, and thus enable the Russian people to live on the labor and wealth of the Ukraine.<sup>47</sup>

At the request of the Rada, German and Austrian troops entered Ukraine, and backed by their support, the forces of the Ukrainian National Republic drove the Bolsheviks from Kiev on March 1, 1918. The first Bolshevik occupation of Kiev lasted just 20 days; as troops supporting the Rada advanced, the Soviet Ukrainian government fled to Soviet Russia. According to the agreements reached at Brest-Litovsk, and in return for military assistance, the new Ukrainian government was expected to supply massive quantities of grain and other resources. An enormous strain was placed on the Ukrainian government by its obligations to the Central Powers, and the necessity of procuring such large amounts of grain caused dissension among the peasantry, which

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<sup>46</sup> Fedyshyn, Oleh S. *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1918*. New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press 1971. 260.

<sup>47</sup> Eudin, Xenia Joukoff. "The German Occupation of the Ukraine in 1918." *Russian Review* 1.1 (1941). 92.

resulted in tension between peasants and the Central Rada.<sup>48</sup> The inability of the Ukrainian government to provide the promised resources convinced the Germans that they needed to install their own Ukrainian government.

Throughout the month of April, rumors were spreading in Kiev concerning the establishment of a new government. As the Rada's influence waned, the ministers of justice, trade, and education, each of whom were members of the Socialist Federalist party, resigned their positions.<sup>49</sup> An increase in German intervention in Ukrainian internal affairs resulted in a harsh condemnation of the policy by the Rada, but the government was powerless to take any other action. The German policy of forced grain requisitioning from Ukraine for the war effort began causing major dissent among the peasantry. Between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April, representatives of the Central Powers met to plan the demise of the Central Rada after the governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary lost faith in the Rada's ability to provide the requisite foodstuffs. The chief of staff of the German Army met with Pavlo Skoropadskyi, a prominent landowner, to propose that he become the ruler of Ukraine.<sup>50</sup>

On April 28, 1918, the Central Rada met for the last time and elected Professor Mykhailo Hrushevsky President of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic. "The next day," as Dmytro Doroshenko recounted:

"...a German military detachment entered the building of the Central Rada, interrupting the session, and searched all members for weapons under the pretext of a conspiracy being concocted against the German military forces. On the morrow an imposing Congress of about 8,000 landowners and well-to-

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<sup>48</sup>Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996. 486.

<sup>49</sup> Reshetar, John Stephen. *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. 127.

<sup>50</sup> Magosci, 488.

do peasants from all parts of Ukraine assembled in Kiev called by the “Union of Landowners,” and proclaimed as Hetman of the Ukraine Pavlo Skoropadski, a General formerly in Russian service, now in Ukrainian.”<sup>51</sup>

By the end of April 1918 the Ukrainian state, founded on socialist principles, came to be represented by the Hetman Skoropadskyi, one of the largest private landowners in Ukraine.<sup>52</sup>

### *Establishment of Hetmanate/cultural achievements*

The second phase of the Ukrainian revolution, the period known as the Hetmanate lasted fewer than eight months, from late April to mid-December 1918. Elected by the “Congress of Landowners,” and representing their interests, Hetman Skoropadskyi also allied himself with the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which had seen its land confiscated by decree of the Third Universal. Like the land-holding interests, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church sought political and social stability, and in exchange for the return of its lands, the Church gave its blessing to the Skoropadskyi regime.<sup>53</sup>

Skoropadsky also advocated for the establishment of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, a concept which was inspired by the revolution.<sup>54</sup> While the Rada had mostly ignored the Church, the Skoropadskyi government demanded independence for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Moscow patriarchate.<sup>55</sup> With the support of the

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<sup>51</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, Oleh W. Gerus. *A Survey of Ukrainian History*. Winnipeg: Humeniuk Publication Foundation, 1975. 706

<sup>52</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 356.

<sup>53</sup> Magosci. 489.

<sup>54</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, Oleh W. Gerus 706.

<sup>55</sup> The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was established in 1921

economic elite, the blessing of the Orthodox Church, and the backing of the German army, the Hetman Skoropadskyi commenced dissolving the Rada and local land committees. Within a few months a bureaucratic apparatus was reinstated in Ukraine, as the Hetman tried to restore order. Skoropadskyi, despite reversing many of the achievements of the Ukrainian revolution, made major contributions towards the promotion of Ukrainian culture. In addition to the creation of several million Ukrainian textbooks and the introduction of Ukrainian language in schools, the Skoropadskyi government established an infrastructure for education.<sup>56</sup> Around 150 new Ukrainian-language schools were opened, primarily in rural areas.<sup>57</sup> In October of 1918, two new Ukrainian universities were founded and a national archive was established. However, the most remarkable achievement in the field of education during the Hetmanate was the creation of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, which occurred on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

### *Opposition to the Hetman*

The Skoropadskyi government, with a blend of monarchical, republican, and most prominently, dictatorial features afforded its citizens some basic civil rights and placed a strong emphasis on the inviolability of private ownership.<sup>58</sup> However, although this new government claimed to represent the interests of Ukraine, it was largely composed of

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<sup>56</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 357.

<sup>57</sup> SOURCE

<sup>58</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 356.

“men who had done nothing to win political independence for the Ukraine, and were opposed by the Ukrainian parties which wore the Ukrainian national colors.”<sup>59</sup> This was due to the rejection by Ukrainian nationalists of the Hetman’s invitation to join the government. Instead, the Ukrainian parties formed the “Ukrainian National Union.” Headed by Volodymyr Vynnychenko and composed of the socialist elements opposed to the Hetman, the Ukrainian National Union wanted to create a parallel government in Ukraine. Also in opposition to the Skoropadskyi regime was the peasantry, who were victimized by the Hetman’s policies. Not only was food being requisitioned by force from the countryside, but the land itself was reclaimed when the Hetman reinstated private ownership of land. As the collection of food for transport to the Central Powers proceeded more rapidly, the Ukrainian countryside erupted in violent opposition. “From the middle of 1918,” wrote Richard Pipes “the entire Ukraine became the scene of a growing peasant rebellion.”<sup>60</sup>

Hoping to capitalize on peasant unrest, leftist elements within Ukrainian Bolshevik Communist Party (CP(b)U<sup>61</sup>), which was subordinate to the Russian Communist Party, prepared to incite a peasant rebellion in Ukraine. Throughout the

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<sup>59</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, 1882-1951, and Simpson, G. W. (George Wilfrid). *History of the Ukraine*. Edmonton: Institute Press, 1939. .

<sup>60</sup> Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.134.

<sup>61</sup> The CP(b)U is the Bolshevik Communist Party in Ukraine. In May 1918, left-wing members of the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary Party split, in opposition to the Russian-dominated Bolshevik leadership of the CP(b)U. The members of the new party were called Borot’bisty (fighters). The Borotbists formed a separate government in 1919, with the help of the peasant army controlled by Otaman Matvii Hryhoriiv.

summer, more and more often, peasant discontent manifested itself in “riots and acts of incendiarism.”<sup>62</sup> From the outset the biggest problem for the CP(b)U, widely perceived as foreign to Ukraine, was building an indigenous power base.”<sup>63</sup> The Bolsheviks that remained in Ukraine estimated that by the late summer of 1918 the time had become ripe for an insurrection:

“The general political conditions at that time were most favorable [sic!]. German rule, violence, and the indemnities which the conquerors widely imposed, tortures, mass executions, punitive expeditions, the burning of villages, the destruction of all peasant and worker organizations, the nullification of all the achievements of the Revolution, starvation wages, ruined enterprises, the high price of all necessities, and, finally, the complete return to the landowners and factory proprietors of all their previous privileges—all this provided splendid soil for the widespread growth of the revolutionary movement and for the development of an active will to fight among the masses.”<sup>64</sup>

On August 5, the KP(b)U called for general uprising in Ukraine, the decree stated: “(we must) quickly begin military activity against the enemies of the workers and the peasants in Ukraine.”<sup>65</sup> But despite the favorable political climate for rebellion, the August 1918 uprising was a failure. In most of the regions in Ukraine, there was no response at all to the Bolshevik declaration. The “sporadic and half-hearted” revolts that did occur were easily suppressed by German troops.<sup>66</sup> When the KP(b)U met again in October of 1918 at its Second Congress, internal politics were dominated by the rightists and Stalin was made a permanent member of the KP(b)U. The main tasks of the party were formulated

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<sup>62</sup> Eudin, Xenia Joukoff. “The German Occupation of the Ukraine in 1918.” *Russian Review* 1.1 (1941): 90-105. 100.

<sup>63</sup> Yelchuk, Serhy. *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation*. Oxford; New York;: Oxford University Press, 2007. 90.

<sup>64</sup> V. Cherniavskii, “Z spohadiv pro robotu Oblasnoho Komitetu K.P.(b)U.” in V. Manilov, “*Pid Hnitom.*” Cited and translated in Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.135.

<sup>65</sup> M. Ravich-Cherkassi. *Istoria Komunisticheskoi Partii (b-ov)Ukraini*. Gosudarstvenoe Uzdatelstvo Ukraini. 1923. 212.

<sup>66</sup> Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.136.

and included the preparation of Ukraine for Bolshevik military action, which was to coincide with the demise of the Skoropadskyi regime.<sup>67</sup>

### *Skoropadskyi's downfall*

The demise of the Skoropadskyi regime ultimately came not at the hands of the Bolsheviks, but due to the close of the First World War. The Hetman's authority was entirely dependent on the German military, so as the end of the war drew nearer and it became apparent that the German army would soon leave, Skoropadskyi's regime began to lose its authority.<sup>68</sup> Confronted with the potential collapse of his regime, the Hetman's government tried to negotiate with the Entente powers and also with the Ukrainian National Union, headed at that time by Volodymyr Vinnichenko. In late October, the National Union and the Skoropadskyi government reached an agreement whereby a new cabinet was formed including five members from the Ukrainian National Union. But the cooperation between the two administrations was short-lived, and within weeks their relationship had deteriorated to the point that National Union decided to organize a "long-prepared" insurrection against Skoropadskyi.<sup>69</sup>

With the end of the war in sight and the realization that his hold on power was decreasing, the Hetman Skoropadskyi became desperate. Hoping to save his regime and at the same time impress the Allies, the Hetman formed a new cabinet, renounced

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 137.

<sup>68</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 359.

<sup>69</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, 1882-1951, and Simpson, G. W. (George Wilfrid). *History of the Ukraine*. Edmonton: Institute Press, 1939. 639.

Ukraine's independence, and declared a federative Union between Ukraine and a future non-Bolshevik Russia.<sup>70</sup> On November 14<sup>th</sup> he issued an edict:

Before us now stands a new political task. The Allies have long been the friends of the former great and united Russian state. Now...the conditions of its future existence have definitely changed. The former vigor and strength of the All-Russian state must be restored on the basis of the federative principle. In this federation, the Ukraine deserves to play one of the leading roles...Deeply convinced that any other policy would mean the destruction of the Ukraine, I appeal to all who cherish her future to unite around me and stand in the defense of the Ukraine and Russia.<sup>71</sup>

Skoropadskyi's attempt to seek a Russian alliance convinced the Ukrainian National Union to form its own government, the Directory. The Directory immediately declared Skoropadskyi's government invalid and with the support of the Sich Riflemen among others,<sup>72</sup> they began to march toward Kiev on November 18. As the forces of the Directory drew closer to Kiev, they halted to avoid coming into conflict with the German army, which continued to protect the Hetman.<sup>73</sup> The standoff was ended by the German Command, which made an agreement not to engage the Directory's army and to withdraw German troops from the city on December 14, 1918.<sup>74</sup> Just prior to the entry of Kiev by Directory forces, the Hetman Skoropadskyi issued his final pronouncement, a declaration of abdication:

I, Hetman of Ukraine, have employed all my energies during the past seven and one-half months in an effort to extricate the Ukraine from the difficult situation in which she finds herself. God has not given me

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<sup>70</sup> Adams, Arthur E. *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine: The Second Campaign, 1918-1919*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. 23.

<sup>71</sup> Hunczak, Taras, "Ukraine Under Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi" in Hunczak, Taras (1932), and Von der Heide, John T. *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977.79.

<sup>72</sup> Composed of former Ukrainian Austro-Hungarian forces and the local populations, the Sich Riflemen were one of the first regular military units of the Army of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

<sup>73</sup> Hunczak, Taras, "Ukraine Under Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi" in Hunczak, Taras (1932), and Von der Heide, John T. *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977.80.

<sup>74</sup> Magosci, Paul. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996.493,



the strength to deal with this problem, and now, in light of conditions which have arisen and acting solely for the good of Ukraine, I abdicate all authority.<sup>75</sup>

### *Anarchy*

The third period of the Ukrainian revolution began in the year 1919 and found Ukraine in complete chaos and lawlessness, with multiple forces vying for control of the country. As Orest Subtelny wrote, "...in the modern history of Europe, no country experienced such complete anarchy, bitter civil strife and total collapse of authority as did Ukraine at this time."<sup>76</sup> Beset by peasant violence and political instability, Ukraine was further devastated by the economic hardships caused by the war and by the German occupation. Inflation was such that in late 1918 the price of goods was twenty-four times than it had been just six years prior.<sup>77</sup> Ukraine was also at the mercy of gangs of armed peasants, who robbed and killed indiscriminately. Peasants looted estates, murdered their inhabitants and occasionally launched major raids on cities.<sup>78</sup> Those living in villages literally barricaded themselves in their homes against hordes of intruders and strangers, many of whom had fled the dying cities in search of food.<sup>79</sup> For most of the year, the entire country was at their mercy. Richard Pipes offers the following description:

The year 1919 in Ukraine was a period of complete anarchy. The entire territory fell apart into innumerable regions isolated from each other and from the rest of the world, dominated by armed bands of peasants or freebooters who looted and murdered with utter impunity. In Kiev itself governments came and went, edicts were issued, cabinet crises were resolved, diplomatic talks were carried on—but the rest of the country lived its own existence where the only effective regime was that of the gun. None of the authorities

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<sup>75</sup> Reshetar, John Stephen. *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. 127

<sup>76</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 359.

<sup>77</sup> Reshetar, 177.

<sup>78</sup> Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.137.

<sup>79</sup> Subtelny, 359.

which claimed the Ukraine during the year following the deposition of Skoropadski ever exercised actual sovereignty. The Communists, who all along anxiously watched the developments there and did everything in their power to seize control for themselves, fared no better than their Ukrainian nationalist and White Russian competitors.<sup>80</sup>

Following the ignominious departure of the Hetman—he fled Kiev disguised as German officer<sup>81</sup>—the Directory tried to establish its authority in Kiev, forming the government for a revived Ukrainian National Republic. The Directory, with an army commanded by Symon Petliura, had come to power with the cooperation of the Bolsheviks, with whom they’d struck a deal: the government in Moscow<sup>82</sup> would agree to recognize the Directory’s authority in Ukraine after the fall of the Hetman and in exchange the new Ukrainian government would allow the Communist party to function on Ukrainian soil.<sup>83</sup> On December 26<sup>th</sup> 1918, the Directory issued its own “Declaration,” a statement of goals indicating that it would attempt to restore order to the country while at the same time advancing revolutionary aims. To this end, the Directory promised to expropriate and redistribute large private landholdings, including those belonging to the state and the Church. The Directory called for the establishment of a “Worker’s Congress,” which was to represent the “toiling masses,” and proclaimed its intention to subjugate the bourgeoisie. On January 22 1919, exactly one year after the original declaration of Ukrainian independence, the Directory asserted its union with the West

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 137.

<sup>81</sup> Hunczak, Taras, “Ukraine Under Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi” in Hunczak, Taras (1932), and Von der Heide, John T. *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977.81.

<sup>82</sup> The Soviet capital was moved to Moscow in March 1918.

<sup>83</sup> Adams, Arthur E. *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine: The Second Campaign, 1918-1919*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. 44.

Ukrainian National Republic, which had been formed in October of 1918. The act carried significant symbolic meaning, celebrating the long-awaited union between Ukrainian peoples in the east and in the west.

### *Peasant movement*

As numerous groups competed for control over Ukraine, the land question remained the paramount concern for the peasantry. Historically, Ukrainian peasants, poor by European standards, were nevertheless much better off than those in Russia. Owing to the system of *barschina*<sup>84</sup>, which existed primarily in the southern parts of the Russian empire due to favorable soil conditions, peasants formed a stronger bond to the land on which they worked and lived. Unconcerned with political and social revolutions the peasants were primarily motivated by a desire to secure more land,<sup>85</sup> and accordingly, they allied themselves with whichever government they believed could fulfill this need.

As Peter Kenez wrote:

“The peasant movement, which developed in the years of chaos was stronger in the Ukraine than (in Russia). None of the governments, which changed with rapidity, was able to extend its rule over the countryside. The peasants rebelled against the cities, which were inhabited by Jews and Russians, and only wanted to take and were unable to give. The anti-urban ideology of the peasantry was utopian, and bound to be defeated, but it made the task of those who hoped to govern the country very difficult.”<sup>86</sup>

Peasant armies had become a major force in Ukrainian society, capable of rising up against governments that threatened their well-being. When the Skoropadskyi

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<sup>84</sup> *Barschina*, known as corvee labor, was the feudal practice of peasant debt repayment through labor. The system was prominent in Ukraine, where the fertile land made it more profitable to use workers for agricultural work. As a result of *Barschina*, the Ukrainian peasants formed a greater attachment to the land than did peasants in Russia. In Ukrainian it is called Panshchyna панщина

<sup>85</sup> Magosci, 498-499.

<sup>86</sup> Kenez, Peter. *Civil War in South Russia, 1919-1920: The Defeat of the Whites*. Berkeley: Published for the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace [by] University of California Press, 1977. 142.

government reversed the Rada's land decree, the peasant masses revolted, killing 15,000 German military personnel between April and June of 1918 alone.<sup>87</sup> As the Directory army rose to eliminate the Skoropadskyi regime, its 100,000 strong ranks were filled with peasant volunteers. However, the peasants were hardly a unified force, consisting of "some village elders and schoolteachers, (and) led by self-proclaimed leaders (*otamany*<sup>88</sup>)... whose only real common bond was opposition to Skoropads'kyi's rule."<sup>89</sup> By early 1919, when it became clear that the Directory was incapable of delivering on its promises to redistribute land, the peasants switched their allegiances to the Bolsheviks, signaling the demise of the Directory. Thus, in late 1918 and early 1919, the peasant masses, in two major uprisings, directly impacted the collapse of two separate Ukrainian governments.<sup>90</sup> The third peasant revolt in 1919 was by far the most the most tragic, where numerous peasant armies committed hundreds of brutal pogroms in Ukraine. This period of violent antisemitism, when between 50,000 and 60,000<sup>91</sup> were massacred, is viewed as the largest modern mass killing of Jews prior to World War Two. One cause for peasant unrest was the establishment of a Soviet government in Ukraine which viewed the peasants as enemies. <sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 498.

<sup>88</sup> Otamans were village elders, who headed various peasant armies. In the Army of the Ukrainian National Republic, "otaman" was a division, corps, or army group commander.

<sup>89</sup> Magosci.499.

<sup>90</sup> Gilley, Christopher. "The Ukrainian Anti-Bolshevik Risings of Spring and Summer 1919: Intellectual History in a Space of Violence." *Revolutionary Russia* 27.2 (2014): 109-131.112.

<sup>91</sup> Cherikover, I. *Antisemitizm I Pogromi na Ukraine 1917-1918 gg.* Berlin: Izdanie Ostjudisches Historisches Archiv T. 1. 18.

<sup>92</sup> The policies of the Soviet Ukrainian government were only one of the many causes of peasant uprisings which led to pogroms in Ukraine. The term "pogrom" actually refers to three waves of violence perpetrated against the Jewish population of Ukraine that occurred in 1881-4, 1903-6, and 1918-21.

### *Bolsheviks and peasant pogroms*

The Ukrainian Soviet government alienated the peasantry by instituting a system which used Bolshevik-controlled councils to establish communal farming for the purpose of grain confiscation.<sup>93</sup> When Ukrainian Soviet Republic came to power, thousands of Bolshevik cadres were dispatched to the Ukrainian countryside where they came into conflict with peasants.<sup>94</sup> As peasants rebelled against Bolshevik attempts to requisition grain, many old anti-Semitic tendencies prevailed. As Orest Subtelny states, although most Jews were apolitical, "...it is a fact that Jews were also disproportionately prominent among the Bolsheviks, notably in their leadership, among their tax and grain-gathering officials, and especially in the despised and feared Cheka."<sup>95</sup> Many peasants came to view the Bolsheviks and the Jews as one in the same, conflating blame for one with the other. In a letter written by the otaman Struka and printed in the newspaper "Union" on October 17<sup>th</sup>, the warlord attempted to justify the brutality against the Jews:

I am not denying that there were instances when the Jewish population suffered at the hands of the insurgents, but this happened only because the majority of the Red Army is composed of Jews who raided and destroyed our property and our families and displayed inhuman cruelty in their repressions.<sup>96</sup>

#### *Foreign invasion*

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

<sup>94</sup> "The Communist Take-Over of Ukraine" Hunczak, Taras, "Ukraine Under Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi" in Hunczak, Taras (1932), and Von der Heide, John T. *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977. 117.

<sup>95</sup> Subtelny, 363.

<sup>96</sup> "Pismo atamana Stryka po gazete "Ob'edeninie" No.17 (30) oktyabrya" Miliakova, L.B. and I.A. Zuzina, comps. *Kniga Pogromov: Pogromy na Ukraine, v Belorussi I Evropeskoj Chaste Rossi v Period Grazhdanskoj Voyny, 1918-1922gg.: Cbornik Dokumentov*. Moskva:Rosspen, 2007. "Не отрицаю что были случаи когда еврейское население страдало от повстанцев но это происходило лишь потому что большинство солдат-красноармейцев состояло из евреев уничтожавших и громивших наше имущество и наши семьи и проявлявших бесчеловечную жестокость в своих расправах."

Amid social chaos, political instability also reigned in Ukraine, as six different armies, the Ukrainians, the Whites, the Entente, the Bolsheviks, the Poles, and the anarchists competed for control over the country.<sup>97</sup> With few solid plans for administering order internally, the Directory also faced multiple threats from foreign armies on its soil. In December 1918, the Entente, in an attempt to block the spread of bolshevism, landed 60,000 troops in Russian and Ukraine. The Western powers intended to provide military support for the anti-Bolshevik White forces, which planned to launch from its stronghold in the Don region a campaign to restore the former unity of the Russian empire. In the south, the French attempted a military occupation in several Black sea ports,<sup>98</sup> but failed in their efforts and withdrew on April 6 to avoid a direct military conflict with the Soviets.<sup>99</sup> The Ukrainians and the Whites were naturally incompatible allies. Other than their mutual opposition to Bolshevism, the two had nothing in common, and the Whites were openly hostile to Ukrainian nationalist ambitions. However, although they would hold most of the Left Bank<sup>100</sup> by August of 1919<sup>101</sup>, the Whites were not the most immediate concern for the Directory, whose intelligence indicated that, in the north, the Bolsheviks were planning a second occupation of Ukraine.<sup>102</sup> Claiming that they were going to help the Ukrainian “workers” to get a “Ukrainian Soviet Socialist

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<sup>97</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 359; Frederiksen, O. J. (ed ), and Mikhailo Hrushevsky. *A History of Ukraine*. New Haven: Yale University Press., 1941. 553.

<sup>98</sup> Subtelny, 361.

<sup>99</sup> Frederiksen, O. J. (ed ), and Mikhailo Hrushevsky. *A History of Ukraine*. New Haven: Yale University Press., 1941. 555.

<sup>100</sup> The Left Bank is a territorial, administrative, and geographic region consisting of the Ukrainian lands east of the Dnieper River.

<sup>101</sup> Magosci, 501

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid* 501.

Republic,” the Bolsheviks began to move troops into Ukraine in order to reassert their authority in Ukraine.<sup>103</sup>

### *The army abandons the Directory*

In Kiev, the Directory forces were dwindling as peasants deserted in large numbers. Believing that they had removed the threat to their livelihood, the Hetman Soropadskyi, and indifferent to the fate of the Directory,<sup>104</sup> large numbers of peasants returned to their villages.<sup>105</sup> Also, Bolshevik agitation was more successful than in the previous assault on Kiev, and the peasant masses were falling prey to “extremist demagogic agitation,”<sup>106</sup> The army of the Directory, which had dropped in size from 100,000 to 25,000,<sup>107</sup> was not sufficiently strong to repel the Bolshevik attack. As Soviet troops began occupying towns in Ukraine, representatives from the Directory officially protested to Moscow. Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Grigorii Chicherin, responded:

We must advise you that your information concerning the advance of our troops into the territory of Ukraine does not correspond with the facts...There is no army of the Russian Soviet Republic on Ukrainian territory...Between Ukraine and Russia there are at present no armed conflicts. The Directory cannot be unaware that the government of the Russian Socialist Republic has no aggressive intentions against the independence of the Ukraine, and that already in the spring of 1918 our government dispatched a war greeting to the Ukrainian [Soviet] government, which had come into existence at that time.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, 1882-1951, and Simpson, G. W. (George Wilfrid). *History of the Ukraine*. Edmonton: Institute Press, 1939. 640

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Subtelny, 362.

<sup>106</sup> Doroshenko .640

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*362.

<sup>108</sup> Rabocha gazetta (Kiev), January 7, 1919, cited in Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.141.

### *Establishment of Soviet Power*

On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1919, Soviet troops entered Kharkiv, prompting the Directory to issue a final ultimatum to Moscow to immediately withdraw its troops. When the Soviets refused, the Directory issued its own declaration of war on January 18. By February of 1919, just two months after it came to power, the Directory was forced out of Kiev, where it took up residence in Vynnytsia. Symon Petliura increasingly took a more prominent role in the leadership of the Directory until he finally replaced Volodymyr Vynnychenko, who sought refuge abroad. Petliura's army entered Kiev on August 31, 1919, but found the city occupied by the White forces, who had all but forced out the Bolsheviks. The two anti-Bolshevik armies fought on the streets of Kiev, compelling Petliura's army to evacuate to avoid doing further harm to the city.<sup>109</sup> As Petliura sought support from Poland, the fighting continued between the Whites and the Bolsheviks for Kiev. But despite support from the Allies, in February 1920, the White army of General Deniken<sup>110</sup> conceded defeat to the superior Red Army, which numbered 1.5 million men by fall of 1919.<sup>111</sup> Also, the remnants of the Galician Army,<sup>112</sup> which had joined the Whites, became part of the Bolshevik Red Army.<sup>113</sup> As Soviet power established itself in Ukraine, the former Ukrainian government and peasants continued to fight against the

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<sup>109</sup> Doroshenko, Dmytro, 1882-1951, and Simpson, G. W. (George Wilfrid). *History of the Ukraine*. Edmonton: Institute Press, 1939. 644.

<sup>110</sup> Anton Denikin was a Lieutenant General in the Imperial Russian Army before the Revolution. During the Russian Civil War he became a prominent General of the White Army.

<sup>111</sup> Subtelny, 376.

<sup>112</sup> The Ukrainian Galician Army was the military of the West Ukrainian National Republic both during and immediately following the Polish-Ukrainian War of 1918-1919.

<sup>113</sup> Doroshenko, 644



Bolsheviks for several more years. However, by 1920 individual efforts to create an independent Ukrainian state were beginning to come to an end.

By December of 1920, with the forces of the revolution mostly spent, Russia attempted to normalize relations with its border lands. Although insurrection against the Soviet authorities continued after the Bolsheviks took Kiev—the Ukrainian government in exile in Poland still maintained contact with some of Petliura’s *otamany* near Kiev and Nestor Makhno<sup>114</sup> held out until late summer of 1921—the Bolsheviks ultimately broke the Ukrainian partisan movement by committing over 50,000 troops to the issue, most of whom were members of the feared Cheka.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, Ukrainians still had reason to hope that they would be allowed to secure the gains of the revolution and expand them still further. The relationship between the Russian and Ukrainian states during the turbulent revolution, however, would come to define future relations between the peoples.

During the Ukrainian revolution several key elements played a significant role in the relationship between the Ukrainian and Bolshevik governments. The establishment of Ukraine as a distinct geographical area, which was essentially rural and decidedly non-Russian,<sup>116</sup> necessitated its domination by the Bolsheviks. The cities, as Mykhailo Hrushevsky wrote, “are not Ukrainian in population and are often centers of anti-

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<sup>114</sup> Nestor Makhno was the commander of an independent anarchist army in Ukraine during the Russian Civil War of 1917–1922, which was known for its violence and brutality, particularly towards Jews.

<sup>115</sup> Subtelny, 377.

<sup>116</sup> Sullivan, Robert S., 1925. *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine, 1917-1957*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962. 62.

Ukrainian feeling, demonstrations, and manifestations which undermine our statehood and thereby evoke dismay in Ukrainian society.”<sup>117</sup> The perceived backwardness of the peasants inspired enmity among the Bolsheviks, who oriented towards an all-Russian identity. Another element that defined the relationship concerns the indispensability of Ukraine for the Bolsheviks.<sup>118</sup> In addition to its human capital, Ukraine contained vital agricultural and mineral resources which were crucial to the establishment of Soviet authority in Ukraine. Leninist doctrine promoted the idea that the Bolsheviks could not win without local support, and so it was imperative to try to appeal to the Ukrainian masses.

The presence of foreign armies on Ukrainian soil impacted the relationship between the Ukrainian and Russian governments significantly during the revolution. Foreign armies contributed to the chaos and brutality of the revolutionary period by disrupting the development of independent local groups, whether nationalist or Bolshevik, which encouraged repeated Russian intervention into Ukraine.<sup>119</sup> During the chaos of the Ukrainian revolution, foreign armies, notably the German army, arrived in Ukraine with the intent to extract its natural resources for the war effort; once the

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<sup>117</sup> Hrushevsky, Mykhailo “Speech on National Minorities” in Lindheim, Ralph and George S.N. Luckyj eds. *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine : An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996. 239.

<sup>118</sup> Sullivant.62

<sup>119</sup>*ibid*, 63.

Germans left, the Bolshevik Soviet government asserted its authority over Ukraine. The national awareness and impetus to fight for the national idea was not sufficiently developed among the Ukrainian masses to successfully overcome the obstacles presented by foreign occupation, which left Ukraine at the mercy of its invaders. Writing on totalitarianism, Hanna Arendt's apt summary could be easily applied to Ukraine, she wrote:

The conqueror either wanted nothing but spoils and would leave the country after the looting; or he wanted to stay permanently and would then incorporate the conquered territory into the body politic and gradually assimilate the conquered population to the standard of the mother country. However, the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine did not necessarily mean that nationalist ambitions had been thwarted. On the contrary, with the formation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ukrainians nationalists were able to realize some of their dreams regarding statehood. Under the Soviets, Ukraine finally became a clearly defined geographical and national entity, which maintained its own administrative center and apparatus. After centuries without representation, Ukraine finally received a territorial and administrative framework which reflected the national identity of its people.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Subtelny, 387.

## **Part 2: Soviet Ukrainian literary activity and the literary policy of the Communist Party**

At the end of the revolutionary period, though the country was in ruins, the national spirit endured in the unprecedented amount of literary activity that took place in Ukraine. Most writers were affiliated with a particular literary group, which published a literary journal that served as a forum for its political views and featured the works of its members. During the Ukrainian literary renaissance formerly unknown writers were lionized and came to occupy a prominent place in society. However, most enjoyed their fame only briefly: as the Party relaxed its support for the drive for Ukrainianization<sup>121</sup>, the persecution of Ukrainian writers increased. The writers of the Ukrainian literary renaissance became the “executed renaissance,” and the state later attempted to obliterate their memory in the public record. Mykola Khvylovy, the most outstanding writer from the era of the “executed renaissance,” espoused a path for the development of Ukrainian literature that would be: “on no account by the Russian. That is definite and

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<sup>121</sup> Ukrainianization was a Soviet state policy which aimed to promote Ukrainian cultural expansion.

unconditional. Our political union must not be confused by literature.”<sup>122</sup> Khvylovy ideas brought him in direct conflict with the Party’s views on literature, and more ominously with Stalin himself, who deplored Khvylovy’s “ridiculous and non-Marxist attempt to divorce culture from politics.”<sup>123</sup>

In this chapter I would like to focus first on the policies of the Soviet government that contributed to an initial flourishing of post-revolutionary cultural and literary activity in Ukraine. By observing the link between politics and literature in Soviet Ukrainian literary activity, I will attempt to demonstrate the crucial role that many of Ukraine’s literary intelligentsia continued to play in attaining some measure of cultural autonomy through their literary/political endeavors. In reaction to attempts by Ukrainians to define proletarian literature by Ukrainian standards, Soviet literary policy became increasingly more restrictive of their literary activity. The literary life and the polemics of Mykola Khvylovy, during his time in the literary organizations Hart and VAPLITE, demonstrates the struggle, which continued to be waged by the Ukrainian intelligentsia, not only against official Party repression, but also against the current of philistinism in literature, which threatened to destroy art itself.

### *Ukrainianization:*

#### *Purpose, ideological antecedents*

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<sup>122</sup> Khvylovy, Mykola. “The Apologists for Scribbling.” In Lindheim, Ralph and George S.N. Luckyj eds. *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine : An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996. 273.

<sup>123</sup> See Stalin’s letter to Kaganovich in: Stalin, I.V. *Sochinenie*, VIII 149-154.

Broadly speaking, the Soviet policy of Ukrianianization, was intended to legitimize Soviet rule in Ukraine by appealing to a greater percentage of the local population.<sup>124</sup> During this time, emphasis was placed on developing local language and culture through the accompanying policy of *korenizatsia* (indigenization). Though it was not officially implemented until 1923, many of the concepts which formed the basis for the policy of Ukrianianization have their origins in the Eighth Congress of the Russian Bolshevik Communist Party (RCP(b) of 1919, where it was established that in order to foster better relations between the proletarians and semi-proletarians of various nationalities, it was necessary to recognize the equality of all nationalities.<sup>125</sup> In an attempt to encourage cooperation between the cities and the countryside, the Party adopted a program of cultural education, through which it could educate the non-Russian peoples living in the border lands.<sup>126</sup> The Tenth Party Congress met in 1921 and established a framework to help the non-Russian working masses in their struggle for equality, resolving to:

1. develop and strengthen the Soviet state system in forms which correspond to the national conditions of these non-Russians;
2. develop and strengthen the use of native languages in the courts, administration, economic organs, organs of power, which would be staffed by local people who know the way of life and psychology of the local population;
3. develop the press, school, theaters, clubs and all cultural-educational institutions in the native languages; and
4. create a wide net of course and schools, general education as well as professional-technical schools in the native languages, in order to quickly prepare skilled workers and soviet and party workers from the local population in all spheres, especially in the sphere of education.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Magosci, 533.

<sup>125</sup> Liber, George. *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923-1934*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 34.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* 35.

<sup>127</sup> Sullivant?

By appealing to hopes for a national revival among the Ukrainian people, the Party sought to attract the masses to its ideology. However, its intent was never to promote Ukrainian nationalism as such; in fact, the concept of nationalism was inherently contradictory to Party philosophy. The Party viewed nationalism as a detriment to the revolution because it took the focus off of the class struggle. Lenin expounded on the incompatibility between Marxism and nationalism:

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the “most just”, “purest”, most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers’ association that is formed (an association that is international in its economic activities as well as in its ideas and aims).<sup>128</sup>

Lenin believed that nationalism and national movements were manifestations of the capitalist era, when imperial powers “subjugated colonial regions and enslaved them to the advantage of the ruling classes.”<sup>129</sup> Nationalism, Lenin asserted, was a transitory phenomenon which would ultimately become superfluous in the new proletarian era. In the meantime, however, it was imperative to eliminate great-Russian chauvinism by “a gradual destruction of the suspicions and antagonisms which had given it birth.”<sup>130</sup>

#### *Indigenization and the Influence of the city on the countryside*

The policy of Ukrianianization was instituted in an attempt to broaden the level of support among the peasantry for Bolshevik principles and to attempt to incorporate the population into local government and into the Party apparatus. In Ukraine, the joining of the proletariat and peasantry was complicated by the fact that adherents to Bolshevism

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<sup>128</sup> Lenin, V.I. “Cultural-National Autonomy” *Collected Works*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965. Vol. 20. 33.

<sup>129</sup> Sullivant, 85.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* 87.

were far more prominent in the Russified cities of Ukraine than they were in the countryside. At fundamental issue was the disparity between the national composition of the proletariat and of the peasantry.

In Ukraine, the vast majority of the population lived rurally, however the cities were largely composed of non-Ukrainians. In 1920, only fifteen percent of Soviet Ukraine's population lived in cities.<sup>131</sup> The cultural influence of the city overshadowed that of the countryside and complicated efforts to assimilate the peasants among the proletariat. Joseph Stalin addressed the lack of mass support among the peasantry by proposing the formation of Marxist cadres, which would interact and form close ties to the local population. He assessed the problem in Ukraine in the following way:

The second weak point of Soviet power is the Ukraine. The situation in the Ukraine is further complicated by certain peculiarities in the industrial development of the country. The problem lies in the fact that the basic industries, coal and metallurgy, have been established in Ukraine, not from below, not as the result of the natural development of the national economy, but from above, as the result of an imposition artificially planted from outside. And this peculiarity leads to the result that...the joining of the proletariat with the peasantry has been considerably delayed by these differences in national composition...<sup>132</sup>

Central to Stalin's policy was the need to integrate ethnic Ukrainians into the positions of local leadership in Ukraine. As Terry Martin has pointed out, *Korenizatsiia* was a "deeply psychological strategy," relying on the work of those who believed strongly in the national movement, its effectiveness as a strategy was due in part to the fact that indigenization was presented as an essential goal.<sup>133</sup>

Having identified the crisis which existed in the countryside, the Party made the first steps toward accelerating the process of Ukrainianization. Yet, the problem remained

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<sup>131</sup> Magosci, 540.

<sup>132</sup> Stalin, I.V. *Works* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953. Vol.5. 336.

<sup>133</sup> Martin, 222.



of how to Ukrainianize state and local institutions which were primarily composed of ethnic Russians. Ethnic Ukrainians were poorly represented among the leadership in Ukraine, leading Stalin to lament that, “the state apparatus (in Ukraine) is hardly nearer to the people and customs than in Turkestan.”<sup>134</sup> The underrepresentation of Ukrainians in the Party (only 23% at this time) was evident in the composition of the government in Ukraine, where fewer than 35% of government employees were ethnic Ukrainian.<sup>135</sup>

#### *Political ukrainianization and Party concessions*

To remedy the situation, in July of 1923, the Party made changes among the leadership positions of the Ukrainian People’s Commissariat, which included the removal of its opportunistic former leader, Khristian Rakovskii, who supported Ukrainian nationalism only in furtherance of his own personal ambitions, in favor of Vlas Chubar, a native Ukrainian and the son of poor peasants, who would, it was expected, show greater concern for Ukrainian institutions. Notably, Oleksandr Shumsky, from his newly-appointed position as Director of Agitation and Propaganda, a position which tasked him with leading educational work within the Party, continued to advocate for a policy of accelerated Ukrainianization.

Instituted at a time when the Party was compelled to make concessions towards nationalist ambitions, the policy of Ukrainianization aimed at reforming multiple areas of

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<sup>134</sup> Sullivant, 106

<sup>135</sup> Subtelny 388.

society. Recognizing the lack of support among the peasantry for Bolshevism, the Party made efforts towards compromising with nationalist elements in Ukraine. At the Fourth Congress of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, it was declared that:

In an effort to win the support of the masses of the local population it is necessary in a greater degree than in the central regions to meet halfway either revolutionary-democratic elements or even those merely loyal in their attitude to Soviet Power...The border regions are so poor in local intellectual workers that each of them through all efforts must be drawn to the side of Soviet power.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to political Ukrainianization, the state attempted to incorporate Ukrainian language and culture within the educational system and, thereby, increase representation among Ukrainians within the Party. One of the early results, which evinced the hope that the Ukrainian intelligentsia had for the program, was the influx of Ukrainian dissidents, Mykhailo Hrushevsky among them, who returned from exile to participate in Ukrainianization efforts. Hrushevsky was appointed director of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, where he developed a program of studies in Ukrainian history.

However, this period of relaxed Party control was short-lived. In a letter to Lazar Kaganovich Stalin reiterated the Party's need to maintain control over the Ukrainianization movement, stating:

It is true that a wide movement toward [the development of] Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian social life has started and is gaining strength in the Ukraine. It is true that on no account should it be allowed to fall into the hands of elements that are hostile to us. It is true that many Communists in the Ukraine do not understand the meaning and importance of this movement and therefore do not take steps to dominate it...It is true that one must carefully select and create cadres of people who would be capable of mastering this new movement in the Ukraine.<sup>137</sup>

By early 1926, a political crisis known as the "Shumsky affair," signaled the end of compulsory Ukrainianization.

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<sup>136</sup> Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) in Stalin, I.V. *Works* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953. Vol.5. 330.

<sup>137</sup> Stalin, I.V. *Soceininiia* VIII, 149-154, cited in Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 67.

### *The Shumsky Affair*

The Shumsky affair signaled a shift in the Party's implementation of its Ukrainianization program and demonstrated the lengths that the Party would go to demonize perceived manifestations of Ukrainian nationalism in Soviet politics. In March of 1926, Lazar Kaganovich, then First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, proposed at a Politburo meeting that the Party no longer forcibly Ukrainianize the proletariat. Shumsky, concerned that Kaganovich's proposal would send a dangerous signal of weakness regarding the Party's ability to enforce its indigenization policy,<sup>138</sup> vehemently protested Kaganovich's position and decried the slow pace of Ukrainianization. Enraged at the dominance of the Russian communists within the Party and disgusted by the obsequiousness of his fellow Ukrainians, Shumsky lashed out at the entire Ukrainian Politburo:

In the Party the Russian Communist dominates and conducts himself with suspicion and hostility—to speak mildly—towards the Ukrainian Communist. He dominates and by relying on the contemptible self-seeking type of Little Russian, who in all historical epochs has been equally unprincipled and hypocritical, slavishly two-faced, and traitorously sycophantic. He now prides himself in his false internationalism, boasts his indifferent attitude to things Ukrainian and is ready to spit upon the (perhaps even sometimes in Ukrainian), if that gives him the chance to serve and get a position. <sup>139</sup>

Shumsky's reckless invective notwithstanding, it was his letter to Stalin requesting the removal of Kaganovich from his position in Ukraine that signaled his downfall. Asserting that those who actually believe in the cause of Ukrainian culture should lead the Ukrainianization movement, Shumsky proposed that Kaganovich be

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<sup>138</sup> Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. 212

<sup>139</sup> Hirschak, E. "Shums'kyzm i rozkol u KPZU" *Bil'shovyk Ukrainy*, no.5, 1928. 39-40 cited in Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. 212.

replaced by an ethnic Ukrainian. While Stalin counseled patience to Shumsky, the politically savvy Kaganovich wrote his own letter to Stalin, in which he drew links between Shumsky with the Ukrainian nationalist writer Mykola Khvylovy. Attached to the letter were the polemical writings of Khvylovy, which advocated for a Ukrainian literature independent of Russia. Stalin was especially concerned with the nationalist sentiment in Khvylovy's political pamphlets, and he criticized Shumsky for his defense of Khvylovy.<sup>140</sup> In April of 1926, Stalin replied to Kaganovich that:

Comrade Shums'kyi does not realize that in the Ukraine, where the Communist cadres are weak, such a movement, led everywhere by the non-communist intelligentsia, may assume in places the character of a struggle for the alienation of Ukrainian culture from the all-Soviet culture, a struggle against "Moscow," a struggle against the Russians, against Russian culture and against its greatest achievement, Leninism, altogether. I need not point out that such a danger grows more and more real in the Ukraine. I should only like to mention that even some Ukrainian Communists are not free from such defects. I have in mind that well known article by the noted Communist, Khvylovy, in the Ukrainian press. Khvylovy demands that the proletariat in the Ukraine be immediately de-Russified, his belief that "Ukrainian poetry should keep as far away as possible from Russian literature and style," his pronouncement that "proletarian ideas are familiar to us without the help of Russian art," his passionate belief in some messianic role for the young Ukrainian intelligentsia, his ridiculous and non-Marxian attempt to divorce culture from politics—all this and much more in the mouth of the Ukrainian Communist sounds (and cannot sound otherwise) more than strange.<sup>141</sup>

Although Shumsky apologized for his attack on Kaganovich, he was unyielding in his views, and refused to succumb to pressure to denounce Khvylovy.<sup>142</sup> The Party was forced to acknowledge the dangers that Shumsky's intransigence posed to its national policy. A joint letter from Kaganovich and Vlas Chubar to the Politbureau, written in June of 1924 warns that:

One must reckon with the danger that as a result of the irresponsible behavior of Comrade Shumsky a reaction can set in causing a departure, at first psychological and then practical, from the national policy of the Party, which is Ukrainianization. This would bring about a threat of greatest danger to the Party.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Martin, 215.

<sup>141</sup> Stalin, I.V. *Collected Works*. Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1953-54. Vol. 8 149-154.

<sup>142</sup> Luckyj, 69.

<sup>143</sup> Skrypnyk, M.

In Party jargon “Shumskyism,” and later “Khvylovyism,” became euphemisms for the manifestation of Ukrainian nationalist sentiment in politics and literature. Shumskyism and Khvylovism rejected the Party doctrine of centralism. The national and personal freedoms that Shumsky and Khvylovy promoted within their respective spheres were viewed as subversive by the Party, which also recognized the propagandistic value of making these ideas into permanent political issues.<sup>144</sup> Shumsky’s beliefs represented a challenge to the Party’s centralized authority and necessitated the particularly harsh attacks on his character and his expulsion from the Party.

In 1933 Shumsky was arrested on charges that he belonged to a secretive counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet organization called the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO), the existence of which was later shown to be entirely contrived by the NKVD.<sup>145</sup> After originally receiving a sentence of ten years in a labor camp, Shumsky continued to assert his innocence in exile in Krasnoyarsk. Through letters to Stalin and hunger strikes, he protested the injustices of his case, but his sentence was never commuted. In spite of his poor health, Shumsky managed to live out the remainder of his sentence, but partial paralysis left him incapable of leaving the city. Shumsky died “suddenly” on September 18, 1946, by what appeared to be natural causes. However, according to Pavel Sudoplatov, Shumsky was poisoned at the behest of Nikita Khrushchev, then First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, because Shumsky had “established contacts with Ukrainian emigres...” and “...was plotting to join the

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<sup>144</sup> Shapoval, Iurii. "Oleksander Shumsky: His Last Thirteen Years." *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 18.1 (1993): 69.

<sup>145</sup> Shapoval, 71.

Ukrainian provisional government-in-exile.”<sup>146</sup> However Shumsky died, he is significant for his impact on Ukrainian autonomy within the political sphere. Shumsky’s efforts to promote the acceleration of the Ukrainianization program exposed an ideological rift within the Party, which the Party leadership addressed by launching attacks on Shumsky and his ideas. The decline of his career paralleled a change in attitude towards the program by Party leaders, which ended compulsory Ukrainianization.

### *Results of Ukrainianization*

Although the Ukrainianization program continued until the early 1930s, its political implications revealed the discord that existed among Party members; and Party leadership was more cognizant of the need to exercise control over the direction of the Ukrainianization movement. Shumsky’s overt nationalism, his vocal support for the acceleration of the Ukrainianization program, and his willingness to openly disagree with high-ranking Party members ultimately exposed him to allegations of counterrevolutionary activity. Despite the fact that the allegations were NKVD fantasies, they served their purpose, removing Shumsky from the Party and discrediting him and his ideas.

Although Party rhetoric maintained the importance of pursuing its Ukrainianization policy, which had yielded some tangible, if problematic results, practical support for the movement diminished in the wake of the Shumsky affair. The

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<sup>146</sup> Sudoplatov, Pavel . *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness, a Soviet Spymaster*. Boston, Mass: Little, Brown, 1994. 249.

policy had created for the Party the unintended consequence of further inspiring nationalist ambitions among the Ukrainian intelligentsia, and the Party was compelled to qualify its position regarding the intended outcomes of Ukrainianization. The June 1927 Plenum of the CP(B)U, which issued its *Theses on the Results of Ukrainization*, declared that:

The Party supports the wide use by the Ukrainian culture of all the treasures of world culture...However, in the Party's view this cannot be done by contrasting Ukrainian culture with the cultures of other nations, but through brotherly cooperation between the working and toiling masses of all nationalities in the raising of an international culture to which the Ukrainian working class will be able to contribute its share.<sup>147</sup>

Though implementation of the program continued, the détente with Ukrainian nationalist sentiment was over, and greater attention was paid to the assimilation of the Ukrainian population within the Soviet system. The Party, which earlier had warned of the dangers of Great Russian chauvinism, now spoke of the need to be vigilant about Ukrainian chauvinism, which promoted the concept of a necessary “struggle between two cultures.”<sup>148</sup> The Plenum appealed to Party members to recall the advice of Lenin, who asserted that:

When one speaks of the proletariat, then the opposition of the Ukrainian culture as a whole to the Great Russian culture as a whole means a shameful betrayal of the proletariat, in favor of bourgeois nationalism. If a Ukrainian Marxist is possessed by a quite natural hatred for his Great Russian oppressors, and if he transfers even a small part of this hatred, be it only a feeling of alienation, to the cause of the Great Russian proletariat, then this Marxist will fall into the mire of bourgeois nationalism.

Despite the ideological battles provoked by Ukrainianization, the policy, in many ways, yielded positive results for the Party. While Ukrainians remained underrepresented

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<sup>147</sup> *Theses on the Results of Ukrainization*; Passed by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U in June, 1927. In Luckyj, Appendix E, 284.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* 284.

in Central Committee, the Party was able to attract many ethnic Ukrainians into its lower ranks. Between 1924 and 1933, the percentage of ethnic Ukrainians in the Ukrainian Communist Party increased (from 33% to 60%).<sup>149</sup> Also, an influx of Ukrainians from the countryside into the city impacted significantly the ethnic composition of cities and helped sustain the drive for industrialization. The cities of Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Luhansk became major industrial centers with large Ukrainian populations. The policy of indigenization was particularly successful at the local level, where literacy rates in the countryside more than tripled from their prerevolutionary levels.<sup>150</sup> Ukrainian was the language of instruction for over 97% of Ukrainian children, however only 30% of universities offered instruction in Ukrainian.<sup>151</sup>

The program of Ukrainianization, and in particular its policy of “indigenization,” contributed to a renaissance which occurred in Ukrainian culture in the 1920s. For the first time Ukrainian language and literature received official state recognition, and sincere efforts were made to promote the spread of Ukrainian culture. In the literary realm, the program contributed to an atmosphere of relative freedom, where writers were temporarily allowed to explore various methods of producing proletarian literature. An unprecedented amount of literary activity took place as a result, with various groups vying to promote their individual views on the direction that literature should take. Recognizing the propagandistic value of establishing a monopoly over literary expression, the Party formed its own literary groups, while monitoring closely the

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<sup>149</sup> Magosci, 540.

<sup>150</sup> Subtelny, 390.

<sup>151</sup> Subtelny, 389.



activities of independent literary organizations. Party intrusion into literary life in Ukraine became increasingly common, dissenting writers were branded as “nationalist” and “deviationist.” “Shumskyism,” the epithet used to describe manifestations of Ukrainian nationalism in the political sphere, became known as “Khvylovyism” in literature, as the Party increasingly came to view any perceived manifestation of nationalism (such as autonomy over artistic expression) as subversive to Party doctrine.

*Early literary organization:*

*Lenin and Proletkult*

While the Party sought to monopolize political power in the wake of the revolution, initially, it was not sufficiently strong enough to exert its full authority over literature. The first literary group to emerge, Proletkult, sought to provide literary education to the masses. However, once it tried to assert its independence in its own affairs, Proletkult became subject to repressive measures by the Party. The fundamental issue concerned the organization’s stated intent—to resist any interference in its activities

by the Party—which directly contradicted Lenin’s long-held theories on Party literature. Lenin’s concept focused on literature’s utilitarian value, stressing that literature must be subordinate to Party control. In 1905, *Novaya Zhizn* published Lenin’s decree on Party literature, in which he stated:

What is this principle of party literature? It is not simply that, for the socialist proletariat, literature cannot be a means of enriching individuals or groups: it cannot, in fact, be an individual undertaking, independent of the common cause of the proletariat. Down with non-partisan writers! Down with literary supermen! Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat, “a cog and a screw” of one single great Social-Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component of organised, planned and integrated Social-Democratic Party work.

“All comparisons are lame,” says a German proverb. So is my comparison of literature with a cog, of a living movement with a mechanism. And I daresay there will ever be hysterical intellectuals to raise a howl about such a comparison, which degrades, deadens, “bureaucratizes” the free battle of ideas, freedom of criticism, freedom of literary creation, etc., etc. Such outcries, in point of fact, would be nothing more than an expression of bourgeois-intellectual individualism. There is no question that literature is least of all subject to mechanical adjustment or levelling, to the rule of the majority over the minority. There is no question, either, that in this field greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content. All this is undeniable; but all this simply shows that the literary side of the proletarian party cause cannot be mechanically identified with its other sides. This, however, does not in the least refute the proposition, alien and strange to the bourgeoisie and bourgeois democracy, that literature must by all means and necessarily become an element of Social-Democratic Party work, inseparably bound up with the other elements. Newspapers must become the organs of the various party organisations, and their writers must by all means become members of these organisations. Publishing and distributing centres, bookshops and reading-rooms, libraries and similar establishments—must all be under party control. The organised socialist proletariat must keep an eye on all this work, supervise it in its entirety, and, from beginning to end, without any exception, infuse into it the life-stream of the living proletarian cause, thereby cutting the ground from under the old, semi-Oblomov, semi-shopkeeper Russian principle: the writer does the writing, the reader does the reading.<sup>152</sup>

Although it was primarily a Russian organization, Proletkult was also present in Ukraine, until 1923, where it existed as a “well-organized network of literary workshops.”<sup>153</sup> Its objective was “to render the workers class conscious, and thus to give them both the knowledge and the fighting impetus to enable them to achieve their historic

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<sup>152</sup> Lenin, V.I. “Party organization and Party Literature” *Novaya Zhizn*, No. 12, November 13, 1905. in *Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1965, Moscow, Volume 10. 44-49.

<sup>153</sup> Luckyj, George. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1990. 37.

mission—the final overthrow of capitalism and the inauguration of the classless State.”<sup>154</sup>

Driven by the critical need to educate the workers in the class struggle, the group hoped to raise awareness by establishing a system of reading groups and workshops in literature, drama, and the visual arts.

Alexander Bogdanov, co-founder and chief theoretician of Proletkult, called for the total destruction of the old bourgeois culture, in favor of the “pure proletarian culture” of the future. However, it was the Proletkult’s policy of refusing to allow the Party to interfere in its affairs that made Party members suspicious. Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin’s wife, feared that the Proletkult “would detract workers from the important task of state construction and, because of its autonomy, turn into a haven for anti-Soviet forces.”<sup>155</sup>

Bogdanov was arrested in September of 1920 for his alleged involvement with the “Worker’s Truth”<sup>156</sup> movement.

In October of 1920 Lenin wrote his draft resolution, “On Proletarian Culture,” which affirmed the right of the Party to oversee cultural affairs. It stated:

Adhering unswervingly to this stand of principle, the All-Russia Proletcult Congress rejects in the most resolute manner, as theoretically unsound and practically harmful, all attempts to invent one’s own particular brand of culture, to remain isolated in self-contained organisations, to draw a line dividing the field of work of the People’s Commissariat of Education and the Proletcult, or to set up a Proletcult "autonomy" within establishments under the People’s Commissariat of Education and so forth. On the contrary, the Congress enjoins all Proletcult organisations to fully consider themselves in duty bound to act as auxiliary bodies of the network of establishments under the People’s Commissariat of Education, and to accomplish their tasks under the general guidance of the Soviet authorities (specifically, of the People’s Commissariat of Education) and of the Russian Communist Party, as part of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Paul, Eden, 1865-1944, and Cedar Paul. *Proletcult (Proletarian Culture)*. London: L. Parsons, 1921. 23.

<sup>155</sup> Steinberg, Mark D. "Lynn Mally, Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. 41.

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<sup>157</sup> Lenin, V.I. *Collected Works* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965. Vol.31, 316-317.

On December 1, 1920, a decree was published in *Pravda* by the Party's Central Committee that denounced Proletkult as a "petit bourgeois attempt to establish a power base outside 'Soviet power'" and "a 'haven for socially-alien elements.'"<sup>158</sup> Following Lenin's denunciations and Bogdanov's arrest, the networks of the Proletkult groups disintegrated by 1923. Proletkult was significant because it represented an early attempt at independent literary organization. However, when it tried to exclude the Party from influencing its cultural efforts, Lenin and the Bolsheviks reacted by denouncing the Proletkult and affirming party control over the cultural education of the proletariat. The suppression of Proletkult marked the first major act of party control within the realm of literature.<sup>159</sup>

So I assume the two subchapters below – fellow travelers and borotbists – are not about "literary organizations" per se, because later you have a chapter titled "literary organizations." However, since you talk about literary activity above, a reader may think that these are already literary organizations... maybe you can say that these two below are more like ideological patterns or something? From which the literary-proper stands will/did emerge? Am I understanding you correctly?

### *Fellow Travelers*

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<sup>158</sup> Rosenthal, Bernice Glatzer. *New Myth, New World: From Nietzsche to Stalinism*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.162.

<sup>159</sup> Luckyj, 37.

Another writers' grouping, which dared to assert creative independence in literature, were the Ukrainian "fellow travelers," who were without party affiliation and preferred to remain aloof from party life. In seeking to create a literature free from Party influence, the "fellow travelers" clashed with Party members, who maintained that they alone had the right to determine the direction of proletarian literature. The derisive term, "fellow traveler," made its way into the lexicon of literary criticism after it was used by Leon Trotsky in a series of articles entitled "The Non-October Literature," published in *Pravda* beginning in 1922. In them Trotsky stated that:

They don't understand the revolution in its entirety and its communist goal is alien to them. They are all to a greater or lesser degree inclined to overlook the worker, focusing their hopes on the peasant. They are no artists of the proletarian revolution, but they are its fellow travelers in art.<sup>160</sup>

Aside from the neo-classicists, who opposed the use of literature for didactic and propagandistic purposes, and instead focused on the production of "high art," the primary Ukrainian fellow traveler group, which gathered around the literary journal *Life and Revolution*, was known as Lanka; it included several very talented writers and poets: Valeriian Pidmohyl'ny, Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, Yevhen Pluzhnyk, and others who were united in their opposition to Party intrusion into literary affairs. Forced to disband in 1929, most of the members of Lanka were executed during the Stalinist terror of the 1930s.

### *Borotbists*

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<sup>160</sup> Kornienko, N. "Literary Criticism and Cultural Policy during the New Economic Policy: 1921-1927" in Dobrenko, E. A. (Evgenii Aleksandrovich), and Galin Tihanov. *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011. 19.

The Borotbists (fighters), who took their name from their newspaper, *Borotba* (The Struggle) were left-wing members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party who split from the Ukrainian Bolshevik Communist Party in 1918 in opposition to Russian Bolshevik involvement in the Ukrainian Communist Party. A year later, however, in 1919, the Borotbists stated their desire to merge with the Ukrainian Bolshevik Communist Party. Though the local Communist Party rejected the Borotbists' overtures, they were overruled by the central leadership in Moscow, who recognized the importance of securing Borotbist support in their attempts to establish control in Ukraine.<sup>161</sup> Essentially a populist party, the Borotbists held much stronger ties to the Ukrainian peasant population than did the Bolsheviks. However, the admission of Borotbists into the government did not have an immediate impact on their quest for Ukrainian autonomy within a Soviet framework. After 4,000 Borotbists joined the Bolshevik Ukrainian Communist Party in 1920, only 118 remained after the party purge in 1921.<sup>162</sup> Yet many of those who survived would play a significant role in the political and cultural development of Ukraine in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>163</sup>

The Borotbists were representative of one side of a larger polemic in Soviet Ukrainian politics, the debate between centralist versus anti-centralist views. In response to the centralizing tendencies of many within the Soviet Ukrainian government who look towards Moscow for guidance, the Borotbists and other elements of the government had a

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<sup>161</sup> Moss, Kenneth Benjamin. "A Time for Tearing Down and a Time for Building Up": Recasting Jewish Culture in Eastern Europe, 1917--1921." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2003.328.

<sup>162</sup> Yelchuk, Serhy. *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. 91.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*91.

vested interest in preserving Ukrainian self-government.<sup>164</sup> However, unlike the Borotbists, who were latecomers to the Bolshevik party, others, like Mykola Skrypnyk, a close associate of Lenin, were Bolsheviks during the old regime. Skrypnyk's philosophy was that Bolshevism needed to be Ukrainianized in order to make it more appealing to the Ukrainian people.<sup>165</sup> Though he is not identified by scholars as a nationalist, Skrypnyk, through his various government positions, was a key defender of Ukrainian autonomy in the 1920s. Notably, in 1922 Skrypnyk vehemently opposed a proposal by Stalin to absorb the non-Russian republics into a unified Russian Soviet socialist state. Lenin supported Skrypnyk's view, proposing that the Soviet republics form a "union of equals." As a result, the 1924 Soviet constitution also carried a provision which afforded each republic the right to secession from the union.

The Bolsheviks were initially inclined to grant concessions to Ukrainian nationalists in the political and cultural realms in order to marshal support from the countryside. In 1920, the prominent Borotbist Oleksander Shumsky became Commissar of Internal Affairs in Ukraine. Shumsky, along with Vasyl' Blakytnyi<sup>166</sup> and Hrihori Hryn'ko,<sup>167</sup> were among the Borotbists, who affected the path of Ukrainian cultural and political development from within the government. The All-Ukrainian Literary Committee, under the influence of the Borotbists, published the journal *Mystetsvo* (Art), which debated the direction that new Soviet Ukrainian art, film, and literature should

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<sup>164</sup> Subtelny, 384.

<sup>165</sup> Subtelny, 384.

<sup>166</sup> Vasyl Blakytnyi, one of the first in Ukrainian proletarian writers, he was a founder of the Borotbists party. In 1923 he found a literary organization of Ukrainian revolutionary writers known as "Hart."

<sup>167</sup> Hrihori Hrynko, first purged from the Party in 1921, returned to government as Commissar of State Planning in 1925. In the "Trial of 21," Hrynko was charged as a saboteur and was executed in 1938.

take, and featured the writings of Hnat Mykhailychenko, Pavlo Tychyna, and Mykhail Semenکو, among other well-known Ukrainian writers. At a conference of the All-Ukrainian Literary Committee (Vseukrlit) in 1919, the position of the new literary intelligentsia was illuminated by Hnat Mykhailychenko, the editor of *Mystetstvo*, who stated that:

The old, bourgeois art, especially poetry, was the art of doing nothing, the art of holiday laziness. The new proletarian art—this is the art of labor; the poetry of labor, the grandeur of labor, the greatness of its achievement, the passion for the process of labor and its comprehensive validity.<sup>168</sup>

Although there could be no return to the old beliefs, new ones were not easy to create. A concept for a new proletarian literature had been explained it was to but it still was not very clear how it should look. Early Soviet attempts to create a formula for literature were, therefore, unsuccessful. While the Party had clearly shown its disapproval of Proletkult's interpretation of proletarian literature, it was not yet capable of consolidating its authority over literary affairs in Ukraine. The direction that Ukrainian literature would take was still able to be freely discussed in the years immediately following the revolution. However, as independent, new literary organizations were created, the Soviet government became increasingly aware of its inability to control literary discourse in Ukraine and reacted with repressive measures. In this early period of literary organization, various literary groups sought to create a formula for producing a

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<sup>168</sup> Serstinyuk, L.L. "Zhurnal *Mystetstvo* (1919-1920) yak Djerelo Vivchinya Kuturotvorchoho Protsesu *Revolutsiini Dobi*. 107. Шерстинюк Л.Л. Журнал «Мистецтво» (1919–1920 рр.) як джерело вивчення культуротворчого процесу революційної доби. 107. «Старе, буржуазне мистецтво, зокрема поезія, було мистецтвом байдкування, празности, мистецтвом святкової лінії. Нове, пролетарське мистецтво – це мистецтво праці. Поезія праці, велич праці, велич її досягнень, захоплення процесом праці і її всеохоплюючою чинністю. »



literature which would be reflective of the new age, competing amongst themselves to create an archetype for proletarian literature.

Literary life in post-revolutionary Ukraine manifested itself almost exclusively in the form of literary organizations, which were composed of writers who sought “to interpret Marxism in many different ways, hoping to distill from it the essence of proletarian literature.”<sup>169</sup> In the void created by the destruction of the old regime, there was a vital need for unambiguous theories on the creation of literature. Imbued with revolutionary fervor, literary groups sought such a formula, and although they often agreed upon the final goal, they argued over ways in which to achieve it.

While some writers scorned the idea of individual literary expression, which undermined the efforts of the collective to produce a single unified literature, others, asserted the need for personal autonomy in the creation of literature. The Ukrainian neoclassicist<sup>170</sup> Mykola Zerov noted that “there is very little literary education, and therefore very little possibility of learning from literary models, of testing various styles, of emancipating oneself from the strong influence of a master in order to crystallize one’s own literary personality.”<sup>171</sup> Iurii Mezhenko (Ivaniv), however, a leading Ukrainian bibliographer, literary and theatre critic, responded by denouncing the kind of the

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<sup>169</sup> Luckyj, 41.

<sup>170</sup> The Neoclassicists were a group of Ukrainian writers concerned with the production of high art, who eschewed mass art, didactic writing, and propagandistic work. They believed the main purpose of literature to be aesthetic, rather than didactic.

<sup>171</sup> Zerov, Mykola. *Do Dzherel*. Kiev: Slovo 1926. 25.

“Дуже мало літературної освіти, а через те і вміння вчитися на літературних зразках, випробувувати різні стилі, вміння емансипуватися від впливу художньої індивідуальності сильнішого майстра, різьбити з себе оригінальну літературну постать.”

individual artistic expression espoused by Zerov and Khvylovy. In an article published in *Proletar'ska os'vita* in 1921, Mezhenko, resorting to literary platitude, which Zerov, Khvylovy and other writers despised, proclaimed: “we do not understand or want to understand your feeble literary ‘I’ because we are striving toward a spontaneous and creative ‘We.’”<sup>172</sup> The struggle to assert personal creative freedom amid the prevailing tendencies of the time towards collectivism was a significant theme in post-revolutionary Ukrainian thought and is exemplified by the relationship between the writers’ organizations *Pluh* and *Hart* and their dealings with the Party. For Khvylovy, true artistic expression resulted from individual genius and was far more valuable to literature than the efforts of “a hundred *prosvita*-types.”<sup>173</sup> As Khvylovy wrote in “Kamo Hridesy,” “There can be no doubt that”

for proletarian creative literature, the Soviet *intelligent* Zerov, who is armed with the higher mathematics of art is—hyperbolically speaking—a million times more useful than a hundred *prosvita* types, who are about as knowledgeable in this art as a pig in orange-growing, who in the seventh year of the Revolution have suddenly become more revolutionary than Lenin himself and throw around “red” phrases in various Soviet journals over the signature of a “tsia” or an “enko”<sup>174</sup>

### *Pluh, Hart, and Party efforts at literary control*

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<sup>172</sup> Leites, A. and M. Iashek, *Desiat' rokiv ukrains'koi literatury: 1917-1927*. Vol.2. Kharkov: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1928. 62. Cited In Luckyj, 39.

<sup>173</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Kamo Hriadesy” “Kamo Hriadeshy” (“Whither to go”). Ukrlit.org [UKRLIT.ORG.] [http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi\\_mykola/kamo\\_hriadeshy](http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi_mykola/kamo_hriadeshy) Web. 5 Mar. 2016

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* 3-4. “Для пролетарської художньої літератури, без всякого сумніву, корисніш — гіперболічно — в мільйон разів радянський інтелігент Зеров, озброєний вищою математикою мистецтва, ніж сотні «просвітян», що розуміються на цьому мистецтві, як «свиня в апельсині», що на сьомому році революції раптом зробилися революційніш від самого Леніна і тепер виступають по різних радянських журналах з «червоними» фразами під прізвиськами якогось «ця» чи «енка». “Tsia” and “enko” refer to the minor Pluzhian writers Petro Kyianitsia and Hrihorii Iakovlenko. “Enko” could also refer to “Pylypenko,” Pluh’s founder.

The literary organization “Pluh,” (Plow) founded in April 1922, and led by the fable writer, Serhii Pylypenko, was the first mass literary organization in Ukraine. Adopting an artistic and ideological platform, the Pluzhians, as its members were known, asserted that their “revolutionary-peasant work should be aimed primarily at organizing the consciousness of the peasant masses and the rural intelligentsia in the spirit of proletarian revolution.”<sup>175</sup> Through depictions of revolutionary peasant life, the organization’s members aimed at the creation of “broad pictures” and “universal themes,” which would appeal to a wider audience. Asserting the importance of content over form, the Pluzhians were openly hostile to any formal experimentation, which they believed led to a detachment from real life.<sup>176</sup> They sought simplicity and economy in their artistic methods,<sup>177</sup> and were concerned with the role of the peasantry in the class struggle:

The struggle is between the bourgeoisie on one side and the proletariat on the other. Other classes can choose between these two; there is no third camp. In this process of class struggle, the peasantry shows its lack of unity and is divided between partial support of the bourgeoisie (the ‘kulaks’ and the well-to-do peasants) and partial support of the proletariat (poor peasantry, agricultural laborers, and the “middle” peasant). The latter groups we regard as revolutionary peasantry... Hence the peasantry is potentially the proletariat and its place is on the anti-bourgeois front.<sup>178</sup>

The Pluzhanyn (Plowman), the widely-read journal published by Pluh which featured the writings of Andryi Holovko, Petro Panch, and Hryhori Epik among others, hoped to realize a new concept of literature which would incorporate an all-inclusive theory of literary organization that called for the collaboration of “masses of literary

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<sup>175</sup> Pylypenko, S. and Rostyslav Melnykiv. *Vybrany Tвори*. Kiev:Smoloskyp, 2007. 602. “Револьюційно-селянська творчість плужан має бути скерована насамперед на організацію свідомості широких селянських мас і сільської інтелігенції в дусі пролетарської революції”

<sup>176</sup> Mihaychuk, George. "The Role of the 1920s Form and Content Debate in Ukraine." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 37.1-2 (1996): 121.

<sup>177</sup> Luckyj, 46.

<sup>178</sup> Leites, A. and M. Iashek, *Desiat' rokiv ukrains'koi literatury: 1917-1927*. Vol.2. Kharkov: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1928. 62. Cited In Luckyj, 46.

workers, from those with the highest qualifications and the greatest talent down to village correspondents and contributors to wall newspapers and circulars.”<sup>179</sup> In order to facilitate the mass production of peasant writers, Pluh created study groups, forming branches throughout Ukraine. The group, with hundreds of devoted members, successfully formed a mass literary organization. However, Pluh’s rapid growth brought it into conflict with another literary group that opposed the ideological and esthetic platform of the Pluzhians.<sup>180</sup>

In January of 1923, Vasyl Blakytny founded the literary organization known as “Hart” (Tempering), which gave its name to its literary journal. It was published monthly between 1927 and 1932 in Kharkiv. The aim of the Hartians was to “create a single international culture, which would use Ukrainian language as a tool of creation.”<sup>181</sup> Hart carried on many of the traditions of the Borotbists, including the promotion of Ukrainian National-Communism.<sup>182</sup> The organization’s membership, at least for a time, consisted of some of the most talented Ukrainian writers of the era, including Mykola Kulish, Pavlo Tychyna, and Mykola Khvylovy. Regarded as the founder of Ukrainian proletarian literature, Hart played a vital role in the literary politics of the post-revolutionary period. In its attempts to extend the discourse on proletarian literature, the organization

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<sup>179</sup> Pylypenko, S. “Nashi hrikhy,” *Pluzhanyn*, No.4-5, 1925. Cited in Luckyj, 47.

<sup>180</sup> Luckyj, 47

<sup>181</sup> Oprishko, T. “Journali “Hart,” “Pluh,” i “Molodnyak” v 1927-19288: Konstruvanie Proletarskoho Mirovozzrennia v Ukrainiskoi Literature.” Kievski Universitet imeni Borisa Grinchenka. [http://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/6698/1/T\\_Opryshko\\_ZhU\\_3.pdf](http://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/6698/1/T_Opryshko_ZhU_3.pdf)

“стремясь к созданию единой интернациональной культуры, пользуются украинским языком как орудием творчества...”

<sup>182</sup> Luckyj, 54.

established affiliate programs in the United States and Canada, which played significant roles in the communist movements in those countries.<sup>183</sup>

In the absence of strict Party control over literature in the years immediately following the revolution, Pluh and Hart each set out to create a proletarian literature which represented the ideals of its founders. However, both organizations also realized the necessity of working from within a larger framework dictated by the Communist Party. To this end, the members of Pluh and Hart were willing to subordinate literature to Party authority as long as they were able to maintain some vestige of control over its development. In this way, despite their artistic differences, both Pluh and Hart vied for the approval of the Communist Party and willingly submitted their work for evaluation by the Party.

The Thirteenth Party Congress, which was held in May of 1924, clarified the Party's position with the resolution "O Pechati" (On Print Media), asserting that "in the field of literature, the Party's measure would be the workers and rural correspondents...while 'Party-minded literary criticism' had to become the champion of this line."<sup>184</sup> With confirmation of the need to extend Party control over literary activities, workers and peasant groups were dispatched to inspect and monitor the activities of Pluh and Hart, which entailed maintaining correspondence with village and factory workers, creating literary circles, and publishing literature for the masses. A special commission

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<sup>183</sup> *ibid*, 55.

<sup>184</sup> Kornienko, N. "Literary Criticism and Cultural Policy during the New Economic Policy: 1921-1927" in Dobrenko, E. A. (Evgenii Aleksandrovich), and Galin Tihanov. *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011. 21.

was formed, producing the following report on the activities of Pluh and Hart, which offered praise for the two groups, but also contained a caveat:

The workers' and peasants' inspection has in the last days completed its examination of Hart and Pluh. The inspection was done with the aim of surveying the material situation and the resources of these organizations as well as clarifying the methods of guidance and supervision of these two groups by the Party organizations. The following are the results of our investigation: Pluh and Hart are literary organizations which provide village and city with suitable Ukrainian literature which is also in accord with the Party's policy of Ukrainization.

Having taken into account the fact that up to the present day the wide masses of the people are uninformed about the activities of Pluh and Hart and that there is, as yet, no clear understanding by Party organizations of the work of these bodies, that no constructive criticism exists, and that finally no adequate material support has been offered, the inspection commission considers all these matters worthy of general attention. Furthermore it is thought necessary to suggest that Pluh's activities in the villages be conducted with caution. The heads of their branches should be Communists...The Central Committee has expressed its agreement with the conclusions reached by the administrative and social inspection commission.<sup>185</sup>

In January of 1925, the All-Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (VAPP) sponsored the "First Union of Proletarian Writers," which served as a forum for a dispute between Pluh and Hart. The All-Ukrainian Association of Proletarian Writers (VUAPP), an organization which consisted of Russian writers living in Ukraine, and VAPP's Ukrainian representative, proposed a union among Pluh, Hart, and the VUAPP, which Hart strongly rejected. Pluh's leader, Pylypenko, however, was unopposed to the merger and willingly submitted his organization to the control of VAPP. The Hartians intensified their attacks on Pluh, as Blakytyni openly accused Pylypenko of "attempting to ignore the principle of representation by National Republics and forming instead an executive according to the representation from large industrial centers."<sup>186</sup>

Aside from organizational disputes, Pluh and Hart disagreed on the form the proletarian literature should take and on who its intended audience should be. According

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<sup>185</sup> "Otsinka roboty 'Hartu' i 'Pluha,'" *Literatura, nauka, mystetstvo*, September 14, 1924. Cited in Luckyj, 51.

<sup>186</sup> Luckyj, 56.

to its program, Hart's purpose, like Pluh's, was to "struggle against bourgeois art" in order to attract the proletarian masses to literature. However, the Hartians strictly opposed the Pluzhian approach, which maintained that "the task of our time in the realm of art is to lower it, to bring it down to Earth, to make it necessary and intelligible to all."<sup>187</sup> Hart's members feared that the idea of "massivism"—the production of literature by and for the masses—would lead to a lowering of artistic standards.<sup>188</sup> Mykola Khvylovy, an outspoken member of Hart, was particularly critical of Pluh and its founder, Pylypenko. In the "Author's Forward" to "Kamo Hriadeshy," Khvylovy wrote:

There are two literary, revolutionary organizations: Hart, the union of proletarian writers, and Pluh, the union of peasant writers. Many disagreements have recently arisen between these two groupings. Pluh, which, by its own admission, is a union of poorly-qualified writers—more correctly, simply a voluntary cultural-educational organization that for some reason has pretensions to playing a role in art—is unable to accept the existence of Hart and continually attacks it.<sup>189</sup>

Khvylovy's attack on Pluh and Pylypenko led to a split between two opposing factions within Hart: the "adherents of the official mass orientation and the supporters of Khvylovy, who advocated artistry as the goal of literary activity."<sup>190</sup>

Addressing the growing rift among literary groups, the Party pronounced its "Resolution of the CP(B)U concerning Ukrainian Literary Groupings," in May of 1925, which affirmed that "no single literary organization, including Hart, can claim that it

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<sup>187</sup> Mace, James E. *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933*. Cambridge, Mass: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S, 1983. 130.

<sup>188</sup> Subtelny, 395.

<sup>189</sup> Khvylovyi, Mykola. Author's Forward to "Kamo Hriadeshy" ("Whither to go"). . Ukrlit.org [УКРЛИТ.ОРГ.] [http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi\\_mykola/kamo\\_hriadeshy](http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi_mykola/kamo_hriadeshy) Web. 5 Mar. 2016

"Єсть дві літературно-революційні організації: «Гарт» — спілка пролетарських письменників — і «Плуг» — спілка селянських письменників. Останніми часами між цими угрупованнями виникло багато суперечок. «Плуг», будучи спілкою з слабшою кваліфікацією (це він сам не раз прилюдно визнавав), певніш — просто добровільною культурно-освітньою організацією, що чомусь претендує на роль в мистецтві, — ніяк не може примиритися з існуванням «Гарту» і раз у раз атакує його."

<sup>190</sup> *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Vol. 2. 1988.

alone represents the Party in the field of literature, or holds a monopoly in applying the Party line in this field.”<sup>191</sup> The resolution went on to defend Hart against allegations that it was a nationalist group hostile to Party interests and praised the organization for accomplishing “a great deal in uniting around the Party and Soviet government the most active and talented representatives of contemporary Ukrainian literature and poetry.”<sup>192</sup> The Party’s more circumspect praise of Pluh, reflected its concern over the organization’s potential to attract the peasant masses. It declared that Pluh’s organizational activity was “a great and responsible work which the Party must support,” but that it should be confined to those areas “where there are Party organizations to direct (its) work.”<sup>193</sup> While it assessed the organizational work of Pluh and Hart, the more crucial task for the Party was to establish itself as the arbiter of literary thought in Ukraine. The Party made it clear that the two organizations had, at times, deviated from Party policy in their literary endeavors; in response it resolved to form groups of Marxist critics which would direct the work of proletarian writers according to Party doctrine. The resolution’s pronouncement *On Literary Criticism* proclaimed the need to organize Marxist criticism in such a way as to reveal the “defects and deviations which are present in an equal degree among the writers of Hart and other literary groupings...” and “...which occur because the Soviet writers do not always understand correctly the Soviet policy...”<sup>194</sup> Without endorsing any single literary group, the resolution instead reaffirmed the need

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<sup>191</sup> “Resolution of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U on Ukrainian Literary Groupings” in Appendix D. Luckyj, 277.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.* 277

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* 278

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* 278



for a strong Party presence in Ukrainian literary affairs, which could reveal the ideological mistakes of its writers.

As a result of the internal dispute within Hart, Khvylovy and his supporters left Hart, with the intention to form a literary group that would forge a new path for Ukrainian literature. Rejecting the domineering Russian influence in Ukrainian literature, Khvylovy and the circle of writers that formed around him proposed that the direction of Ukrainian literature must lead “on no account towards Moscow.”<sup>195</sup> On November of 1925, Khvylovy and others founded VAPLITE, the Free Association of Proletarian Writers, whose writers strove to perfect their work by adopting an orientation towards western literature.<sup>196</sup>

### *VAPLITE*

#### *Organization, program and literary theory*

Unable to survive a serious internal crisis, and with the death of its leader, Ellan Blakytyn, the literary organization Hart disintegrated at the end of 1925. Its members, eager to develop their literary talents, sought new literary organization. Some abandoned Blakytyn’s “national plus Communist” doctrine and instead looked toward the Party for direction, but others “had visions of creating a sophisticated national art and were determined to fend off all manifestations of provincialism and crudely utilitarian

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<sup>195</sup> Lindheim, Ralph and George S.N. Luckyj eds. *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine : An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996. 276.

<sup>196</sup> Luckyj, 61.

literature.”<sup>197</sup> A group of talented writers led by Mykola Khvylovy formed an organization known as the Free Academy of Proletarian Literature (VAPLITE), which continued many of the traditions established by Hart. VAPLITE, which existed in Kharkiv from 1925-1928, drew into its ranks many of the former members of Pluh and Hart. Among the Vaplitians who called for the establishment of closer ties with proletarian literary groups at home and abroad and for the promotion of Ukrainian literature, were some of the leading writers of the day: Oles Dosvitny, Hryhorii Epik, Maik Iohansen, Khvylovy, Mykola Kulish, Ivan Senchenko and Pavlo Tychyna, among others.

A group of seventeen writers, focused around Khvylovy, met on October 14, 1925, to undertake the task of structuring the new literary organization.<sup>198</sup> Two key points were made in the deliberations which served as the basis for the formation of the new organization: that it should be represented by multiple schools of literature and that it must maintain a free hand in its literary activity. The foundation for VAPLITE’s artistic work was defined in its charter, which affirmed that “at the base of its artistic work VAPLITE places Marxist ideology and the programmatic postulates of the Communist Party, giving its members broad freedom to make use of all artistic and literary forms.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Pnytzkyj, O. "The Modernist Ideology and Mykola Khvyl'ovyi." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15.3/4 (1991): 257-62.

<sup>198</sup> "Protocol narady pys'mennykiv m. Kharkova, vid 14 zvoivnya 1925 roku," *Liubchenko Papers in Luckyj*.60.

<sup>199</sup> "Statut Vilnoi Akademii Proletarskoi Literaturi VAPLITE" Khvylovy, M. *Tvori v p'yatokh tomakh*. Vol.5 Smoloskur: Baltimore, 1986. 657. "В основу своєї мистецької праці ВАПЛІТЕ кладе марксистський світогляд і програмові постулати комуністичної партії, даючи широке право своїм членам користатися всіма художньо-літературними формами, як уже вживаними в світовій літературі, так і цілком новими."

VAPLITE aspired to be a conglomerate of literary thought and expression unified in a single organization. To achieve this, Vaplitians appealed to writers from various literary schools, seeking to recruit them into the new literary group. As the name of their organization implied, the Vaplitians asserted their autonomy in the management of literary affairs, evident by the passage of a resolution at the meeting which declared that:

The [future] literary organization should unite qualified writers: former members of Hart, Pluh, and others. The management of the organization should be in the form of a council elected from representatives of various schools and tendencies. The Council should designate one of its members as a chairman (or president) and another as secretary. The organization should consist of several literary schools, forming one organization with a [common] ideological basis, while retaining wide autonomy as far as their literary work is concerned as well as in purely formal matters of publishing, the recruitment of young literary forces, and the accomplishment of cultural work outside the organization.<sup>200</sup>

In 1926 VAPLITE began a program of literary publication, culminating in the production of its eponymous literary journal, which expounded on the literary and political views of its members. The new journal was well-received and “stirred wide interest among Ukrainian intellectuals, [winning] the group considerable support and popularity.”<sup>201</sup> Contained in Vaplitian literary model was a profound concern for the integrity of artistic expression. The organization sought to elevate the cultural life of Ukraine, which according to Khvylovy was too dependent on Russian culture, by focusing on quality in literary production rather than quantity. Unlike the multitude of generic literary groups, which “could spring up like mushrooms after the rain, without an obvious need,”<sup>202</sup> VAPLITE was an organization of professional writers, who were imbued with a sense of responsibility for their work.

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<sup>200</sup> Luckyj, 60.

<sup>201</sup> Shkandrij, M. “Introduction” in Khvylovy, M. *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1986. 13.

<sup>202</sup> Dosvitny, O. “Do rozvytku pys’mennyst’kykh syl,” *Vaplite, zoshyt pershyi*. 9 in Luckyj, 62.

### *The Literary Discussion and Khvylovy*

Pre-dating the formation of VAPLITE, the “Literary Discussion” was a wide-ranging literary discourse, held in between 1925 and 1928 and, which focused on issues concerning the national and cultural identity of Ukrainians.<sup>203</sup> Central to the discourse were the social and political implications of the policy of Ukrainianization, which occurred amid rapid industrialization and forced collectivization.<sup>204</sup> Khvylovy saw that the policy of Ukrainianization also had the effect of appealing to the ignorant masses, the lower-class and less-educated elements of Ukrainian society, many of whom assumed the mantle of “writer,” using it as a platform to assert their parochial views on literature. Initiated by the writings Mykola Khvylovy, who decried the philistine influence on the revolution, the Literary Discussion formally began on April 30, 1925, with the publication in the literary journal *Kultura i Robot* (Culture and Daily life) of an article by H. Iakovenko entitled “On Critics and Criticism in Literature,” which.<sup>205</sup> In it, he criticized the prominence of VAPLITE’s “Olympians,”<sup>206</sup> who snobbishly rejected the literature of “tractors, communes, and the ‘negative behavior of monks.’”<sup>207</sup> In Iakovlenko’s estimation, Khvylovy’s “Ya...Romantika,” was a story that could only be

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<sup>203</sup> Zales'ka Onyshkevych, Larysa M. L., and Mariia Revakovykh. Contemporary Ukraine On The Cultural Map Of Europe. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. in cooperation with the Shevchenko Scientific Society, 2009. Print.

<sup>204</sup> Bertelsen, O. *The House of Writers in Ukraine, the 1930s: Conceived, Lived, Perceived*. The Carl Beck Papers  
Publisher: University Library System, University of Pittsburgh, 2013.9-10.

<sup>205</sup> Shkandrij, “Intro.”4. in Khvylovy, M. *Cultural Resistance*

<sup>206</sup> Name given to Vaplitan elite, Khvylovy, et al., by their literary opposition.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*4.

read by “Philistines and degenerates, for whom the Revolution was an example of acute spiritual sadism.”<sup>208</sup>

Instigated by the polemical writings of Mykola Khvylovy, one of the key themes of the Literary Discussion concerned the development of Ukrainian literature. Though they tacitly accepted the official line of the Party, VAPLITE held an independent position regarding literary policy and took very seriously its commitment to maintain high artistic standards in its work. Khvylovy and others asserted that Ukrainian literature should be allowed to develop independently from the Rusocentric literary influence of the Party. Khvylovy rejected the Party’s interference in literary affairs in his polemical pamphlets, which reflected VAPLITE’s imperative to orient Ukrainian literature in a new direction.

In “Dumky pro techii,” he wrote:

“Already we imitate the ‘Pope.’ All these All-Ukrainian Central Committees are quite unnecessary for a Ukrainian writer. What is important is not a Central Committee—but literature...From today the slogan is not give us quantity—who can give us more?’ but ‘give us quality!’ It is necessary to reinstate the destroyed artistic criteria.”<sup>209</sup>

For Khvylovy the bureaucratization of literature was symptomatic of the pervasive influence of Moscow, a city with strong traditions rooted in philistinism.<sup>210</sup> In his view, it was imperative to create a literature which would satisfy the urban elite; however, the elite, which occupied the Russified cities of Ukraine “continued to cower...before the Russian master, who still dominated urban centers, who had over the centuries

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.* 4-5

<sup>209</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Dumky pro techii”, (“Thoughts Against the Current”) 28-31. UkrLit.org [[UKRLIT.ORG](http://ukrlit.org).] [http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi\\_mykola/dumky\\_proty\\_techii](http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi_mykola/dumky_proty_techii) Web. 5 Mar. 2016

“Буде вже наслідувати «папі». Всі ці літературні всеукраїнські ЦК зовсім не потрібні для письменника...Словом, одинице наше одне із чергових гасел не «дайош кількість — хто більш», а дайош якість.”

<sup>210</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Ukraine or Little Russia” *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1986. 228-229.

assimilated a Philistine and condescending attitude towards Ukrainian culture.”<sup>211</sup> In the unpublished brochure entitled “Ukraine or Little Russia,” Khvylovy wrote: “Today the center

of an all-Union Philistinism is Moscow, in which the proletarian factories, the Comintern, and the All-Union Communist Party are like an oasis on the world-scale. While in Ukraine, around the center, one can only hear the term “Comrade,” over there they have long ago moved from “Citizen” to “Sir.” Moscow has strong traditions which are deeply rooted in Philistinism. Moscow itself (and even the whole of Russia, if we exclude Siberia) essentially never saw the October Revolution and its heroic struggle. Russian revolutionary democracy is one thing, the thin-bearded Muscovite intellectual quite another.<sup>212</sup>

Throughout 1926 the Central Committee of the CP(B)U was locked in heated debates which focused on issues taken up during the Literary Discussion, concerning the national question, the ideas of Mykola Khvylovy, and cultural development in Ukraine.<sup>213</sup> At the same time that the Party was vilifying Shumsky for his political errors, Khvylovy and others were admonished for their literary deviationism. At the June 1926 plenary session of the CP(B)U, the same one which produced the “Theses on the Results of Ukrainianization,” the prominent Russian Bolshevik, Volodymyr Zatonsky quoted from Khvylovy’s “Іа...Romantika” to demonstrate the author’s negative portrayal of the Revolution.<sup>214</sup> Khvylovy, Shumsky, and the Vaplitian poet Volodymyr Sosiura were

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<sup>211</sup> Shkandrij, M. “Introduction” in Khvylovy, M. *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine*. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1986. 10

<sup>212</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Ukrainia chi Malorossiya” Uklit.org [*UKPLIT.ORG*.] [http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi\\_mykola/ukraina\\_chy\\_malorosiia](http://ukrlit.org/khvyliovyi_mykola/ukraina_chy_malorosiia) Web. 5 Mar. 2016.

“Москва сьогодні є центр всесоюзного міщанства, що в ньому, як всесвітній оазис, — пролетарські заводи, Комінтерн і ВКП. Коли на Україні, і зокрема в центрі її, ви чули тільки «товариш», там вже давно перейшли з «гражданина» на «господина». Москва має міцні традиції, які глибоко входять в міщанство. Москва як Москва (і навіть Росія без Сибіру), по суті, не бачила Жовтневої революції і її героїчної боротьби. Російська революційна демократія — одне, а жидкобородий московський інтелігент

— зовсім інше.”

<sup>213</sup> Shkandrij, M. “Introduction” 12.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

accused of “waging a campaign on the national question that could only be described as an attack on the Central Committee.”<sup>215</sup> Khvylovy’s promotion of a European orientation for Ukrainian literature was deemed “useful only for the flag of the Ukrainian petty bourgeoisie, which understands the national revival as a bourgeois restoration, and considers the orientation toward Europe as an orientation toward Capitalist Europe.”<sup>216</sup>

### *Party Condemnation*

As the Party was in the process of eliminating Shumsky and his ideology, it also took steps to discipline VAPLITE and Khvylovy for alleged “anti-proletarian” activities. At a November 1926 Politburo meeting, Kaganovich, the General Secretary of the CP(B)U, speaking for the other members, demanded that Khvylovy, along with Oles Dosvitny and Mykola Ialovy offer a written admission of their guilt. Under intense pressure from the Party the three Vaplitiens signed an open letter the following month conceding their errors:

We acknowledge that the slogan of orientation toward “psychological Europe,” no matter whether past or present, proletarian or bourgeois, coupled with an attempt to sever relations with Russian culture and to ignore Moscow (which is the centre of world revolution), as a center of world Philistinism, were definite deviations from the proletarian line on internationalism...We fully share the opinion of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U about literary groups like the Neoclassicists...We regard, therefore, Khvylovy’s...formula of using these groups “psychologically” as erroneous...We recognize our ideological and political errors and we openly repudiate them. We do not in any way dissent from the Party line and recognize its policy and work, directed by the Central Committee of the CP(B)U, in the field of cultural construction as entirely correct.<sup>217</sup>

Despite admissions of wrong-doing by Khvylovy and others, the Party continued to exert pressure on VAPLITE and the Khvlovists. In December of 1926, Volodymyr Koriak, a

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<sup>215</sup> Petrovsky, H. “Promova na chervnevomu plenami TsKKP(b)U 1926 r.” in *Budivynstvo*, 57. Cited in Shkandrij, “Introduction” 14.

<sup>216</sup> Shkandrij, M. Introduction. 14.

<sup>217</sup> Shkandrij, “Introduction.” 17.

Ukrainian literary critic and one of the founding members of Hart, gave a lecture in Kharkiv, entitled “The Three Musketeers,” in which he attacked Khvylovy, Dosvitny, and Ialovy. The publication of the first issue of the literary journal *Vaplite* was delayed and its subsidy was reduced by 666 rubles, as attacks on the group continued to appear in newspapers and journals.<sup>218</sup>

In January of 1927, in order to fend off further persecution and save the organization, Mykola Kulish, VAPLITE’s president, issued a resolution expelling Khvylovy, Ialovy, and Dosvitny from its ranks. As the resolution indicated, Kulish was concerned about the future of VAPLITE.<sup>219</sup> Though he pointed out that the three dissenting writers had renounced their mistakes, he made clear that a conflict still existed between them and the rest of the organization, which he feared would negatively impact the future work of VAPLITE.<sup>220</sup> Unsatisfied with VAPLITE’s attempt to rectify the situation internally, the Party responded by admonishing the organization for expelling the writers without first receiving Party endorsement for its actions.

Increasingly, the Party drew links between the Vaplitians and nationalist and fascist thought in Ukraine, which it believed was directed from abroad. In its 1927 resolution concerning Ukrainian literature, the Politburo of the CP(B)U repudiated the actions of VAPLITE, and Khvylovy in particular, stating that the Party must work to

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>219</sup> Khvylovy, M. *Tvori v p'yatokh tomakh*. Vol.5 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 667.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* 667.

“Хоча т. т. [Khvylovy, et al.] і зреклись у листі з 1. XII. 26 р. своїх помилок, проте надалі в остаточних по літературній дискусії висновках, а також у поглядах на шлях розвитку пролетарської літератури на Україні між т. т. та рештою ВАПЛІТЕ не досягнуто згоди, що може негативно відбитися на дальшій роботі й лінії ВАПЛІТЕ.”



“combat all counter-revolutionary, bourgeois-liberal, and similar tendencies in literature” and that Ukrainian literature should function as a “weapon of the proletariat in its direction of the entire Ukrainian cultural development.”<sup>221</sup> Increasingly viewed as a symbol of opposition, Khvylovy was accused of offering support to the “anti-proletarian” Neoclassicists, whose works, for the Party, epitomized harmful bourgeois tendencies in literature. The Party noted that:

Recently, the bourgeois elements in literature have manifested themselves not only in the ‘ideological work, designed to satisfy the demands of the growing Ukrainian bourgeoisie’ (Resolution to the June plenum of the CP[B]U), but also abroad, among Ukrainian writers of the fascist and nationalist camps, where began, in union with fascist Poland, a literary campaign against the Socialist Ukraine...Such anti-proletarian tendencies manifested themselves in the works of Ukrainian bourgeois litterateurs of the type of the Neoclassicists. They were not met by any opposition; on the contrary, some fellow travelers and VAPLITE, headed by Khvylovy and his group, supported them.<sup>222</sup>

Party denunciations of Khvylovy and his expulsion from VAPLITE, did little to limit his association with the organization. The ideological and spiritual leader of the group, Khvylovy continued to publish his works in the literary journal, *Vaplite*, while he travelled throughout Austria and Germany in 1927.<sup>223</sup> However, it was ultimately the continued contact between VAPLITE and dissident writers formerly in its ranks and the group’s willingness to publish their works that contributed to the organization’s demise.

#### *Vaplite no.5*

The publication of the fifth issue of *Vaplite* (1927), which was summarily banned by the Party, intensified the criticism against VAPLITE and sealed its fate as an

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<sup>221</sup> “Policy of the Party concerning Ukrainian Literature; Resolutions of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U, 1927.” In Luckyj, Appendix D. 279.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* 281.

<sup>223</sup> Carynyk, Marco. "A Bit Of Blood-Stained Batting. Kharkiv, Saturday, 13 May 1933". *Krytyka Magazine Krytyka.com*. May, 2015. Web. 10 Mar. 2016.

organization. The issue, which featured the writings of Khvylovy, Kulish, Pavlo Khristiuk, Tychyna, and others, became the forum for a confrontation between VAPLITE and “All-Ukrainian Union of Proletarian Writers (VUSPP),” an organization inspired by the Party whose aim was to undermine VAPLITE, and with whom VAPLITE had refused to form a union.<sup>224</sup> Among the criticism leveled at the VUSPP and its representatives, Pavlo Khristiuk, a writer unaffiliated with VAPLITE praised the works of Hrihorii Epik, while denouncing Volodymyr Sosiura, the former Vaplitian who defected to its rival, the VUSPP. Khristiuk believed that among Soviet writers, there existed an unfair obligation to portray only the positive aspects of Soviet life, a tendency which was ruining literature.<sup>225</sup> In the article entitled “Scolding with a Feather”<sup>226</sup> Khristiuk wrote that:

H. Epik touched on the negative phenomena of our reality. And V. Sosiura touched on these phenomena longer. It's true that he approached it differently than did Epik. Epik will thirst for the struggle with these phenomena. And Sosiura, with his poetry, produces such an impression that everything is already lost, that we don't have the strength or the competence, that NEP and Philistinism won out over the revolution, They demoralized every fighter, destroying all of their hopes and all their efforts at the construction of a new life. <sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> See “Do Chleniv VAPLITE” and “Postanovi VAPLITE” in Khvylovy, M. *Tvori v p'yatokh tomakh*. Vol. 5 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 664-665.

The VUSPP, much the same way that the All-Ukrainian Association of Proletarian Writers had attempted with Hart, tried to compel VAPLITE to enter into a union with its organization. The first document listed above is an ultimatum from the VUSPP to VAPLITE, in which VAPLITE is required to appoint a representative to the VUSPP by 6pm of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1927. In the second document, written by Mykola Kulish, the author reaffirms the aims of his organization, while defending its right to decline participation in the union.

<sup>225</sup> Shkandrij, Intro.20.

<sup>226</sup> “Розпеченим Пером”

<sup>227</sup> Sosiura, V. “Rozpечenym perom” *Vaplite* no.5, 1927 194-203. “Г. Епiк торкнувся негативних явищ нашої дійсности. Торкався цих явищ довший час i В. Сосюра. Правда, пiдходив до них инакше, нiж пiдiшов Епiк. Г. Епiк будить жаду боротьби з тими явищами, а Сосюра справляв своїми поезіями таке вражіння, що все вже пропало, що немає сили й проможности боротись, що непа, мiщанство перемогли революцію, здеморалiзували колишніх орцiв, розбили всі їхні надії i спроб и будовинового життя.”

In Khvylovy's "Odvertii Lyst do Volodymyra Koryaka" (Open Letter to Volodymyr Koriak), the author exposed Koriak's literary hypocrisy (Koriak was a co-founder of both Hart and the VUSPP, two organizations with antithetical views on literature). Khvylovy wrote:

Clearly, tediously, and unambiguously. Candidly and pretentiously you try to revise Plekhanovist, that is, Marxist esthetic, and yet publicly you purport yourself as an ardent defender of Pylypenkoism... What is your formula? What is art? –again, I ask you, as I asked Pylypenko before. But you are silent, and I sympathize with you: you will not willingly give your definition because you do not want to appear on the pages of our press with the ideologues.<sup>228</sup>

However, the publication in the same issue of *Vaplite* of the first part to Khvylovy's *Valdshnepy* (The Woodsnipes) provoked an even stronger reaction.<sup>229</sup> In the novella, Ahlaya, a Russian-born woman-turned-Ukrainian nationalist, is drawn to Ukraine, where the ideals of the revolution are not already hopelessly compromised. The conflict in the story is between Ahlaya and Karamazov, a disillusioned Communist.<sup>230</sup> Karamazov, and those like him, would "not be capable of formulating and creating new ideologies because they lack wide individual initiative, and even the appropriate terms, to create a program for a new world outlook."<sup>231</sup> Ahlaya, by contrast, symbolizes the future generation of intelligentsia, those who possess the qualities necessary to lead.

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<sup>228</sup> Khvylovy, M. "Odvertii Lyst do Volodymyra Koryaka" *Vaplite*, no.5, 1927. 159.

"Ясно, нудно і недвозначно. Одверто і претензійно намагаєтесь і Ви ревізувати плеханівську,цеб-то марксистську естетику, і публічно рекомендуєте себе завзятим прихильником пилипенківщини... Яка-ж Ваша формула? Що-ж таке мистецтво?—знову питаю я, як у свій час запитував Пилипенка. Але Ви мовчите, і я Вам співчуваю: одверто, з доброї волі, свого визначення ви і не дасте, бо не хочете фігурувати на сторінках нашої преси ідеологом."

<sup>229</sup> Khvylovy, M. "Val'dshepy" *Vaplite*, No. 5, 1927, 5-69.

<sup>230</sup> Shkandrij, M. "Introduction" 20.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.* 66.

"Ці Карамазови забули, що вони Карамазенки, що їм бракує доброго пастиря. Вони (часто розумні й талановиті) не здібні бути оформителями й творцями нових ідеологій, бо їм бракує широкої індивідуальної ініціативи й навіть відповідних термінів, щоб утворити програму свого нового світогляду."

Andrii Khvyliia, one of the chief organizers of the VUSPP, saw in Khylyovy's *Valdshnepy* an attempt "to show that the Soviet Union is not Soviet, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not real, that the national policy is a sham, that the Ukrainian people are backward and will-less, that a great rebirth is yet to come, and finally that the Party itself is an organization of hypocrites."<sup>232</sup> Through his heroine, Ahlaya, as "a symbol of Ukrainian nationalism and fascism" Khvylyovy

cast a slogan of struggle against our society; he acknowledged that the Revolution...has found herself in a blind alley, that the Party has become a group of Pharisees, that there is no hope, and therefore the only watchword should be to educate, in the spirit of Ukrainian nationalism, young men who will lead the Ukraine to her national regeneration.<sup>233</sup>

Though the novella was unfinished, it was banned by the Party for its romantic depiction of Ukrainian nationalism and for its unreserved criticism of the Communist Party.<sup>234</sup>

In the face of Party condemnation, Mykola Kulish, VAPLITE's President tried in vain to save the organization through self-criticism. He admitted that he erred in allowing Khvylyovy and the other dissident Vaplitians to publish their material in the journal and took personal responsibility for the publication of Khristiuk's article.<sup>235</sup> However, Party members were unmoved. They may have recalled Kulish's own article in the fifth issue of *Vaplite*, "Krytyka chy prokurorskyi dopyt? (Criticism or a Procurator's Interrogation?)"<sup>236</sup> in which the author wrote "if the VUSPP cannot, through its ideological poverty, transcend the limits of yesterday in Ukrainian literature, and, instead, tramples around in one place, then it is useless to cover its feeble oath of devotion to

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<sup>232</sup> Khvyliia, A. *Vid ukhlu v prirvu* (From Deviation to Schism). Kharkiv: vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1928 quoted in Luckyj, 83.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.* 83

<sup>234</sup> Luckyj, 84.

<sup>235</sup> Letter from M. Kulish to *Komunist* (Ukrainian), January 12, 1928. In Luckyj, 84.

<sup>236</sup> Kulish, M. "Критика чи прокурорський допит?" *Vaplite*, no.5, 1927.146-57.

Soviet power with provocations towards Vaplite in its political address.<sup>237</sup> In any case, the Party exerted strong pressure on Kulish and the Vaplitians to dissolve their organization.

### *Dissolution of VAPLITE*

With Khvylovy abroad and amid internal dissent, Kulish shouldered the burden of VAPLITE's struggle against the Party, attempting to keep the organization alive. Kulish's notes, diary entries, and correspondence with Khvylovy are preserved in the Liubchenko Papers<sup>238</sup> and reveal Kulish's distress at the prospect of VAPLITE's disintegration.<sup>239</sup> On January 12, 1928, the group met to establish its "Protocols of the General Meeting of VAPLITE."<sup>240</sup> In a vote taken to decide the fate of the organization, fourteen members voted for its "liquidation," while only two were opposed (Kulish and Gromov.)<sup>241</sup> The entries dated from around this time in Kulish's diary exhibit its author's despair over VAPLITE'S fate and over the general state of Soviet literary life. Kulish relates:

January 12, 1928...The meeting of VAPLITE. Resolution to dissolve (in principle).

13. At Khvyliia's. "A heart-to heart talk." He said: 'The fourteen voters were right.' Draft of the letter to the editorial board. Signatures.

14. Went to Khvyvliia's to show him the draft of the resolution [about VAPLITE's dissolution]. Change in his mood and ideas. General meeting of VAPLITE at night, in the Building of Scholars. Decision to formulate a new collective resolution about dissolution. Election of the liquidation committee.

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.* 147. Kulish, M.: "якщо ВУСПП не може через свою ідейно-художню вбогість вийти за межі вчорашнього, в українській літературі, дня і топчеться на одному місці, то не варто прикривати своє безсилля божбою про відданість свою радянській владі й кивати на політичну адресу Вапліте."

<sup>238</sup> The Liubchenko Papers, are a collection of notes, papers, and correspondence, which were preserved by VAPLITE secretary Arkadii Liubchenko, during the mid-1920s. The archive forms the basis for much of the scholarship on VAPLITE and the "Literary Discussion," the last free literary debate held in Ukraine between 1925 and 1928.

<sup>239</sup> Luckyj, 86.

<sup>240</sup> "Protokol zahalnikh zboriv VAPLITE" in Khvylovy, M. *Tvori v p'yatokh tomak*, Vol.5. 673.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.* 680.

15. A day of despondency and low spirits.  
 16. Announcement about dissolution to the People's Commissariat of Education, the Press Section [of the CP(B)U], and to the editorial board of *Komunist*.  
 18. At Skrypnyk's. Discussion with commentaries. Shorthand.  
 20. I have been called to appear before the General-Secretary, Kaganovich. A frank conversation.  
 23. Unexpected blast from the Press Section, with an order to call the 'former ones [members of VAPLITE].' Meeting and waiting in the literary club.  
 29. A dream. First letter to H-ch [Khvylovy].  
 31. A dream: meeting with H-ch in Oleshky. Dusk. He is going away (across the sand and the steppe). We bid each other farewell. I am crying.  
 February 1. A dream: Someone carried someone else to the grave pit, which is all ready. They say he is dead, but I see how D's legs bend up. Frightened.<sup>242</sup>  
 Conceding organizational, but not personal defeat, Kulish and the other members of VAPLITE issued its final resolution on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 1928. The statement reinforced the non-political nature of its work and attested to the organization's commitment to artistic integrity.

Conceived as a purely literary organization, VAPLITE, offered a high standard of artistic work and awareness of the organization and played a significant role in the development of Soviet proletarian literature in Ukraine. However, in literary works and literary polemics VAPLITE committed errors, which, beyond the will and understanding of the organization, took on a negative political significance. These errors by VAPLITE and by its members have been sincerely and repeatedly acknowledged in the decisions of the organization, in the pages of the journal, and in the statement of Comrade President Kulish in the newspaper "Komunist," which to the fullest extent unites all members of VAPLITE...Therefore, we, members of the Free Academy of Proletarian Literature consider it better to dissolve our organization, in order to make it possible for writers who are members of VAPLITE to work more peacefully, in the service of Soviet culture, as it is led by our Communist Party<sup>243</sup>

Amid the backdrop of a less conscientious policy towards Ukrainianization, and with the forced dissolution of VAPLITE, the Party had yet again confirmed its role as

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<sup>242</sup> Diary entries of M. Kulish, Liubchenko Papers. Cited in Luckyj, 86.

<sup>243</sup> "Rezolutsia zahalnikh zboriv vilnoi akademii proletarskoi literature VAPLITE" in Khvylovy, M. *Tvori*, Vol.5. 681. "Задумана як суто літературна організація, вапліте дала високий стандарт художньої роботи і значну відіграла (sic?) роллю в розвитку радянської пролетарської літератури на Україні. Однак в процесі літературної роботи й літературної полеміки ВАПЛІТЕ допустилася помилок, що помимо волі і усвідомлення організації набрали політичного негативного значіння. Ці помилки ВАПЛІТЕ та окремі члени цілком щиро визнали неоднократно в постановках організації на сторінках журналу «Вапліте» та заяві президента тов. М. Куліша надрукованої в газеті «Комуніст» до якої повній мірі приєднуються всі члени ВАПЛІТЕ... Через це ми, члени Вільної Академії Пролетарської Літератури, вважаємо за краще розпустити свою організацію, щоб дати можливість письменникам, членам ВАПЛІТЕ, спокійніше працювати на користь радянської культури, якою керує наша комуністична партія."

arbiter of literary affairs in Soviet Ukraine. However, many prominent Ukrainian patriots had come forward in the spheres of politics and literature to advocate for a greater measure of autonomy in the face Soviet repression. Oleksander Shumsky's contention that Ukraine should be represented politically by Ukrainians and Mykola Khvylovy's advocacy for a path for Ukrainian literature away from Moscow were, for the Party, symptomatic of harmful political ideas, which they branded as "Shumskyism" and "Khvylovism," respectively.

Khvylovy, in particular, presented a significant threat to the Party because of his talent and popularity, and for his views on Ukrainian literature. As such, he was silenced: his work was obstructed by the Party and he was harassed into suicide in 1933.

Khvylovy's remarkable literary output in the mid to late 1920s demonstrated not only his deep concern for the development of Ukrainian culture, but also a profound disillusionment by the disparity between the Revolution's stated aims and the reality it manifested. His sloganeering ("Europe," and "On no account towards Moscow") and neologisms ("prosvita,"<sup>244</sup> "khokhlandia"<sup>245</sup>) reflected a call for liberation from Ukraine's populist past. Khvylovy's novellas and short stories, demonstrate the extent to which the individual must debase himself in order to become a part of the new Socialist reality. As

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<sup>244</sup> Prosvita, "enlightenment," in Ukrainian, generally refers to groups of societies that formed in Ukraine in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to promote cultural awareness. However, in this context Khvylovy uses the word "prosvita" to refer to those with a parochial world view, who attempt to impose their ignorance on all, namely, for Khvylovy, Pluh's Pylypenko.

<sup>245</sup> *Khokhlandia* refers to the general state of those who are Khokhli (pejorative term given to Ukrainians by Russian, meaning something like "hick"), by which Khvylovy means those Ukrainians who behave obsequiously and slavishly toward Russia and its elite. The term refers to a trend in Ukrainian culture, (which may possibly have its origins in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when Catherine the Great began to assimilate the Cossack elite into the Russian Empire by assigning them government posts) whereby Ukrainians, for various reasons, attempted to insinuate themselves into Russian-dominated society by abandoning their Ukrainian-ness.

Khvylovy noted, in spite of its progressive humanist ideals Socialism was, in reality, being implemented by philistines,<sup>246</sup> who were valued for their capacity to commit violence in the name of ideology.

### *Khvylovy and Ukrainian Modernism*

Mykola Khvylovy is “almost certainly the one writer who like a lightning rod attracted, focused, and transmitted the enormous energies of his day—and the energies and powers of interpretation of succeeding generations.”<sup>247</sup> No other writer of the era made as significant an impact on the direction of Ukrainian cultural, political, and literary thought as did Khvylovy. His contribution to the Ukrainian literary canon, his polemical pamphlets and fictional writings, are significant not only for what they reveal about the state of literary activity in Soviet Ukraine, but also because they are representative of a short-lived Ukrainian literary renaissance, which, led by Khvylovy, concerned itself with the task of establishing a Ukrainian literature that looked not towards Moscow for its literary models, but to the West. The key ideas put forth by Khvylovy in his polemical pamphlets: *prosvita*, art, Asiatic renaissance, and Europe<sup>248</sup> indicate a psychological orientation towards Europe rather than Russia, and a rejection of provincialism and populism. These ideas are symbolic of a Ukrainian Modernist ideology, which is

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<sup>246</sup> See discussion of Dr. Tahabat and the “degenerate” in the section on Khvylovy’s “Ya...Romantika” in the third part of the paper.

<sup>247</sup> Grabowicz, George G. "Symbolic Autobiography in the Prose of Mykola Khvyl'ovyi (some Preliminary Observations)." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 22 (1998): 165.

<sup>248</sup> As identified by M. Shkandrij in “Intro.” 8-9



prominently characterized by the need to rebel against Ukraine's populist past.<sup>249</sup> By examining the major themes in Khvylovy's polemical pamphlets and in his prose, we are able to better understand the author's vision for a new Ukrainian literature. In this chapter I would like first to attempt to establish, for the purposes of this paper, a simplified definition of Ukrainian Modernism and then briefly look at the origins of modernism in Ukrainian literature. Next, I will examine aspects of Khvylovy's modernist ideology, which are present in his polemical writings in in his prose. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a comprehensive analysis of Ukrainian modernism, it is necessary to establish a basic framework through which we can orient Khvylovy's literary style. Modernism's place in Ukrainian literature has been hotly debated among scholars, who have yet to provide an authoritative definition for the movement. However, many agree that some of the key features of modernism are discernable in Khvylovy's polemical pamphlets and in his prose. Khvylovy's modernist ideology was forged by the creative forces unleashed by the Ukrainian revolution.

“Poorly defined” and “inaccurately conceived,”<sup>250</sup> Modernism in Ukrainian literature has provoked debates among literary scholars who have called for a clearer and less restrictive definition of the term. In his polemical contribution to the debate, “Exorcising Ukrainian Modernity,” George Grabowicz asserted that Ukrainian Modernism, “if the notion is to be meaningful ... must be understood as a concept defining both a period and a style, with a flexible, rather than schematic sense of a system

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<sup>249</sup> Tarnawsky, M. "Modernism in Ukrainian Prose." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15.3/4 (1991). 266.

<sup>250</sup> Tarnawsky, M. "Modernism in Ukrainian Prose." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15.3/4 (1991). 266.

of themes, and, above all, values and artistic devices and stances...”<sup>251</sup> Literary scholars have put forth compelling arguments, which while demonstrating the problematic nature of establishing an a definition for Ukrainian Modernism, have contributed greatly to our understanding of the Modernist movement in Ukrainian literature.<sup>252</sup> While they have disagreed over which Ukrainian writers might be classified as Modernists, a basic consensus exists in terms of the way in which many scholars have come to view Ukrainian Modernism. For the purposes of this paper, Ukrainian Modernism may be loosely defined as an ideology, both a polemic and a poetics, characterized by its opposition to populism and its concern for the inviolability of individual artistic expression, that “transcends its historical time and cultural setting,”<sup>253</sup> linking many of the writers of the 1920s to their pre-revolutionary literary antecedents. The traditional division of Ukrainian literature into pre and post-revolutionary eras often obscures the literary similarities which exist between the two generations.<sup>254</sup> Scholars who have sought a broader definition for Ukrainian Modernism have noted the ideological and stylistic similarities between some of the Ukrainian writers of the 1920s and the early Modernist writers at the turn of the century. Among the early Ukrainian Modernist writers there was a deep concern for artistic integrity and individual freedom in literary expression and opposition to the parochial views of populist litterateurs. As Tarnawsky

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<sup>251</sup> Grabowicz, G. "Commentary: Exorcising Ukrainian Modernism." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15.3/4 (1991): 281.

<sup>252</sup> See the *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* series on Modernism in Ukrainian Literature. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15(3-4) December 1991. See also, “Modernism’s National Narrative,” in Shkandrij, M. *Russia and Ukraine* 197-212.

<sup>253</sup> Grabowicz, G. "Commentary: Exorcising Ukrainian Modernism." 273-83.276.

<sup>254</sup> Tarnawsky, M. "Modernism in Ukrainian Prose." 266.

affirms, “the driving idea of Ukrainian Modernism is the rejection of populism and village realism.”<sup>255</sup>

The early Ukrainian Modernist movement in literature began in the pre-revolutionary era, with writers who were associated with the literary organizations, “Ukrainska Khata” (Ukrainian House) and “Moloda Muza” (Young Muse). Moloda Muza, formed in 1906, was an informal group of writers, based in Lviv, who sought “freedom and liberty in content and form.” Among the traits which characterized the group as a whole were a penchant for the aesthetic above the utilitarian in life, an opposition to populism, and a focus on the intelligentsia. The editors of the group’s organ, the journal *Svit*, (World) printed a letter to its readership, affirming its commitment to use literature as a means to accentuate beauty and goodness in life:

“We come to you during these trying days of wide social and political activity and we point to the path of Goodness and Beauty, often forgotten in times of struggle and yet so longingly awaited. This path we have given the name *Svit*... We will do everything in our power to bring forth *Svit* as best as possible. The names of our contributors, their respect for art—let these speak today to our honorable comrades and compatriots. We extend warm and sincere encouragement to such a good and necessary affair, we add our enthusiasm and our love - the rest is in your hands, respected public.”<sup>256</sup>

The journal published the writings of the pioneering Ukrainian Modernist writer, Olha Kobylanska, whose works depicted cultured female protagonists oppressed by a philistine and provincial society. For Kobylanska, feminism signified the attainment of personal autonomy, a “painful, conscious, and long-drawn-out process;”<sup>257</sup> her works “emphasized professionalism and condemned dilettantism, amateurishness, and lack of

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<sup>255</sup> Tarnawsky, “Modernism in Ukrainian Prose” 10.

<sup>256</sup> *Svit*, no. 1 (24 February 1906), p. 1 cited in Struk, Danylo Husar. “The Journal *Svit*: A Barometer of Modernism.” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15.3/4 (1991): 248.

<sup>257</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Martha. *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women in Ukrainian Community Life, 1884-1939*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1988.109.

literary technique.”<sup>258</sup> The renowned Ukrainian author, Lesia Ukrainka, wrote to Kobylanska, her contemporary and friend: “You are an artist. In our public this is not valued very highly, but I love it above all. Es lebe die Kunst!”<sup>259</sup> However, critics such as Serhii Iefremov, a literary scholar from Eastern Ukraine and an advocate of populism in literature,<sup>260</sup> considered Kobylanska to be “elitist” and criticized her works for lacking in social responsibility and for propagating a concept of beauty that bordered on pornography:

The farthest development of the symbolist scheme, and the essence of the discovery made by the young generation, the last word, so to speak, of our symbolism consists of the fact that the cult of love turns into the cult of...the naked body—of course, the female naked body predominantly if not exclusively. Yet that is exactly, if you will, what was bound to happen: if the whole meaning of life rests only on beauty and physical love, then sooner or later that beauty and love will undoubtedly focus on one point—straight sensuality and straight unadulterated pornography.<sup>261</sup>

Mykyta Shapoval, an political and civic leader from Eastern Ukraine, who held positions in three separate Ukrainian governments between 1917 and 1919, helped found the journal *Khata*—“a vehicle for Ukrainian Modernism.”<sup>262</sup> He saw in Olga Kobylanska’s pioneering work, *Tsarivna*,<sup>263</sup> “a model for the attainment of personal

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<sup>258</sup> Pavlychko, Solomea, and Rob de Lossa. "Modernism Vs. Populism in Fin De Siècle Ukrainian Literature: A Case of Gender Conflict." 1996. 87. in Chester, Pamela and Forrester, Sibelan E. S. *Engendering Slavic Literatures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. 87.

<sup>259</sup> Ukraïнка, Lesia. *Khronolohiia zhyttia i tvorchosty*. New York, 1970.570. cited in Pavlychko, Solomea, and Rob de Lossa. "Modernism Vs. Populism in Fin De Siècle Ukrainian Literature: A Case of Gender Conflict." 1996. 87

<sup>260</sup> Tarnawsky. 267.

<sup>261</sup> Iefremov, S. "V poiskakh novoi krasoty," *Kievskaia sfarina*, 1902, no. 12, pp. 404-5. Cited in Struk, Danylo Husar. "The Journal Svit: A Barometer of Modernism." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15.3/4 (1991): 246.

<sup>262</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Martha. 109.

<sup>263</sup> Olga Kobylanska’s *Tsarivna*, published in 1896, is the “first and most consistently feminist novel in Ukrainian literature” ( Bohachevsky-Chomiak).

autonomy.”<sup>264</sup> Like Kobylianska, who “experienced a large influence from Nietzsche, with his ultra-individualistic philosophy,”<sup>265</sup> Shapoval and the Khatians asserted Nietzschean ideals of freedom for the individual in their own literature. Thus, the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche provided the ideological basis for the rebelliousness of the works of the early Ukrainian Modernists. For Shapoval, their works were to be evaluated on the basis of their esthetic value and their expression of the national idea. Under his editorship the literary journal, *Ukrainska Khata*, appeared in Kiev between 1909 and 1914 and featured the works of Ukrainian Modernists, along with translations of Charles Baudelaire,<sup>266</sup> Heinrich Mann,<sup>267</sup> and others. The journal served as a major forum for young, nationally-conscious Ukrainians inspired by the 1905 revolution, who formed the basis for a new Ukrainian national liberation ideology and national/cultural world view. Many early Ukrainian Modernists “believed in a European orientation for Ukrainian culture, had visions of creating a sophisticated national art, and were determined to fend off all manifestations of provincialism and crudely utilitarian literature.”<sup>268</sup> Ukrainian Modernism legitimized art as a free, individual pursuit; not

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<sup>264</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Martha. 109.

<sup>265</sup> Iefremov, S. *Istoria Ukrains'koho Pis'menstva*. Leipzig, 1919. Vol.2. 263-264. Cited in Tarnawsky, M. *Modernism in Ukrainian Prose*. 267.

<sup>266</sup> Charles Baudelaire was a French poet (1821-1867) who inspired many of the Ukrainian Modernists. Credited with having created the term “modernity,” Baudelaire’s most famous work, *Les Fleurs du mal*, dealt with the author’s concern for the changing nature of beauty in an industrializing and modern Paris.

<sup>267</sup> Thomas Mann was a German novelist (1871-1951) and essayist whose works critiqued the authoritarian social structure of German society under Kaiser Wilhelm II.

<sup>268</sup> Ilnytzkij, O. "The Modernist Ideology and Mykola Khvylovyyi." 257-258.

beholden to any edifying or enlightening program, it was to be measured by European, and not just simply nativist, standards.<sup>269</sup>

The works of the pre-Revolutionary Modernist writers in Ukraine share basic ideological similarities with the writings of Mykola Khvylovy. Although scholarship (particularly English-language scholarship) on the topic is rather limited, some outstanding contemporary Ukrainian literary scholars have expounded upon key similarities between the ideas of the pre-Revolutionary Ukrainian Modernists and those of Khvylovy. Among the most illuminating is Oleh Ilnytkyj's, article entitled "The Modernist Ideology and Mykola Khvylovy," which makes a strong case for the validity of such a comparison. By examining Khvylovy's early letters to Mykola Zerov and Khvylovy's theretofore-unpublished pamphlet "Ukraina chy Malorosia," Ilnytkyj concluded that Khvylovy "had a close affinity for certain aspects of the Modernist ideology."<sup>270</sup> The thrust of Ilnytkyj's argument rests on two key points of similarity between Khvylovy and his ideological predecessors: the necessity of a European orientation for Ukrainian literature and the obligation to struggle against philistinism.<sup>271</sup>

#### *Khvylovy and pre-Revolutionary Ukrainian Modernism*

In his polemical pamphlets Khvylovy confronted two fundamental issues, the need to direct a European orientation for Ukrainian literature and an imperative to break with Ukraine's nativist past, ideas which were also of central importance to the pre-Revolutionary Modernists. Implicit in this dichotomy (European orientation and rejection

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<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.* 261.

<sup>270</sup> Ilnytkyj, O. 258.

<sup>271</sup> Ilnytkyj, 262.

of populism) are a host of other ideas, including, prominently, the need to preserve the sanctity of art as an individual pursuit. Khvylovy was completely opposed to the concept that art must necessarily be lowered in order to make it more accessible to the common man. (As we have seen in the previous chapters, Khvylovy ridiculed the “enko”s<sup>272</sup> for just this idea.) In his own works, Khvylovy made no concessions to “the ignoramus, the plodding dullard, or to the prejudiced member of the dominant Russified city culture who viewed all things Ukrainian with condescension or contempt.”<sup>273</sup> However, this tendency did not mean that art should be divorced from the national idea. On the contrary, the freedom to explore and to create various literary models precisely served the national interest. As the Ukrainian poet Bohdan Ihor Antonych stated, “Art—in and of itself—is a social value; a nation is obviously a society, therefore art is by definition also a national value.”<sup>274</sup>

Khvylovy’s critics were the first to draw comparisons between him and the pre-Revolutionary Modernists. The literary scholar and critic Oleksandr Doroshkevych wrote in 1925 that Khvylovy was “an epigone of modernistic-aesthetic Europe.”<sup>275</sup> However, for Khvylovy, the fundamental problem concerned how to create art in a culturally-backward country and in the absence of non-Russian literary models. In “Kulturnii Epigonizm” (Cultural Epigonism) Khvylovy wrote:

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<sup>272</sup> Pylypenko, Iakovlenko, etc.

<sup>273</sup> Shkandryj, 8.

<sup>274</sup> “Natsional’ne mystetstvo,” *Karby*, 1933, p.5. cited in Ilnytkyj, 262.

<sup>275</sup> Doroshkevych, O. “Shehe slovo pro Evropu,” *Zhyttia I Revolutsiia* 1925, 6-7. p.66. cited in Ilnytkyj, O.258.

We are faced with this fundamental and unexplained dilemma: Are we going to approach our national art as fulfilling a service (in the given instance—serving the proletariat) and as forever subordinate, forever a reserve for those of the world’s arts that have attained a high level of development?

Or on the contrary, while retaining the service role shall we find it necessary to raise its artistic level to that of the world masterpieces? <sup>276</sup>

Comparisons between Khvylovy’s VAPLITE and the Khataists by their critics concerned

the European orientation that the two groups espoused for Ukrainian literature. As

Ilnytskij pointed out, Khvylovy praised Mykhailo Iatskiv, the “greatest of all the Moloda

Muza writers,” for playing an outspoken role in the struggle against philistinism.<sup>277</sup>

Khvylovy, for whom Modernism equated to an explicit rejection of philistinism,

embraced the comparisons drawn between the Vaplitians and the Khataists by their

critics: “In other words, if we are ‘khatiany,’ than those who are not with us are in the

clutches of provincialism...Because, after all, what is ‘khatianstvo,?’ Did it not have a

particularly westernizing orientation? In this sense, we really see them as our

predecessors.”<sup>278</sup>

### *Quo Vadis?*

The first cycle of Khvylovy’s polemical pamphlets, entitled “Quo Vadis,” described several ideas which are crucial to understanding Khvylovy’s literary ideology.

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<sup>276</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Kulturnii Epigonism” *Tvori v p’yatokh tomakh*. Vol.2 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 176.

“Стоїть така основна й нез’ясована дилема: —Чи будемо ми розглядати своє національне мистецтво, як службне (в даному разі воно служить пролетаріатові) і як вічно — підсобне, вічно — резервне, до тих світових мистецтв, які досягли високого розквіту? Чи, навпаки, залишивши за ним ту ж саму службну роль, знайдемо за потрібне підіймати його художній рівень на рівень світових шедеврів?”

<sup>277</sup> Ilnytskij, 259.

<sup>278</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Ukraina chy Malorosia” *Tvori*. Vol.2 Kiev: Vydanstvo khudozhnii literaturi “Dnipro,” 1990, pp.576-621. This quote is also cited in Ilnytsky, 259.

“Іншими словами, коли ми «хатяни», то той, хто не з нами, обов’язково попадає в лабеті просвітянства... Бо що таке «хатянство»? Чи не було воно потенціальним західництвом? Отже, в цьому сенсі ми дійсно вбачаємо в ньому свого предка.



*Prosvita*, art, the Asiatic Renaissance, and Europe, as Myroslav Shkandrij has noted, are four inter-related ideas which are central in Khvylovy's pamphlets. A major failing of the Ukrainianization program, as Khvylovy recognized, was that it afforded the least qualified and most philistine writers of the era a position of literary prominence. To Khvylovy these writers were imposters, "hacks," who stood for the degradation of art and its subordination to Soviet authority. What was needed, then, was a renaissance in Ukrainian literature, which rejected provinciality and embraced the European literary tradition. Obstructing the progress of Ukrainian literature were the *prosvita* types, who, unable to produce anything of literary merit, were compelled to substitute ideological debate for artistic ability.<sup>279</sup> *Prosvita* originally refers to pre-Revolutionary cultural groups which assumed a populist character and operated primarily in the Ukrainian villages; in his polemical pamphlets, Khvylovy uses the term to connote provinciality and primitiveness. In *On 'Satan in a Barrel' or On Graphomaniacs, Speculators, and other Prosvita-Types (A First Letter to Literary Youth)*," the first of Khvylovy's pamphlets in "Quo Vadis," the author opened by quoting Oswald Spengler:<sup>280</sup>

"I elevate Bach and Mozart to inaccessible heights, but it does not follow from this that thousands of scribes and philosophers who inhabit our large cities should be given the title of artist and thinker."<sup>281</sup> Khvylovy's message is that the term "artist" has been appropriated by retrograde

elements in society who denigrate art through their attempts lower its standards. Only by

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<sup>279</sup> Shkandrij, "Introduction." 6-9.

<sup>280</sup> Oswald Spengler was a German historian and writer best known for his book *The Decline of the West*. Spengler had a huge impact on intellectual discourse throughout Europe in the 1920s and his ideas and works were influential to Khvylovy.

<sup>281</sup> Shkandrij, "Introduction." 9

breaking from its backward past, with its traditions of populism and ethnographism, can Ukrainian literature aspire to serve the interests of the intelligentsia.<sup>282</sup>

In “On Copernicus of Frauenburg or The ABC of the Asiatic Renaissance in Art (a Second Letter to Literary Youth” Khvylovy wrote of the potentially harmful influence of *prosvita* in Ukrainian literary society. He addressed the younger generation of Ukrainian writers, imploring them to “take a critical view of those ‘inscribed truths,’ which ‘enko’ preaches.”<sup>283</sup> Art, in Khvylovy’s mind, “was to be one of the highest vocations: it was not understood as the propagation of convenient political slogans, but as the playful composition of profound ideas and complex imagery.”<sup>284</sup> For Khvylovy, art was the product of genius: “one must be born an artist.”<sup>285</sup> By contrast, the *prosvita* artist was “...the philistine, the man-in-the-street who, keeping pace with the development of the victorious class, succeeds in giving society a useful work.”<sup>286</sup> The *prosvita* artist, then, is no artist at all: “Because an artist who ‘keeps pace with the victorious class’ ceases to be an artist.”<sup>287</sup> Khvylovy’s definition of art echoed the pre-Revolutionary

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>283</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Pro Kopernika z Frauenbyrg, abo Abetka Aziatskoho Renesancy v Mistetsvi” *Tvori v p’yatokh tomakh*. Vol. 4 Smoloskup: Baltimore, 1986. 86.

“Гадаємо також, що наша абетка збентежить «молоду» молодь, і вона поставиться критично до тих привабливих «прописних істин», які проповідує «енко».

<sup>284</sup> Shkandrij, “Introduction” 10.

<sup>285</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Pro Kopernika z Frauenbyrg, abo Abetka Aziatskoho Renesancy v Mistetsvi” *Tvori v p’yatokh tomakh*. Vol. 4 Smoloskup: Baltimore, 1986. 94. “— Мистцем треба народитись”

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.* 96.

“Але йдемо далі. Йдемо до просвітянського визначення мистця. — «Я називаю (каже «енко») художником того міщанина «обивателя», який в рівні з ходюю розвитку кляси-переможниці зумів дати суспільству корисний твір”.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.* 96.

“Бо мистець, який йде «врівні з ходом розвитку кляси», перестає бути мистцем.”

Ukrainian Modernists—they also “pointed to a path of goodness and beauty”: “What is ‘art in general...’” Khyvylovyy wrote,

To answer this question, you do not have to be a theoretician.  
Art in general is an arch-specific branch of human activity, which attempts to satisfy one of the needs of the human ‘spirit,’ namely love of the beautiful.<sup>288</sup>

Khyvylovyy’s conception of art is closely related to another of his major symbols, the “Asiatic Renaissance.” Khyvylovyy believed that the Revolution would lead to a cultural and political revival in which Ukrainian literature would play a messianic role.

“The powerful Asiatic Renaissance in art is approaching,” Khyvylovyy wrote,

and its forerunners are we, the ‘Olympians.’ Just as Petrarch, Michelangelo, Raphael, etc., in their time from a tiny corner of Italy set Europe ablaze with the fire of the Renaissance, in the same way the new artists from the once oppressed Asiatic countries, the new artist communards who are travelling with us will climb the peak of Mount Helicon and place there the lamp of the Renaissance, and, under the distant rumble of fighting on the barricades, it will cast the light of its blazing purple-blue pentangle over the dark European night.<sup>289</sup>

Khyvylovyy envisioned the “Asiatic Renaissance” as a battle which would usher in a great spiritual awakening among the Asian countries. It represented a struggle “against the old psyche” and was characterized by what Khyvylovyy’s called *Romantic vitalism*. Romantic vitalism (life) was to be the “art of the first period of the Asiatic renaissance. From the

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<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* 87.

— «Мистецтво взагалі» — то архи-специфічна галузь людської діяльності, що намагається задовольнити одну із потреб «духу» людини, саме любов до прекрасного.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* 98.

“Отже, гряде могутній азіатський ренесанс у мистецтві, і його предтечами є ми, «олімпійці». Як в свій час Петрарка, Мікель-Анджело, Рафаель і т. д. з італійського закутка запалили Європу огнем відродження, так нові мистці, з колись пригноблених азіатських країн, нові мистці-комунари, що йдуть за нами, зійдуть на гору Гелікон, поставлять там світильник Ренесансу, і він, під дальній гул барикадних боїв, спалахне багряно-голубим п’ятикутником над темною, європейською ніччю.”

Ukraine it must spread to all parts of the world and there play not a domestic role, but a universally human one.”<sup>290</sup> Romantic vitalism As Khvylovy wrote in “Quo Vadis,”

Speaking of the Asiatic Renaissance, we mean the future unheard-of flowering of art among such nations as China, India, and so forth. We set it as a great spiritual reawakening of the backward Asian countries. It has to appear, this Asiatic Renaissance, because the idea of Communism stalks like a spectre not so much over Europe as over Asia; because Asia, realizing that only Communism will liberate it from economic slavery, will utilize art as a factor in the battle...The Asiatic Renaissance is the culminating point of the transition epoch.<sup>291</sup>

The fourth symbol in Khvylovy’s “Quo Vadis,” “Europe,” is the force “which thrusts humanity forward, out of *prosvita* and on to the highway of progress.”<sup>292</sup> Europe, as a “psychological category,” represents an orientation away from the provinciality of Ukraine’s past and towards a European literary tradition. For Khvylovy,

“Europe is the experience of many ages. It is not the Europe that Spengler announced was ‘in decline,’ not the one that is rotting and which we despise. It is the Europe of a grandiose civilization, the Europe of Goethe, Darwin, Byron, Newton, and Marx, and so forth. It is the Europe that the first phalanxes of the Asiatic renaissance cannot do without.”<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* 104.

“Це мистецтво першого періоду азійського ренесансу. З України воно мусить перекинутися у всі частини світу й відограти там не домашню роль, а загальнолюдську.”

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* 100.

“— Говорячи про азійський ренесанс, ми маємо на увазі майбутній нечуваний розквіт мистецтва в таких народів, як Китай, Індія і т. д. Ми розуміємо його, як велике духовне відродження азійськи-відсталих країн. Він мусить прийти, цей азійський ренесанс, бо ідеї комунізму бродять примарою не стільки по Європі, скільки по Азії, бо Азія, розуміючи, що тільки комунізм звільнить її від економічного рабства, використає мистецтво як бойовий чинник. Отже, гряде новий Рамаян. Азійський ренесанс — це кульмінаційна точка епохи переходового періоду.”

<sup>292</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Pro Demagogichnu Vodichku, abo Spavzhnya Adresa Ukrainskoi Voronshini, Vilna Konkorentsia, VUAN, i.t.d (Tretii list do literaturni molodi)” (On Waters of Demagogy or The Real Address of Ukrainian Voronskyism, Free Competition, Vuann, etc. Third Letter to the Literary Youth) *Tvori v pyatokh tomakh Vol.4 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986.* 130.

“ Ми розуміємо Європу теж, як психологічну категорію, яка виганяє лю дьскість із просвіти на великий тракт прогресу”

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

“Що ж таке Європа? Європа — це досвід багатьох віків. Це не та Європа, що її Шпенглер оголосив «на закаті», не та, що гниє, до якої вся наша ненависть. Це — Європа грандіозної цивілізації, Європа — Гете, Дарвіна, Байрона, Ньютона, Маркса, і т. д., і т. п. Це та Європа, без якої не обійдуться перші фаланги азійського ренесансу.

Through the Ukrainian Neoclassicist writer, Mykola Zerov, Khvylovy formed the image of a European-oriented Ukrainian litterateur: “We have to use the Zerovs,” Khvylovy wrote, “not only for their technical skills, but also in their psychological dimension... the fact that they are so intently ‘against the current’ in translating the Romans, gives us the right to view them as real Europeans.”<sup>294</sup> An orientation towards Europe and away from Russia is the crux of Khvylovy’s Modernist ideology. Those involved in the struggle against philistinism in the cultural and literary sphere are harbingers of a new epoch in Ukrainian literature. “We are not feeble epigones,” Khvylovy affirmed, “We are courageous pioneers in the “brilliant world—Communism.”<sup>295</sup> “And so,” Khvylovy wrote as he ended the pamphlet, “Europe or *prosvita*? For art there can be only one answer: Europe.”<sup>296</sup>

### *Ia...Romantika*

“Коли ти революціонер — ти не раз розкоlesh своє «я».”<sup>297</sup>  
“When you are a Revolutionary, more than once does your “I” split.

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<sup>294</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Pro Demagogichnu Vodichku, abo Spavzhnya Adresa Ukrainskoi Voronshini, Vilna Konkorentsia, VUAN, i.t.d (Tretii list do literaturni molodi)”(On Waters of Demagogy or The Real Address of Ukrainian Voronskyism, Free Competition, Vuann, etc.) *Tvori v pyatokh tomakh* Vol.4 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 130.

“Отже, зерових ми мусимо використати не тільки по лінії техніки, але й у напрямку психології...той факт, що вони так пильно «проти течії» перекладають римлян, дає нам право вбачати в них справжніх європейців.”

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.* 130.

“Ми не безсилі епігони, ми відважні піонери «в яскравий світ — комунізм.”

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* 111.

“Що ж тоді: — Європа чи просвіта? — Для мистецтва — тільки — Європа.”

<sup>297</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Pro Kopernika z Frauenburg, abo Abetka Aziatskoho Renesancy v Mistetsvi” *Tvori v p'yatokh tomakh*. Vol. 4 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 104.

Mykola Khvylovy's "Ia (Romantika)," is perhaps his one prose work which best describes the author's Modernist dilemma. In apocalyptic terms, Khvylovy conveys the profound sense of personal crisis that is brought about by the painful reality of the Revolutionary era. The result of this personal crisis is a fracturing of the ego, whereby the "I" is represented by its constituent parts. The opposition between these facets of the protagonist's ego, the psychopathic discourse, provides the tension through which the narrative progresses. As Solomea Pavlychko has identified Khvylovy himself experienced such an ideological crisis, which "pushed him to the brink of a permanent mental breakdown. Neurasthenia, emotional crisis, mental illness, abnormality, hysteria - these words define the leitmotifs of his prose."<sup>298</sup> Through an analysis of the story's main characters and their interactions, we are able to better discern the nature of the protagonist's psychological rupture and its consequences. The protagonist's inner drama plays out against the background of his external reality. In this way, the story's self-reflexive character allows it to "gain external objectivity and social relevance," by enacting "the inner schisms inherent in (Khvylovy's) era."<sup>299</sup>

As the story opens, the reader is confronted with two primary images, the mother and the "intangible commune" to which she is linked. For Khvylovy, the "distant" or

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<sup>298</sup> Pavlychko, S. *Diskors Modernizmu v Ukrainski Literaturi: Monografia*. Kiev: Lebid, 1999. 269.

"Микола Хвильовий як письменник і особистість упродовж 20-х років пережив світоглядну кризу, яка поставила його на межу постійного душевного зриву. Неврастенія, душевна криза, психічна хвороба, ненормальність, істерія — цими словами визначаються лейтмотиви його прози."

<sup>299</sup> Ferguson, Dolly. "Lyricism and the Internal Landscape in the Early Creative Prose of Mykola Khvyl'ovyi" *Canadian Slavonic Papers: An Inter-disciplinary Quarterly devoted to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* 18.4 (1976). 430.

“intangible” (literally the “commune beyond the mountains”<sup>300</sup>) represents the ideal vision of the communist future. The Mother’s connection to the distant commune, her “innocence, silent sorrow, and limitless kindness,”<sup>301</sup> immediately cast her in a martyrological light. The Mother here can be seen as a projection of the protagonist’s psyche, and she has some very fundamental associations: she symbolizes righteousness, and goodness, sovereignty, and humanity. The protagonist’s material world, by contrast, is lawless and brutal; survival in this world requires the abnegation of those ideals which the Mother represents. As the protagonist comes under the influence of the ideas associated with the image of the Mother, his irrepressible and painful reality becomes manifest:

“And both my impossible suffering and my unbearable torture grow warm in the light of fanaticism before this wonderful picture of sorrow.”<sup>302</sup>

The Mother plays a revelatory role in the story through her connection to the distant commune and with her prophetic warnings. Her message is foreboding: she warns her son, the protagonist, that he is losing his humanity. “Beware” the Mother pleads, “...the mint withers in sorrow...A storm is approaching.”<sup>303</sup> The image of the mint here is important: not only does it suggest a connection to purity, virtue, and humanity; it also

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<sup>300</sup> “загірна комуна”

<sup>301</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Іа Romantika” *Tvori v pyatokh tomakh* Vol.2 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 33.

“Моя мати — наївність, тиха жура і добрість безмежна. (Це я добре пам’ятаю!).

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.* 33.

“І мій неможливий біль, і моя незносна мука тепліють у лямпаді фанатизму перед цим прекрасним печальним образом.”

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

“— Тривога! — Мати каже, що вона поливала сьогодні м’яту, і м’ята вмирає в тузі. Мати каже: «Надходить гроза!» І я бачу: в її очах стоять дві хрустальні росинки.

has a certain sensorial significance in its connection to the Mother. When the protagonist arrives at his mother's home, the yard also smells of mint; visual and olfactory, and later in the story, extra-sensory representations of mint signify its importance as a symbol. The image of the mint and its accompanying associations are ephemeral, however. Similarly, the image of the Mother also emerges when the protagonist doubts the righteousness of his revolutionary obligations. But in the presence of Dr. Tahabat and the degenerate, "in the lamp of Revolutionary fanaticism," the Mother withdraws and "waits, rigid, in the darkness."<sup>304</sup> Unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, the protagonist tries to convince himself that his Mother, in fact, does not exist:

"And then, alarmed, I assured myself that this was false, that no such mother stood before me, but nothing more than I phantom.

—A phantom?—again I shudder.

No, this is not true! Here, in this quiet room, my mother is not a phantom, but a part of my own criminal "self" to which I impart my will. Here in this remote corner, on the outskirts of the city, I am hiding one part of my soul from the guillotine."<sup>305</sup>

"Disappearing night and day into the Cheka," which is incongruously based in the "mansion of an executed noble, with gorgeous door-curtains, ancient pictures, and portraits of the princely family,"<sup>306</sup> the protagonist heads a revolutionary committee. This

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<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.* 38.

"І тоді відходила, удалялась од мене моя мати — прообраз загірної М арії, і застигала, у тьмі чекаючи."

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.* 39.

"І тоді, збентежений, запевняю себе, що це неправда, що ніякої матері нема переді мною, що це не більше, як фантом. — Фантом? — знову здригнув я. Ні, саме це — неправда! Тут, у тихій кімнаті, моя мати не фантом, а частина мого власного злочинного «я», якому я даю волю. Тут, у глухому закутку, на краю города, я ховаю від гільйотини один кінець своєї душі."

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

"День і ніч я пропадаю в «чека». Помеш канья наше — фантастичний палац: це будинок розстріляного шяхтича. Химерні портъери, древні візерунки, портрети княжої фамілії. Все це дивиться на мене з усіх кінців мого випадкового кабінету."



is “the new Sanhedrin, the dark tribunal of Communism,”<sup>307</sup> where a committee of three pronounces death sentences on ideological criminals. Amid the anachronistic splendor of the mansion, images from the portraits on the walls, like spectres from a by-gone era, look down upon the protagonist from every corner of his “happenstance” office.<sup>308</sup> But they do not provoke feelings of contempt in the protagonist; he is instead struck by their antiquity and grandeur. As he gazes at the paintings, the protagonist becomes aware that he stands on the precipice of the dawning of a new age, and he questions his role in it. His self-reflection leads to a realization of the essence of his dilemma: though the protagonist performs the morally reprehensible tasks required by Cheka, he yet retains a capacity for empathy, his humanity. His awareness of the impossibility of sustaining these two opposing ideas is the cause of his psychological crisis.

“I look at the portraits: the prince is knitting his brows, the princess displaying a haughty disdain, while the princelings play in the gloom of century-old oaks. I, in this extraordinary austerity, feel the entire ancient world, all its impotent grandiosity, and the beauty of the former years of the nobility. It is like the precise placement of mother-of-pearl at the banquet table of a wild and starving land. And I am a complete stranger, a bandit by one terminology, an insurgent by another, I look frankly and sincerely at these portraits, and in my soul there is no anger and there never will be. And I realize this: I am a Chekist, but I am also a human being.”<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* 35.

“Це новий синедріон, це чорний трибунал комуни.”

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.* 34

“День і ніч я пропадаю в «чека». Помеш кання наше — фантастичний палац: це будинок розстріляного шляхтича. Химерні портъери, древні візерунки, портрети княжої фамілії. Все це дивиться на мене з усіх кінців мого випадкового кабінету.”

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* 34-35

“Я дивлюсь на портрети: князь хмурить брови, княгиня — надменна зневага, княжата — в темряві столітніх дубів. І в цій надзвичайній суворості я відчуваю весь древній світ, всю безсилу Грандіозність і красу третьої молодости минулих шляхетних літ. Це чіткий перлямутр на бенкеті дикої голодної країни.

І я, зовсім чужа людина, бандит — за одною термінологією, інсургент — за другою, я просто і ясно дивлюсь на ці портрети і в моїй душі нема й не буде гніву. І це зрозуміло: — я — чекіст, але і людина.

The protagonist's fellow Chekists are the communitard Andrusha, Dr. Tahabat, and the degenerate. Andrusha is the ideal communist; though he believes sincerely in the idea of Socialism, he is unwilling to sacrifice his moral principles in service to it. Like the Mother, Andrusha represents the compassionate and merciful aspects of the protagonist's nature. As the protagonist knows, Andrusha believes that their activities "are indecent, that the communitards are not used to such things, that this is—a bacchanal, etc., etc."<sup>310</sup> When Andrusha voices his objections to the sadistic work of the tribunal, the protagonist, basking in his own fanaticism, berates Andrusha, who (recalling the imagery of the mint) "withers" before him.<sup>311</sup> Andrusha functions as the protagonist's conscience; he is ignored and ultimately banished suddenly from the story ("Andrusha has disappeared")<sup>312</sup> before the protagonist commits his final irredeemable sin, matricide.

The Lenin-esque Dr. Tahabat represents the pragmatic, calculating, and doctrinaire aspects of the protagonist's psyche. This Doctor, with his "wide brow and white in his baldness, with his cold reasoning, and with a stone instead of a heart,"<sup>313</sup> is unencumbered by a sense of moral responsibility; he maintains a certain power over the

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<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.* 37.

"Але Андрюша нервово переходить із місця на місце і все поривається щось сказати. Я знаю, що він думає: він хоче сказати, що так нечесно, що так комунари не роблять, що це — бакханалія і т.д., і т.п."

<sup>311</sup> In the first instance of what I translated here as "withering," Khvylovy wrote "м'ята *вмирає* в тузі," literally "the mint is *dying* in sorrow." In the second instance, concerning Andrusha, Khvylovy wrote "Андрюша *знітився*, зблід і вийшов із кабінету," ("Andrusha shriveled, grew pale and left the room.") The basic images of withering away and dying are evident in both examples.

<sup>312</sup> Khvylovy, M. "Іа Romantika" *Tvori v ryatokh tomakh* Vol.2 Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 48.

"Андрюша десь ізник"

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* 37

"Цей доктор із широким лобом і білою лисиною, з холодним розумом і з каменем замість серця..."

protagonist through his ability to “be cruel and inhuman when reason dictates.”<sup>314</sup> The protagonist realizes that in the Doctor’s hands, he “is merely an insignificant thing which has surrendered to a predacious will.”<sup>315</sup> “Is he not both my inescapable master and my beastly instinct?”<sup>316</sup> Dr. Tahabat’s faithful lackey, the degenerate, unquestioningly carries out the Doctor’s commands. The degenerate is “the arm that carries out the orders of the cold, dispassionate brain.”<sup>317</sup> “If the Doctor is the evil genius, my evil will,” reflects the protagonist, “then the degenerate is the executioner from the guillotine.”<sup>318</sup>

Fearing a revolt, agents of the Cheka scour the city for enemies, “already there are not enough prisons for the guilty, and yet almost innocent city rabble.”<sup>319</sup> The members of the “dark tribunal” are tasked with the adjudicating the fate the so-called enemies of the Revolution. However, the cases presided over here do not concern violent counter-revolutionaries, but rather a theosophist husband and wife and a group of nuns; they’ve committed the capital offense of ideological non-conformity. The protagonist presides over the first case, number 282,<sup>320</sup> that of a theosophist man and wife accused of holding

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<sup>314</sup> Ferguson, “Lyricism.” 430.

<sup>315</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Іа Romantika” *Tvori v pyatokh tomakh Vol.2 Smoloskyp*: Baltimore, 1986. 37

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.* 37

“-- це ж він і мій безвихідний хазяїн, мій звірячий інстинкт.”

<sup>317</sup> Ferguson, “Lyricism.” 430

<sup>318</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Іа Romantika” *Tvori v pyatokh tomakh Vol.2 Smoloskyp*: Baltimore, 1986.38.

“коли доктор — злий геній, зла моя воля, тоді дегенерат є палач із гільйотини”.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* 40

“Так! Так! Я знаю: може спалахнути бунт, і мої вірні агенти ширяють по заулках, і вже нікуди вміщати цей винний і майже невинний обивательський хлам.”

<sup>320</sup> In “Ya...Romantika,” codes, which are embedded in the text, share a symbolic link to Khvylovy’s own suicide. For Khvylovy, numbers are significant, particularly the number 13. As we are told, the case of the condemned couple is assigned case number 282, three numbers which add to twelve. We can conclude that the case number then for the group of nuns (although it is never stated) would be 283, adding to 13. The significance is evident when we take into consideration Khvylovy’s fixation with the number thirteen and his May 13 suicide. Khvylovy even wrote in his suicide letter, “Remember how I loved the number thirteen?”

secretive night-time meetings in their apartment. The protagonist takes a sadistic pleasure in abusing the couple, pronouncing their death sentences as they plead before him. “Ah, you are theosophists!” the protagonist proclaims,

You are seeking Truth! New Truth? Yes! Yes! Who is it? Christ? No? Another savior of the world? Yes! You are not content with Confucius, nor with Buddha, nor with Lao-Tse, nor with Mahomet, nor with the devil himself. Ah, I understand: you need to fill the void... Then why, in the devil’s name not make Cheka your new Messiah?<sup>321</sup>

Pleased by his capacity for cruelty, the protagonist revels in a growing sense of ideological fervor, which he compares to the fanaticism of holy warriors.

I am entering into my role. A mist stands before my eyes, and I was in a state that could be qualified as extreme ecstasy. I suppose that in such a state the fanatics went to Holy War.<sup>322</sup> A group of nuns, among them the protagonist’s mother, crowd into his office, charged with agitating against the Commune. The protagonist receives the group with his back turned, observing the darkening sky from his office windows. Resolutely he turns around, intending to pronounce a death sentence on the group, but the sight of his mother reignites his crisis of conscience.

But I turn and see—right before me stands my mother, my sorrowful mother, with the eyes of Maria. In alarm, I flung myself sideways: what is this—a hallucination? In distress I darted to the other side and cried out: You? And from the crowd of women I hear a voice fraught with pain: ‘Son! My rebellious son!’ I feel as though I am on the point of collapse. I am dumbstruck; I grasp a chair and brace myself against it. But at that moment, a boisterous, rolling laughter strikes against the ceiling and vanishes. It is the Doctor Tahabat:

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A second point of interest concerns the similarity in manner of death between Khvylovy and the Mother: both die of gunshot wounds to the temple. This kind of coding is interesting because, I think, it affords an extra-textual understanding of the author and the story. The observations made here are my own; however for an authoritative examination of symbolic autobiography in Khvylovy’s works, see George Grabowicz, “Symbolic Autobiography in the Prose of Mykola Khvylovy.”

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* 43.

“Ага, ви теософи! Шукаєте правди!.. Нової? Так! Так!..Хто ж це? .. Христос?.. Ні?.. Інший спаситель світу?..Так! Вас не задовольняє ні Конфуцій, ні Лао-тсе, ні Будда,ні Магомет, ні сам чорт!.. Ага, розумію: треба заповнити порожнє місце... — Так якого ж ви чорта, мати вашу перетак, не зробіте цього Месію з «чека»?

<sup>322</sup> Khvylovy, M. “Іа Romantika” *Tvori v ryatokh tomakh Vol.2* Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1986. 41

“Я входив у ролі. Туман стояв перед очима, і я був у тій стані, який можна кваліфікувати, як надзвичайний екстаз. Я гадаю, що в такій стані фанатики йшли на священну війну.”

‘Mother?! Ah you, damned muppet. Still need mother’s breast? Mother?!’ I instantly come to my senses and grip the Mauser. ‘Hell!’ and I threw myself upon the Doctor. But he just watched me coldly and said: “Well, well, calm down, you traitor to the Commune. See to it that you settle affairs with “mother” (he emphasized “with mother”) as with the others.<sup>323</sup>

A mirror hangs above the heads of the condemned nuns, in which the protagonist sees himself: “pale, almost lifeless.”<sup>324</sup> He is confronted with the realization that he must commit matricide if he is to prove his worth as a “soldier of the revolution.” For the protagonist, there is an implicit understanding that the killing of his mother equates symbolically to a killing of himself. <sup>325</sup>“Yes,” he thinks, “At last they have seized the other end of my soul. No longer will I go to the edge of the city in order to hide my criminal self. I now have only one law: never to say anything to anyone about how I split my ‘I.’”<sup>326</sup> The protagonist instructs the sentinel to take the group to the cellar, which elicits another eruption of laughter from Doctor Tahabat.

Outside, amid an increasing cannonade and rising smoke on the horizon, the enemy’s forces press down upon the insurgents: “A smell of execution hung in the

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<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

“але я повертаюся і бачу — прямо переді мною стоїть моя мати, моя печальна мати, з очима Марії. Я в тривозі метнувся вбік: що це — галюцинація? Я в тривозі метнувся вбік і скрикнув: — Ти? І чую з натовпу женщин зажурне: — Сину! мій м’ятежний сину! Я відчуваю, що от-от упаду. Мені дурно, я схопився

рукою за крісло й похилився. Але в той же момент регіт грохотом покотився, бухнувся об стелю й пропав. То доктор Тагабат: — «Мамо»?! Ах ти, чортова кукло! Сісі захотів? «Мамо»?!! Я вмить опам’ятався й схопився рукою за мавзер. — Чорт! — і кинувся на доктора. Але той холодно подивився на мене й сказав:

— Ну, ну, тихше, зраднику комуни! Зумій розправитись і з «мамою» (він підкреслив «з мамою»), як умів розправлятися з іншими.”

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.* 45 “Блідий, майже мертвий...”.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.* 45. “Так! — схопили нарешті й другий кінець моєї душі! Вже не піду я на край города злочинно ховати себе. І тепер я маю одно тільки право:— нікому, ніколи й нічого неговорити, як розколось моє власне «я».”

air.”<sup>327</sup> The insurgents risk being overrun by the enemy and the protagonist must quickly decide the fate of his mother. The chaos of his external reality mimics the protagonist’s internal strife and belies the fact that he has already decided his mother’s fate. “Yes,” he thinks to himself, “these were impossible moments. This was torture. But I already knew what I would do. I knew it when I left the palace. Otherwise, I would not have left so quickly.”<sup>328</sup> The protagonist laughs wildly at Andrusha’s final appeal for the mother’s clemency. Then, “Andrusha is gone,” and along with him the possibility for any sort of spiritual redemption for the protagonist. But, back inside the palace, Doctor Tahabat remains, lounging sensuously on the couch, drinking the wine of the former residents, and throwing the empty bottles on the floor. Tahabat’s self-righteous behavior and the “ironic glances” he casts provoke feelings of inadequacy in the protagonist; ultimately he capitulates, “like a beaten dog,” surrendering his will before the Doctor.

“At that I stand and become enraged.—Doctor Tahabat, for the last time I warn you: do not joke with me. But my voice breaks and there is a gurgling in my throat. I make an attempt to grab up the Mauser and finish off the Doctor right there. But I suddenly feel and perceive myself to be so piteous and worthless that the remnants of my will are leaving me. I sit, mournfully, on the sofa like a beaten, impotent hound, gazing at Tahabat.”<sup>329</sup>

Forced to evacuate the palace, the tribunal leads the procession of the condemned out of the city in preparation for their executions. Bracketed by Tahabat and the

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<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* 46.

“Пахло розстрілами.”

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.* 46. “...Так, це були неможливі хвилини. Це була мука. —Але я вже знав, як я зроблю. Я знав і тоді, коли покинув масток. Інакше я не вийш ов би так швидко з кабінету.”

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.* 49

“Тоді я не витриму ю й шаленію. — Докторе Тагабат! Останній раз попереджаю: не жартуйте зі мною! Але голос мій зривається, і мені булькає в горлі. Я пориваюся схопити мавзера й тут же прикінчити з доктором, але я раптом почуваю себе жалким, нікчемним і пізнаю, що від мене відходять рештки волі. Я сідаю на канапу й жалібно, як побитий безсилий пес, дивлюся на Тагабата.”

degenerate, “the sentinels of my soul,” the protagonist’s fate is ineluctable: he must commit matricide, and in doing so eternally sever any link between revolutionary obligation and moral imperative. Nevertheless, the anticipation of the final act is torturous for the protagonist. Though he cannot see his mother, he can sense her presence. The image of the mint in connection to the mother recurs here and takes on a multi-sensory significance. “I look at the crowd, but I see nothing there. Instead I feel: There went my mother with her head bent. I can feel: the smell of mint. I caress her dear head, with its silvery-grey hair.”<sup>330</sup>

The protagonist’s psychological rupture is manifest; again he is temporarily unable to discern fantasy from reality. His decision to kill his mother signifies that he can no longer take refuge from the savagery and nihilism of the external world behind the ideals which the mother symbolizes. Thus, he kills not only her, but also that part of himself which identified with righteousness. The protagonist’s hopeless and insuperable external reality reasserts itself with a palpably: “Which is it: reality or hallucination? But this was reality: an authentic and vital reality, rapacious and cruel, like a pack of starving wolves. This was a hopeless reality, as inevitable as death.”<sup>331</sup> The protagonist reassures

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<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.* 50

“Я дивився в натовп, але я там нічого не бачив. Зате я відчував: — там ішла моя мати з похиленою головою. Я відчував: пахне м’ятою . Я гладив її милу голову з нальотом сріблястої сивини. Але раптом переді мною виростала загірна даль. Тоді мені знову до болю хотілося впасти на коліна й м олитовно дивитися на волохату силуету чорного трибуналу комуні.”

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.* 51

“Що це: дійсність чи галюцинація? Але це була дійсність: справжня життєва дійсність — хижа й жорстока, як зграя голодних вовків. Це була дійсність безвихідна, неминуча, як сама смерть.”

himself that “still it is the only way to the distant lakes of the unknown and beautiful commune.”<sup>332</sup>

Reaching the outskirts of town, the protagonist stands alone with his mother. The sounds of the approaching battle hasten his decision to act.

Then, in a daze, enveloped by the flames of an impossible joy, I put my arm around my mother’s neck and pressed her head to my breast. Then I raised my pistol and put the barrel to her temple.

Like a cut spike of wheat she fell on me.<sup>333</sup>

Ironically, the matricide, the act which was to signify to his compatriots the extent of protagonist’s ideological commitment, actually affords him no consideration. In reality, the protagonist, originally the head of the revolutionary tribunal has debased himself to the point that he is beneath even the degenerate. As the protagonist kneels over his dead mother, the degenerate appears and gives orders to his superior: “Well, communard, get up! It’s time to join the battalion.” The act of matricide results in a total loss of the protagonist’s agency, who is reduced to taking orders from a degenerate.

A close reading of Mykola Khvylovy’s “Ia... Romantika,” deepens our understanding of the nature of the protagonist’s internal dilemma. Unable to reconcile his revolutionary duties with his innate sense of moral rectitude, the protagonist splits his “I;” he then is forced to destroy that part of himself which is incompatible with his external reality: his humanity. An examination of the “characters” in “Ia...Romantika” reveals them to be facets of the protagonist’s psyche, through which his personal crisis is acted

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<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.* 51.

“Воістину: це була дійсність, як згряя голодних вовків. Але це була й єдина дорога до загірних озер невідомої прекрасної комуни.”

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.* 52.

“...Тоді я у млості, охоплений пожегом якоїсь неможливої радості, закинув руку нашую своєї матері й притиснув її голову до своїх грудей. Потім підвів мавзера й нажав спуск на скроню. Як зрізаний колос, похилилася вона на мене.”



out. The interactions among these sides are characterized by a psychopathic discourse that alternates between fantasy and reality. As Yuri Bezkhoutry has noted, In “Ia...Romantika,” there exists a “symbiosis between illusion and reality...The boundaries between actuality and fantasy are precarious and uncertain.”<sup>334</sup> The tension between the between the protagonist’s internal and external worlds reaches its apex with the killing of the mother. Ultimately, by killing his mother, the protagonist rejects moral responsibility and embraces the nihilism of the external world.

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<sup>334</sup> *Khudozhnii svit Mikoli Khvylovoho: Avtoreferat disertatsii kafedra filologichnii nauk*, Yuri M. Bezkhutrii . Lvivskii Natsionalnii Universitet imena Ivana Franka. Lviv: B.v., 2003. 76.

“Характерною властивістю цієї новели Хвильового є типовий для літератури ХХ століття симбіоз ілюзії та реальності. Читачеві буває надзвичайно важко розрізнити, чи описувані події й відчуття насправді відбуваються й переживаються, чи це лише уявлювані героєм, нафантазовані ним картини. Межа між дійсністю і фантазією виявляється хисткою й невизначеною.

In the first part of the twentieth century, a renaissance in Ukrainian political, cultural, and literary life occurred, which was driven by the creative well-spring that became known as the Ukrainian Revolution. The Ukrainian intelligentsia recognized that their revolution was inherently a struggle for national liberation. To this end, they sought autonomy in all aspects of Ukrainian life. Immediately after the Provisional government in Russia fell, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, and other Ukrainian patriots established a central government, whose first order of business was to pronounce Ukrainian autonomy within Russia. Recognizing the historical affinities between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples and expressing a cautious optimism for their declarations of sovereignty, the new Ukrainian government asserted in its First Universal its basic right to “manage its own life on its own soil.” However, dreams of Ukrainian political sovereignty were deferred due to the interference of foreign occupiers on Ukrainian soil. Ultimately, the Red Army won out, the Ukrainian National Republic was abolished, and Moscow asserted its political hegemony over Ukraine.

However, the Ukrainian idea did not die. In the absence of political independence, the Ukrainian intelligentsia worked to expand a discourse on Ukrainian culture and literature within the new framework of the Soviet Ukrainian government. The state policy of Ukrainianization afforded intelligentsia members the hope that Ukrainian language and culture could be disseminated throughout the cities and in the countryside. Their ideas on Ukrainianization, however, often opposed the official Party line, and this brought them into conflict with other Party members. Oleksandr Shumsky was an example of a Ukrainian politician who sought to work within the Soviet framework to promote Ukrainian interests. His efforts demonstrate the desire of a Ukrainian intelligentsia to be led by a government in Ukraine that was more representative of Ukrainians. His outspoken efforts concerning the pace of Ukrainianization earned him the indignation of

the Party, which condemned his activities as “Shumskyist.” The Party realized the ideological significance of making an example out of Oleksandr Shumsky. Shumskyism became synonymous with any perceived manifestation of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. And Shumsky’s defense of the Ukrainian writer Mykola Khvylovy doomed both men. Moscow’s proscription of Ukrainian autonomy within the political sphere overlapped and paralleled its attempts to circumscribe Ukrainian literary and cultural expression.

Mykola Khvylovy is the unquestioned leader of what became known as the “executed renaissance” in Ukrainian literature. Like his contemporaries who were involved in the Ukrainian political movement, he was an ardent communist. However, his revolutionary and socialist idealism was at odds with the brutal reality that the revolution had produced. In his polemical pamphlets, Khvylovy decried the lowering of artistic standards and promoted his vision for a Ukrainian literature that was independent of Russia. Khvylovy defended literature against what he saw as manifestations of philistinism, which threatened the very existence of art. His outspoken nature and the implications of his ideology caused him to become a target of the Soviet regime. His polemical pamphlets and prose became the basis for which he was condemned by the state. Finally, Khvylovy’s suicide casts him in a martyrological light: he became a symbol for a short-lived Ukrainian cultural and literary renaissance and an icon for Ukrainians.

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