PERSONAL NARRATIVES OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM IN CHERKASY OBLAST

by

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Abstract

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ABSTRACT

Ukraine's women's movement is part of a complex social field characteristic of formerly Soviet countries, but it also emerges from its own specific political history. Post-Soviet period, (neo-) nationalism, feminism and (neo-) socialism are significant forces shaping women's collective behavior. Their activism resonates with the pre-Soviet liberation struggle while it is shaped also by practices from the recent Soviet past. It also is sensitive to external pressures, including the agendas of Western aid and the Ukrainian diaspora.

This study accepts the emergence of non-state women's organizations as indicative of an incipient movement and examines this field of social activism in Cherkasy, a largely rural province of central Ukraine. The inquiry proceeds from the heterogeneity of women's responses to Ukraine's post-Soviet transition, and from the premise that their various life experiences bear on their engagement in activism and choice of organizational commitment. The analysis probes issues of differential recruitment, personal presentations of self as *activist*, and ideological motivation for participation in projects often melding feminist, nationalist, and/or socialist goals.

The spectrum of activism mirrors Ukraine's post-Soviet nation building crisis, and includes both conservative and transformational aspects. An optimistic trend is discerned in the practices of self-directed activist groups seeking affiliation with independent national women's

federations and working outside of the para-statal structure that is heir to the Soviet women's councils. Personal narratives of activism reflect positions on gender and nation and suggest a Ukrainian feminist standpoint that is simultaneously supportive of both women's parity and post-Soviet national integrity.

Preface

An ethnographic inquiry into the emergence of a broad variety of women's organizations in central Ukraine during the first decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union serves as the basis for this dissertation. The focus of this work is on the gestation and the institutional foundations of gender-based collective action in a largely rural province of central Ukraine, but it also begins to address a lacuna in literature on the countries of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) regarding diaspora influence on homeland developments through transnational organizations and the mobilization of resources, both material and symbolic. The Ukrainian context for the women's movement is complex: the form and structure are related to the recent Soviet past, while the movement's content is informed by Ukraine's recent encounter with Western feminism as well as Ukraine's historical liberation struggle.

My specific approach to understanding the post-Soviet women's movement in Ukraine is based on the perspective of the women activists themselves. Thus, my investigation sought ground in both anthropological and feminist theory as self-consciously political as well as intellectual systems of thought (Mascia-Lees and Sharpe 2000:19). What follows explores the evolution and interaction of socialist, nationalist, and feminist informed practices among Ukraine's women's organizations and demonstrates how these ideological orientations are reflected and integrated in women's personal narratives of leadership and community activism.

Narratives of the post-Soviet period of transition in Ukraine have generally neglected to recognize the role of women; their organized life, if treated, has been presented as a separate sphere—a chronic problem (Scott 1996:12). The basic fact that women constitute more than half of Ukraine's population, of its workforce and of its electorate, indicates that women form a critical mass in terms of their collective and cumulative behaviors. Women's own accounts

depart from other transition narratives by suggesting that powerful actions taken by women significantly influenced certain outcomes in Ukraine's recent history. For example, it was Soviet Ukrainian women, banding together in the late 1980s, who organized the return of their sons conscripted into the Soviet army to serve in their home republic, Ukraine. These women created the groundwork for a separate Ukrainian military, an important component of political independence (Pyskir 1994:79). Post 1991, the cumulative effect of the work of women's organizations is also an underappreciated and neglected factor of the transition. Women's groups and networks have provided the continuity of social welfare provision in post-Soviet Ukraine. Women have filled the ranks of Ukraine's regional state administration. Women have been important to the waging of opposition politics in the post-Soviet period, both in the regrouping of Ukraine's anti-nationalists under the banner of the political left and pro-sovereignty activists under the banner of a national democratic right.

Hindsight situates the months of my Ukraine-based field work as a precursor to the 2004 Orange Revolution and compels me to assert that the increased outreach of national democratic post-Soviet women activists into the rural areas of the provinces was a factor in the electoral behavior of central Ukrainian rural voters in 2004. Analyzing the dramatic outcome of the 2004 presidential elections, Dominique Arel (2005) asserts that it was central Ukraine that ultimately secured victory for Victor Yushchenko and his Our Ukraine Party: the rural residents of this largely agricultural region who had supported leftist (socialist-communist) candidates in 1994 and then the non-party affiliated Leonid Kuchma in 1999, voted mostly Orange in 2004. Arel's argument rests on the fact that central Ukraine is a historically ethnic Ukrainian territory (in contrast to Ukraine's East and South with large populations of Russians that supported Kuchma's candidate, Victor Yanukovych, also the preferred candidate of Russia's leaders) and

explains the voting patterns in central Ukraine by linking electoral behavior to differences in personal commitment to Ukrainian identity and nationalism. The social mechanism by which the peasantry "became orange" is not known, pending "serious fieldwork" (Arel 2005:3). My fieldwork suggests, however, that loyalty to an ethnic identity would not offer, as Arel would surely agree, a full explanation. Among the possible factors that need to be considered and have been overlooked is the activism of women's organizations. Although women's organizations were not prominent actors in the final demonstrations of Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004, I suggest that they played a significant, yet unrecognized role in its success.

Although dramatic differences in worldview between the socialist left and reform-capitalist right prevented easy coalitions during the 2000-2001 Kuchmagate period (Woronowycz 2001), women at both ends of Ukraine's political spectrum were starting to find common ground in their anti-corruption stance against the rule of the party of power (Zvyglyanych 1999). Many of these organizations (explicitly or implicitly) promoted Ukrainian identity; but, more significantly, I observed their grassroots civic work to have a healthy effect on both urban and rural communities. Their work is part of a wide effort involving many actors, representing both domestic and external non-governmental entities, to stimulate national solidarity, civic participation, and democratic self-government in the local communities.

Independent Ukraine is by constitutional design a pluralistic society, committed to the protection of the rights of its diverse citizenry. By virtue of historical developments, independent Ukraine is a divided society, multi-ethnic but predominately Ukrainian with a large Russian minority. Ukraine is decidedly bi-lingual with Russian language dominating the non-traditional spaces of print media and popular culture. It is also multi-confessional with a prevalence of Orthodox Christians most of whom affiliate with the Ukrainian Orthodox

Churches of either the Kyivan or Moscow Patriarchates. Most regrettably, Ukraine appears to be dramatically split in terms of its citizens' assessment of the recent Soviet past and what that history means for Ukraine's future.

The election of Yanukovych in 2009 has pulled Ukraine into another period that is inciting demonstrative protest anew. Ukraine is threatened with the loss of the superficial gains of the Orange Revolution and even of basic freedoms in a confrontation along lines repeatedly drawn between pragmatic corruption and idealist visions (both nationalist and socialist) of what a socially just and democratic order should entail. The Yanukovych regime has hi-jacked the anti-corruption mission of civil society, using it as an excuse to persecute and eliminate its political opposition, while his Party of Regions jeopardizes Ukraine's "European choice" and plays into Russia's long term goals for the region. There is urgency in this moment to define the nation and the state that governs it to the satisfaction of Ukraine's residents and the world community. I hope Ukraine's women will rediscover their strength and outrage and will again be on the move towards transforming themselves, their communities, their society, and their country.

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I am grateful for the vote of confidence from the CUNY Graduate Center Doctoral Program in Anthropology in granting me travel funds for a reconnaissance trip to Cherkasy, Ukraine during the summer of 1998, which shaped my research proposal. The project conceived was supported by an Individual Advanced Research Overseas IARO grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and by a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad award (both for the term of June to December 2000). The duration of this document's gestation in no way reflects a lack of interest in its success, rather my own timetable and a few life adventures not entirely in my control.

I am immensely grateful for the academic and moral support of my advisor (and now Executive Officer), Gerald Creed, who has been the most wonderful mentor; for the enriching instruction of my professors at the Doctoral Program in Anthropology at the Graduate Center, especially Jane Schneider and Leith Mullings; and for the shepherding long ago when I first started, of our former Executive Officer, Louise Lennihan. I feel particularly fortunate in having the guidance of Jane Schneider, now professor emeritus, and Kate Crehan, as members of my dissertation committee. I also cannot thank Catherine Wanner enough for the 11th hour insights she induced as my external reader. There are also those who died while this project was still in progress and whose memory I keep: Dr. May Ebihara (2005), who prepared me for the field; and Charlotte Frick (2004), director of student activities at the Graduate Center, who lead me through the grants process and continued to check on me in the field.

I am indebted to William Noll, director of the Center for Oral History (Kyiv) who introduced me to the central Ukrainian village and offered that the Center be my host affiliation in Ukraine; and to his spouse, Lidia Lykhach, editor of the ethnographic journal, Rodovid, who

was party to creating the occasion for my first trip to Cherkasy in 1998. It was the Center for Oral History that co-sponsored an international conference on "Problems in Oral History Research in Eastern European Villages 1920-1940s" from August 4-7 at the Cherkasy Ethnographic Museum, and arranged for an exploratory fieldwork opportunity afterwards.

In 2000 I was blessed to be accepted into the home of a lovely retiree couple who made it possible for me to keep my promise to my own family that I would keep myself safe. So many people contributed to this project and to my well-being that I could never name them all and enumerate their acts of kindness. However, if the evolution of a research project can be analyzed as path-dependent, then I owe much of what follows to Liudmyla Taranenko, my host in Cherkasy during the summer of 1998. Despite her duties as then head of the Cherkasy Writers Union, Liudmyla facilitated my whirlwind introduction to the city, while arranging for me to meet with significant women of the oblast.

Liudmyla and I immediately connected, and even, surprisingly, found that we knew some people in common by virtue of her recent contacts with the West. She herself had been an activist during perestroika, a figure prominent for her critical journalism and outspoken manner, while I am a diasporan Ukrainian-American, whose first visit to Ukraine was a 1992 nostalgia trip taken with my mother and sister to meet with family from whom we had been separated by the Cold War. Over tea in her kitchen, Liudmyla described her involvement in the post-Chornobyl mobilization against the proposed Chyhyryn nuclear reactor and her leadership in the early organization of Cherkasy's movement for Ukrainian independence. She had traveled outside of the USSR before, and had even recently visited Australia on invitation from the Ukrainian diaspora which allowed her to observe and report on Ukrainian-Australian community life. She was now considered to be a local authority on women in the West.

Thus, the collection of women I talked to during the summer of 1998 was largely of Liudmyla's making. At the time, I was curious as to why, in spite of my interest in it, Liudmyla steered me clear of the feminist Women's Center in Cherkasy, even though it was located in the very same courtyard off Hohol (Gogol) street where Liudmyla lived. Time constraints aside, it was an odd omission, since the center is of importance to any overview of women's activism there. The Cherkasy Women's Center was the only one of Cherkasy's women's organizations listed in 1998 as a member of the NIS-US Women's Consortium sponsored by Winrock International and was in 2000 one of the few indigenous loci of overt Western-style feminist consciousness-raising in Ukraine. But Liudmyla was not missing the point, but rather trying to show me that women's activism in Cherkashchyna pre-dated Ukraine's independence and moreover, went beyond that which was/is aided by post-Soviet Western influence. She wanted me to appreciate the vision, determination, and courage of local women who had salvaged and preserved things Ukrainian even under the conditions of Soviet Russification and had created and molded early Ukrainian civil society.

Liudmyla introduced me to a variety of women, from managers of collective farms to her former colleagues in political activism during the heyday of Rukh. There was a definite undercurrent of discontent in their talk, reflecting their frustrations and deflated hopes. Liudmyla also felt the demands upon her womanhood within the nation, even though, in her own understanding of it, she openly rejected feminism. Moreover, she was most decidedly by choice not a member of any women's organization, explaining that, like Ukraine's myriad political parties, they claim to be different but all do one and exactly the same thing. In her opinion, not only were they all concerned with social-welfare benefits, but they were pushing a low level of Ukrainian culture to boot. She lamented that the cooking, embroidery, and song should not mark

the limits of Ukrainian cultural expression. Like most other Soviet Ukrainian women, Liudmyla felt few obstacles to personal success under the Soviet system, having experienced fulfillment on various fronts, as a sugar factory employee, as a journalist and poet, and as a mother of four. She chafed at what she perceived to be the narrowing rather than widening scope of women's activism in the post-Soviet period.

My conversations with the women activists in 1998 and 2000 also lead me to discoveries about my own history and my sense of self. One day Liuda, a young woman I had hired to help with the initial transcription of some of the interviews, all conducted in Ukrainian, said to me "Marta, I take back what I said before [I couldn't recall what was it that she had "said before" that she needed to take back?]; having listened to your interviews, I am convinced you *are* a real Ukrainian!" I felt touched, but confused, too, by her inclusive evaluation of me. Ukraine identifies its members by citizenship, granted to all residents of Ukraine's territory as of 1991. Beyond this legal definition, one might be identified/or identify as ethnically Ukrainian by birth, by geneology, by loyalty to Ukrainian traditions and language competency. I could not guess by what criteria Liuda was suddenly re-evaluating me.

We had had some discussions about the connection between language and thought: She was, as are almost all urban Ukrainians, bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian; I am bilingual by virtue of my parents' and their diaspora community's insistence on language maintenance, in Ukrainian and English. My Ukrainian--a western Ukrainian (Lviv area) dialect, reflecting a pre-Soviet world of 50 years ago—had been enriched over the years by my personal and academic interests, which kept it a viable vehicle of communication in a variety of contexts. Thus, while Liuda and I were both accustomed to doing most of our academic work in the non-Ukrainian language, were communicating in our ethnic lingua franca. Liuda had suddenly realized that she

felt our worldviews had more in common than not. I hoped it also meant she was hearing respect and trust come through in the interviews.

In the course of my research with activist women I had become acutely aware of my own personal narrative and self-presentation, wondering to what degree I was influencing theirs. On tape I caught myself explaining that I am a student, a middle-class, married woman with children, a teacher at the local community college, and an American of Ukrainian heritage and upbringing, whose grandmother was the Ukrainian-speaking caregiver while my widowed mother worked (my mother retired from the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress in 1981). I was raised in a tight-knit, intellectual, and politically activist Ukrainian community in the Washington, D.C. area, so my exposure to things Ukrainian was not limited to home. I had married a diaspora Ukrainian (my Orest) with whom I was raising two daughters. At the time of my field work, I was juggling family with adjunct lecturing and graduate study (seeking self-fulfillment) while caring for both my mother in law and my own mother (a classic performance of Ukrainian daughter/mother-hood). Some women in Ukraine were genuinely amazed that the life of their American-born counterpart was in some respects as complicated as their own.

The difference between us was that except for very general issues, I had few anxieties about my future, whereas they could barely count on tomorrow. They could not find enough kind words for my husband who was holding down the fort while I was off doing my research, but it was not so unusual in their experience that a mother would be away overseas for long periods of time working out of necessity in the global market. There was a subtext of (non-malicious) envy over the inequality between us, not due to education, but one of privilege. My parents had managed to escape Soviet rule and I was born into a land of opportunity. They

seemed to be thinking, "That might have been me!" And I looking at them realized that if not for chance the contours of their lives may just as well have been mine.

Therefore, I am most grateful to all the women, in both Ukrainian academic and activist circles, who took the time to share their thoughts with me and extended their friendship to me, and to my driver, who often observed my encounters and subsequently offered his insights. His honesty provided another gendered angle to counterbalance my obsession with the women's perspective on their world. Although my sphere of contacts expanded immensely in 2000, I remain indebted to Liudmyla for her initial attention to my focus—that is, keeping it wide through a smorgasbord approach that revealed a panorama of unfolding events. I think of her now as I try to place these observations of women's activism and the words of these women themselves, their personal narratives of leadership, into a wider social movement context.

Finally, I am grateful to Ellen, the constant presence in our Doctoral Program office and to the wider CUNY community for the intellectual stimulation and sustenance, and for the wonderful years teaching as an adjunct at Queensborough Community College and Queens College. I am grateful to all my friends—in academic circles and otherwise—for their abundant good will, cheering me on and patiently waiting for me to resurface from my periods of total immersion. And with all my heart I send thanks to my extended family for their love and support, especially to both my sisters who made frequent extended visits to help, to my brother who re-empowered me with a new laptop when I had run out of steam, to my husband who always understood, to my two daughters who are the heart of my life, and above all, my mother, who has hung on to the very end to see a cherished and nurtured wish come to fruition.

Note on transliteration and abbreviations

I have applied a modified Library of Congress system for transliteration, omitting diacritical marks and simplifying where it seemed advisable in order to avoid confusion. I do, however, depart from common practice by using the Ukrainianized (vs Russified) versions of place names, as in Kyiv (Kiev) and Cherkasy (Cherkassy).

The pronunciation of Cherkasy is roughly "chair-KAH-see" The cultural-geographical region called Cherkashchyna is pronounced "chair-KAHSH-chin-ah," and refers to a territory roughly equivalent to the Cherkasy Oblast.

An *oblast* is a province as well as the basic administrative unit of Ukrainian government, akin to a state in the United States.

Within the oblast, a *raion* (var. *rayon*) is a district, or, in the context of a city, a borough.

A local council (*rada*) can be either urban (*miska rada*, city council) or rural (*silska rada*, or village council).

CAE As of 1992, all former collective farms are reregistered as Kolektyvne Silske Hospodarstvo (KSP) or Collective Agricultural Enterprise (CAE).

The local radas in many places also include a non-governmental, informal voluntary council of women, called the zhinocha rada (zhensovety Russ). As of 1993, these women's councils are formally under the umbrella of a new women's organization called the Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy.

Abbreviations for a subset of Ukraine's over 150 registered political parties:

<u>Left orientation</u>

CPU Communist Party of Ukraine

SPU Socialist Party of Ukraine registered Nov 25, 1991 headed by Oleksander Moroz for 20 years (in July 2010 succeeded by Vasyl Tsushko)

PSPU (Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine) Natalia Vitrenko

PPU Peasant Party of Ukraine (SelPU)

Center

SDPU(o) Sotsial-demokratychna Partiia Ukraiiny-obiednana (Social Democratic Party of Ukraine-United) oligarchical and pro-governmental party associated with Kuchma administration, 1994-2004

National Democratic

NRU Narodnyj Rukh Ukrainy (The Popular Rukh of Ukraine, Udovenko's Rukh)

UNR Ukrainskyj Narodnyj Rukh (The Ukrainian Popular Rukh, Kostenko's Rukh)

Note: Rukh (meaning *movement)* refers to the perestroika-era Movement for the Restructuring of Ukraine (1989) which spearheaded the push to independence. In 1990, the movement registered as a political party and in 1999 split into two.

DemPU Democratic Party of Ukraine

KhDPU Christian Democratic Party of Ukraine

NDPU People's Democratic Party of Ukraine

Right

KUN Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists

OUN Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists

Nasha Ukraina (Our Ukraine) Party of Yushchenko and his supporters in 2004

Some acronyms and names of women's organizations and diaspora organizations:

WCFU World Congress of Free Ukrainians

WCU World Congress of Ukrainians

ICW International Council of Women 1888

WILPF Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

IWSA International Women's Suffrage Alliance 1905

UNWLA Ukrainian National Women's League of America 1925

WFUWO World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations 1948

In memoriam: A Ukrainian feminist necrology

Lyudmyla Smolyar (1958-2004)

Solomea Pavlychko (1958-1999)

Natalia Chukhym (1956-2003)

Halyna Chomiak Freeland (1946-2007)

Note on names: Since many of the women I interviewed are known figures as leaders of women's organizations or public officials, I provide those names. Otherwise, participants in women's activism are usually identified by first name only.

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Introduction

> *Shchob znat' liudej, to treba pozhyty z nymy. A shchob jikh spysuvaty, to treba samomu stat' cholovikom, a ne marnotratelem chornyla ta paperu.*
> In order to know people, you must live with them. But to write about them, then you yourself must first become one of them, to avoid becoming nothing but a dilletantish waster of ink and paper.
> –Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) from a plaque in the Museum of the Kobzar in Cherkasy

This study is an inquiry into an "actually existing women's movement" (Bahro 1978; Basu 1995)[1] which developed within the territory of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) in independent Ukraine, during the country's first post-Soviet[2] decade of economic and political transition. An exploratory field visit to the provincial central Ukrainian oblast,[3] of Cherkasy revealed extensive women's involvement in perestroika-era activism which extended into the post-Soviet period as part of the appearance and evolution of a new gendered niche of activism. This finding suggested that the West's anticipation of an aggressive feminist response in Ukraine had served to eclipse the diversity of post-Soviet Ukrainian women's activities,[4] and motivated my

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[1] This is an allusion to the phrase "actually existing socialism" introduced by Rudolf Bahro (1978) to refer to real, as opposed to ideal, socialism being lived in the countries of the Soviet sphere. Amrita Basu (1995:1-21) does not employ the phrase herself, but rather its spirit.

[2] Alexandra Hrycak writing about women's activism in Ukraine uses *post-Soviet* in Hrycak 2002 and *post-socialist* in Hrycak 2006 to describe the historical moment in which contemporary Ukraine finds itself. I will use the term *post-Soviet* here, as I observe that Soviet-era socialist practices were evident in Cherkasy, including a (neo-)socialist movement of opposition to the Kuchma administration. Socialist ideals still resonate and have political potential.

[3] An oblast is an official administrative unit of Ukraine, often translated as province. Ukraine currently is divided into 24 oblasts and one Autonomous Republic, the Crimean Autonomous Republic, as of July 1992.

[4] Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (2000:103) make a similar point for Eastern and Central Europe where insistence on the term feminism has "blinded observers to the actual and diverse political activity around gender issues since 1989." The same should be said for the FSU. In yet another

description of these activities in their "actually existing" form, interpreted here partly as an extension of Soviet women's structures and partly as creative innovation in response to the social, economic, and political circumstances of perestroika and the post-Soviet transition.

The Terrain of Women's Activism in Ukraine

By using the term *women's movement* I join Valerie Sperling (1999, 2000) in honoring the nomenclature applied by FSU women themselves to the social arena of their post-Soviet activism. In the mid 1990s, the women's world community preparing for the 1995 United Nations World Conference of Women in Beijing was inclined to present these arenas of gendered collective behavior as women's movements. Sperling 1999, however, also notes the strangely non-mobilized character of the women's movement in Russia. In Ukraine, too, the post-Soviet women's movement is characterized by organizations that are more hierarchically arranged and less grassroots; not much mobilized and not very demonstrative, focused more on keeping the peace rather than fomenting revolution.

Indeed, in Ukraine, this movement is more accurately described as a heterogeneous collection of women-lead civic organizations, academic groups and charitable initiatives differing in their ideological commitments, strategies and discursive practices. What it is not is a grounded cohesive group engaged in orchestrated collective action. These organizations, some of them large national structures, are rather in competition with one another over women's energies and allegiances, and especially over political influence with the state. As an integral part of Ukraine's social terrain, the women's movement arena reflects Ukraine's continuing difficulties with post-Soviet nation-building in which Ukrainian nationalism—strongly supported

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context, Martha Bohachevsky Chomiak (1988:4) observed that "the heterogeneity of the [historical] Ukrainian [women's] movement was overshadowed by a stress on the communality of the national experience." The vagaries of focus are not an uncommon problem.

by the Ukrainian diaspora in the West and inextricably associated with support for capitalist reforms—struggles against a lingering Soviet nationalism. The latter emanates from a communist or socialist perspective, and is generally coupled with an acceptance of continued Russian hegemony in Ukraine.

In the recent Soviet past, community-based women's councils (*zhensovety*—Russ., *zhinochi rady*—Ukr.) were the officially sanctioned focal point for women's community activism, while the Soviet Women's Committee (SWC) represented Soviet women in the international arena. At the onset of perestroika in 1986, Gorbachev began to imagine a reinvigorated network of local women's councils channeling women's political efforts into a more grassroots-connected Soviet Women's Committee (SWC). Instead, the perestroika era brought women to the streets in an array of environmentalist, maternalist, and cultural nationalist forms of anti-state political activism. Soon, this activism would inform the first non-governmental independent organizations, which in nationalist quarters are hailed as proof of the rebirth of civil society in Ukraine. In July 2000, the National Council of Women of Ukraine (NCW/Ukraine)—a new organ discontinuous with both the Moscow-centered SWC and its temporary heir, the Women's Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1990) — was officially admitted into the International Council of Women (ICW) at Helsinki as a body representing the full range of Ukrainian women's political perspectives. This was no small victory for Ukraine's women, as the membership of the new NCW/Ukraine represented an unprecedented coalition of women on both sides of the country's intractable political and cultural divide that has plagued Ukraine into its third post-Soviet decade.

The original premise of my investigation was that women, being variously affected by conditions of the transition period, display a diversity of personal and collective responses to it;

and I proposed that, through an analysis of women's personal narratives, I would gain insight into the relationships, life experiences, and family circumstances that draw women into activism of various stripes in rural and small town Ukraine. William Noll's (1999) research addressed the problem of the destruction of Ukrainian rural civil society during the years of the Soviet collectivization in which the rich participatory culture of the villages was replaced with a truncated CPU committee-approved version, largely controlled and performed in the context of the village houses of culture.[5] After 1991, when the Soviet ideological underpinning of the rural cultural sphere collapsed, there was little left of the village's earlier communal cultural practices. How were rural areas dealing with the return to self-organization? How did women's organizations emerge in or relate to the village setting? I learned during my fieldwork that the women's councils had been revived at the urging of the state, but that in several places they were being challenged by newer women's groups presenting themselves as more legitimate and more effective social agents. Questions of ideological motivation, the relationship of leaders to variously defined communities and their grassroots appeared critical to understanding these developments.

Overall, in 2000 there were some 28 thousand non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of all legally-allowed types registered in Ukraine.[6] Women's organizations that are women-led

[5] William Noll's Center for Oral History published in 1999 the results of fieldwork conducted in 1993-1995 among approximately 450 aged villagers of central and eastern Ukraine—approximately half of these in Cherkasy oblast—on the social transformations they experienced through the 1920s-30s in the Soviet lead transition from private to collective farming.

[6] See www.ngoukraine.kiev.ua/idc/ukr webiste of the Innovation and Development Center (IDC) in Kyiv. Although public organizations started to register in the late 1980s, it was Ukraine's July 16, 1990 Declaration of National Sovereignty and its August 24, 1991 "Act of the Declaration of Independence" that established the formal context for Ukraine's new institutions, later guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine (1996). In 1992, the "Law About Public Organizations" provided the specific legal context for civil society organizations, requiring their

and women-centered in their programs constituted a small subset of these. The issues collectively addressed by women included the cultivation of national identity, the provision of social welfare and health services, the protection and patriotic education of army recruits, the nurturing of children with special talents as well as those with special needs, and the protection of the physical and social environment, including efforts to increase the political participation of women in local self-government initiatives.

Circa 2000, reports based on statistics gathered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Ukraine conclude that approximately 4 percent of all of Ukraine's NGOs were dealing with women's issues (Nanivska 2001:10)[7] and operating in an advocacy mode for

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re-registration (thereby, some organizations have two registration dates) In the fall of 1990, organizations that were neither government entities (First Sector) nor for-profit businesses (Second Sector) could register as *hromads'ka orhanizatsija* (community organization). The community organization could be specified legally as a charity, political party, or *hromads'ke obiednannia* (community association). Community associations are further specified as territorially international, national—*vse-Ukrajinska* (all-Ukraine)—or regional. Regional associations are those operating on the oblast, city, or village level. (See Dimitrov 2000.)

[7] Vira Nanivska (2001:10), the director of Ukraine's International Center for Policy Studies (ICPS) since 1997, cites the UNDP) as the source for this statistic. The numbers are extremely slippery. Circa 2000 the Innovation and Develoment Center (IDC) counted approximately 28,000 independently registered NGOs in Ukraine overall, but did not publish a total tally of women's organizations. Four percent would be approximately 1120 NGOs concerned perhaps with loosely defined women's issues, rather than specific "gender" issues. Solomea Palvychko (1997) cited over 70 women's organizations; Lyudmyla Smolyar (2000) cited over 90, including 4 international and 18 all-Ukraine organizations. While the numbers of NGOs were undoubtedly increasing, the count may be complicated by the fact that in some reports, large chaptered, or federated organizations may count as one organization, whereas in another, its individual chapters will figure separately. Furthermore, as more groups could afford the second level of registration (the first is legitimization, which does not allow a bank account) they would certainly strive to achieve this status for the reason that it makes them grants-eligible. Registering as a regional level organization was also more likely to attract the support of foriegn donors who were more likely to make grants to women's groups that presented themselves as being small, local, and autonomous. In the prelude to the 2004 elections, such groups seem to have multiplied even more intensely; reports cited 30 national All-Ukraine women's organizations, 5 women's political parties and 1000 women's groups in Cherkasy Oblast alone (Lytvyn 2003:4-5).

the improvement of women's status. By one count there were 90 women's organizations officially registered in Kyiv in 2000, among these four as international associations and 18 as national ones, that is, having chapters Ukraine-wide, or "All-Ukraine" in status (Smolyar 2000). Specifically feminist organizations—women's professional associations, self-help and advocacy groups, women's information and consultation centers, and gender research centers—account for an even smaller subset of the women's NGOs (Smolyar 1999).[8] As a rule (to which there are exceptions) Ukrainian women's organizations eschew the term *feminism* even when they are committed (as most of them actually are) to women's equality and women-centered solutions, which are usually understood to be the territory of *gender*. The term *gender* has been accepted into the Ukrainian lexicon by the feminist scholarly and activist elite,[9] but is usually seen as blatantly foreign borrowing by the general public.

Several of the large All-Ukraine organizations of the recognized women's movement were also registered in Cherkasy, the oblasts' administrative center. To achieve oblast status, an organization needed to provide proof of a minimum of three chapters registered in either towns

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[8] Smolyar (1999:203-207) lists no fewer than 16 gender research centers, feminist in orientation, that appeared since the mid 1990s in the major cities of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa, and Lviv (with more than one center each), and also in the smaller cities of Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Simferopil, Kirovograd, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zakarpattia.

[9] In 1998 the term *gender* was introduced in the January-April issue of the journal entitled Sociology: Theory, Methods, and Marketing, published as of June 1997 by the Institute of Sociology of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. A one-page entry by the assistant editor and feminist sociologist Olha Ivashchenko (1998) introduced gender as a new tool of sociological analysis. By 1999, the conferences and research on gender is flourishing. Ukraine's activist groups accommodate the new path of "gender politics" adopted by the state. Natalia Hrytsiak frames the recommendations for implementing gender politics as "the victory over the conditions of totalitarianism and the confirmation of equal rights, in human relations between men and women in society…Gender culture and gender politics together represent a united and balanced strategy for the securing of human life, formation of new values, and the chanelling of energy of communities and persons for human development" (2000:5).

or villages of the oblast territory. The organizations espoused a variety of political viewpoints and some were directly affiliated with political parties with fundamentally divergent visions of Ukraine's future. Apparently, the All-Ukraine women's organizations were making outreach to rural provinces a priority and their civic engagement in local self-government issues was starting to draw more women into political participation. In addition, many of these organizations shared a strategy of promoting both national and women's (sometimes even feminist) goals, suggesting various combinations of nationalist, socialist and feminist missions comingling on the ground.

The Salience of Nationalism

Ukraine's independence in 1991 might have signaled the end of the relevance of nationalism to its social movement milieu;[10] however, to the contrary, nationalist concerns were even more acute after independence and were still high on the agenda among some women's organizations a decade into the period of transition. Along with a general concern for women's needs, many women's organizations were engaged in the shoring up of Ukraine's weak national awareness as a civic project, even though nationalism (especially ethno-nationalism) was a stigmatized ideology. These efforts were by necessity paired with attention to the physical and material needs of the populace. In 2000, socialism too was politically marginalized and feminism was still considered a discredited idea, but a maternalist vein of activism, stemming from the Soviet era, yet agreeable to those of both nationalist and socialist inclinations, showed no signs of diminishing. Supported by discourses of civic motherhood, especially as distilled in the symbol of the *berehynia* (the goddess of the hearth), maternalist activism fed on women's sense of duty

[10] Jane Dawson predicted a dramatic change in the "mobilizational potential of national identity" in the FSU with the conclusion of nationalist struggles in the establishment of new nation-states for many nationalities within the USSR. (1996:27) In Ukraine, nationalism continues to be significant in its agonistic nation-forging processes.

to nation and/or state or at least one's territorial community. This trend also seemed to be promoting a temporarily unifying niche for women's activism in protest over government corruption and was leading to a framing of the problem that identified corruption as both a national and gendered experience.

Historically, Ukrainian women's activism emerged with the 19th century growth of Ukrainian national consciousness and the development of an organized movement closely followed the contours of Ukraine's struggle for self-determination. Since nationalism continues to be relevant to Ukraine's women's movement I am inclined to view its nationalist and feminist aspects as parts of one piece, rather than dismissing the nationalist aspects of the field as anti-feminist—a view supported by recent scholarship. In particular, the work of Jill Vickers (2006) whose "Bringing Nations In: Some Methodological and Conceptual Issues in Connecting Feminisms with Nationhood and Nationalisms" proposes to re-evaluate the uniformly negative relationship between *nation* and *gender* as theorized by Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) by exploring the diversity of women's experiences within historical national projects (Vickers 2006:86). My work here too tries to keep in mind the evolving relationship of Ukrainian women to what is primarily a liberal national project.[11]

Thus, it became necessary for me to also explore how Ukraine's contemporary women's movement remembers the ones that pre-dated it and, in particular, to examine how Ukraine's activists relate to the transnational activism of the Ukrainian diaspora. After 1991, redefinitions of former Soviet boundaries and transition-era patterns of political and economic emigration have made for a more widely distributed Ukrainian diaspora than before independence, but the

[11] In the independence period, Ukraine's nationalism is no longer liberation nationalism and infrequently veers into ethno-nationalism. The tone of Ukraine's nation-building project overall is in keeping with the definition of liberal nationalism as developed by Yael Tamir (1993).

largest concentration of ethnic Ukrainians outside of Ukraine continues to be, as during the Soviet period, in the United States and Canada.[12] The Ukrainian diaspora, as a de-territorialized but not denationalized population, still imagines itself, and is imagined by the new Ukrainian state, as a component of the national community,[13] which embraces resident citizens, émigrés and diaspora communities under one *transnational national community* (as defined by Loring Danforth 1995:80).[14] Within this framework, the politicized diaspora has brought its material and moral support to bear on Ukraine's rejection of socialism (especially Soviet Russian-led socialism, i.e. communism) and promotion of Ukraine's nationalizing institutions. Diasporic women's organizations are prominent in this transnational (and at times feminist) activism.

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[12] The North American diaspora is the product of three successive "waves" of emigration from Ukrainian territories to the West: the first, an economic wave seeking employment (1876-1914); the second, a political wave seeking refuge (1914-38); and a third, post-WWII political wave (1949-early 1950s). In the early 1990s, there were approximately 750,000 to 1.5 million individuals identifying as Ukrainian in North America. For more information, see the work of Orest Subtelny (1991) and Marta Dyczok (2000b) for the experience of the persons displaced during World War II. The post-Soviet emigration to North America is called the "Fourth Wave."

[13] The Ukrainian government uses the phrase *Zakordonne Ukrajinstvo* (Ukrainiandom beyond the borders) to refer to the estimated 20 million persons of Ukrainian origin or descent living outside of Ukraine, as a nod to the fact that not all migrants from Ukraine identify with this *Ukrainiandom*, retaining their Jewish, Russian, and other ethnic identities in their post-Soviet destinations. Recognition of the diaspora led to a special government commission and the legal status of extraterritorial Ukrainian citizenship under a Ministry of Foreign Affairs program.

[14] A Ukrainian transnational national community, by definition a deterritorialized (dispersed) yet not denationalized population engaging in a common cultural space within the context of the processes of globalization is superficially recognized through its accumulated organizational infrastructure. The World Congress of Free Ukrainians (WCFU) created in 1967 serves as the community's highest coordinating body outside of Ukraine. Renamed the World Congress of Ukrainians (WCU) in 1993, it currently claims to represent Ukrainian émigrés and their organizations in over 30 countries. In 1992, Ukraine's government called the First World Forum of Ukrainians in Kyiv and organized the Ukrainian World Coordinating Council (UWCC), envisioning for it a role of facilitating unity between the new diaspora in the East and the Western diaspora (WFUWO 1998:462).

Exploring these realities led to questions about how Cherkasy as a provincial locale with a strong communist legacy is affected by this diasporic transnational feminism, nationalism and ethno-nationalism. Nationalism is admittedly a community-enhancing ideology: the question here is, how does it co-exist with feminism in Ukraine and how might it support and/or hinder the articulation of women's needs.

Women in Ukraine's post-Soviet Transition

A legacy of the Russian imperial women's movement and of the Ukrainian and Russian Revolutions was the legal recognition under the Soviet system of many women's rights—to suffrage, higher education, maternal insurance, divorce, a guarantee of minimum wage and certain work benefits in return for mandatory employment. Within the Soviet Union, women were 51% of the Soviet workforce and thanks to the Soviet education, 40% of Ukraine's women embarked on independence with vocational or professional training and 16% had university degrees in 2002 (Perelli-Harris 2009). But behind the superficial emancipation of Soviet women was the reality that they were generally employed as semi-skilled professionals or as low-skilled and low-paid workers and were segregated into feminized sectors, especially in the lower tiers of education and in the medical profession as primary health service providers. Many women were exploited as cheap manual labor, which in many respects, meant dangerous and back-breaking work, as in construction and non-mechanized work in the agricultural sector. They also went unrelieved of the burdens of domestic labor as well, which bred resentment among Soviet women for the brusque treatment and lack of respect the system seemed to encourage.

By 2000 it was clear that the transition introducing fundamental changes to the economic system (capitalist economic principles of the market system and privatization) and the reinforcement of democratic practices (including the decentralization of government) had created

a dire situation across the FSU. The severing of trade relations in the region, a steep drop in production and the disruption of the social welfare and healthcare provision systems all served to bring widespread poverty to a once-affluent society. Some problems pre-existing in the Soviet period were exacerbated to the point of catastrophe (Field and Twigg 2000:2), while additional problems appeared as a result of exposure to global processes: Already in the 1990s the health provision system was failing to address the lingering Soviet-era problem of alcoholism-related mortality (Levchuk 2009). To make matters worse, Ukraine's suddenly porous borders and absent antinarcotics machinery made it a ready conduit for southwest Asian heroin bound for Europe, introducing drug addiction and drug-related violence (Layne et al., 2002) and organized crime (Williams and Picarelli 2002). Growing intravenous drug use and the quickening of the spread of HIV/AIDS (DeBell 2005) put Ukraine at the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS pandemic for Eastern Europe. Ukraine's problems with national identity paled in significance when argued in the context of these serious socio-economic crises.

The post-Soviet changes have affected both men and women, but not in the same ways. In the transition period women were systematically locked out of high-level politics, disenfranchised in the early privatizations, and blocked from business opportunities, thus cheating them out of wealth accumulation. They suffered the brunt of transitional setbacks in employment and are disadvantaged in opportunity training and hiring practices (Human Rights Watch 2003). Women are blatantly discriminated against due to gender (especially mothers of small children), age (anyone over 40 or even 30 may told that they are too old to be retrained), and are widely known to be subjected to overt sexual harassment on the job (Wanner and Dudwick 2003:279). Women's employment is further complicated by the post-Soviet curtailment of state subsidies saddling families with greater responsibility for the supervision,

education, and medical care of children, as privatized workplaces and restructured collective farms are no longer conduits for state benefits.

In general, women's curtailed access to the public sphere, with its corresponding loss of prestige and respect, suggests that post-Soviet nationalism has imposed a new patriarchal gender regime (Walby 1997:6). Sperling (2000) however notes that the alarming "new" (sic) sexism in the region, while exacerbated, is part of a complex of earlier trends (Lane 1992:266-269). Enduring and worsening in the post-Soviet period, social problems stemming from the Soviet period continue to create a social context for women's community engagement. These problematic trends are moreover gendered and can be seen as arenas of crisis that both the state and civil society are attempting to address: there is the nation's crisis of identity connected to the crisis of national culture; there is also crisis over the provision of social welfare in a market economy, connected to the framing of women's responsibility as citizens. Not the least of these is the nexus of issues related to the demographic crisis affecting much of the FSU, including Russia (Field 2000:11),[15] and Ukraine (Steshenko 2001). [16]

Ukraine's demographic crisis is characterized by a steady contraction of Ukraine's population—from 52.2 million in 1993 to nearly 49 million in 2001[17] to 46.9 million in 2006. A

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[15] The situation in Russia was characterized by "a yearly decrease in the size of the population, stagnant or decreased life expectancy, increased premature mortality, the return of infectious diseases, rising morbidity, a degradation of the environment, and practically every other index related to the well-being of the population, including a length of life differential between the sexes in favor of women" (Field 2000:11).

[16] This is Valentyna Steshenko of the Ukrainian State Commission for Statistics.

[17] The last Soviet census of 1989 counted Ukraine's population as 52 million. Andrew Wilson (2000:254) cited 50.1 million in 1998, half of this decline being due to emigration, the rest due to decreased fertility and a 46 percent increase in mortalilty, particularly for males. The first post-Soviet Ukrainian national census of 2001 (available at www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/result)

total of 1.2 million (a significant 23 percent) represents emigration, much of which involves economic migration by women (see Hrycak 2011; Solari 2011). Increases in adult mortality coupled with decreasing fertility which is supported by the highest abortion rate in the world account for the rest (Perelli-Harris 2008:1160). Being a largely agricultural and relatively under-industrialized society, Ukraine experienced the first demographic transition later than Western Europe, maintaining a total fertility rate (TFR) of 5.2 until the 1920s. Soviet family policy assisted bigger families and honored women who gave birth to five children with Motherhood medals and those who gave birth to ten as Mother Heroines, but these instances were less frequent in Ukrainian territories than in the Caucasus and Central Asian Soviet Republics. By the 1970s Soviet fertility had declined so significantly that pronatalist policies were introduced, resulting in a baby boom from 1981 until the Chornobyl nuclear disaster of April 1986. By 1988-89, at the end of the Soviet period, fertility had fallen to 1.99 (Steshenko 2001). From a stable pattern of a TFR around 2.0 (1960s-80s) Ukraine's fertility rate fell to 1.2 shortly after independence and dipped to its lowest-low of 1.1 in 2000 (Perelli-Harris 2008:1147).[18]

In 1999, the support allowances made to Ukraine's large families —redefined in the post-Soviet period as families of three or more children under the age of 18 years (i.e. born after 1981)—were revised under the Measures on the Improvement of the Situation of Families with

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updated by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine indicates that the total resident population of Ukraine as of December 5, 2001 stands at 48,241,000, of which 25, 925,000 (53.7 percent) are women.

[18] Currently the TFR is 1.3. Based on data from the Ukrainian Committee for Statistics, from the first round (2003) of the Ukrainian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (ULMS) and focus group research, Brienna Perelli-Harris (2008) concludes that the decline in fertility is best explained by a postponement or interruption of pregnancies that would lead to second births. A longstanding trend, the 1997 birthrate was no more than 65 percent of that for 1989 (UNDP 1999:119 Table 8 "General birth rates and indicators of women's exhausted fertility" in 1989-97).

Many Children,[19] which mandated their closer local supervision as potentially vulnerable to social ills (Phillips 2008:14; Zhurzhenko 2004:40-41). Historically, Soviet Ukraine's urban women kept to a pattern of one or two children, while rural women may have had four. The births of children seem to be as a general pattern, widely spaced. [20] In the absence of widely available modern contraceptives, abortion, legal under Soviet law without interruption since 1955 (although banned briefly in the 1930s), was and continues to be used liberally to control not so much the birth of first children, as the spacing of subsequent births (Levchuk and Perelli 2009, Perelli-Harris 2008:1160). [21] As a result of the demographic transition, Ukraine's population is also an ageing one, with persons over 60 reaching 19.5 percent of the population in 1998.

In many respects, however, the demographic statistics suggest that men as a general category have been more gravely affected than women (Field 2000:12). Compared to the West, life expectancy in Ukraine is eight years lower for women and 12 years lower for men, who lead the nation in premature mortality.[22] In the category of those over 60, women very significantly

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[19] These measures went into effect around the time of my fieldwork. In subsequent years, the social insurance system made new provisions for families of three or more children. In 2005 the state offered a large one-time payment as a birth incentive. See Sarah D. Phillips (2008:15-16) for a full treatment of this topic.

[20] The women who participated in my survey had mostly two-child families, with children spaced at least three and often five or six years apart (see Chapter 9). It occurs to me that this may reflect an adaptation maximizing access to Soviet family benefits.

[21] The research conducted by Natalia Levchuk and Brienna Perelli-Harris (2008) suggests that Ukraine's fertility patterns reflect universal childbearing and near universal marriage, with relatively low occurrence of voluntary childlessness, co-habitation, and non-marital birth. The mean age at first birth is between 21 and 22, indicating a trend of early marriage and inclination to carry first pregnancies to term. Low fertility seems due to decline in second births, and abortion. Because abortion is feared to cause sterility, the currently better availability of contraceptives (up seven percent from 1994-99) brought the abortion rate down (between 1990 and 2002) from 70 to 22 per thousand women of childbearing age.

outnumber men who stand at only 55 for every one hundred women in 1998. Feminist analysis of women's post-Soviet disenfranchisement aside, women as a demographic category seem to have a better survival strategy than men (Field 2000). They appear to lead healthier, less alcohol-addicted, more socially-embedded, and useful lives. Women are reported to more often seek moral and material support, if not for themselves directly, then for those close to them. Observers of women worldwide suggest that a gendered pattern of commitment to the collective promote women's well-being. Women's strategies should reveal an internal logic that secures their better survival in conditions of rapid change.

Potential for Women's Movement

The Soviet-era women's councils notwithstanding, gender was not a category of political mobilization before 1991, not even within the mass environmental and nationalist movements of post-Chornobyl Ukraine (Dawson 1996, Marples 1986, 1991, Wilson 1997).[23] There was also little impetus for specifically feminist movement in the FSU territories, given progressive Soviet policies on women's education, employment and unchanged access to abortion (Schecter 2000:93). Membership in women's organizations was not impressive at the end of Ukraine's first transitional decade—an estimated 0.2 percent of Ukraine's women belong to women's

[22] Life expectancy for men has gone down, to 63.4 years; mortality is up for for boys in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. Life expectancy for females is 74.2 years (UNDP 1999:118, Table 7 "Average Future life expectancy by age groups for labor activity time of women and men in 1989 and 1996").

[23] They did not take into account evidence of women's movement in the form of the mass Organization of Soldiers' Mothers (1990) and of the Soiuz Ukrainok (Ukrainian Women's Union) whose chapters were widespread in western Ukraine before 1991. This is possibly because of the absence of overt movement in the wider formal Soviet women's sector (cf Sedaitis and Butterfield 1991).

organization, without taking overlapping memberships into account (Smolyar 1999:33).[24] Casual conversations with various women beyond my formal research population confirmed several factors limiting the number of joiners.[25] Foremost was the lingering post-independence apathy and general distrust of the public sphere (although women's organizations fared far better in public opinion polls on measure of *trust* than did politicians or government agents).[26] Second was the fact that women felt they needed gainful employment not opportunities for voluntary service, which often reminded them of the Soviet-era forced volunteerism.

Vira Nanivska (2001:9) reports that according to polls conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in 1994 and 2000, membership in Ukrainian Third Sector organizations appears to have remained constant. Superficially, the number of women's organizations (and supposedly their membership) has appeared to have grown somewhat, and Nanivska is aware that official lists do not include groups that do not as of yet have the means or longevity to appear on the NGO-watchers' radar (2001:11). But an interesting contrast with the Soviet era presents itself with the fact that the activists of the Soviet women's councils had tended to be

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[24] This figure too is slippery. If it refers to 0.2 percent of the total number of females in Ukraine, then this accounts for just over 52 thousand (if women are 53.7 percent of 49 million, then there are approximately 26 million females). But if it means 0.2 percent of adult women (over 30) who are the potential target population of participants, then this might mean approximately 32 thousand. Neither figure is intuitively accurate, and the reality is unknowable. (See Smolyar 2000:14.)

[25] Kate Schecter (2000:93) lists the following reasons: (1) women can now stay at home rather than work; (2) poverty and scarcity of goods lead to prioritizing of material needs over equality; (3) women would rather home-care than day-care their very young children; and (4) the continued legal access to abortion and (5) little energy for organizing.

[26] A survey conducted by the Ukrainian NGO Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) in 2000, elicited opinions regarding levels of trust granted various public institutions and organizations. With regard to women's organizations, 2.8 % of the respondents trusts them completely, 16.7% trusts them to some degree, 17.7% does not trust them much, 16.2% does not trust them at all and 46.5% says it's hard to say.

young unmarried women (Bridger 1987:187). The post-Soviet activists tended to be urban, educated, and most significantly, middle-aged, rather than younger, reflecting a different profile of biographical availability (McAdam 1986:70). My interviews, furthermore, suggest that a significant proportion of the currently middle-aged activist population is in fact drawn from the pool of women who were engaged in social activism in the past (see Chapter 9).

A proportion of social activism appears to arise out of the delegation of social protection responsibilities from central to local governments, which means that women, who dominate the lower echelons of provincial administration, are in the forefront of the struggle to meet the needs of the vulnerable. The transitional state has furthermore also imposed expectations that women shoulder more responsibility, through voluntary labor in the (non-governmental) public sphere, for the aged and infirm of the communities (Phillips 2008). It should therefore come as no surprise that the pension-eligible women find themselves more often in the position of care-givers rather than care-receivers within their extended families.[27] Collective caring as women's activism makes sense to and draws an older generation into its practices with the rationale of helping the younger generation find itself in a time of socio-economic crisis.

Since 1991, there has been much public discussion and/or government legislation on issues, all based in fact, that are, discursively described as "crises": there is the "demographic crisis" and the "crisis of national identity" (see Chapter 1) which is the phrase used to denote Ukraine's problems of post Soviet nation-building. The crisis of identity is logically related to a potential problem of the reproduction of national culture which involves Ukraine's redefinition of its history, its official language, its national heraldry, etc., all of which need to be reset after decades under the influence of a Soviet ideal of convergence of nationalities with the USSR

[27] Between 1989 and 1998, the "care-givers/care-receivers" ratio has decreased for young cohorts and increased for their grandparents' cohorts (Bezrukov and Foigt 1999).

(Zinych and Naulko 1974). There is also the obvious crisis around the state's need to guarantee continued provision of social welfare within a newly organizing market economy. Gender underpins each of these crises and women and women's collectivities (both voluntary and state-mandated) and ideas about women's responsibilities in the arenas of public and private citizenship—all of which are constant topics of discussion—are a critical, even if unacknowledged, aspect of the solutions being worked out.

While membership did not appear significantly large, the number of women's non-governmental organizations proliferated in the later 1990s (Zhurzhenko 2001:46) leading to speculation about their nature (women's shield or weapon?) and political purpose. Viewed as a newly-defined political constituency, however, women may be expected to cultivate formal, legally registered, organizations as their proof of presence before the state, and that each political community would seek to establish itself as part of the political landscape (Creed 2006). Also supportive of this social consolidation is the fact that there are women ready to commit to staying in their communities. Rather than taking a strategy of emigrating (temporarily or permanently in search of better opportunities) they stay and join other women in collective action to struggle with the new economic, social, and political circumstances in order to make life better for everyone.

Objective conditions for women's movement clearly obtained in transitional Ukraine (Nechemias 1991:75)[28] and the absence of overtly feminist demonstrative protest (Gal and

[28] Carol Nechemias (1991:75) agrees with Verta Taylor (1989) who cites historian William H. Chafe (1972:227) as recognizing movement in the following conditions: (1) a social atmosphere conducive to reform; (2) a cogent point of view around which to organize; and (3) a positive response by substantial numbers of women to the call to end discrimination.

Kligman 2000:105-106)[29] need not signal the absence of socially and politically-relevant action. Most importantly, the women in Ukraine self-identify as participants in a domestic women's movement that participates in the larger global women's movement. The organizations I examined were all female-headed and run, addressing issues of specific concern to women. In my way of thinking, participants in women-defined and women-centered projects that challenge male privilege are acting in a feminist manner; and women competing for participation in local self-government in order to advocate for women and their communities are engaging in a feminist/civic-nationalist project. The women of my study shared a gendered national identity as female resident-citizens of Ukraine and were aware of feminist analysis that identified them as members of a socially discriminated category. Despite problems related to competing definitions of community that inhibit political coalition-making in Ukraine, there is still reason to think that a movement may be sparked by some catalyst strong enough to impose a common political frame that resonates with most women in Ukraine.

This dissertation is presented in four parts. Part I describes the research project and its theoretical underpinnings. It also explains the significance of my chosen fieldwork site. Part II provides the broad context of Ukraine's women's activism, explaining the link between the historical Ukrainian women's movement on homeland territories with Ukrainian women's activism in the diaspora and with its re-emergence as a feature of post-Soviet Ukrainian society. Part III describes the niche of social and political activism in Cherkasy oblast. It discusses the

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[29] Gal and Kligman recognize feminism as "a movement and a set of practices—such as protesting, marching, holding meetings and conferences, lobbying and consciousness-raising" that vary in appearance depending on place, historical timing, and "in some cases by ethnic or national group, and in accordance with their other political commitments" (2000:105-106).

characteristics of my research population and survey sample and their activist identities as expressed in their personal narratives. Part IV explores the practices –of nationalism, feminism and feminist nationalism—exhibited by chapters of larger women's organizations and of newer activist groups in which I discern a feminist future.

Part I The Project

Chapter 1: Theoretical Overview

> *The "recognition of the historical specificity of the forms of collective action is the beginning of wisdom"—Charles Tilly (1984:305)*

Feminism, Nationalism, and Socialism in the FSU

Ukraine's declaration of independence in August 1991 was a moment of promise.[1] North American and Western European governments recognized the strategic import of Ukraine's geo-political position and sent advisors to help support Ukraine's economic transition to a market system and the development of civil society—an enhanced sphere of non-governmental, civilian-organized common interest activity—to engage the state in democratic processes. Actually, civil society had already started to take shape in Ukraine during late perestroika as an Ukrainophone (versus Russophone) and culturally Ukrainian (versus a Russified Soviet) space (Riabchuk 1992, 2001). Its perestroika milieu was the Popular Movement for Restructuring in Ukraine (1989) called *Rukh* (Ukrainian for *movement*) which originated in the Ukrainian Writers' Union's 1986 assertion of Ukrainian nationality rights.[2] As Rukh evolved into a movement committed to "the rebirth and comprehensive development of the Ukrainian state" it enjoyed the full measure of the Ukrainian diaspora's transnational activist capabilities. After independence, the diaspora became an increasingly interested participant in Ukraine's civil society, promoting among other things, the re-establishment of a Ukrainian (nationally-conscious) women's movement and its re-integration into transnational Ukrainian community structures (Hrycak 1999).

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[1] Wilson's *The Unexpected Nation* (2000) provides a good overview of this historical process. A referendum in December 1991 sought and obtained national consensus, with an 80 percent turnout of eligible voters of whom 92 percent voted for independence.

[2] The Rukh movement organization published its statute in *Literaturna Ukrajina*, the journal of the Ukrainian Writers' Union (February 16) and held its founding congress in Kyiv (September 8-10) in 1989. The movement attracted both liberal communists and integral nationalists, but maintained a democratic nationalist tone overall.

The new nation-states emerging from the former Soviet Union have variously followed a post-Soviet/post-socialist path involving the acceptance of Western democratic practices and capitalist market reforms. On the basis of patterns observed in the "third wave of democratization in the 20th century" (Huntington 1991), the territories of the FSU and its satellites were seen as the fourth successive arena for the march of transitions to democracy. Despite setbacks for feminism during the 1980s in North America and the United Kingdom,[3] Latin American women's mobilization and feminist movement activity were significant elements in such transitions to democracy (Jaquette 1994:1-2). The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-85) also served to heighten feminist awareness, empowerment of women, and growth of women's non-governmental organizations in a wider circle of countries of the Third World (Basu 1995:18, Yuval-Davis 1997:120). Social movements were similarly expected to serve in the construction of civil society in the FSU[4] and have since come to be seen as "crucial actors in the processes of social and political change" (Giugni 1999:xi) including *women's* (especially *feminist*) movements for full gender equality.[5]

Even as hopes were pinned on feminism, the dismemberment of the Soviet empire coincided with a rise in the influence of nationalism as a social movement ideology. Against visions of a newly integrated Europe, nationalism found new utility in post-Soviet countries

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[3] Nira Yuval-Davis (1997:122) agrees with Susan Faludi's (1992) analysis of 'backlash,' i.e. resurgent threats to and retreats from women's positions arising from male anxiety over potential loss of control. (See also Oakley and Mitchell 1997; Threlfall 1996.)

[4] Andrew Arato (1991:198) identifies Moshe Lewin (1988) as the first to make this connection.

[5] In 1990, there was speculation that a Soviet women's movement would be significant to the democratization processes of perestroika (Racioppi & See 1997:ix, Nechemias 1991:75); some initially entertained a renewed feminist movement (see Watson 1997a:21 1997b:158). Gal and Kligman call this expectation "not only overly optimistic, but a misreading of civil society as a sociocultural phenomenon" (2000:105).

consolidating their positions in the world order, based, as it has been at least since 1949, on the nation-state. The confluence of the break-up of multinational state structures (i.e. the internally divided FSU, Former Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia), the reassertion of national identities in new nation-states freed of Soviet hegemony, and the reunification of Germany create a complex field of social movements characterized by questions of identity. Nation-building processes couched in specific nationalist projects are under scrutiny from feminist perspectives even as (more fundamentalist and nationalist) women themselves engage in the defense of custom and tradition (Yuval-Davis 1997:122).

Historically, feminism has had an uneasy relationship with both socialism and nationalism. Activists of late 19th-early 20th century Eastern Europe included radical women who struggled to introduce feminist issues into Marxist programs as well as those who found their women's program subordinated to the various current national struggles (see Meyer 1985). After 1917, the Russianized Leninist form of Marxist socialism continued to neglect feminist concerns on the grounds that women's emancipation would automatically follow capitalism's defeat by socialism (Meyer 1985:18-21). Soviet communism did bring women into the workforce, provided opportunities for their education, and facilitated their representation in government, but it still failed, in its pervasive patriarchy, to leave space in which women could create their own autonomous organizations for their own self-liberation (Meyer 1985:25). The post-socialist moment would seem to offer a détente for feminism.[6]

Indeed, both nationalism and feminism, once banned as bourgeois ideologies, have returned against the backdrop of the lingering effects of Soviet socialism—accompanied by neo-

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[6] Frigga Haug (1991:38) points out the paradox, that socialism did not liberate women and the post-socialist moment therefore brought only disillusionment to Western feminists.

socialist activism against the retreat of post-Soviet regimes from the former guarantees of social welfare provision. The negotiation between them is ongoing in all of the EE/FSU countries. Women's movements have also (re-)emerged throughout central and eastern Europe and in most of the FSU states. New women's organizations are starting to redefine the niche of activism to which women were obliged under the Soviet system, even if that niche is still rooted in and constrained by Soviet habits. Nonetheless, after two decades, there is still significant resistance to feminism, which Barbara Einhorn (1993) called an "allergy to feminism."

Increasingly, observers are recognizing that the failure to embrace feminism in these countries is also a direct outcome of the transnational encounter between Eastern women and Western feminists, fraught as it is with the pitfalls of decades of divergent experience producing different priorities and different understandings of the root causes of women's inequality (Gal and Kligman 2000:100-102).[7] Compounding the frustrations, Western popular media barraged FSU women with its own (anti-feminist backlash) pop-psychology, pop-therapy, and images of women seeking husbands through enhanced femininity. Peggy Watson (1996, 1997) maintains that the anti-feminism in the FSU region is part of the same backlash being felt in the West, with the rejection of feminism in the post-Soviet sphere being more a product of the fragility of the feminist identity there, rather than a symptom of its total absence. She maintains that feminism will strengthen as women start to confront the second-class status they acquired as an automatic

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[7] Gal and Kligman note four factors complicating the East-West feminist encounter: (1) the different structural positions of women in East/Central Europe and North American/Western Europe; (2) the reticence of FSU women to accept themselves as a "socially-marked category;" (3) FSU women's aversion to admitting "politics" into the home; and (4) the diversity of Western feminism itself and disunity over how the women's movement should relate to the state and whether maternalist activism counts as feminism (2000:100-102).

by-product of Western democratization processes (Watson 1997:160) and will surely mature in time (1996:229).

Everywhere in the FSU, democratization and market reforms resulted in severe setbacks for women in workforce participation, political representation and access to safety-net social benefits. The economic disenfranchisement of women that began during the Brezhnev era continued under perestroika [8] and the economic restructuring of the transition period only forced women into deeper unemployment. Post-Soviet democratization also did little to ensure women's equal participation in new political structures and actually diminished the numbers of women in high political office. Across the diverse post-Soviet states, a common scenario unfolded of economic crisis leading to discrimination against women and resurgent nationalism readily implicated in these misogynist developments (Marsh 1998:91).[9] Katherine Verdery, for example, sees a clear connection between ethno-nationalism, patriarchal communism, and the current anti-feminism (see discussion in Watson 1997:154); others recognize a contemporary neo-nationalist discourse interacting negatively with feminist goals (Wilford and Miller 1998:ix). Some, however, hear women's post-1989 disdain for ideology and their discomfort at being re-defined as a "socially-marked category" (Gal and Kligman 2000:101); or they blame Soviet-era gender discourses still harbored by post-Soviet men and women (Watson 1996:229, Bridger et al., 1996:23-25) and do not miss the fact that the iconization of Woman as Motherland reigned as a Soviet patriarchal myth long before the break-up of the empire into its constituent nations (Heldt 1992:161).

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[8] This analysis is generally supported, but Donald Filtzer (1996) makes a clear argument.

[9] Maxine Molyneaux (1996:234) noted three global trends that hinder feminism in our era: the ascendancy of neo-liberal economic models (where the state ceases to be a provider, but is rather a facilitator, of services), the end of communism/socialism as a source of policy alternatives, and new currents of nationalism and religious fundamentalism, all of which apply to Ukraine.

Nationalism, however, is a ubiquitous presence in new nation-states, especially ones in the process of nation-building; therefore, it is crucial to recognize its effects. Recent scholarship asserts that although nationalism has the potential of promoting a sense of community among women, it also holds potentially negative effects on them as well, since women are imagined as integral to the success of nation-building projects (Yuval-Davis 1997:3). Ideas about femininity and masculinity are constructed within specific nationalist discourses. Nationalist discourse tends to make iconic the "essential woman;"[10] it calls for the "recovery of the traditional woman," setting her up as a signifier of the culture/nation and objectifying her as bearer and nurturer of the next nationally-conscious generation (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989:7). Anne McClintock has theorized this positioning as the "the central time warp of nationalism" in which time is divided by gender, representing woman as the atavistic and authentic body of national tradition, while man has the permission to act as progressive agent (1995:359). Building on Frantz Fanon's (1965 "Algeria Unveiled") observations of post-colonial nationalism's penchant for framing women as symbols of national uniqueness, McClintock warns that the interaction of feminism and nationalism is often a treacherous dance and that feminist agency is subject to be disciplined by nationalism and subordinated to it (1995:367).

The potential compatibility of feminism with nationalism has been the subject of some scholarly disagreement.[11] Gisela Kaplan (1997), for one, found them almost completely incompatible in Western Europe. Karen Offen's work, however, uncovered the obscured histories of feminism in Europe and described "nationalizing feminisms and feminizing

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[10] For a full listing and discussion of those who have theorized this tendency, see Norma Alarcon, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem's introduction to their jointly edited *Between Woman and Nation* (1999:9-10).

[11] For an especially comprehensive discussion of this issue see Vickers 2006.

nationalisms" as synergistic variations of the gendered activism found in the territories of Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, Finland, and Ukraine under Habsburg and Russian rule (2000:214). The unique historicity of various women's movements, championed by Amrita Basu (1995), gained the attention of academic feminism following disenchantment with the *sisterhood is global* rhetoric of the 1970-80s and consequent recognition of separate feminist cultures.[12] Amy Hackett (1972) was the first to use the term "national feminism" to describe these culturally distinctive and context-specific feminisms (Offen 2000:213). Sharon L. Wolchik and Alfred G. Meyer (1985) were also ahead of the academic curve when they devoted an edited volume to the cultural variations in the (Marxist context) feminism exhibited in different Eastern European cultures. Meyer pondered the compatibility of various combinations of socialism, national liberation, and feminism, while noting that from country to country women differed in political tactics, philosophic foundations, focal issues, and the degree of boldness with which they demanded controversial things such as sexual freedom (1985:13-30).

Since the mid 1980s into the 1990s, scholars have suggested a more generous definition of feminism within women's movements. Kumari Jayawardena (1986) showed how feminism was not imposed on Third World societies but arose out of an awareness of gender discrimination within indigenous national liberation struggles. Basu (1995:19) also refrained from excluding from feminism even such women's movements that appeared less than autonomous, asserting that women's ability to act under authoritarian conditions is evidence of

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[12] *Sisterhood is global* is a reference to the title of Robin Morgan's edited anthology of the International Women's Movement, in which the USSR is represented (as one country) by a single entry penned by Tatyana Mamonova (1984:676-683). Morgan, in turn, wrote the introduction to Mamonova's (1984), *Women and Russia: Feminist Writings From the* ***Soviet Union*** (my emphasis). Similar assumptions attach to Barbara Holland's (1985) *Soviet Sisterhood*.

the women's prominent role within family and community and women's access to informal networks for mobilization. Lois West's edited volume first gave the pattern a name—*feminist nationalism*[13]—and proposed a kind of gendered cultural relativism for its examination linking feminism (activism for women's equal rights) with nationalism (territorial integrity, political independence, sovereignty) as defined in their own cultural contexts (1997: xii,xxxi). In her work on Third World histories, McClintock (1995:385) also recognized feminist-nationalist cooperation in liberation struggles, using the terms "feminist nationalism" and "nationalist feminism" seemingly interchangeably, though she concludes that nowhere has a feminist revolution successfully accompanied a socialist or national one and that feminism is always made to serve nationalism in the end. However, Ranjoo Seodu Herr (2003) elaborates on a nationalist feminism as a variant in which Third World feminists continue to prevail upon nationalists to keep their revolutionary promises in newly independent nation-states.

Certainly, not all women's activities and not all women's movements should be automatically defined as feminist. A deeper appreciation of women's agendas, however, has led to the understanding that any women's movement that challenges patriarchy is feminist regardless of nomenclature (Beckwith 2000, Vickers 2006). This also allows the leaders of what might qualify as ostensibly feminist projects to reject the label feminist when it seems tactically unwise or counterproductive to their immediate cause, as would arguably be the case in Ukraine where post-Soviet anti-feminist sentiments abound. Vickers has recently furthered the scholarship on women's movements affiliated with national projects (initiated by Basu 1995 and

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[13] I believe that Bohachevsky Chomiak was perhaps the first to describe *feminist nationalism* labeling the Ukrainian variation of it "pragmatic feminism" or "community feminism" (1988:xix). West (1997:xxxix) does us the service of asserting that there really *is* such a cross-cultural or global phenomenon and producing a volume exploring its manifestations.

Jayawardena 1986) by exploring across Third and even former Second World contexts "how [various] national projects and women's movements and feminisms relate and change over time in response to factors including colonialism, nationalism, war, and democratization" (2006:89).

Several edited volumes (Moghadam 1993; Funk and Mueller 1993; Basu 1995; Rueschemeyer 1998; Gal and Kligman 2000) have addressed a comparison of the gendered socio-economic and political effects of transition in Central and Eastern Europe –recognizing Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, East Germany as unique post-Soviet contexts forged in the differential application of Soviet institutions to distinct pre-1945 national cultures—while in these tomes the countries of the former Soviet Union, if included, were generally represented by one or two offerings from the Russian perspective. It was not until the mid-1990s that the first analyses of the Ukrainian context started to appear (Marsh 1996; Buckley 1997).[14] Newer research has yet to analyze the similarities and differences among women's movements in the more intimate quarters of the former Soviet space where the legacies of the Russian Empire continued to hold sway. Even in Vickers' introduction (2006) to her global comparative framework of women's activism and women's/feminist movements, the women's movements of the FSU are lumped in a hodgepodge and dubbed a *sui generis* category. In contemporary parlance, the conceptualized First and Third Worlds continue to enjoy currency (Herr 2003; Mohanty 1991, 1994), but the countries of the former FSU, the Second World, have not yet found their place in the re-imagined new world order.

Ukraine's Crisis of Identity

[14] The first Ukrainian voices were those of Solomea Pavlychko (Institute of Literature, Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Kyiv) as an indigenous feminist scholar and Marian J. Rubchak (Valparaiso University, USA), a Ukrainian-American feminist who has been a participant in the introduction of feminist thought and analysis to Ukraine since the early 1990s.

Ukraine is perhaps one of the most enticing arenas for the study of the interaction of socialism, nationalism, and feminism. Pre-1991, during the Soviet era, *Ukrainian* was not a neutral identity, carrying the note and stigma of nationalism. To this day, nationalism is a constant backdrop to much of Ukrainian social life and the formation of contemporary Ukrainian identities, expressed in language (Russian, Ukrainian or their mixture, called *surzhyk),* in political orientation (in essence, one's personal evaluation of the Soviet past), and in engagement with Ukraine's new civil society, including membership in women's groups and organizations.

Ukraine has a particularly deep history of attempts at nationhood prior to August 1991. In the modern era, Ukraine's trajectory to nationhood is a complex story punctuated by two short-lived bids for national independence, once during each of the world wars of the 20th century (1917-20; and 1941-43). As it happened, the contemporary Ukrainian state emerged only after an extensive Soviet period during which the formerly Russian imperial territories of central (Dnieper Ukraine) and eastern Ukraine constituted the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as of 1920, with western Ukrainian territories annexed to it in 1939. From this political arrangement, independent Ukraine inherited the political boundaries, infrastructure, and cultural legacies of its Soviet status. Ukrainian struggles for sovereignty, however, extend much further back into history, however.[15]

One of the arguments around the fall of the Soviet Union is that its nationality policies nurtured national consciousness among the Soviet minorities within their constituent states

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[15] Wilson 1997 (Chapters 1 and 2) offers a brief review of Ukrainian history, while Wilson 2000 offers a fuller treatment, though not as comprehensive as the histories of Orest Subtelny (1988) and Paul Robert Magocsi (1996). Arnold Margolin (1946:22-36) offers a fascinating and sympathetic personal view of the Ukrainian liberation movement. For an excellent analysis of Ukrainian engagement with its "others," turn to Rogers Brubaker (1996:79-106) for Russian-Ukrainian and Timothy Snyder (2003) for Polish-Ukrainian relations.

(Malia 1994; Strayer 1998; Khazanov 1995; Hirsch 2005). While the introduction of Soviet administrative structures may have contributed to Ukraine's overall resources for state-building, it was by no means responsible for giving it a Ukrainian face (Motyl 1993; Brubaker 1996). Arguably, the first state-building phase for a specifically Ukrainian populace can be seen in the Cossack era (Magocsi 1996:179), which came to a close during the reign of Catherine II (1729-1796) who incorporated Cossack territories into the Russian imperial structures (Magocsi 1996: 265). The subsequent period of colonial status relegated Ukrainian language and culture to rural (traditional/backward) status, while the urban centers were industrialized and populated as extensions of Russian (high culture) space.

One hundred years later, Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866-1934) authored a Ukrainian indigenous history linking the Cossack era with the medieval kingdom of Kyivan Rus' and applied a discourse that delineated Ukrainian as discreet from Russian. The effects of the national revival resulted in the short-lived revolutionary government of the Ukrainian National Republic (1917-20, headed by Hrushevsky as the first Ukrainian president) and lingered into the first years of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the form of national communism. The tumult of World War II brought another failed bid for independence among other war-time traumas. The Ukrainian nation-state that finally emerged in 1991 not only had a rich history for the construction of a national narrative, but also ample grievances over Ukrainian experiences under Soviet Communism, not the least of which was the Chornobyl nuclear power plant disaster of 1986, to fuel a separatist movement.

Andrew Wilson (2000:153) points out that Soviet Ukraine had the largest of all dissident populations and accounted for half of all Soviet political prisoners. Their nationalist dissent not only invoked the right of a soviet socialist republic to secede from the Union (guaranteed by

Article 72 of the 1977 Soviet constitution) but also was an open struggle to preserve a cultural identity that was endangered by the forces of Soviet-Russian assimilation. The 1960s-70s were brutal decades for nationally conscious writers, poets, artists, and human rights advocates: three waves of arrests (1965-66, 1972-73 and 1976-80) accompanied Brezhnev's purge of Petro Shelest, (1963-72) the general secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party who leaned towards Ukrainian national communism, and ushered in the long tenure of the orthodox internationalist, communist hard-liner Volodymyr Shcherbitsky (1972-89) whose policies effectively crippled Ukrainian identity. Shcherbitsky also delayed the reforms of perestroika and glasnost in Ukraine by several years. The lack of overt protest in pre-perestroika Ukraine (noted by Manual Castells 1997) is refuted by the sheer volume of dissident samizdat (*samvydav*—Ukr.)[16] as well as by research that confirms an increase in attempted protest events over this period (Shelley 1996:182-183).[17] The severe measures that were brought to bear against various dissident groups (including the feminists) on the eve of the Moscow Olympics (1979-80) are now recognized not only to have seriously reduced the resource base (in terms of persons and organizations) for movement in 1987-88 (Wilson 2005b:16) but also to have intensified the forces let loose by perestroika (Shelley 1996:181).

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[16] One of the major diaspora enablers of the dissemination of samvydav was the Smoloskyp Information Service founded in 1968 in the diaspora by Osyp Zinkevych. The Smoloskyp enterprise smuggled, translated, and published Ukrainian dissident texts in the West from the 1960s on, using a network of young diaspora volunteers. As of 1990, Zinkevkych lives in Ukraine and Smoloskyp operates as a publishing house and is establishing a Museum of Ukrainian samvydav in Kyiv.

[17] Louise Shelley (1996:182) quotes a tabulation published by Alexeeva and Chilidze in 1985 (Mass Unrest in the USSR, Volume 1, Washington D.C. Office of Net Assessments) showing that from 1956-83 the Soviet militia subdued over 400 collective protests organized around human rights, nationality rights, and cultural expression issues. Shelley concludes that from 1965-74 unsanctioned public protests, mostly over human rights and nationality issues, increased five-fold over the previous decade, indicating strong resistance, strongly suppressed.

In 1991, Ukraine's nationalists asserted that their right to independence was backed by this (somewhat compromised) Ukrainian cultural integrity. This post-Soviet break was/is a "moment of imagination" (as per Benedict Anderson's 1983 "imagined community"), a moment in which dreams of autonomy were seized upon but not quite fulfilled. Certainly, the national patriot's dream of a sovereign Ukraine taking its place in the world of peer nations with a self-interested foreign policy, independent economy, and government responsive to its citizens, secure in its national identity and characterized by a populace—that even if ethnically plural, would nevertheless feel comfortable as *Ukrainians* —has not yet been fulfilled. But the opening words of the Ukrainian national anthem optimistically remind us that "Ukraine has not yet died" either. Ukraine's period of transition has become a liminal moment in which it is stuck, most obviously, with respect to economic reform, but also just as importantly, in its self-definition as a political and cultural entity.

Therefore, of all of Ukraine's post-Soviet transitional tasks—described by Taras Kuzio (1998:165) as uniquely "four-pronged" and including the democratization of the political system, the establishment of a market economy, and the construction of an independent state administration—perhaps the most daunting was its task of nation-building. In the fall of 2000 in Cherkasy, I heard the following Ukrainian state broadcast over the Soviet-era kitchen radio set:

> People need to accept the fact that they need not be afraid of the word nationalism, as one of the variations of nationalism is patriotism. The Constitution is written on the basis of the national idea. The ideology of the Soviet people was also a form of nationalism. We need to feel free to *be* citizens of Ukraine, a state based on a titular nation. All the rest will follow, as the manifestation of a renaissance of national development. We have to know our history to better orient ourselves on the path to tomorrow. We need to raise

> national consciousness. As Viacheslav Lypynskyj, the Ukrainian nationalist philosopher said: "No one will make a nation out of us if we do not do it ourselves." [Quote from Ukrainian state radio broadcast heard in Cherkasy, September 21, 2000]

The official Soviet policy of the industrial development of all peoples and their convergence in all cultural and lifestyle respects had apparently been, to a large degree, effective (Zinich and Naulko 1972). Kuzio (2002) observes that Ukraine attempted to compensate simultaneously for the incomplete politicization of ethnicity among its citizens at the time of independence by engaging in ethnicization of the populace in its early nation-state building period.[18] The first post-Soviet President, Leonid Kravchuk (1991-94), a recent ex-communist, extended support to the kinds of Ukrainianization projects begun during the perestroika era by activist groups of the Rukh milieu, especially the promotion of Ukrainian language and culture and historical memory. This period, critical for initializing definitions of nation and gender, represents Ukraine's brief early career as a nationalizing state (Brubaker 1996:4-5, 83).[19]

In 1993, however, a virulently anti-nationalist (orthodox internationalist) left in the form of the revived Ukrainian Communist Party (CPU, banned in 1991) influenced a change in course (Wilson 2000:187): One of the casualties during the Leonid Kuchma Presidency was the campaign to enforce the use of Ukrainian as the official language of the state. As the national-

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[18] See Catherine Wanner's *Burden of Dreams* (1998) for an ethnography of Ukraine as a nationalizing state during these years, covering the re-adjustment of state/religious calendars, language policies, education as it affects gendering, and the recasting of history, including the renaming of physical spaces, and the dismantling and erection of monuments.

[19] Despite Western predictions of conflict, Ukraine negotiated its first years of independence without the kind of nationalist conflict that ravaged the former Yugoslavia (in Croatia and Bosnia, 1991-95) and without any violence, recognized Crimea as an Autonomous Republic in July 1992.

democratic political front fragmented, issues threatening to sovereignty took the fore, such as disagreement over Ukraine's relationship to other political economic and cultural entities in the CIS region, especially the dominance of Russian print and media in Ukraine (Brubaker 1996:55, 79). After 1993 Ukraine came to be seen as a "weak nationalizing state" (Wilson 1997:116). Ukraine's position became increasingly complicated by geographic proximity to Russia, which not only had a large measure of economic control (over gas, for example) in Ukraine, but also had been growing stronger in its stance as an "external national homeland" (Brubaker 1996:109) protecting the rights of ethnic Russians and even Russophone Ukrainians within Ukraine's boundaries.

The sharpening of conflict over divergent political visions has supported the formulation, employed by both indigenous and Western scholars, of Ukraine's "crisis of identity" (Riabchuk 1992, Wolchik and Zviglyanich 2000). It is now common to frame Ukraine's rather complex history as an essential dichotomy—between a more nationalist and more European western region with a shorter but severely traumatic Soviet experience, and a more Russified eastern/southern region with an imperial Russian and longer Soviet history. In this vein, Mykola Riabchuk (1992) introduced the phrase *Two Ukraines,*[20] while Andrew Wilson refers to Ukraine's "split personality" (2000:146). The crux of the split is ultimately a difference of vision regarding Ukraine's future—between those who imagine Ukraine as part of Europe and the political and economic traditions of the West and those who imagine Ukraine's future in a

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[20] Rory Finnin and Adriana Helbig (2005) provide a succinct discussion of the two Ukraines thesis; for the original expose of the concept, see Riabchuk 1992; also Riabchuk 2002. Finnin and Helbig also point out that historian Orest Subtelny (2000:5) counters the dichotomous model by proposing that the central oblasts represent a middle ground between two extremes, since its historical experience involved neither drastic ethnic "confrontation" (as in western Ukraine) nor "homogenization" (as in southeastern Ukraine).

relationship with Russia and the CIS as the country's closest political, cultural and economic partners, perhaps with the reinstatement of socialism or even (but even less realistically) of communism.

These different visions are assumed to translate into deep-seated differences in opinion and approach to an array of issues. There is some validity to this. During the Kuchma decade, weighty issues were publicly discussed: Ukraine's belonging in Europe or Eurasia, membership in the European Union (EU) or the CIS, cooperation or membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). These discussions entailed policy stances on compliance with economic requirements of global market participation, the privatization (and re-privatization) of industry assets, the continuing land reform and support for collective versus private forms of agricultural production, and so on. Differences on such fundamentals can be very disruptive: those who still celebrate the Soviet Union and thwart reform can be seen even as a threat to the very security and stability of the new Ukrainian state.

Early in the transition period, Andrew Arato noted that the FSU field of social movement involved both change-seeking and Soviet-order preserving elements (1991:204)[21] similar to what Manuel Castells called *proactive* and *reactive* movements (1997:2). Thanks to strong Communist successor parties which represent a left "even more unreformed than their Russian counterparts" (Wilson 2000:189), the meddling of Russia, and the constant anxiety of Russian-

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[21] Arato suggested that these are rooted in different "temporal modalities or historical contexts of action" and continues to say that, "Sometimes, to make matters worse several of these levels are to be found within a single movement. At issue are not only the different intentions of these movements, but the different logic of their action with respect to the issues of the day: economic reform, political democratization and the type of civil society that is emerging –modern or semi-traditional, democratic or semi-authoritarian" (1991:204).

sphere manipulation, these are prolonged, extended adjustment realities. It is not only the domestic struggle (of reactive communists resisting reforms) that has weakened Ukraine's nationalization or nation-building as a proactive process (Castells 1997:31). The context of Russia's aggressive external homeland nationalism also raises anxiety of Ukrainian homeland civic nationalists, especially of the nationalist Western diaspora, that is stirred to actions befitting of a strange variant of "*diasporan* external homeland nationalism" (pace Rogers Brubaker 1996).

The crisis of identity is theorized as having to do with the disruption of the regime of domination in which Soviet Ukrainian was subordinated to Soviet Russian and/or Soviet identities. Working from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and the mastery of a "'common code"' (1977:81), Carter Bentley notes that "shared dispositions on which coordinated action and sensations of ethnic affinity depend" can be disrupted even by incremental social change (1991:29). Rapid change even more surely creates a stage for a crisis of ethnic identity (Bentley 1991:43). The moment of independence and with it the sudden dissolving and discrediting of the CPU set the stage for an upending of the system of values, which involved the scrutiny of personal careers and ethnic affiliation (ethnic Russians constituted a majority of directors of industry and holders of high political office) and generated skepticism over some personal transformations crafted in the new political circumstances. Communists who remained in power "changed their colors" from "red" to "yellow-blue" (becoming pragmatic neo-nationalists): but, in terms of political affiliation, they identified as *pozapartijni* or non-partisan (literally, beyond the party) [22] which until 2004 was the moniker of the Party of Power, and whose ranks included both Presidents Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma.

[22] This phenomenon where non-aligned party membership as a code for ex-CPU, generally represented by communists-turned-capitalists with neo-nationalist patriotic inclinations is also described by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (2001:250-254).

Wilson (1997:113) notes that in contrast with other post-Soviet contexts where the transformation of the national communist elite into a nationalizing force is a systemic feature, Ukraine's ruling elites were never wholly united around national communism. When the banned Communist Party of Ukraine reorganized in 1993, it had the dubious distinction of being "one of the most conservative successor communist parties in the former USSR" (Wilson 1997:114-115). The CPU platform denounces the destruction of the USSR, calling for the restoration of the Union as a voluntary agreement between socialist states and condemns bourgeois nationalism and the leaders of the Ukrainian liberation movement as traitors. At the end of the 1990s, the CPU is still the largest in Ukraine and together with the other parties of the left (the Socialist Party of Ukraine SPU, the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine PSPU, and the Peasant Party PPU) constitutes a Parliamentary force that inhibits the implementation of post-Soviet reforms. The leftist front views reforms as the corrupting influence of Western (American) interest and sees Western capitalism as a colonizing force that threatens Ukraine's national independence. In fact, "the left therefore sees itself not as 'anti-national,' but as defenders of the Soviet Ukrainian identity. For the left, it is the 'national-fascist' Galicians and their Western puppet-masters who are not only anti-Soviet, but actually 'anti-Ukrainian,' rather than the other way around" (Wilson 2000:190). Thus, in Ukraine uniquely, the left and right constitute identities, opposing each other on every aspect of social, political, economic, and cultural life, with the left even claiming that the imposition of Ukrainian language in Ukraine is a result of the artificial influence of Ukrainian nationalism imposed by the diaspora (Wilson 2000:189). [23]

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[23] These camps persist. President Kuchma approved a program of integration with the European Union in September 2000. In 2001, a report from the Council of Europe Rapporteurs speaks of a worsening political situation: "The apparent lack of political will to reinforce local and regional self-government in the country is mainly determined by the current political situation in which

Thus, the crisis of identity is very much rooted in the effects of nationalism. For most of the nation's history, Ukrainian nationalism has been a state-seeking, Risorgimento and liberation nationalism, akin to that of the Third World anti-colonial movements, and heavily stigmatized in the Soviet Union for its separatist potential as well as in the West due to its World War II alliances. But, with independence, nationalism can be reconfigured as a liberal project along the lines of Ukrainian patriotism. In the early 1990s, there were moments when ethno-nationalism (characterized by the sentiment *Ukraine for Ukrainians*) reared its head; but, by the end of the 1990s, the general designation *nationalism* is no longer monopolized by the narrow range of ethno-nationalism of which western Ukrainian liberation fighters and their descendents in the diaspora have often been accused (Hrytsak 2004:6). Kuzio (2000a) argues that in an independent Ukraine, Ukrainian nationalism needs to be accepted as the state ideology of ruling elites, as is the case in all civic states. He suggests that his peers—Dominique Arel, Andrew Wilson and Anatol Lieven—who define Ukrainian nationalism narrowly as a Western Ukrainian phenomenon, fail to recognize that the context of Ukraine's independent status potentially transforms Ukrainian nationalism into new civic and patriotic forms.

In 2000, most of the (over) 150 political parties registered in Ukraine espoused Ukraine's territorial and cultural sovereignty and were supportive of transitional reforms. These are often referred to as the *civic nationalists* (Kuzio 2000b; Hrytsak 2004). This civic nationalist center includes the center right (heirs of the Rukh democratic milieu), the pragmatic 'non-partisan' and

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some political parties continue to consider the ECLSG [European Charter of Local Self-Government] and the decentralization process a threat for the cohesion of the country..[as] they could offer viable political arguments to the opposition forces accusing the ruling parties to favour the country's fragmentation. This could lead to the mobilization of masses of people still convinced that communism is the only way to face the heavy economic difficulties." (2001: point 8). Almost a decade later, a UNDP Human Development Report (2008) discusses the ongoing effects of the ambivalence over EU integration.

neo-nationalist center as the party of power, and the socialist center left, excluding the anti-Ukrainian internationalist CPU (see Kuzio 2000b, 2002). Generally, former CPU, now identifying as being without party affiliation continue to dominate the people's councils on all levels (village, district, city, and oblast). I often heard from the residents of provincial Cherkasy that, despite the multiplicity of political parties registered on the national level, the only political orientations that really mattered locally in both electoral and quotidian politics were embodied by the contest between civic nationalists (mostly Rukh-affiliated candidates) versus the entrenched Communists and their sympathizers.

These extreme differences of vision (Arato 1991) are "deep-level differences over how to interpret social reality" (Jaggar and Rothenberg 1984) or differences in habitus (Bourdieu 1977) that underlie conflict and disagreement (Bentley 1991:29). Conversely, the possibility of collective action implies an arrival at some shared interpretation of reality. By the end of the 1990s, the policies and scandals of Leonid Kuchma's administration (ostensibly anti-Ukrainian economic and cultural policies, apparent compliance with oligarchic powers, transparent manipulation of electoral processes, censure of the press, and complicity in widespread corruption) appeared to be creating an opposition that embraced both right and left ends of the civic nationalist front. This civic nationalism is also the political territory occupied in 2000 by most of Ukraine's women's political and community organizations.

Defining My Terms

In this project, I avoid pre-judgments along the lines of a women's versus feminist dichotomy (cf Beckwith 2000) by accepting all women's organizations of post-Soviet Ukraine as a kind of gendered social movement activity and I trace the effects, synergistic and inhibiting, of feminism, nationalism, and socialism in their collective practices. To do this, I will by necessity

use the concept-terms *feminism, nationalism,* and *socialism* while trying to grasp their nuanced variations, since they are not only multiple in their manifestations (nationalism can, for example, be ethno-centric, political, liberal, cultural, economic, state-seeking, state-led and so on) but also often mutually implicated and always historically context-specific.

In the historical context, by socialism I will mean the ideology of Marxism that mobilized men and women to revolutionary activism, the politics of social democracy that seeks a just society free of exploitation of the poor and powerless, as well as the system of governance and economic management called state socialism. I will not engage scholarly models of socialism or of post-socialist transition, but will try to keep lived socialism in view as a (recently existing) social system of arrangements and contracts, which has been disturbed, though not erased, in the move from state socialism to capitalism (Gal and Kligman 2000:4). Conflicting views on the necessity of a state-guaranteed safety net through welfare provision and social infrastructure were evident in the 1980s even in the United States and in European countries with strong social democratic political parties (Rowbotham 1996:4); thus, it is not so strange, that in the post-socialist world, Ukraine included, there are aspects of socialist revival in reaction to the conditions of transition (Creed 1998). This reaction to the government's compromised ability to fulfill its social obligations, and the appeal to a renewal of socialist conscience, I identify here as *neo-socialism.*[24]

By historical nationalism, I will mean the striving to bring a people and state into congruency, following Anthony D. Smith, who sees nations as "grounded in pre-existing ethnicities and their political mobilization, and are formed by this legacy" (1995:71). Ukrainian

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[24] I use the term neo-socialist in the sense of post-Soviet socialism, which I distinguish (and its representatives in Cherkasy do too) from Soviet communism.

nationalism has never been aggressive or "ethnocentric" as defined by Smith 1983, obviously fitting the description of "polycentric" type of nationalist aspirations focused on becoming a member of the "family of nations" (Tamir 1993, citing Smith 1983:158-159). Throughout the 20th century in the Ukrainian SSR, organized political nationalism was able to appear only in the form of national communism (as it did in the 1920s, the 1960s, and in the later perestroika years 1989-90) in persons who were both communists and nationally-conscious Ukrainians (Wilson 1997:93). In contemporary Ukraine, nationalism means efforts towards nation-building in the classical sense.[25] In addition, due to Ukraine's long record of liberation struggle which resonates with the nationalist dissident movement of the 1970s and the ultimately state-seeking program of Rukh, I will distinguish between nationalists who identify with the movements of the recent pre-independence period and those ex-communists who adopted pragmatic nationalist positions in the post-Soviet period. Here, this pragmatic nationalism will be called *neo-nationalism*.[26]

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[25] See Smith (1998:19-21) for the classical nation-building model according to the tenets of the modernist paradigm, which describes the task addressed by Ukrainian nationalists, having a kind of "state-nation" (a territorial state with a heterogenous population) on their hands.

[26] Please note that I use the term differently than does Smith (1995:71-77) when he employs it in reference to contemporary North American and Western European regional nationalisms (e.g. Quebecois, Catalan), or Rick Wilford and Robert Miller (1998), who apply the term to nationalism in the post-Soviet moment. Nonetheless, readers may take issue. Wilson (1997:93, 111-112) notes that in Ukraine, these leaders were sufficiently disillusioned with communism to become "nationalist in substance rather than merely national in style." Although it is impossible to determine the sincerity of ideological conversion and for this reason social movement analysis usually takes professed affiliation at face value, we must also assume individual variation. Insider intuition recognizes a subtle but distinctly felt difference between these "nationalists" and what I am calling pragmatic "neo-nationalists," which may at times even cause contentious disagreement between them. Thus, I am using the term neo-nationalist the sense of a neophyte or convert, who is aware (as per Pierre Bourdieu 1977:2) of the repertoire of rules and roles, but lacks the practical mastery necessary to consistently negotiate the cultural terrain. It is interesting in light of this that former President Leonid Krawchuk (ex-CPU), in an interview to the diasporan newspaper *Nova Gazeta*, was moved to assert "I am a Ukrainian nationalist" (Nova Gazeta, No.20(128) May 19, 2011, web-archived at www.novagazeta.us).

Overall, I will abide by Katherine Verdery's formulation of nationalism as "the political utilization of the symbol nation through discourse and political activity as well as the sentiment that draws people into responding to the symbol's use" (1996:227); but in terms of identity, I will also follow Yuval-Davis in recognizing ethnicity as a political project. Nationalism does not only mean promoting the sovereignty of one's nation, but also the promotion of a selection of (the wide array of available) cultural features as markers of the nation's ethnic uniqueness (Yuval-Davis 1994:408-424). The operation of a nationalist project means identity politics, that is, the salient presence of "discourses and movement organized around questions of religious, ethnic, and national identity" (Moghadam 1994:ix).

One of the aims of my research is to investigate the evidence for feminism in post-Soviet Ukrainian women's grassroots activism. In this exploration, I take heart from Karen Offen's mission to uncover hidden feminist traditions (2000:xi) and direction from Richard Stites who locates feminism as one component of imperial Russia's women's movement, a movement embedded in larger social processes of revolution, struggles for national autonomy, and socio-economic change (1978:xvii). In the post Soviet period, feminism might be detected as an undercurrent constituting a critical reaction to patriarchy, the system of social relations that enable male privilege and power (Walby 1990:19). Sylvia Walby (1990) theorizes two main kinds of patriarchy—private patriarchy where women sequestered within households are ruled by fathers and husbands as the beneficiaries of their work; and public patriarchy, in which women are not limited to the home, but their labor is subject to collective expropriation for the benefit of the market (as in the United States) or the state (as in the former USSR). While Ukrainian culture does not harbor practices that physically maim or isolate women, the effects of both private and public patriarchy are felt—in household production, paid employment, male

violence, mandatory heterosexuality, gender-stereotyping by cultural institutions, and the state, which are the major societal structures through which patriarchy is made effective (Walby 1990).[27] Historically, feminism has appeared in many guises, however, and even within North America there is much disagreement on fundamental issues including the sources of patriarchy (Walby 1990; Gal and Kligman 2000:102-3; Brenner 1996).

A typology of feminism first recognizes that the North American feminist engagement is usually regarded as spanning several distinct and generational periods. The First Wave equal rights feminism (1848-1930) and the Second Wave which introduced the radical women's liberation feminism of the 1960s-70s are generally accepted designations.[28] A Third Wave[29] of feminism sensitive to differences of race/ethnicity and class arose in the 1980s, introducing the concerns of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women in the 1990s, when feminism faced the "backlash" (Faludi 1991) and merged into a more individualist and less organized cultural front sometimes identified as one of the "new" social movements.[30] Apart from wave-periodicity, it is also usual practice to recognize a thematic classification of feminisms (Jaggar and Struhl 1978; cf Offen 1988:132-133). These feminism are contrasted with un-(non-)feminist conservatism, defined as the upholding of a sexual division of labor as being natural (innate) and a good and

[27] Sylvia Walby (1990:21) outlines six structures and treats each one to analysis in separate chapters. The structures in brief are the spheres of the household, paid employment, obligatory heterosexuality and the sexual double standard, male violence, cultural institutions (including media) and the state.

[28] It is worth noting, however, that Walby (1997:145) asserts that First Wave feminism was much more than a suffrage campaign, being a long-term and multi-faceted movement, and rejects the idea that Second Wave feminism was significantly more radical than the First.

[29] The term *Third Wave* was coined by Rebecca Walker in a 1992 essay in which she expounds on how North American feminism failed to recognize non-white and non-heterosexual women.

[30] This is an erroneous view, in Walby's opinion (1997: 142-143).

just arrangement for society. The major thematic varieties of feminism[31] are (1) classic mainstream feminist liberalism which seeks equitable treatment for women through suffrage and legal equal rights; (2) traditional Marxist feminism, which points to capitalism as the root of women's exploitation (3) radical feminism that sees male dominance as the root of patriarchy and strives towards the transformation of society, (4) modern socialist feminism (a 1970s version working to remedy both economic and cultural sources of women's oppression) which focuses on the issue of women's domestic labor, economically underappreciated though foundational to social reproduction as the most critical and yet the most complicated of problems needing to be solved; and (5) cultural feminism (emphasizing essential biological differences, including reproductive capacity, between men and women as the basis for women's solidarity). These varieties differ in their explanations for women's subordination and in aspects of their practices. Feminism, thus, continues to inspire argument and defy easy definition (Walby 1990:2) even in the United States, where the tensions between radical and liberal feminism over abortion and motherhood are difficult to reconcile. Because it is moreover theorized to be context-sensitive and historically specific, feminism is not and should not be expected to appear everywhere in the same variation of formulation and practice (Scott 1996:7; Vickers 2006).

In light of the imminent transitions of the next decade, Offen's excursion into the puzzle of the world's ambivalence over feminism was prescient. She suggests that behind the various classifications of hyphenated-, and categorizations of period-feminisms, lies a basic divergence between "two distinct modes of historical argumentation or discourse" (1988:134). One strand is that of "individualist" feminism that has its roots in John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*

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[31] This is not meant to be an exhaustive or particularly authoritative listing. It is a composite of various sources, including Offen 1988, Jaggar and Struhl 1978, and Wikipedia notes.

(1869) and is the basis for women's claims to rights equal to that of men in their society. The other is a "relational" feminism evident in Mary Wollstonecraft's (1792) phrasing of "the rights of women" embedded in their womanly roles and maternal responsibilities. While individualist feminism has gained dominance in North America, relational feminism has been a strong strain in European feminism, particularly the French. Its "couple-centered vision" (1988:138)—which superficially resembles conservatism—supports different interpretations of women's needs and appropriate state support for women, and results in arguments of "equality in difference" rather than strict equality.

Offen acknowledges that (particularly North American) resistance to ideas of sexual difference and women's maternal or nurturing proclivity is not unfounded and cites the Soviet Union as one society in which ideas about women's special nature were exploited in such a way that continued their subordination (1988:154). She asserts however that it is imperative to readmit relational features into the program of feminism to make it work for both men and women. Vickers (2004, 2006) too notes that since the North American Second Wave, Western feminism has become associated much more closely with what she calls "unafilliated" (autonomous, individualist) feminist arguments, whereas earlier, "affiliated" (familial or relational) feminist arguments had held more weight. This North American Western version of feminism has served to alienate women in other cultural settings and to obscure their efforts as women for women.

A variety of feminisms affect the Ukrainian context by way of indigenous history and as a consequence of the contemporary flow of ideas. The legacy of the women's movements of the imperial 19th and early-mid 20th centuries is currently relevant to the national project of reconstructing the specifically Ukrainian component of those movements and creating a bridge to

that past for Ukraine's women (see Part II). Currently equal rights feminism remains the foundation of gendered civic nationalism in Ukraine, even if the word feminism is not associated with it. Furthermore, the sentiment that women's access to political office may promote community renewal and give women an opportunity to address various contemporary societal problems still has currency. Liberal feminism informs a large part of the agenda of the major women's organizations united under the NCW/Ukraine who would like to see a stronger commitment to women's equality by the state (state-lead, or state feminism) in Ukraine, though there should be more ambivalence over whether cooperation (and what kind of cooperation) with the state amounts to cooptation.[32]

Although the word *gender* has successfully inserted itself as an alternative to the word feminism in Ukraine, it is a concept that is still poorly understood outside of strictly academic circles. Within feminist academic circles, gender, as "the differential social construction of the behavior of the sexes" (Offen 1988:151) is accepted as feminism's primary category of analysis; and this conceptual took is applied to understand how these differences structure their own reproduction through societal institutions and practices (Gal and Kligman 2000:4). However, it is also often repreated in Ukraine, that "gender is not feminism," because feminism is popularly associated with a radical, anti-male ideology. The vast common ground between gender as a concept and feminism as a political stance is not generally acknowledged by the activist elite. One major reason may be that "gender approaches" are by definition sensitive to the fact that both men and women suffer under Ukraine's dire socio-economic conditions, and thus, do not encourage women to make the step towards an analysis of patriarchal structures. Therefore, although women's equality is popularly unquestioned and the gender approach is accepted by

[32] Lorna Weir (1987) discusses this as a classic dilemma expressed by socialist feminists.

academic feminists and gender activists alike as the best vehicle for its practical attainment, little progress has been made in enforcing women's rights in Ukraine (Hankivsky and Salnykova 2010:318).[33]

One of the common criticisms of gender and feminism, and the organizations they inspire in Ukraine, has been the insinuation that they represent a foreign intrusion upon Ukrainian culture. Countering this view, Natalia Lavrynenko, a feminist who heads the Research and Consultation Gender Center at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv (1993) [34] notes that many of the gender centers were created by incorporating various early informal groups formed by indigenous feminist scholars, lecturers, journalists, and cultural activists into Ukraine's institutions of higher learning (Lavrynenko 1999:84-85). Between 1993 and 1996, indigenous scholars offered lectures on gender and feminism at Ukraine's major universities and several of these women would soon come to head the country's major university-based gender research centers.[35] I, therefore, see the creation of the gender centers, not as an artificial, but as an organic, feature of Ukrainian intellectual life. As such, however, these gender centers are also implicated in Ukraine's crisis of identity.

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[33] Ukraine's overall rejection of the term, if not the spirit of, liberal feminism, means that parity goals have been adopted, pro forma, under the guise of gender, as promoted by the global women's movement lead by the United Nations community. Olena Hankivsky and Anastasia Salnykova (2010) note that, despite Ukraine's UN membership since 1949 and its status as an early signatory of the CEDAW agreement and protocols, the pursuit of practical gender equality and gender mainstreaming has only superficial state support.

[34] Lavrynenko's (1998) discussion of rape in Ukraine was a ground-breaking event. She cites her own center and of Kharkiv as being, in 1993, the two most active such groups (personal communication, June 2000)

[35] Solomea Pavlychko (1958-1999) brought feminism to the Department of Literature at the National Academy of Sciences in Kyiv. Lavrynenko and Natalia Chukhym (1956-2003) lectured at the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv; Lyudmyla Smolyar (1958-2004) introduced such lectures at the Food Technology University in Odessa where she established an influential gender center, while Irina Zherebkina did the same at the V. Karazin State University in Kharkiv.

In 1997, Svetlana Kupryashkina, founder of the first Center for Women's Studies in Ukraine (Kyiv) was among those who observed the politics of the women's organizations in relation to the Ukraine's split ethos and warned of their potentially far-reaching effects on the development of Ukrainian women's studies and feminism in general.[36]. In her article entitled "Women's Studies in Ukraine: the Limits (sic) of Research," Kupryashkina (1997:384) raises a critical question: "Who should speak for feminism in Ukraine, foreigners or indigenous Ukrainians, and if the latter, then which Ukrainians?" She wonders whether theoretical splits would ensue between the (Ukrainophobic) "Slavophilic left" and those who are more (Ukrainophilic) "pro-West." Finally, will women's studies become a search for national roots? [37] She did not see this as an isolated Ukrainian phenomenon, though—the ideological split over how to frame the status of women in the post-Soviet transformations affected the entire global academic community. She defined the split as pitting the "the focus on failure school" (those who seek to discredit the Soviet regime) against the "credit for achievement school" (those who acknowledge the positive aspects of the former Soviet system for women). She even admitted to fearing that the history of 19th century Russian liberalism may be in danger of being erased; understanding the two camps to be politically motivated, she voiced a concern that ideology may prove stronger than methodology (1997:385).

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[36] Kupryashkina noted that in the FSU countries "many scholars are directly involved in the activities of the women's groups and organizations" (1997: 384), i.e. are enmeshed in the politics. Lavrynenko (1999) also opined that the women's organizations had become "too politicized" over the last decade, echoing concerns voiced earlier by Solomea Pavlychko (1996).

[37] Oksana Kis (2010) of the National Academy of Sciences in Lviv, has addressed this concern, discerning how state priorities influence the framing of women's oral history, women's biography and the history of the women's movement to suit the nation-building project.

Currently, a variety of feminist theories are employed by Ukrainian academic feminists associated with four main academic Gender Centers, each having its own unique research and theoretical agendas (Rewakowicz 2009; Zhurzhenko 2010, 2011; See also Chapter 11). In one Kyiv center of feminist production established by Solomea Pavlychko (1958-1999), an indigenous feminism (a *national feminism* using Amy Hackett's term) that challenges traditional aspects of Ukrainian cultural patriarchy is being developed in the Ukrainian language primarily through a feminist analysis of the Ukrainian literary canon. In direct contrast, the center established in Kharkiv by Irina Zherebkina, chooses to communicate in Russian, and applies Western feminist theory in a tone highly critical of both Ukraine's nation-building and the direction of socio-economic reforms.

Ukraine's feminist academics avidly promote gender studies, but in 2000 they appeared to have distanced themselves from the grassroots. Ukraine's feminist activists, on the other hand, align themselves primarily with Western non-governmental agents such as the Winrock International's NIS-US Women's Consortium in Kyiv (Hrycak 2002:72). They have adopted various Western feminist issues and practices (see Part IV) including a focus on women's reproductive health and "feminist consciousness-raising" techniques from the North American women's liberation (radical feminist) movement (Cassell 197, hooks 2000). The theoretical advances of Third Wave feminism are encouraging a theorizing of difference along class and community politics lines (e.g. Kis 2010) but recognition of other axes of difference, such as that of sexual orientation, finds little practical resonance in Ukraine. The feminism brought into Ukraine by Western agents is one that skirts difficult issues. Julie Hemment (2007) who conducted research in Russia agrees with Chandra Mohanty's (2003:6) assessment of the

feminism introduced into the FSU by international democratization aid programs as a watered-down version, devoid of class analysis and social justice content.[38]

In keeping with observers of the East-West feminist encounter who urge a generous evaluation of what might count as feminism in various societies, particularly in the FSU where women tend to openly reject the term, I use the label *feminist* wherever I detect any kind of "political challenge to male hegemony and hierarchy" (Offen 2000:21), including resistance to "patriarchal assumptions" (Lerner 1993:3-4), regardless of whether or not this is a term of self-ascription (Gal and Kligman 2000:103-4; Collins 2000). Following Gerda Lerner, I recognize feminist consciousness as an awareness of membership in a subordinated and historically wronged social category, recognized to be socially constructed (not "natural") and an effort to address this problem through women's collective action (1993: 14, 274). Offen (1988:152) also outlines criteria for recognizing feminism when women validate their particular viewpoint based on their own lived experience of discomfort/discontent arising out of specific interactions with men. If such statements lead to an analysis of women's systematic discrimination and if these sentiments are expressed in a community of women who voluntarily meet to strategize action for securing their physical, material, intellectual, and spiritual well-being—this is feminism. I believe that women's statements made to me in 2000 should shed doubt on observations that in 2000 there was virtually no evidence of any organized resistance to patriarchy among non-academic women in post-Soviet Ukraine (Zhurzhenko 2001).

The question remains how is patriarchy understood in Ukraine (Lerner 1993:3-4; Walby 1990; Hemment 2004; Mohanty 2003), and in what contexts do women currently tend to

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[38] Chandra Mohanty calls it "free market feminism"—a "neoliberal, consumerist, (proto-capitalist) feminism concerned with women's advancement up the corporate and nation-state ladder" (2003:6).

recognize their subordination within patriarchal structures? Nations and nationalisms are theorized as being fundamentally gendered (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989). Women are burdened with a central role in the biological reproduction of the ethnic nation and in the transmission of its culture, as reproducers of the cultural boundaries of the national/ethnic boundaries (in marriage), as signifiers of ethnic/national difference and as citizens of the nation-state with certain participatory rights and obligations (Yuval-Davis 1994, 1997: also see summary in Walby 1996:236-237). Vickers (2004) has objected to these as blanket statements, and suggests that perhaps nation's deleterious effect of women's status may have more to do with the state, which is theorized as fundamentally patriarchal. In her opinion, the focus should be rather on how gender regimes are negotiated at the historical juncture when nation hooks up with statehood.

My analysis (see conclusions) will attempt to address current work on gender and nation[39] and to follow Vickers' lead in examining how women negotiated gender relations within the transition from Soviet nationality/nation to nation-state. Women sometimes manage to change existing patterns of gender relations for their own self-empowerment (Wolford 1998:12), but they may also bargain a compromise or accept imposed limitations in order to survive (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1993). The early years of nation-statehood may be critical for establishing gender relations in this context of heated identity politics. I will therefore explore the mutual implications of nation and state by examining the interaction of nationalist and feminist practices in women's organizations. By focusing on the expression of nationalism in

[39] Anthony Smith (1998:205) notes that the theoretical integration of the role of women in national projects either as activist agents or as symbols of nation started in the 1980s The most recent developments are the examination of the use of women in the symbolic construction of nation (Kandiyoti 1989, Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989) and discussions of how feminism should relate to current politics of identity (Yuval Davis 1997).

women's collective practices in relation to gendered and feminist goals, I hope to better understand how Ukrainian women participate in the construction of gender roles that operate within their society.

Ukraine's Women's Movement and Post Soviet Identity Politics

Historically, the women's movement of Ukrainian women on Ukrainian territories can be traced to Ukrainian-identifying women's collective and organized actions under Russian and Austro-Hungarian imperial rule. Their activism was inspired by the First Wave of Western feminism and European feminist developments as much as it was a part of the Ukrainian liberation struggles of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Ukrainian women of the Russian (the Dnieper Ukraine) and Austrian (in Austria-ruled East Galicia) Empires even engaged in significant trans-state cooperation in feminist nationalist endeavors across these imperial boundaries (Kichorowska Kebalo 2007; see also Offen 2000; Stites 1978, 1990). The movement made political gains during the revolutionary period that established the Ukrainian People's Republic of 1917-20 but did not survive Ukraine's defeat by the Bolsheviks. During the interwar years of 1921-39, when Eastern Galicia was governed by the Polish Second Republic, a feminist-nationalist Ukrainian women's movement achieved mass mobilization and cultivated contacts within the international women's organizations in Europe in the hopes of furthering nationalist goals (Rupp 1997, Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988). After World War II, the Ukrainian women's movement continued as its membership grew in the diaspora, especially of North America, where world umbrella organizations were created to coordinate the activities of a transnational national Ukrainian community. In addition, the continued engagement of diaspora women in the international women's, and transnational movement activism brings diaspora women's organized

activity into the context of a longer and broader women's movement history that extends into the present day.

The phrase *Ukrainian women's movement* was originally used to refer to the pre World War II movement (and its diasporan extension), and this phrase continues to conjure up images of women's efforts on behalf of Ukrainian independence, connoting the ethos of western Ukraine and the diaspora. In contrast, the phrase *women's movement of Ukraine* (in contemporary post-Soviet Ukraine) implies a distance from the now-stereotypical image of a Ukrainian women's movement as simple adjunct to the liberation struggles. It serves to embrace a somewhat wider range of activism, including social welfare issues, women's status in employment and political representation, as well as cultural and civic projects that cooperate with Ukraine's nation-building efforts. However, the discrepancies between the left/right orientations taken by many women's organizations apparently make it difficult for the movement to formulate a broadly accepted women's agenda to deal with the deteriorating socio-economic status of women in post-Soviet Ukraine.

Sperling notes that the fact that women's organizations of the FSU identify themselves as being part of the world women's movement as well as a social movement in their own countries, "reminds us that we have to understand their movement *in the context of a different political history*" (1999:219). Following this reasoning, we should explore the contemporary (1990s) field of Ukraine's women's movement as an outgrowth of its cumulative histories, pre-Soviet, perestroika and post-independence developments. As will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, the narrative of the Ukrainian women's movement starts with the appearance of organizations. The importance of organizations—and organized community—for a population that is not associated with a state cannot be underestimated, as it is their proof of existence and

validation of their identity (Creed 2006:3). In an era of the hegemony of the nation-state, the importance of statehood and the significance of appearing state-worthy cannot be underrated or overstated. The emphasis on organizations rather than mass collective behavior within this activist field, however, need not mean the negation of movement.

Across the FSU, women's movements are non-mobilized, plagued by resource poverty, and characterized by non-demonstrative activist strategies (Sperling1999:46). In Ukraine, the women's sphere activity of the 1990s may be interpreted as a "move to institutionalization" of gendered interests; and because its traits may be considered artifacts of the post-Soviet moment, the women's movement may be viewed as an incipient one, temporarily engaged in erecting the scaffolding of a post-Soviet social infrastructure. On the other hand, while a lack of mobilization resources initially made it hard for non-sanctioned groups to operate in the first years of the post-Soviet period (as predicted by Dawson 1996:25), the grassroots movements of the immediately preceding perestroika period did manage to mobilize the masses on indigenous leadership and volunteer labor. This would suggest that given a strong stimulus and an agreed-upon target, movements will find a way. In 2000, rather than going the route of the loud public gatherings of the perestroika era, the grassroots groups were quietly looking to hook up to higher level organizations that would provide them with legitimacy, visibility, and material support.

Classical definitions of movement involve recruitment-oriented organizations along with a shared ideology and commitment to either personal or social change (Gerlach and Hines 1970). In the 1990s, social movements came to be understood as being more specifically political. Castells (1997:3) saw them as "purposive, collective actions, whose outcome, in victory, as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of the state," making the state and demands on the state central to the idea of social movement. In some definitions, social movements are

considered temporarily organized fields not organizations deliberately constructed for the long term, as the majority of Ukraine's women's organizations appear to be. Nevertheless, I am suggesting that Ukraine's women's movement may be analyzed as a social movement—on the strength of the element of opposition within it and in its intent to bring the state to accountability through the activism of its organizations. In this I see feminism, nationalism, and socialism, individually and in combination, as positively and negatively (i.e. pro- and anti-nationalist, -socialist, -feminist) motivating ideologies.

According to Charles Tilly (1984), the way to understand social movements as a large scale phenomenon is to examine each separate manifestation of collective action in its own specific historical context, taking into account its personnel and their motivations, their social and economic resources, their grievances and their opportunities for expression of their needs (1984: 305). It is the multiplicity of collective actions constituting any perceived movement that necessitates starting from an initial recognition of their specificity. Craig Calhoun (1993:386-387) too, reminds us that social movements are inherently plural in their social bases, and therefore, their forms of mobilization, the issues they champion and the meaning their activities carry for participants are various. For this reason, no single theoretical model can adequately explain social movements, particularly if they operate within a complex field of overlapping initiatives. Indeed, Calhoun comes to the conclusion (1993:386-387) that within any one time in history there is more likely to be not one movement but a social field of movements that are interrelated (Lesser 1985).

The moment of my fieldwork constitutes a time of the weak nationalizing state when women's organizations, many of them either aligned with various political projects or affiliated with political parties, took on the issue of women's leadership in political participation (Smolyar

2000). This was also a time when the women's movement was part of the civil society oppositional front to the Kuchma administration. In fact, the women's organizations were operating in a social field where there are many counter and parallel social movements happening simultaneously with varying manifestations of nationalism, feminism and post-Soviet redefinitions of socialism.

Personal Narratives of Leadership and Community Activism

In various conversations, but particularly in the exercise of interviewing, I heard women talk about why and how they got involved in social activism. Here they explored the question of "why me?" and I listened to how they framed their self-election to social activism. At some juncture in the interviews, either elicited by a direct query ("how did you personally come to be involved in this?") or by some serendipitous turn in the conversation, my interlocutor would often share her reflections on her own activist agency. The text of this *speech act,* that is, the relating of the personal experience that lead to activism, is what I call the *personal narrative*. I found the personal narrative a well understood and ubiquitous genre, examples of which were frequent in the press. Women also refered to themselves using various terms equivalent to the Soviet era word *aktyvistka* (activist) but which pointed to a different historical context—an alternative social narrative—through which women explained their inclination to activism.

Activist identities and networks

There has been much work done on identity in post-Soviet Ukraine. Kuzio (2000a) has proposed a spectrum of ethnic identities corresponding to a range of socially-relevant positions on cultural and political issues having to do with the duality of vision noted in Ukraine. A Ukrainian ethnic identity corresponds to supporting independence and titular ethnic group cultural hegemony, including official status of the vernacular, the Ukrainian language; A

Ukrainian identity with Soviet/pan-East Slavic sympathies is characterized by an opposition to aggressive Ukrainianization (particularly the enforced usage of Ukrainian in all state and public venues) and it typical of individuals associated with Ukraine's radical Left; a Soviet identity is recognized as accepting of Russian-language domination in Ukraine; a Russian ethnic identity would be detected in those who imagine Ukraine only as a part of the Russian Empire and of the USSR and therefore, currently part of Russia's rightful sphere of influence.

Each of these ethnic identities is a political project, crafted from a choice of features from historical and cultural material, which Yuval-Davis describes as a "rich resource, usually full of internal contradictions, which is being used selectively by different social agents in various social projects within specific power relations and political discourse in and outside the collectivity" (1997:43). Contemporary Ukraine's identity politics apparently involves more than one ethnic project and these are in intense competition for hegemonic position (Yuval-Davis 1994:183). What's more, "gender, class, membership in a collectivity, stage in the life cycle, ability—all affect the access and availability of these resources and the specific positioning from which they are being used"(Yuval-Davis 1997:43).

Many researchers have also explored the territory of new gender identities that are being generated in the transition period. They have examined the discourses promoted by the Ukrainian government, the media, the circumstances of the marketplace, and Third Sector involvement (Pavlychko 1997, Zhurzhenko 2001, Rubchak 2001, Kis 2002, Hrycak 2002, Phillips 2000, 2008) to isolate the new images women are encouraged to apply to themselves. Oksana Kis (2002) examines the models of the traditional discourse of the *berehynia* image as a homegrown construct versus the *Barbie* as a gender identity constructed on the basis of ideas imported from the West (2002); Tatiana Zhurzhenko (2001:41-42) also isolates the

domohospodarka (housewife), the *dilova zhinka* (businesswoman), and the *feministka* (feminist) as new gender constructs in circulation. Indeed, individual women may be aware of these various proffered images, but that does not necessarily mean, for any particular woman, that her personal identity or behavioral agency is determined by these constructs (Merry 2006). My research here proposed to uncover women's formulations of their own activist identities, as demotic discourses, and to discover their corresponding coordinates of ethnic identity, class, collective/organizational membership, political orientation, and age among other variable characteristics that provide them with their particular positioning within the social web.

This study began with a focus on the network of organizations and organizational membership as related to personal networks that account for recruitment and the expression of various activist identities among women in Ukraine. Because organizational membership is both activated by and itself activates relationships in a network, membership in women's organizations is an appropriate critical site for examining issues of identity, if identity itself is understood to be itself a relational concept. Taking example from David Stark's (1992) analysis of the FSU economic transition as the reconfiguration and adaptation through "transformative practices" of previously existing social resources, habitual practices, and social ties, I began to think of post-Soviet women's activism in this context as well. I applied Stark's concept of "networks of affiliation" to women's specifically *gendered networks of affiliation,* which I subsequently discovered being applied in other studies of women's movements.[40]

In the last decade, networks have become central to social movement research and theory. The tensions between the material opportunity structures (MOS) approaches (focusing on aspects of mobilization capacity and moments of political opportunity) and the subjective

[40] For example, Karen Beckwith (2000:466) uses the term *gendered political opportunities*.

approaches of New Social Movement (NSM) theory (exploring motivation as ascribed to identities, meaning, and framing) are addressed by a relational networks approach. Focusing on both personal networks and social movement networks of organizations and groups nodal to their webs of interaction (as structural features) in combination with motivational factors of meaning, this approach opens up the possibility of examining recruitment and identity formation.[41]

Although women's activism in Ukraine is not at the moment nationally coordinated collective political action, there is strong social consensus that women's issues are defined by their responsibility for the rehabilitation of the nation and the social welfare of its members. I want to better understand how this responsibility been communicated to Ukraine's women and how their collective identities are evolving within the "interpretive, discursive and dramaturgical practices that shape(d) movement participants' understanding of their condition and of possible alternatives" (Edelman 2001:291 re: McAdam et al 1996a, 2001 and Tarrow 1998). These questions relate to the concept of *framing* that is central to recent research exploring movement participation and growth. The most recent research is applying essentially ethnographic approaches recognizing both subjective *emic* and objective *etic* aspects of these processes (Diani and McAdams 2003; Broadbent 2003:212). My proposal was to explore commitment to activism as a dependent variable of a woman's social network, which may support or constrain choices within a range of credible activist transformations.

Until the mid-1970s differential recruitment and differential participation in social movement activities were explained by personality and/or psychological factors. Then attention turned to structural explanations for movement participation. Examinations of recruitment

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[41] Jeffrey Broadbent (2003:204-205) provides a concise explanatory juxtaposition of the MOS and NSM theories and of the resolution offered by relational network approaches.

contexts yielded evidence of the links between structural availability and salient prior identity (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). Working with the concept of "submerged networks" (Melucci 1989:60), Carol Mueller (1994) analyzed the genesis of the U.S. women's liberation movement showing how its earliest activists were members of a network of women who felt patronized within the New Left and civil rights movements. This finding suggests that personal networks can serve as the social locations in which new conceptions of self are created and performed.

Similarly, in my field interviews, I look to the personal history of the participants in women's social activism to illuminate its origins. Primarily, however, I approached the leaders of the women's groups as being the key to movement production. Marc Edelman (2001:185) notes how "accounts of contemporary social movements (have taken an) unproblematic view of how organizing takes place…assume[ing] high levels of agreement among leaders and congruence between the aspirations of leaders and grassroots participants" without paying enough attention to the important role of deliberate organizing as a purposeful, long-term process and to the role of organizations in social movement activity. He suggests that because Western scholars are eager to frame movements as legitimate spontaneous grassroots phenomena, they often fail to document how leaders may manipulate and motivate their followers. Movements in general may not be as much a grassroots phenomenon as we would want. Particularly in the post-Soviet setting, where ideology is suspect and top-down directives negatively valued, leadership may be problematic. But leaders are necessary for the establishment of the kind of organized collective life that is essential for the recognition of a community by the state. The activist niche is relevant in Ukraine both for individuals empowered as leaders as well as for the collective empowerment of communities.

Identities as Narrative and Relational Phenomena

I accept identities as being both "relational" and "narrative" (Harding 1986:154; Somers and Gibson 2003). Identity has been long explored as a relational concept;[42] and I agree with those who reject identities either as natural/primordial or as epiphenomenal constructs and treat them as socially emergent phenomena. Researchers of identity confirm that people tend to describe their *selves* as multifaceted rather than singular, with identities both complex and fluid through their lifetimes. My conversations with many women in Ukraine support this observation: many expressed a discomfort with being boxed into one identity over another and, on occasion, this was even offered as a reason not to join specific organizations. There seems to be agreement among women in Ukraine that it is simplistic to use *woman* as a static unifying category, but there seems to be a little less appreciation of the fact that the application of *Ukrainian* as an ethnic marker is equally as essentializing if imposed as an all-encompassing definition of self. Because people see themselves as a multifaceted complex of both temporary identities or roles and a few identities that feel more permanent, it is reasonable to assume that individuals express a facet of their personal identities through organizations they join and that they receive confirmation of identity from the groups in which they are involved.

The rejection of *essential self* and the construction of subjectivity as an "open-ended, contradictory and culturally specific amalgam of different subject positions" is the hallmark of poststructuralist approaches to the concept of identity (McNay 1992:2). Scholars of emancipation politics (feminist politics included) have grappled with the implications of this poststructuralist deconstruction of unified subjectivity for social movement, especially for creative agency that is capable of effecting change. The model itself suggests that movement participation is a temporary activation of some one of a complex of identities that constitute the

[42] Craig Calhoun traces current postmodern theory of self back to Parsons "roles" (2003:12)

self but does not explain how individuals manage to act autonomously. Lois McNay (1992) finds an answer in Michel Foucault's final works (*The Uses of Pleasure, the Care of the Self*) in which he proposes that individuals actively fashion their own (complex) identities through practices and techniques available to them within their historical social contexts. Foucault dispenses with the need to posit a core self (1992:4) and asserts that identities, understood to be fluid through one's lifetime, can be variously constituted through one's choice of historically available legitimate practices.

The historically available practices include a wide array of social communicative tools, including discourses and social narratives that are both current or accessible and socially acceptable (legitimate). My collection of personal narratives of women activists can, therefore, shed light on how the women embraced by my research sample, all female citizen-residents of a one central Ukrainian province, make different choices among an available selection of these practices to position themselves within the women's movement and indeed the entire contemporary post-Soviet arena of social change.

This leads to the acceptance of the theory of a narrative and social constitution of identity (Somers and Gibson 1994). The theory is built on the premise that narrativity and relationality are conditions of social being, social consciousness, social action, institutions, structures, even society itself—that is, the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external relations of time and place and power that are constantly in flux (1994:65). [43] People's actions are made intelligible by understanding the various public

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[43] Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson (1994:65) explain that "the narrative identity approach embeds the actor within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and thus precludes categorical stability in action…It is within these temporal and multi-layered narratives

narratives within which they function (1994:67), and it is an aim of research to illuminate the social narratives that inform their lives (1994:69). This is never known a priori but is always the subject of empirical discovery (1994:73).

Personal Narratives and Feminist Standpoint

Personal narratives provide valuable material for the illumination of daily negotiations in which gender relations are forged as well as the meanings that are attached to such interactions. Here I use personal narratives primarily to examine a women's social position and her expression of activist commitment. Some of the women I talked to in 2000 had gone through experiences from which they felt themselves emerging as whole autonomous people, having confronted patriarchal barriers, leading me to conclude that there is a feminist moment budding among them.

My project sought to prioritize women's viewpoints (Personal Narratives Group 1989), making their experience the priority *standpoint*,[44] while honoring feminism's insistence on the heterogeneity of the category *Woman* (Reinharz 1992:252) and the importance of recognizing a multiplicity of viewpoints. Women activists seeking women's and national rights will of course articulate a different position than those who believe themselves to be disenfranchised by the national project. The "matrix of domination" theorized by Sandra Harding (1986)[45] and explained by Patricia Hill Collins as a "historically specific organization of power in which social groups are embedded" (2000:227-228) applies to Ukraine's various subgroups of women

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that identities are formed; hence narrative identity approach shares much with the relational epistemologies most associated with Harrison White (1992; White et al.1976)."

[44] Dorothy Smith (1974) introduced the concept of the *standpoint of women*, which Nancy M. Hartsock (1983) took further to theorize a platform for liberatory action as a *feminist standpoint*.

[45] Sherry Gorelick (1996) calls it the "complex of many determinations."

differently affected by the current identity politics. A Ukraine-specific women's subjugated knowledge should eventually emerge in the articulation of their cumulative and shared experiences. Negotiations between these subordinated groups, according to the model of "transveral politics" proposed by Yuval Davis (1994, 1997) would not elevate any one subjective experience to the status of *truth* but would appreciate each subgroup's experience as a "partial knowledge" important to recognizing that truth (Collins 2000:10; 251-252).

This study, then, represents an attempt to reconstruct the complex history of the emergence of women's post-Soviet activism in Ukraine, recognizing the plurality of historical causality but giving priority to the workings of networks of individuals and organizations (in local, national and transnational settings). It is a story of overlapping and different narrative perspectives; and the challenge is to keep all sides of the ideological divides in sight, palpable in the expectations of continuity from representatives of the old Soviet order, the pressures of change from the representatives of the new order, as well as pressures from the international aid community under whose encouragement but also scrutiny Ukrainian women are called on to perform their social activism. I will try to keep the focus on the terrain of social activism, even as I try to keep the various agents of power in view. And I will strive to have as much sympathy for those who feel obligation to the old Soviet order as I do for those who are bravely trying to establish the new.

Part I: The Project

Chapter Two: The Significance of the Field Site

"All ethnography is part philosophy, and a good deal of the rest is confession."
—Clifford Geertz 1973:346)

Introduction: Strategic Choices and Serendipitous Scenarios

Cherkasy oblast presented itself as an appropriate field site for an exploration of women's post-Soviet activism for several reasons. A number of scholars had already conducted research into the women's organizations in Ukraine, including sociological and anthropological fieldwork, mostly in Kyiv,[1] but none in small-town provincial settings. In 1998, Cherkshchyna impressed me as being in a neutral position between the stereotypical western Ukrainian ethno-nationalist and eastern/southern Ukrainian pro-Russian orientations (Subtelny 2000) [2] while being central to the Ukrainian national ethos. The region has significance for both Ukrainian and Soviet historiography, being witness to events that demonstrate Ukraine's colonial and Soviet-era victimization, even as it figures as a traditional stronghold of Ukrainian communism. In 2000, Cherkasy was also a setting of social unrest, and a political hotspot, though I hardly could

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[1] Alexandra Hrycak conducted research in 1999-2000 (our stays in the field did not overlap) on the foreign NGO donor sphere and their impact on the development of women's organizations, especially those associated with feminist projects. Sarah D. Phillips (2008) conducted her fieldwork in 1998-1999 among women's organizations structured as mutual aid associations. At the time of my research there had been no studies addressing the circumstances of women's organizations in the more rural areas. Subsequently I have also seen studies of the women's movement examining the dichotomy between the Ukrainian East and West, even investigating women's movement differences based on different historical legacies and political positions: Stephanie Thiel (2010) argues for dichotomous features between the western and eastern Ukrainian manifestations of the women's movement. Natasha Bingham (2008) also compares movement efficacy along the same East/West divide, arguing for western Ukraine's deeper women's movement experience and greater success.

[2] In the practice of assigning Ukrainian oblasts to regions, the oblasts of Vinnytsia, Khmelnytske, Kyiv, Poltava, and Kirovohrad are usually designated as being in the central region of Ukraine, but there is no formal *central Ukraine* as a political designation.

have foreseen that in 1998. However, as a rural province of Ukraine's central regions, in close proximity to Kyiv, it appeared to offer a unique window onto national processes.

My exploratory field visit coincided with a Parliamentary election year (1998) and President Leonid Kuchma's (1994-`99, 1999-2004) preparations for a second round of presidential elections. From 1994 on, Kuchma had been gradually consolidating presidential control over provincial (oblast, city, and village) governments [3] in an attempt to counter communist power still in control of the former people's soviets (councils); but in this process, he was also subverting democratic local elections.[4] Since the mid-1990s, Cherkasy was also an area of revived neo-socialist activism over problems associated with the economic transition (cf Creed 1998b; Creed 1995), their complaints focused on social justice issues (skyrocketing cost of living, unemployment, housing problems, and land reform) and on the oligarchic exploitation of the conditions of economic reform. The other hallmark of the latter 1990s, was the aggressive spread of the Socialist Democratic Party of Ukraine (united), the SDPU(o), as an openly pro-reform (market, energy and land privatization) force in Cherkasy oblast. Despite its name, it was an essentially an oligarch-run business machinery masquerading as a political party (Wilson 2005b:136-137) generally in support of, or rather, taking advantage of Kuchma's initiatives. The SDPU(o) was already infiltrating the executive government structures of Cherkasy oblast in 1998

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[3] Paul D'Anieri et al. (1999:128-129) discuss Leonid Kuchma's consolidation of the "vertical structures of legitimate executive power." The 1995 Law on Power gave the President authority to appoint chairmen of the local councils (legislative branch) and assign them to head their local state administrations (executive branch). By 1996, Kuchma had control over the oblast, city, and even village council chairs whom he made responsible for executive local state authority and accountable to himself, the president.

[4] Steven M. Fish (1995) describes a similar situation in early post-Soviet Russia. For a discussion of how independently elected regional officials (usually Communist Party members) hindered Kuchma's plans for economic reform, especially privatization. Also see D'Anieri et al. (1999:128-129).

and had these, along with many national and non-governmental organizations (including some women's organizations) in its control by 2002 (Wilson 2005b: 135).

It was also during this time that Victor Yushchenko, the former head of the Ukrainian National Bank (1993-99) became Prime Minister (1999-2001) and Yulia Tymoshenko one of his deputies (1999-2001). Both would figure in the Ukrainian political drama a few years hence. Most shocking of the developments to rock Ukraine's political stability in the fall of 2000 was the murder of journalist Hryhorii (Georgij) Gongadze. This and the rise of the Cherkasy oblast's Socialist Party to national prominence in the "Ukraine without Kuchma" demonstrations of December-January 2000-01, were major themes of the prelude to the Orange Revolution of 2004.

Unfortunately, I was not able to return to Ukraine after December 31, 2000, due to my own family circumstances. During my post-fieldwork analysis, however, I widened the scope of my project to include, among the transnational influences of Western non-governmental donors and agents, those emanating from the Ukrainian diaspora. To this end, in the last months of 2001, I revived an earlier connection (as member at large) to the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) and accepted an invitation to join, as a part-time volunteer, a small group of representatives of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO) in NGO activities at the United Nations in New York City. During my overseas fieldwork period, however, I did not represent either of these organizations.

In this chapter, I will first introduce my field site and its significance for Ukrainian history as well as its importance as an industrial but especially as an agricultural region that served as the Soviet breadbasket. In the following chapter, I will discuss the conditions of research in Cherkasy and my research methodology.

Cherkasy and Cherkashchyna

Historical Orientations

Cherkasy oblast sits in the middle of the political map of Ukraine, straddling the Dnipro River just south of Kyiv. The oblast embraces some notable places, for example, Korsun,[5] the site of two famous battles—one being Bohdan Khmelnytsky's victory over the Poles in 1648 (Magocsi 1996:199) after which Sweden, in the language of the 1657 Treaty of Korsun, gave Ukraine its first diplomatic endorsement "as a free people, subject to no one;" and the other being Nazi Germany's defeat in 1944.[6] Another well-known spot is Uman, a city in the western end of the oblast that is the destination of the annual Hasidic Jewish pilgrimage to the resting place of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, the great grandson of the founder of Hasidism, Israel Baal Shem Tov. [7] Tchaikovsky is said to have been inspired to compose his "Swan Lake" in Kamianka, a town associated with the anti-czarist Decembrist movement. [8]

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[5] Korsun was a fortressed town in 1032 during the rule of Yaroslav the Wise of Kyivan Rus'. The museum at Korsun-Shevchenkivsky focused on this era and on the chronology of peasant-Cossack uprisings in Cherkashchyna before the repeal of serfdom in 1861.

[6] The Museum of the Great Patriotic War celebrates the Battle at Korsun of 1944. The main hall displays the huge *Rodina Maty Zovet* (The Motherland Calls You!) poster. The exhibit covering the fascist occupation of Ukraine shows that Cherkasy was occupied on August 22, 1941. The counteroffensive of the Red Army began on November 19, 1942 and resulted in the liberation of Cherkasy from occupation on December 14, 1943, but the battles continued in Korsun into 1944. A part of the exhibit was dedicated to the tragedy of the Ostarbeiters (total of 2.4 million were taken to Germany under slave labor conditions). During the occupation, there were over 180 stationary camps in Cherkashchyna where the Germans kept prisoners of war in such conditions that, on average, 2500 died daily. In recent years, the museum's main hall was outfitted with an exhibit on the history of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, including the case of Olena Teliha, an OUN activist who was executed in Babij Yar in 1942.

[7] The Jewish religion is considered one of the three native religions of Ukraine (the other two being Orthodoxy and Greek Catholicism, which claim a little over 90% of Ukraine's faithful). However, the annual pilgrimages of Jews to the burial site of Rabbi Nakhman Tsadyk (founder of the Breslov Hasidic sect) in Uman over Rosh Hashanah, that were banned during the Soviet

Six to seven thousand years ago, the central Ukarinian forest-steppe zone, including Cherkashchyna, was home to the Tripolye-Cucuteni culture (4200-3800), one of the earliest farming civilizations of the Neolithic. Over the last several decades, archaeologists have uncovered settlements that suggest that matrifocal if not matriarchal social arrangements were characteristic of that distant past and Ukrainians popularly identify with these ancient autochthons as if they were their direct biological ancestors. To a great degree, this has fed Ukrainian women's fascination with and acceptance of the traditional discourse of the berehynia, as the "goddess" is imagined to represent a thread of continuity in Ukrainian cultivation of the land.

Within historically documented time, the city of Cherkasy grew on the site of a settlement that served as a look-out over the vast steppes on the southern boundary of the medieval Principality of Kyivan Rus.[9] During the 17th and 18th centuries Cherkasy was a Right Bank Cossack stronghold.[10] In the 19th century it was a prosperous regional center within the

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period, were allowed to resume in 1989 and yearly bring thousands—in 2010, 35 thousand—pilgrims into Uman. The tremendous influx necessitates pre-planning by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, State Border Guard, Customs Service and the State Committee for Tourism to handle the pilgrims' arrival at Kyiv's Boryspil airport and their transport to Uman. Uman is also the site of the world's largest synagogue, being constructed to accommodate five to six thousand faithful (Kaiser 2010).

[8] The Decembrist movement of revolutionary Russian nobles, the secret Southern Society that planned an uprising to overthrow the tsar in 1825 in favor of a republican system of government, gathered in Kamianka in 1820-22 in the manor of the Decembrist activist Vladimir Davydov. Decembrist ideas of self-sacrifice may have influenced Taras Shevchenko, and the fate of the Decembrists' wives still informs the constructed identities of Cherkasy's rural social activists.

[9] Sosa, Kryvenko and Strashevych (1997:3) note that the founding of the city dates back to the 1280s. Cherkasy celebrated its 700th anniversary in 1986. The oldest known settlement in the oblast is the village of Zhovnene dates to the early 12th century.

Russian Empire. In the 1920s, after the revolution, Cherkasy figured as the center of the Shevchenko district of Kyiv province; but the city became a regional center in its own right on January 7, 1954, when the oblast was officially created, the last of 25 such administrative units to be carved out of the territory of Soviet Ukraine.[11] The date is inscribed on the façade of the city's ethnographic museum, built in 1983 on Castle Hill (*zamkova hora*), the city's highest point overlooking the Dnipro.[12] It shares this overlook, now called Glory Hill, with a Motherland monument--a female representation of Soviet Ukraine Victorious, a reminder of the liberation of the city in a decisive battle against German fascist forces on December 14, 1943. In 1954, parts of neighboring Poltava, Kirovograd, and Vinnytsia oblasts were joined to the core territory of the Shevchenko district to create the modern-day Cherkasy oblast.[13] There is, however, an internal validity to the oblast both in terms of its history and its economic potential. Despite its obvious construction, the Cherkasy oblast coincides roughly with the area traditionally called Cherkashchyna and this imparts it its regional, historical, and ethnographic unity.

Oles Honchar, a Ukrainian figure of political and cultural authority, called Cherkashchyna no less than "the heart of all of Ukraine," not primarily for its proximity to the

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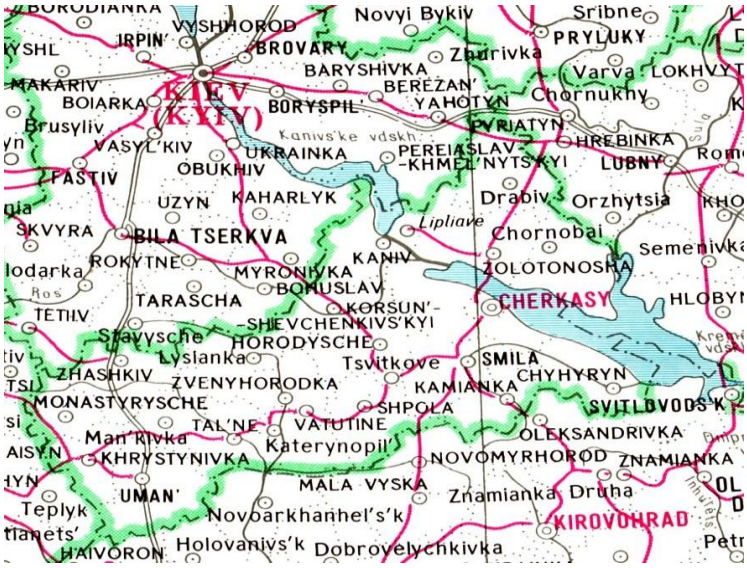
[10] As a Right Bank Cossack stronghold, Cherkasy was integral to the history of the Ukrainian Cossack State (1648-1711) of the Right Bank and of the Hetmanate in the Left Bank territories which came to an end in 1783 (Magocsi 1996:231-237).

[11] Currently Ukraine has 24 such oblasts, since Crimea changed status in July 1992, becoming an Autonomous Republic of Ukraine.

[12] In 1637 Guillaume de Vasseur de Beauplan, traveling with the Polish army, stood here overlooking the lower town on the banks of the Dnipro, which is now underwater since the 1960 construction of the Kremenchuk Reservoir.

[13] Also in 1954, Crimea was presented to Ukraine by the Russian SSR to mark the 300 year anniversary of the Pereiaslav Treaty (1654) with Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595-1667). For the details of the treaty after which the Cossack territories came under Russian imperial rule, see Magocsi (1996:212-216). In 1957, Cherkasy became one of the official 'economic regions' of the Ukrainian SSR.

geographical center of the country's political boundaries,[14] but for its centrality to Ukraine's national imagination. Historian Paul Magocsi points out that in some 15th century Muscovite documents, the Cossacks who lived in the cluster of Right Bank fortified frontier towns, one of which was Cherkasy, were generically referred to as *cherkasy* (1996:179). The name Cherkasy thus came to be at times synonymous with the whole of Ukraine; and the creation of the oblast under it consolidated territories intimately associated with the most rebellious and self-affirming, nation- and state-seeking periods of Ukrainian history. This is true also of its most traumatic and controversial national moments.



Map 1: Cherkasy Oblast (green borders) in relation to the capital, Kyiv

A little-known fact is that this is the location of the Kholodnyj Yar (cold ravine) Republic of the 1920s established by the Ukrainian Free Cossacks in resistance to the Bolshevik capture of

[14] During a meeting at the Cherkasy Oblast Ministry of Culture, members of a delegation from the Kirovograd oblast, Cherkasy's neighbors to the south, informed me that the actual physical geographical center of Ukraine is in the Kirovograd Oblast, and that an official monument marks the spot.

Ukrainian territories in 1917. Every last participant of this rebellion was hunted down and executed, giving credence to the peasants' conviction that the artificial famine of 1932-33, the *Holodomor*— a result of brutal collectivization policies—was targeted expressly against the region for their rejection of the Soviet order. Physical evidence of the genocidal famine abounds in the region, in former churchyard cemeteries and backyard burials.[15] Therefore, Cherkashchyna figures most prominently in the Ukrainian national imagination as the region that gave birth to Ukrainian national consciousness.

A tourist brochure welcomes visitors to Cherkasy described as "Shevchenko's Country (*kraj*), the Fatherland (*batkivshchyna*) of Khmelnytsky, land (*zemlia*) of the Cossacks." Indeed the oblast seems to have been constructed around the historical personages of the Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1597-1657) and Ukraine's national poet and artist, Taras Shevchenko (1814-61), a native son, who was lionized by the Soviets and nationalists alike, as social revolutionary and bard of Ukrainian freedom. Shevchenko immortalized the heroic Cossack exploits and peasant uprisings against oppression: he, together with other Ukrainian intellectuals of his day, saved this history from obscurity, bringing places like Chyhyryn (*Chigirin*—Rus.), the Cossack capital, and its neighboring village of Subotiv, the site of Khmelnytsky's local residence, along with other places of tourist interest into the realm of national treasures worthy of preservation. Shevchenko's work served to preserve the memory of Khmelnystky's struggle (1648-57) for Cossack regional autonomy within Polish Rech Pospolita[16] and of the 18th century *haidamak* movement against Polish exploitation. As the

[15] In Palanka near Uman, a woman showed me her garden where she as a child personally buried her entire family who had starved to death. If one listens, the elderly villagers relate an almost unimaginable series of traumatic events, but I also found that people still feared retribution in 2000 for talking too openly about such things.

setting for this series of uprisings[17] by Orthodox peasants and Cossacks against their Catholic landlords and Jewish arendars (Magocsi 1996:295-296), the oblast abounds in significance for the Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews. This is especially true for the city of Uman, which since the 1768 slaughter of its Jewish inhabitants by the *haidamak* leader Gonta, represents a different mythology for each resident community (Magocsi 1996:297). Ultimately, Shevchenko himself became the icon of the region which is home to the villages of his birth and childhood, the location of his final arrest [18] and the resting place of his remains, as he requested in his *Zapovit* (*Testament*), on the bluffs along the Dnipro River near the city of Kaniv.

Economic Development History of the Region

After the destruction of Cossack local government by Catherine the Great (1776) and Russia's acquisition of the areas around Kyiv and the territories of the Right Bank Polish Palatinates (1793), Cherkasy became a regional center of the Russian Empire's Kyiv *guberniya.* The settlement started to take its modern shape in 1825 under the plan of the English architect V. Heste (Sosa et al. 1997) which allowed the city to accommodate new industry and a growing merchant class. Many of the city's current characteristics may be traced back to this time, when the abolition of serfdom, the building of the railroads, and the development of mining to the

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[16] A June 8, 1648 letter sent by Khmelnytsky to the Russian government asking the Czar's support against the Poles is displayed in the Cherkasy Oblast Ethnographic Museum. The letter is a precursor of the Pereiaslav Treaty of 1654 which some historians claim (and other refute) to be proof of Khmelnytsky's readiness to subordinate the Cossack State to Muscovy.

[17] These uprisings took place in 1732, 1750, and 1768, the last of them being known as the *Koliivshchyna.* Most of the museums of the villages of Cherkasy Oblast include elaborate dioramas of the local events relating to these revolts.

[18] In July 1859 Shevchenko was arrested while visiting the Tsybulsky family of Cherkasy and died in Russia at the age of 47. The Kobzar Museum (1989) in Cherkasy, the Shevchenko house in Kyrylivka, and the museum in Shevchenkove are among the region's Shevchenko landmarks.

South converged to shape the economy of Right Bank Ukraine. The development of metallurgy and coal-mining in areas south of Cherkasy supported the laying of rail through the region,[19] while the lumber industry promoted the growth of the water transportation route offered by the Dnipro.[20]

The territory of Cherkashchyna (21 thousand square kilometers), most of which is covered with *chornozem,* the black earth soil, has long been iconic of Ukrainian agricultural potential. Other than grain, the cultivation of sugar beets, introduced in the 19th century along with mechanization, served to intensify agricultural production here—the region's wheat and barley were important exports to industrialized Western Europe and its sugar satisfied domestic markets within the Russian Empire.[21] There were still 24 old sugar mills in the oblast which produced 160.4 thousand tons of granulated beet sugar in 1997.

At the end of 1917, upon the declaration of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, all land was nationalized, but during the decade of the New Economic Policy (NEP), it continued to be farmed as if privately owned. The collectivization of agriculture, which allowed political control of the rural population, lowered prices, and enhanced economies of scale through

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[19] The railroad connects Cherkasy, through the great rail hub of the Shevchenko Station in Smila, to points north (Kyiv and Moscow) and south (Odessa).

[20] At the end of the 1890s the forests of the Cherkasy area supported six urban sawmills. (The nearby center of Katerynoslav just south along the river had 19 and was a truly important milling center.) Cherkasy had a rail depot close to its port and because of this was able to draw business away from Kyiv which did not have a convenient connection with its port in Podil.

[21] Since Russia did not have sugar-making capability, this was one industry—unlike the textile industry which was artificially retarded by czarist policies—that was allowed to flourish in an otherwise exploitative colonial arrangement. Initially the sugar industry was controlled by the great landowning noble families (e.g. the Bobrynski's, the Pototsky's) and then passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie (the Symyrenkos, the Tereshchenkos) whose names pepper the local histories of Cherkashchyna.

mechanization, commenced in 1928. Collectivization was met with violent peasant resistance, particularly from the women whose rebellion, called the *babskii bunt* or women's revolt, started in Ukraine and spread to Russia (Lerman et al., 1994:23). By 1932, the "dekulakization" of Ukrainian agriculture, a period of terror and famine, eradicated all private farming—a total of 5.2 million peasant farms prospering just four years earlier in 1928 (Lerman et al., 1994:23).

Only with the land reforms that started in 1992 after independence, did private farming reappear as an option, though it was hobbled by the effects of the Soviet command system. The Soviet practice of shipping produce directly from farms to cities resulted in the complete absence of systems of rural storage, wholesaling, and distribution; the central planning of budgets precluded the development of banking and credit. Nevertheless, in 1997, fully 88 percent of Cherkasy oblast's territory was under cultivation, with grain, sugar beets, and sunflower accounting for most of the production. The oblast's agro-industrial sector, accounting for 50 percent of the oblast's total production, is of vital importance to Ukraine's economy, havaing the potential to be one of the country's major complexes of food production.[22]

As of the 1950s, oblast status led to further intensification of the region's industrial development. The construction of the Kremenchuk Reservoir (1960) on the Dnipro occasioned the loss of Cherkasy's pre-revolutionary industrial infrastructure (the old tobacco factory, sawmills, and the old toll house) that were in the low-lying old town.[23] This was compensated

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[22] During a February 1998 visit to Kyiv, the Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs commented that if Ukraine's black soil lands were privately owned and cultivated using western technologies, Ukraine could feed the entire world (see *The Eastern Economist* Vol 5(3):221).

[23] The 1960 construction of the Kremenchuk Reservoir, one of five artificial lakes created along the Dnipro, altered Cherkasy's shoreline, submerging more than eight thousand square kilometers of productive land, two thousand villages, five million graves, 1,500 churches and chapels, and other historic sites relating to the Kyivan Rus' and Cossack periods. Widening the

with new industries producing synthetic fiber, furniture and building materials, as well as several industries related to soviet military production: chemicals, radio parts, and optical instrumentation. In 1980 the city was divided into three boroughs (*raions)*, the Cherkasy borough which extended into its agricultural suburbs, the Sosniv borough, which housed the administrative center of the city; and the Prydniprovsk borough nearest the river bank, which suffered the greatest loss of industry in 1960.

Despite this development, Cherkasy retained its image of quaint old-city charm. In the 1960s-80s, Soviet institutions of cultural value enhanced its natural beauty and made Cherkasy one of Ukraine's favorite "green" resort cities, always open to tourism (unlike closed cities such as Dnipropetrovsk). Moreover, it was a comfortably appointed city, with good highway and rail connections, its own airport, and Dnipro river station. By the 1980s, however, it was clear that pollution from the city's chemical fertilizer and synthetic fibers plants was increasing the incidence of thyroid cancer and causing an alarming frequency of acetone sickness among children (Cengel 2001:1-2).[24] Apparently, Cherkasy's natural landscape, which generates very little movement of air, is to blame for the pooling and concentration of factory emissions over the city. As a result, Cherkasy's pollution-caused health problems were only slightly alleviated in the 1990s, when industrial output declined by 25 percent.

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river, it made Cherkasy's beachfront unsuitably shallow for shipyards, but allowed for the operation of the river passenger station.

[24] Katya Cengel 2001 reported that with the economic downturn of the 1990s, the number of pollutants in Cherkasy's atmosphere has been halved, but that the air still bears much higher levels of 165 pollutants than is legally permitted.

Cherkasy's industry was realigned from military to consumer-oriented production after 1991,[25] and by 2000 the main output from its factories was: nitrogen fertilizer (*Azot*),[26] the production of synthetic fiber and filaments (*Khimvolokno*), machine-building (*Rotor* spin-offs), garments (*Weisse*), optical instruments (*Fotoprylad*), printing (*Hrafija-Ukraina*), and lumber. But the economic downturn was devastating to Cherkasy's local economy,[27] and, in 1999, the country, having rejected shock therapy in favor of a "third path" to "a socially-oriented market economy" was in desperate stagnation (D'Anieri et al., 1999:166-205). There were some successful privatizations in Cherkasy, more so for smaller enterprises (such as the Fotoprylad optical instruments plant [28] and the Hrafija-Ukraina [29] printing house, both in the Sosniv borough) than for the larger complexes (Frydman et al 1993). Large enterprises, however, fared much worse.

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[25] A Cherkasy Oblast administration report of 1998 indicates that in the 1990s, military production accounted for 50 percent of Cherkasy's output; by 1998, production was re-aligned to 80 percent consumer-oriented production and 20 percent light industry.

[26] Cherkasy Oblast's chemical industry accounts for 25 percent of production with Azot alone accounting for five percent of the oblast's output.

[27] Cherkasy reflected the devastation of the national economy's struggle with hyperinflation in 1992-94 and its falling economic indicators, listed by D'Anieri et al., 1999:169-170. From 1991-98 the gross domestic product decreased 63 percent, industrial output 52 percent, and capital investment 77 percent.

[28] Fotoprylad was rescued in 1996 on the brink of bankruptcy. It now employs over 2500 and produces optical instruments for domestically produced military tanks built in Kharkiv (Virhun 1998).

[29] In 2000, Hrafija Ukrajina, established on the base of the communist newspaper Pravda, is now in joint ownership with a German company and considered a successful privatization story. The Ukrainian-German firm fulfills the orders of international producers of tobacco products, among them Phillip Morris, REEMSTMA (there is a Reemstma-Cherkasy plant), and British American Tobacco. Thirty percent is exported to Russia, Kirgizstan, Armenia, and Azerbaidzhan. In 1995 trade volume was 1.8 million DM in value; and 52 million DM expected in 2000. In one ten-month period, this company accounted for 5.8 percent of the entire oblast's gross product.

During perestroika, when Gorbachev had hoped to provide workers with a better assortment of consumer goods, he granted the directorship of a mammoth new machine-building and metal-working complex to be called the Rotor Research and Development Plant to Alim Chabanov, one of his Supreme Soviet deputies and then-director of Cherkasy's Azot chemical plant. The new Rotor complex lured specialists to Cherkasy to work in its many subdivisions.[30] After independence, when Cherkasy apparently lost its military contracts, (then) Prime Minister Kuchma's January 1993 Plan of Action for the privatization of large-scale industry met with strong resistance from the unreformed communist Red Directors of both the military and the agro-industrial complex.[31] The Rotor complex, many of whose employees had been involved in the Rukh-fueled renaissance of Ukrainian life in Cherkasy, suffered the censure of local hard-line communists who opposed the reconfiguration of industrial assets and privatization of industrial infrastructure that represented Soviet investment in Ukraine. As a result, the Rotor complex survived only marginally into 2000. This general atmosphere spoiled potential developments for Cherkasy Oblast.

Independence in 1991 also brought shocks to agriculture, particularly from Ukraine's loss of traditional markets. Soon after independence, Cherkasy was rocked with scandal over the disappearance of a $75 million state-guaranteed bank loan meant for the direct stimulation of the

[30] Workers were promised higher pay than the average Cherkasy wage, which was purported to be the lowest in the entire Soviet Ukraine (personal communication).

[31] R. T. Maddock (1988) explains that Kuchma, himself a former "Red director", was appointed Prime Minister under Kravchuk and charged with saving the Ukrainian economy. His January 1993 Plan of Action for the privatization of large-scale state industries was severely hindered by the dissent in his own Cabinet and by the lobbying of other Red directors, led by the Deputy Premier V. Demianov, Minister of the agro-industrial complex, which also had its Soviet era connections to military production.

oblast's failing agro-industrial sector. [32] The recipient of the loan was Oleksander Tkachenko, a left-centrist politician of Cherkasy's Shpola region who went on to become speaker of Ukraine's Parliament and was the head of the organization called *Zemlia I Liudy* (land and people) from 1992-1994, during the years of the devaluation of Ukrainian currency.[33] In the wake of the currency crisis, Vasyl Tsybenko, Cherkasy's last democratically elected governor (1994-1998), was desperate to attract foreign investment.

With the oblast a target for the ambitions of the SDPU(o) (registered in 1996), Tsybenko was preparing for participation in the 1998 Kyiv Exhibition "Ukraine: Look to the 21st Century." With the help of a foreign consultant and funds from the Cherkasy oligarch (the "Godfather") Serhij Podobiedov (SDPU(o)),[34] the oblast government prepared glossy booklets on the industrial, agricultural, natural, infrastructural, and human resources assets of Cherkashchyna. The magazine *Spilna Sprava* (common cause), a short lived (1996-98) oblast government publication, represents the effort to raise domestic public awareness and a positive foreign reassessment of the oblast's potential. In 1998, Cherkasy had practically completed the privatization of small enterprises and the de-nationalization of the large industrial enterprises; but

[32] The funds, earmarked for the promotion of corn cultivation in cooperation with Mais, Inc., disappeared by apparent distribution but hyperinflation also certainly played a role. Rumor had it that the funds paid for imported automobiles, video equipment, furniture, and tractor-mowers, among other things, but no one could account for about 70 million of the total.

[33] As reported in *Svoboda*, the North American Ukrainian newspaper (July 17, 1998:1 and October 30, 1998:3), the complaint against Tkachenko was opened up on February 26, 1995 by the General Procurator of Ukraine, but without authority from the Parliament to pursue it, the cased was closed on May 24, for lack of evidence.

[34] Serhij Podobiedov, born in 1956 in Dnipropetrovsk, graduated from that city's Institute of Engineering of Transport, established residence in Cherkasy in 1982, and won election in 1998 from the oblast's electoral district No. 197 (Smila, Kamianka, Chyhyryn) to Parliament where he serves on the Commmittee on agricultural policy and land reform. Podobiedov founded Naftaenerho in 1994. He is called the "godfather" of Cherkasy because everyone who is influential in Cherkasy is one of his "people" (*vykhovantsi*) (personal communication).

it seemed never to have quite recovered from fundamental economic decisions made in the early years of rapid privatizations. Cherkasy was waking up to the realization that it had been out of the inner loop on various deals and opportunities.

One patriot of Cherkasy, Ihor Chekalenko (1998), gave voice to the current of anxiety felt over the turn privatization was taking and expressed a fear that, if these trends were to continue, the future economic and political viability, even the existence of the oblast itself would be jeopardized.[35] Chekalenko pointed to the fates of the major infrastructural assets of Cherkasy: the neglected and finally isolated river port, which had closed down between 1998 and 2000;[36] the all-but abandoned airport, which by 2000 was handling only scant cargo traffic and would be in bankruptcy by 2002;[37] and the Azot chemical plant, which had gone looking for investors to

[35] Ihor Chekalenko (1998:3) warns that Cherkasy is being taken apart by outside businessmen (a Kharkiv group runs Azot; a Poltava group bought the riverport station; a Kyivan group is trying to privatize the airport under themselves): "The Cherkasy Oblast may disappear altogether from the map of Ukraine, and in its territory will figure as regions of the Kyiv, Poltava, Kirovograd and Vinnytsia Oblasts [that is, from whence they came in 1954]—this is the prognosis offered by the SDPU(o)." He reports that the SDPU(o) in a meeting with the governor Lukianenko, blamed the chaotic structures of the oblast's government and called for cooperation of all local government officials and community groups to set priorities for the socio-economic development of the oblast, which included the liquidation of non-profitable industry such as the historic local sugar plant and the alcohol factory. Chekalenko wrote for Misto, the organ of the Cherkasy City Council, registered in 1995, edited by Ushanov, and printed by Hrafia Ukrajiny.

[36] In August 1998, traveling between Kyiv and Cherkasy's river port on the Raketa hydrofoil, I did not realize that this would be the last season of passenger service to Cherkasy on the Dnipro. Cargo traffic would also cease, despite the fact that the river port handled 200 tons in 1998 (up 6.7 percent from the previous year). Apparently, Cherkasy was excluded from the overall plans in Ukraine's first major privatization, the Joint Stock Shipping Company Ukrrichflot (Ukrainian River Fleet). Nina Berezhanko (2000) reports on how Ukrrichflot (mis)managed its passenger ships and the Kyiv river port facility. As of 2003 it owned river port facilities in Kyiv, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhzhe, Mykolajiv and Kherson, but Cherkasy has been bypassed since 1992 by cruise ships and by passenger and cargo since 1998, cutting Cherkasy off from the flow of river commerce.

[37] Cherkasy airport serviced its last passenger flight out on June 25, 1995. In 2000, the facility was still accepting cargo flights and the occasional official flying in from Kyiv, as when

privatize and ended being sold to an off-shore organization in Lichtenstein set up by Ukrainians from Kharkiv.[38] Chekalenko omitted the squandering of potential that was Cherkasy's Rotor plant, perhaps because in 1998 there was still some hope that its problems could be resolved.[39]

President Kuchma visited in 1998 (Kalinichenko 1998:3-6) and Minister of the Interior Kravchenko in September 2000. The airport, locally referred to as Cherkasy's *Titanic*, sank into financial insolvency when in 1998 it was required to pay municipal real estate taxes (something it was exempt from earlier as a state-owned enterprise under the Ukrainian Ministry of Transportation). The tax bill in 2000 was 1.5 million, while the airport grossed only 600 thousand in 1999; the airport was unable to pay the salaries of the few workers still employed The director of the airport, Anatolij Kozachenko, considers the bankruptcy an artificially created situation (see Cherkasov 2000). The planes were seized for auction by the Tax Administration to cover pension fund arrears; thieves started dismantling the barbed wire security fence around the perimeter of the runway for scrap metal. By 2002 the airport was in bankrupcy (Kuzlajev 2002), but reopened in 2007.

[38] The Azot chemical plant (*azot* means nitrogen), built in 1962, has 43 industrial divisions, and five production lines, the oldest of which is liquid ammonia (since 1965), and the newest of which is mineral fertilizer and pesticides. The Cherkasy Joint Open Stock Company Azot is now one of the largest enterprises in Ukraine, producing one third of all fertilizer made in Ukraine. The head of Azot is Boris Raykov, president of the Regional Branch of the Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Businessmen. Azot employs six thousand. Falling prices on the world market and the limited buying power of the domestic market means low profits, but Azot continues to support within its business complex a medical division, sanatorium-dispensary, a sports complex Avantguard, and the Perlyna sanatorium which still operates in a Soviet-style. The October (Zhovtnevyj) Hotel is a daughter firm of Azot, as is the residential building called Khimik and the showplace of the Palace of Culture (the Druzhba Narodov, Friendship of Peoples) building on Shevchenko Boulevard. (see website Azot.cherkassy.net)

[39] Ukraine experienced a deep and broad depression 1991-98, with heavy industry and raw materials extraction being hit the worst, but there were also severe downstream effects on small machines tools enterprises. (D'Anieri et al., 1999) This generally relates to the fate of Cherkasy's Rotor Plant, which Cherkasy residents had hoped would be a plum object of privatization and a cornerstone of local economy in the transition. In 2002 in the midst of a moratorium on the sales of state-run enterprises (because the government wants to be able to recover costs through the sales of assets), the Ukrainian cabinet was requesting the right to dispose of such insolvent state-run enterprises, Rotor being a prime example. At this point, Rotor owed its employees 3 million hryvni in back wages. In 1998, the employees of Rotor, many of whom had already not been paid for up to four years, (see Kyrej 1998) were protesting Rotor's designation as bankrupt, and the auctioning off of its assets, since the bankruptcy agency made no promise of alternative jobs for the specialists heading the various divisions of the complex.

But in 2000, it was the demise of Rotor that represented the most wasteful grabbing of assets in Cherkasy and has the greatest repercussions in human lives.[40]

Schema of State Government in the Oblast

In 2000, Cherkasy is a relatively large, though still provincial city in a predominately agricultural region of which it is the seat of the central government administration. With a population of just under 300 thousand, [41] it is by far the largest city of its region and only one of three urban settlements of over 50 thousand. The others are the aforementioned Uman, a city of 90 thousand, and Smila, a city of 76 thousand just 27 kilometers west of Cherkasy.[42] The contemporary schema of local government (see Table from D'Anieri1999:130 showing diagram as per 1996), carried over from Soviet times, is that of a nested hierarchy of local councils of elected deputies. These former people's soviets ostensibly belong to the legislative branch of the government, and each local council should (in theory and by law) have its own local executive staff. Each village council (*silska rada* or *silrada*), of which there are 542 oblast-wide, is subordinated to a district council (*rayon rada* or *rayrada*) convening in one of the 20 towns designated as district centers of the oblast. In addition to these district councils, each of the

[40]The residents of the southwest district dominated by the Rotor plant protested the many years of non-payment of back wages to severed employees by refusing to pay their communal services heating bill in the fall 2000, an example of civil disobedience arising from despair.

[41] The Atlas of Cherkasy Oblast (2000) cites 309,100 population. Informal counts reported in the media in 2000 cited 200,000 as a more realistic figure. The 1989 census counted 290,300.

[42] The other 13 small cities of the region, all of which are among the 20 district centers of the oblast administrative structure have populations under 25 thousand. The remainder are "settlements of an urban type" (5-9 thousand living within six or seven short streets surrounded by fields). The exact number of villages in the oblast is uncertain—usually cited as 520-570 (and up to 800) in number. The problem is that there is no definite legal agreement on the boundaries of the village settlements, noted as one of many impediments to the implementation of local self-government practices by the UNDP (Human Development Report 2008).

oblast's largest cities (those with populations over 25 thousand, i.e. Cherkasy, Vatutine, Kaniv, Zolotonosha, Smila, and Uman) also have their own additional city councils. Cherkasy is the only city large enough to be divided into three boroughs, each with its own borough council. All these are subordinated to the region's Oblast Council, the highest legislative body of the oblast, which meets in the city of Cherkasy.

The city of Cherkasy is also home to the highest body of Ukraine's executive branch of the national central government: the Oblast state administration. In 2000, the head of the Oblast State Administration and the head of the Oblast Council were, by presidential appointment (but against democratic principles), one and the same person, Governor Volodymyr Lukianets. The Cherkasy city council and the city administration were headed by Mayor Volodymyr Olijnyk,[43] an elected official. As head of the Association of Mayors of Ukraine, Olijnyk was also prominent in his endeavors to exercise new post-Soviet powers of local self-government. President Kuchma's interests in consolidating control over the local village, town, and district councils (making all local executive bodies accountable to the governor and to himself) coupled with Ukraine's still unclear and conflicting laws about local powers and responsibilities, especially regarding the disposition of city budgets, seemed to be the source of much conflict in Cherkasy.[44]

Oblast Demographics

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[43] Volodymyr Oliynyk is a native of Cherkasy (b. 1957). He served as VP of Cherkasy City Administration from October 1990 to July 1994; as mayor of Cherkasy and head of the Cherkasy City Council from 1994 to 2002. He is registered as politically non-affiliated with any party. In 2000 he figures prominently as the president of the association of mayors of Ukraine.

[44] A Council of Europe Rapporteurs' report (2001) notes that several mayors, like Olijnyk, appear to be hounded by the President for their attempts to apply local self-government.

According to the 2001 census, Cherkasy oblast reflects Ukraine's general demographic crisis: the overall population is contracting, fertility is down, and mortality is up according to Ukraine's general trends. In 2001, the oblast's 1,403 thousand residents of Cherkasy Oblast are divided fairly evenly between urban (754 thousand persons, or 53.7 percent) and rural (649 thousand) residency.[45] As of 2001, 26.9 percent or 376.5 thousand persons in the oblast are of retirement age (over 55 years of age), while only 54.9 percent (768.3 thousand) are of working age. In 2001, 11.5 percent of them were unemployed (close to the national average). As of April 2005 there were over 434 thousand individuals receiving a pension from the state, the majority of which are women. The 2001 census reports that adult women number 764 thousand, or 54.5 percent of the total population of the oblast; while men and women are evenly represented in the "able-bodied, working age" category (ages 15-59), women outnumber men by more than 2:1 among those over 60 (267 thousand females to 117 thousand males as of January 1999), which is a reflection of the heavy male casualties of the Second World War.

In ethnic composition, Cherkashchyna officially reflects Ukraine's overall multinational status, counting 130 different nationalities in the region. The multicultural nature of the oblast seems overstated, however, since Ukrainians predominate here even more markedly than they do in Ukraine overall, accounting in 2001 for 93.1 percent of the region's population, compared to 77.8 percent Ukraine-wide (ukrcensus.gov.ua). Cherkasy's nationalities profile seems typical of Ukraine's central oblasts. The largest minority in 2001 is Russians with 5.4 percent (down from 8 percent in 1989), compared to 17.3 percent Ukraine-wide. Even though Russian is still the dominant language on the streets in Cherkasy, 92.5 percent of the oblast's residents claim

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[45]The first post-Soviet national census was conducted in 2001. Ukraine's census website www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/result is updated by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine.

Ukrainian as their mother tongue, while only 6.7 percent claim Russian. In general, people in Cherkasy do not couch political conflict in terms of ethnicity, and make a point of eschewing extreme nationalism and especially Ukrainian-Russian ethno-nationalism in both public and private behavior. There are many marriages between different nationalities here (especially Ukrainian-Russian), although more in the urban than in the rural areas;[46] and Russophone habits do not signal lack of Ukrainian patriotism or civic responsibility. As one of my interlocutors in Chyhyryn said when probed "we are all Ukrainians here," meaning that they do not use ethnic distinction as a determinant for civic positions.

There are seven other nationality groups of any significant size, but each represents less than 1 percent of the oblast's total population, according to the Cherkasy Division of Nationalities, Migration and Religion.[47] Apparently, 11.7 thousand (up 1.6 times since 1989)

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[46] According to the Encyclopedia of Ukraine (Kubijovyc 1963) ethnically mixed marriages were 6.5 percent of the total in Ukraine in 1927, and 21.9 percent in 1979. Almost one third of all urban marriages were ethnically mixed, whereas in the rural areas only 9.3 percent were. In general, over 60 percent of all marriages were between two people of Ukrainian nationality.

[47] Nationality group statistics (according to 1989 census and updates) were providedto me by S. Don'ska Head Specialist, Office of Nationalities and Migration, Division of Nationalities, Migration and Religion of the Oblast State Administration (September 14, 2000).

Nationality	Number in Oblast	% of Oblast pop	% of Ukraine total in Cherkasy Oblast
Ukrainian	1,381, 742	90.5	3.7% of all Ukrainians
Russian	122,303	8.0	1.1% of all Russians
Yevreji (Jews)	6,505	0.4	1.3% of all Jews
Belorussian	6,318	0.4	1.4
Tatars	738	0.05	0.8
Armenian	636	0.4	1.2
Gypsies	979	0.06	2.0
Germans	486	0.03	1.3
Azerbaidzani	575	0.04	1.5

There are 140 different nationality groups recorded for Ukraine and 130 in Cherkasy, but the oblast is 93.1 percent ethnic Ukrainians, according to the 2001 census.

Cherkasy oblast residents account for 123 other nationalities and ethnic groups represented in Ukraine. Interestingly, there are no specifically ethnic Russian NGOs registered in Cherkasy, but there is one organization each for the Korean, German, Croatian and Greek communities.[48] In the past there was a Roma organization but it was now defunct.

Of the ethnic minorities the most visible in terms of organizations was the Jewish community. [49] The Jewish community, though small (numbering 1.5 thousand, down 75 percent since 1989), strives to promote the renewal of Jewish culture-consciousness, including the revitalization of religious activity and synagogues.[50] These organizations are also assisting those who desire to leave the country for better opportunities elsewhere (hence their declining numbers in the oblast). I heard traces of anti-Semitism in casual discussion, but most of it was in the context of jealousy due to the ability of Jews to escape the economic strain of the transition through emigration to countries offering better economic opportunities. (It was very difficult for ethnic Ukrainians to get visas for emigration, and fewer households here had families in the

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[48] These include the Cherkasy Oblast Society of Koreans, the German *Wiedergeburt* (born again) a women's club; the Polish Society with chapters in Smila and in Uman; a chapter of the all Ukraine Russian Movement of Ukraine; a chapter of the Croatian Society (inactive); and the Greek Society, *Khorus.*

[49] There were five Jewish organizations: (1) the Cherkasy Oblast Society of Jewish Culture headed by Davyd Letichevskyj; (2) a very active Association of Jewish Communities (*Obiednannia Yevrejs'kykh Hromad*) headed by Naum Tsarikovych Hrajsman in Korsun'-Shevchenkivskyj, which publishes its own newsletter and belongs to the All-Ukrainian Association of Jewish Communities; (3) the Rakhmanut Jewish community organization which is almost inactive, but still holds occasional meetings; (4) the *Khesset Dorot* Charitable Fund, headed by Semen Illich Pavlotskyj and assisted by Davyd Letichevskyj; and (5) the women's organization Kesher, run in Cherkasy by Svitlana Yakimenko and Nina Klotzman. This international organization is headed by Sally Gratsch who visited in 1996-97 for a program held jointly with the feminist Ya Zhinka Women's Center in Cherkasy.

[50] There were a number of synagogues in pre-Soviet Cherkasy. One of these structures still stands, but without alternative housing for its current residents, the revived Jewish community of the 1990s has not been able to re-establish themselves in it.

diaspora than was the case in Western Ukraine). In contrast, the number of Armenians, who immigrate initially as seasonal agricultural laborers, has increased almost threefold.

Of Ukraine's 50-70 religious denominations, at least 40 are represented in Cherkasy Oblast by 700-900 registered religious communities, most of them Christian, either Orthodox or Catholic and hundreds of them registered as affiliated with one of a wide range of Protestant directions—Presbyterian, Evangelical, Baptist. Jewish communities are also widespread in the oblast, while the city of Cherkasy has become home to singleton communities of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Muslims,[51] Buddhists and Hindu practitioners of yoga and meditation. During the Soviet period, only the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was legal; the synagogues were closed down and Cherkasy's historical central Church of St Michael (1693) was razed; few villages were left with a place of worship, most of the churches converted into club houses.

As of independence most of Ukraine's believers identify with one of the three Ukrainian Orthodox Churches (UOC): UOC Kyivan Patriarchate (39.8%), the UOC Moscow Patriarchate (29.4%) as successor to the ROC, and the UAOC Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (2.8%). In 2000 in Cherkasy oblast, there were still conflicts between the UOC KP and MP over the designation of church buildings and many religious communities were in makeshift arrangements for worship, while in Cherkasy's First of May Park a new cathedral of St Michael was under construction, soon to be the largest structure of the UOC MP in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Autocephalous OC, founded in Kyiv in 1919 and outlawed in 1933, is enjoying a rebirth in one parish in Cherkasy. Like the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church (which embraces 14% of Ukraine's faithful but is barely in evidence in Cherkasy), it survived mostly in

[51] There is a growing Muslim presence in Cherkasy, with two to three thousand faithful, and a makeshift mosque on Blahovisna Street.

the diaspora before being re-legalized in 1989, and its parishes are more numerous in western Ukraine than elsewhere.

Rural aspects of the demographic crisis

Being one of the central rural oblasts, Cherkasy exhibits special rural aspects of Ukraine's demographic patterns. The Ukrainian village itself, the traditional site for Ukrainian cultural reproduction, became a focal point of nationalist anxiety since the 1970s, because the rural settlements were severely depopulated.[52] In addition, the villages were plagued by environmental pollution and the onset of processes of 'moral decay,' that is, rampant alcoholism, widespread psychological depression, and the high incidence of violence, domestic and public.

Women predominate in the overall population of the rural areas, especially among the older residents, accounting for most of the rural pensioners.[53] The UNDP 1999 gender analysis country report recognizes this as a Ukraine-wide phenomenon, with almost 40 percent of women in rural areas being of pension age, in contrast to 27 percent in urban areas. In a related trend, fertility, once significantly higher in the rural areas than in the cities, started to level off during the 1970s, partly due to the exodus of young people from the countryside. According to demographer Valentyna Steshenko, from 1989-1997 fertility decreased in urban areas from 1.8 to 1.1 and in the rural areas from 2.3 to 1.7 (Dovzhenko 1998:31-33). The birthrate in Cherkasy oblast is close to the current national average, but Ukraine's central oblasts also exhibit the worst birth to death rations in the country (2.1 deaths for every birth).

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[52] The Ukrainian Institute of Social Research (1998) reported over a thousand villages in ruin, with 90 percent of Ukraine's villages undergoing processes of depopulation.

[53] As of January 1, 1998, Cherkasy Oblast had 670 thousand rural residents, 297,200 men and 372,800 women, or 55.6 percent. Most of these women were at or near pension age.

The dearth of women in the villages of childbearing age, i.e. of women in the categories of those 15-19 years old (who account for most of the live births) and those aged 20-29 (approximately 75 percent of whom are married in Ukraine[54]) largely accounts for the sharp decline in rural fertility. The legal age for marriage is 17 for women and 18 for men; the usual contract is between young heterosexual couples, the average age being 22 for women and 24 for men. Research suggests that first pregnancies are not usually terminated for fear of future medical complications.[55] There is also noted a marked decrease in births among women 30-34, which indicates a reluctance to enlarge the family. Abortion remains the main contraceptive strategy in the rural areas, modern birth control being less accessible here than in the cities. Divorce is three times less common in the rural areas than in the cities. Children born out of wedlock are on the increase, however (12.6 percent in 1990 and 13.3 percent in 1996).

A Ukrainian government publication (Institute of Social Research 1998) on the status of rural women notes that in 1997 roughly half of Cherkasy's agricultural, animal husbandry, and forestry workers were women. This means that in 1997—the year when 200-300 thousand residents lost their jobs, 700-800 thousand were underemployed or invisibly jobless, and 2.5 to three million rural residents Ukraine-wide were out of work (Dovzhenko 1998:4)—women were at least half of them. Earlier, approximately 85 percent of rural women between the ages of 30-50 had been productively employed, primarily in the context of the collective farms, and being paid 70-75 percent of the wages of urban workers (1998:15). The rural women tended to perform the non-mechanized labor on the collective lands—the hoeing, harvesting, composting,

[54] According to the 2001 census, 7.8 percent of women age 15-19 are married, 53.9 percent are married in the 20-24 age category; and 73.4 percent are married among those 25-29 years old. The proportion of those in married status peaks for those 30-39 years of age, at 78.1 percent.

[55] This is according to a 2006 survey of attitudes conducted partly in the Shpola district of Cherkasy Oblast.

spreading of fertilizer, the loading and unloading of trucks—in addition to doing most of the work on their household plots to put potatoes and vegetables on the family table. Women also accounted for most of the rural specialists (though only 5 percent of women holding specialist degrees were advanced to head the collective farms, whereas about half of men with the same credentials were).[56] The exodus of young women from this milieu illustrates not only the attraction of employment outside of the village, but also the extremely unattractive and difficult living and working conditions there.

As of 2000, Cherkasy's location high up in the Dnipro River corridor may have shielded it from the worst of the narcotics trafficking and related organized crime experienced by river oblasts closer to the Black Sea. In general, the dire economic situation exacerbated the effects of a failing health provision system, and mortality from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis was up. Poverty increased the vulnerability of children to abandonment and homelessness. Women and children were being reported as involved in the sale of sexual services as well as being trafficked against their will for sexual exploitation, the latter cited as a problem of the young rural women lacking viable employment.

The land reform

Unlike other post-Soviet countries which made quick work of privatization of state-owned and collective land, Ukraine took a full decade to accomplish the same. Before 1990, land was 100 percent state-owned. In 1992 the government passed legislation providing for the re-registration of the ten thousand or so former *sovkhozes or sovhosps* (state farms) and

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[56] Susan Bridger notes that in 1970 women were 56 percent of the total number of specialists employed in rural areas of the USSR (1987:70-76). However, 75 percent of these were of the so-called "non-productive" intelligentsia, working in the fields of education, health, and culture; women accounted for 31 percent of the "productive" intelligentsia i.e. those working in agricultural production (1987:71).

kolkhozes or kolhosps (collective farms) as shareholding farms called Collective Agricultural Enterprises (CAEs). [57] This preliminary step was a paper process, registering existing entities under a new category in name only without altering the existing collective relations. (Indeed, many people were reportedly not even aware that any change in status had been brought into effect.) The process proceeded unevenly until December 1999 when all collective farms were officially abolished by presidential ukase. In the intervening years, presidential decrees of November 1994 and August 1995 provided for the issue of certificates (*akt)* entitling each CAE member to a specific land share (*paj*), and outlined the procedures for the distribution (not restitution) of land shares among active CAE members and pensioners in good standing at the time of CAE registration. Local arrangements were to be made to provide workers of the social sphere with land shares as well. The decrees also guaranteed that Ukrainian citizens could then use their share of land to create new farm structures, such as agro-firms (or renting to large agricultural businesses) and farmer's associations, the overwhelming majority of new farm structures Ukraine-wide are collective or cooperative enterprises established on the basis of the registered CAEs. [58] In Cherkasy oblast, there were 572 CAEs created in 1999, some of which

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[57] There are four legal collective and cooperative forms of ownership in Ukraine. One is the CAE (*kolektyvni silskohospodarski pidpryemstva, KSP)* created by the re-registration of the earlier kolhosp collectives. Bearers of the land certificates may present these for distribution of real shares of land and may create cooperatives on the basis of their individual ownership. The cooperatives (*tovarystva obmeszehnoji vidpovidal'nosty TOV*—also seen as *sil'skohospodars'ke TOV—STOV* i.e.agricultural cooperative) were registered in two varieties allowed by business law. These are (1) a closed type, called *zakryte aktsionerne tovarystvo* (ZAT) literally a closed association of shareholders or closed cooperative and (2) an open type, *vidkryte aktsionerne tovarystvo* (VAT) which is an open association of shareholders. The closed form of ownership does not allow member shareholders to leave the cooperative with their shares and for that reason is not the form of collective encouraged by the central government.

[58] The average share of land was reported to average 2.4 to 3 hectares (or 6 to 7.5 acres). Sosoyeva (2000) reported that according to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, by the summer

were operating as market-oriented agricultural enterprises alongside a few—no more than 8 percent by 2000 (Sosoyeva 2000)—private family farms (reaching a total of 1,061 private farms in 2004).

Katherine Verdery 2003:231 notes that the Soviet pattern of industrialization led to the over-representation of women in the rural villages and in the transition period resulted in a majority of new land owners among the elderly, which in Ukraine, also means elderly women. Very few women have opted for independent family farming (only 11 out of every one hundred independent farmers in Ukraine are women) and rural women tend to be seen as not having the proper training to run farms. One consideration is the loss of social services that come as a benefit of collective farm membership. But even more critical is the lack of access to credit necessary to manage a farm, an obstacle that affects both genders.

The changes attending the land reform caused great concern in Cherkasy, the country's premier provider of grain. Perhaps its importance to national grain production made change all the more risky in Cherkasy. During the summer and into the fall of 2000, television broadcasts reported anxiously the progress of the harvest.[59] There were irregularities reported in the process of distribution of certificates. In some cases, these seemed to refer to the rights of workers of the social sphere—among whom women predominated. But there were also serious conflicts

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of 2000, 67 percent of former collective farm property had been incorporated into large business (rented to agribusinesses), 25 percent had been turned into farming cooperatives, and the remainder (approximately 8 percent) was being worked as small farms.

[59] A Conference on Institutional Reforms in Ukraine and Implications for Emerging Markets (at Yale University, April 1998), addressed the deepening crisis of Ukraine's farming sector. Most presenters blamed the slow pace of land reform and the government's failure to set a clear agricultural policy. The March 9 1998 issue of the *Eastern Economist, Ukrainian Business and Investment Weekly* warned of the demise of Ukraine's farms and described the situation in terms reminiscent of the great famine of 1932-33. Whereas I saw deep poverty in Cherkasy in 2000—and noticed anxiety over the harvest as well as much official appreciation for the workers of the agricultural sector—I did not see any evidence of starvation.

between those who would want to separate off from the collective framework to work their own private family farms, the social pressures being not to rock the collective boat. There were also the occasional unscrupulous former collective farm director who took advantage of poorly informed villagers and manipulated the process of certificate distribution to further personal power and control of resources.

As of 2001, while distribution of land shares in Ukraine was almost complete, land ownership rights were still unclear, and the difficult work of management changes, restructuring of collective arrangements, and the creation of a land, labor, financial, and marketing systems, was still far off. Women faced much discrimination in these processes, prompting special foreign aid programs, such as the "Sustaining Women Farmers in Ukraine" financed by the Japanese government and the UNDP "Women in Development Fund"—a project implemented in July 1999 and running in 2000, offering computer, agricultural, and business training through information centers in eight of Ukraine's oblasts. Cherkasy Oblast was not one of them.

Politics in Cherkasy in 2000

When I returned to Cherkasy in 2000, major confrontations were brewing. One ongoing conflict pitted the Governor of Cherkasy oblast, Volodymyr Lukianets, as the president's representative (head of the Oblast State Administration OSA) against activists of the Socialist Party and also against Mayor Vodymyr Olijnyk whose administration supported several local self-government initiatives. By December 2000, the mayor was calling for the impeachment of the governor (for unconstitutionally wearing 'two hats' as head of both the executive and legislative branches of oblast government) while Larysa Vojevoda, a Prydniprovsk Borough Councilwoman was demanding the impeachment and replacement of the mayor with a presidential appointee for what she called "budget irregularities" (Shaposhnyk and Majboroda

2000). Concurrently, the socialists under Oleksander Malynowsky were campaigning against the government's proposals for land reform and protesting the rising cost of communal services in the city. The city's residents were already being threatened with no winter heat delivery because of their large accumulated energy debt. [60] The simple conflict of the city aspiring to self-government against the control of the central (oblast) government was muddied by an additional overlay of politics in which the mayor's city administration seemed to side with those of leftist leanings, whereas the central government reforms were being promoted by exploitative oligarchic power. All around, everyone was accused of being corrupt. With the spring 2002 elections to the country's councils coming up, one local women's organization was running a practical seminar for prospective political candidates, attracting an array of activists from the combined national democratic and neo-socialist opposition.

[60] In the Fall of 2000, the 300,000 residents of Cherkasy were collectively 40 million hryvnias in arrears on their communal services bill (gas, water, sewer maintenance).

PART I: The Project

Chapter Three: Research Conditions and Methodology

The Context of Field Work in Cherkasy

After my brief experience of living in the capital city of Kyiv, Cherkasy was a smaller and seemingly more easily grasped setting. It is not, however, a small face-to-face community and although I am sure that I did not move anonymously within it, I did not, even after a few months, recognize everyone on the street from day to day. I depended on networks of acquaintances to negotiate the city, and gravitated to certain places and situations/events to absorb the experience of the women activists I hoped to understand. I therefore, knew only a few people in the apartment block where I lived, and sought out familiar people in their offices and organizational headquarters, most of which were located within a few blocks of the central Oblast Administration Building in Cherkasy, to get news about anything interesting that was happening. Often it was Cherkasy's downtown as center stage that was the lively spot.

My first ride to Cherkasy in August 1998 had been by chartered bus carrying participants of the Oral History Conference. In 2000, again, I came to appreciate the meandering ride by public transportation from Kyiv's Moscow Square station, not only for its economy but also for the opportunity to talk to some random fellow passenger. The bus crossed directly into the middle regions of the oblast where the softly contoured fields, separated by the same rows of poplars which line stretches of central Ukrainian roadways, are stunning for the blackness of the soil. Further on, the road sign for Smila (*smila* literally being the feminine for courageous) commemorates the legendary young woman who saved her village from Tatar invaders in 1633. It is a reminder of the importance of the Cossack history of this region, which supplies so much material for the spontaneous, often playful crafting of Cherkasy's contemporary identities, both

male and female. From Smila it was a short ride past experimental cornfields into Cherkasy. The bus entered the city through its commercial back door, past the dark, defunct airport to the mostly deserted intercity bus station, from where I'd take a taxi to the 1960s apartment block on Ilina Street in which I rented a room as of mid-August 2000.

The apartment on Ilina belonged to a retired couple, whom I called, according to my western Ukrainian custom, Pani (Mrs) Alla and her husband Pan (Mr) Volodya. It was ideally located not far from Cherkasy's administrative center. The couple's son, having succeeded in obtaining a visa to travel abroad was temporarily absent and I took over his room overlooking Ilina, a tree-lined street marred only by the heavy diesel traffic along it. Pani Alla, a retired librarian with an artistic touch, decorated the curtains in my room with hand-made paper leaves in autumn colors. From August to December, I also maintained a foothold in Kyiv, to which I could return when I wanted to participate in women's conferences or the like, and to which I could retreat to work on my notes, because I left my lap top in Kyiv. I did this for a variety of reasons: the cost of electricity was a source of anxiety for my Cherkasy hosts, and, even though I contributed to their household budget, they were wary of additional electrical appliances in the home. Even the wall clock was neither electric, nor battery-powered, but one that could be wound up manually with a skeleton key. Besides, the area was subject to sudden electrical surges. I was also uncomfortable about the possibility of my laptop being stolen: it was by no means standard personal equipment in Cherkasy, even for journalists who usually employed a simple notebook—and so I did, too. I was also not very confident with my new laptop then, and besides, I felt it might create an unnecessary emotional barrier between me and my informants.

I generally travelled from Kyiv to Cherkasy by bus and although I had planned to do the same for my forays out of Cherkasy into the inner oblast areas, I found that public transportation

was so irregular and uncertain that I needed to occasionally hire a driver (recommended by my host family) who would not only help me get around efficiently but also offer me an extra measure of safety. The best route by car from Kyiv to Cherkasy was along the low-lying Left Bank of the Dnipro River via Boryspil, the town that gave its name to the international airport. From this suburb of Kyiv, the road leads southeast to Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky, and through the lonely stretch where Vyacheslav Chornovil, the leader of Rukh movement, became yet one more politically inconvenient person to meet his fate in "death by automobile" (on March 25 1999), since my last visit. [1] The road veers by Zolotonosha, in the forested Left Bank, and over a causeway carrying rail and vehicular traffic over one of the narrower points of the Kremenchuk Reservior. The causeway feeds straight into a once-beautiful resort and city park, Cherkasy's elegant front door, through which visitors are drawn via Shevchenko Boulevard towards the formal center of the city.

My occasional driver, Pavlo, who worried about his old tires bouncing over Cherkasy's neglected pot-hole-ridden roads, liked to quip with some macho pride about Cherkasy being a *partizanske misto* (partisan city) alluding to the foxholes of partisan fighters. His pride as a Cherkasy native reflects the region's dark fascination with resistance and reprisal and with ideas about politics as insurgence and opposition to the state. Indeed in 1998, all manner of partisan politics were intensifying while Leonid Kuchma (Prime Minister 1993-94; President since 1994) was preparing his 1999 re-election campaign; accusations of electoral corruption and presidential heavy handedness extended these partisan politics into 2000 and Cherkasy agents were very much involved in the Kuchmagate events in late 2000 into early 2001.

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[1] A symbolic *kurhan* (traditional Cossack funeral mound) with birch cross on it is erected to his memory along the roadside near the tragic intersection. His death is currently being re-investigated as a possible murder by shooting, even before the possibly staged car accident.

Every time we entered Cherkasy from this causeway side, I imagined approaching a grand theatrical stage. The tree-lined boulevard, a well-kept four lane thoroughfare, runs past Bohdan Khmelnytsky State University. Further on, beyond the administrative center of downtown, the boulevard finds Khmelnytsky's monument, an imposing statue commissioned in 1985 (officially dedicated in 1995) in front of the grand *Druzhba Narodiv* (the Friendship of Peoples) culture palace erected in 1957. Also along the boulevard, gracing the plaza in front of Cherkasy's Drama Theater, is a statue of Taras Shevchenko, erected in 1964. Shevchenko stands directly across from the Cherkasy Oblast State Administration building, built in the 1960s on the plaza where Cherkasy's historic Cathedral of St Michael (1693) once stood. The church's post-revolution destruction made way for a different sort of public ceremonial space. I was told that the city boasted seven more beautiful churches that were lost to the bombing during the liberation of the Cherkasy during the Great War.

In 2000 there was also still another significant personage dominating the plaza: a towering monument to Lenin positioned with his back to the Oblast Administration facing the boulevard, with the main post office to his right and the old Cherkasy Hotel to his left. The struggle to remove this central Lenin had waged for almost a decade, and to listen to some Cherkasy residents, one would think their city was unique in preserving him and the reportedly "over one thousand" Lenins still standing around the oblast..[2] Cherkasy's central Lenin was finally taken down in 2007, but in 2000, Shevchenko, the champion of Ukrainian freedom, and

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[2] During the fall of 2000, in the village of Chervona Sloboda near Cherkasy, the pastor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyivan, not Moscow, Patriarchate) Father Illarion, ran out of patience waiting for the authorities to take down the Lenin monument in the village. He reported that he could no longer suffer Lenin's placid watch over the graves of those who died in the genocidal famine of the 1930s. In the dead of night, he took an axe to the statue, and was amazed at how quickly Lenin succumbed. In the morning, he gave himself up to the authorities (as reported on television in Cherkasy and in the local papers).

Lenin the socialist visionary, who for decades stood in Soviet political symbiosis, had spent the last ten years eyeing each other warily.

To Lenin's left flanking the plaza stood the Cherkasy Hotel where many NGOs had their office spaces, and to on his right hand stood the central post office and a smaller complex of buildings currently housing an art gallery and an exercise (*shaping*) establishment, and most importantly the Ukrainian Writers' Union, the Rukh headquarters and a women's organization (the Union of Ukrainian Women, the *Soiuz Ukrainok*) associated with it. This plaza and this most central street in Cherkasy was the stage for many demonstrations over the long 1990s and was the stage upon which I observed several political events in 2000. Rukh-sympathizers usually gathered before their public manifestations at the Shevchenko Museum, located behind the Oblast State Administration building. On special holidays, members of Cherkasy's cultural elite, some in colorful Cossack regalia and traditional costume, would gather at the museum to set out in procession towards the Shevchenko monument. The Shevchenko plaza was where on November 3, 2000 a plaque was ceremoniously installed commemorating the tenth anniversary of the first raising of the yellow-and-blue Ukrainian flag in Cherkasy (November 3, 1990).

The socialists of Cherkasy's SPU chose to stage its demonstrations at the feet of Lenin, pitching its tent-cities in front of the oblast state building. This meant that the area near the monument to Khmelnytskyj, who is subject to ambivalent historical interpretation, represented the most politically neutral territory of the three public plazas. It was from this venue that the mayor officiated over the annual Cherkasy Days celebrations (held in September in 2000). But this plaza—far down the boulevard from the Oblast administration building—is also where the CPU stalwarts gathered on November 7, 2000 to assert their loyalty to the October Revolution, a Soviet holiday that no longer appeared on the official calendar of the Ukrainian state. This

downtown area, its government offices, market places, businesses, NGO spaces, and cultural establishments was the setting in which I did most of my public observation of a city I was trying to comprehend.

Data Collection

I examined the diversity of women's organizing in Cherkasy oblast primarily through participant observation, open-ended interviews with organization leaders, and a questionnaire administered to a non-random sample of women's movement participants.

Participant Observation

My formal research began in Kyiv, making contacts with the headquarters of national women's organizations, with key figures representing women within the Ukrainian government, and with various international donor agencies involved with women's NGOs.[3] The Innovation and Development Center (IDC) in Kyiv and others [4] supplied me with information about NGO

[3] My first visits included the headquarters in Kyiv of the Soiuz Ukrainok (the Union of Ukrainian Women) and of the Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy (the Union of Women of Ukraine), the Olena Teliha Society and the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of Ukraine (OSMU). I met with Irena Holubieva, the head of the new Ukrainian National Council of Women, with leaders of the Gender Centers in Kyiv and visited a Gender Seminar Summer School session in July at Koncha Zaspa, near Kyiv.

[4] The IDC, headed by Oleksander Sydorenko and supported by the Stuart Mott Foundation, also published the *Guide to Foreign Funding Sources for Ukrainian Non-Profits* and was compiling a directory of women's non-governmental organizations See www.ngoukraine.kiev.ua/idc/ukr. Lists of NGOs (including women's) were also available from various U.S., Canadian, and European Union-based donor programs, the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute (OSI) and the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), the US Agency for International Development (US AID) and its Ukrainian Market Reform Education Project UMREP), the Counterpart Alliance for Partnership (CAP) and its component Counterpart Creative Center (CCC) Fund, the Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), the Eurasia Foundation, the United National Development Program (UNDP) Gender Project, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the NIS-US Women's Consortium (an AID-grant supported sub-project of the Anti-Trafficking Program

registration and provided access to their compiled directories. While over 28,000 NGOs were already separately registered as NGOs, among them established women's organizations and some of their chapters, the newer or still-gelling groups I encountered in the rural areas of Cherkasy Oblast were not yet in the data base.[5]

I made my initial contacts with women's organizations in person, introducing myself and my project to the head or vice-president or other deputy who was available, explaining my interest in understanding the organizations reach into Cherkasy. I did my own information gathering, realizing during these visits, how great a burden it is for them to respond to the many requests for details about their organization's mission, projects, budget, and membership. None of the women's organizations had the technical ability to compile and share information of this sort easily. Computers, reliable copy machines, and paper were all in short supply. Though the large national women's organizations do have their publications, or journals, none of them conducted membership mailing campaigns of the kind routinely employed by the large national dues-collecting organizations familiar to us in the West. The large All-Ukraine women's organizations were federations of small groups of women who work together regularly and generally share more than organizational membership in common. Later, in Cherkasy, I also consulted the Cherkasy Oblast archives for documents relating to perestroika era activism.[6] I

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sponsored by Winrock, International). Several of these organizations offered guidance to groups and would-be organizations regarding the processes of legitimization, registration, program development and effective grant proposal writing necessary for their survival.

[5] The authors of the *Post-Soviet Handbook: A Guide to Grassroots Organizations and Internet Resources* (1999:x) recognize the difficulties of documenting groups that are not interacting with Western counterparts,especially grassroots local and provincial organizations, which are often not accounted for, despite being essential elements of civil society.

[6] I am grateful to Serhij Kryvenko of the Cherkasy City Archives for facilitating my access to the Cherkasy Regional (Oblast) Archives and introducing me to their director and helpful staff.

collected internal organizational literature; and I culled articles from the local and national press. Browsing through the internal archives of some organizations, I started to realize the limitations of what can be understood from brief reports and skeletal minutes of meetings, the paper trail organizations leave behind.

In Cherkasy, I started with making (or re-establishing) contacts with the oblast-level leadership of the women's organizations and reaching out to towns and villages as my work progressed.[7] I collected information on the organizations' history, the difficulties encountered in their work and contacts with other NGOs and donors, with oblast, national, international, and diaspora networks. I interviewed many leaders of these women's groups and was invited to their meetings, during which I explained my project and had a chance to administer my survey questionnaire. A focal point was my attendance at the Women in Politics leadership training organized by the Cherkasy Oblast Soiuz Ukrainok, a group I had met during the summer of 1998. With funding from the International Republican Institute (IRI), [8] this group ran the

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[7] From my Cherkasy home base, I followed organizational networks into other points within the oblast for stays of 1-7 days duration. I visited the villages of Chervona Sloboda, Dubijivka, Biloziria, and Khudiaky in the Cherkasy city region; the city of Kaniv; the village of Bohuslavets in the Zolotonosha district on the Left Bank; historic Chyhyryn, and its nearby villages, Subotiv and Borovytsia; the cities of Smila and Horodyshche; Korsun-Shevchenkivske and the village of Shenderivka; the village of Tereshky in the Shpola district; the village of Talianka in the Tal'ne district; the cities of Uman and Khrystynivka in the western end of the oblast. My field research period also included brief side-trips for research purposes to Chernivtsi and Lviv and also the village of Bolekhiv near Stryj in western Ukraine (the home of the 19th Century Ukrainian feminist Natalia Kobrynska). I also had a chance to visit Konotop, Sebastopol, Kirovograd, and Odessa.

[8] The International Republican Institute (IRI) entered Ukraine in 1992 to support democracy through the training of poltical parties, women's and youth organizations. IRI trains local trainers to facilitate the learning of practical aspects of democratic competition, political campaigning, and general democratic process. In 2000 IRI initiated Women in Politics leadership training and piloted their first women-oriented program through the Soiuz Ukrainok in Cherkasy.

training once- monthly over a weekend, for almost a year. The seminar was quite popular and was deliberately conducted in a non-partisan atmosphere, drawing women from a variety of organizations and from a number of locations around the oblast. It served me as an ideal node from which my research embraced a wider network of activist sites.

When I was still in Kyiv in July 2000, Yulia Tykhomyrova of the Counterpart Creative Center invited me to accompany her to Cherkasy to observe a seminar conducted by the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of Ukraine (OSMU). Therefore, I became acquainted with that organization initially from the donor NGO angle, but this was an isolated instance. I later developed an independent relationship with the Cherkasy OSMU and was invited by them to participate in a trip to Sebastopol where the OSMU ran a human rights awareness training for the navy recruits stationed in that Black Sea port. As a rule, my participation in women's organization events was strictly by invitation of the women activists themselves.

Survey Questionnaire

I administered the questionnaire to groups, whenever I had the opportunity. Participation was meant to be anonymous, but some women insisted on signing theirs, relishing the fact that they have nothing to hide and that nowadays you can tell all! Others left some questions unanswered. The survey was designed to provide general social characteristics (age, education, employment, marital status, household composition, nationality, language usage, and religious affiliation). (See my questionnaire in translation in the Appendix.) A total of 137 women, representing 20 groups in 11 locales (6 urban, 5 rural) completed the questionnaire. I conducted this survey solely in Cherkasy oblast (in the cities of Cherkasy, Smila, Chyhyryn, Uman, and Khrystynivka and in the villages of Dubijivka, Khudiaky, Subotiv, Borovytsia, and Bohuslavets), but I used the questionnaire once in Kyiv (ten women).

Interviews

When I conducted formal interviews, they were tape-recorded with the informed consent of my interlocutors; beyond these, I kept detailed notes of innumerable informal discussions with persons associated with the women's organizations and people completely peripheral to them. In all, I have 19 long (approximately 1-1 ½ hours in length) semi-structured interviews with women activists and nine group interviews, involving 62 women in all. I always met the women in their spaces, their offices, or wherever they were working, which on occasion meant at their home. In this I am influenced by the thoughts of Michael Polanyi on what he calls tacit knowledge (1983). Many of my interviews are also not truly one-on-one. I am generally asking the questions of one interviewee; but usually there is another person or persons present, so that there is an audience of co-workers or of interested colleagues. The interview is thus more of an informal taped conversation than anything else. The group interviews are actually multi-party discussions. This has the effect that my interviews are quite natural. They are however, public in tone—they are not particularly private and involve few secrets. They are also of a high level of content, not "dumbed down" to explain things to me, the outsider. Because the interviews often veer off into interesting exchanges of opinion and innuendo, I occasionally had to do additional background research to understand what they were talking about!

The women I interviewed signed consent forms, and I explained that they have full control over the recorder, which could be turned off should they feel uncomfortable. In the consent form, I also offered an honorarium of ten dollars for their time; but I found that almost all of the women refused to be rewarded for their cooperation, and moreover did not want anyone claiming that they "did it for the money." I compromised by donating the promised

amount at the end of the interview towards the funding of whatever project they had currently planned.

In a semi-structured line of questioning (no strict schedule was pursued), I strove to allow each woman to speak for herself and frame her own account of recent history, her personal place in it, and her motivations for activism within a particular women's association. The interviews cover various topics but mostly are rich in explanations of the life and work of the organizations within the quotidian realities and politics of Cherkasy's local communities. The interview stands as a social encounter in which a woman talked about herself to an inquisitive listener.

In almost all of the interviews there is a moment, often prompted by the direct question "How did you come to be involved in this?" where the woman talks about herself creating a personal narrative in which she explains her personal path to activism and her relationship to the work. I hired help (through the Center for Oral History in Kyiv) to transcribe several of the interviews, but many I transcribed myself and translated them into English. As data, the interviews and embedded personal narratives are treated as (1) a source of information about the events of the past decade as a partial mapping of the social field; (2) as direct evidence of the social relationships that women use to build their bases of influence as leaders; and (3) their own reports of the range and constraints of choices in self-representation—an explanation of how they construct their own identities that is to be literally understood as their Truth about themselves; in this sense, personal narratives may also reveal personal transformations, that is, the experimentation with and evolution of identity.

Notes on Language and the Researcher as Instrument

As both a social and linguistic speech event, the interview involves a variety of speech acts (Hymes 1962, Gumperz and Hymes 1964) by which the speaker performs a presentation of

self (Goffman 1959). The social characteristics of the interlocutor (me) are an important element of the setting. Unless the social biography (position) of the researcher herself is understood in the matrix of social relations there is an insufficient appreciation of the context in which the research data was produced. The call is for a social science that not only "gives voice" but also forges connections between communities of women by producing more self-aware analyses by women of various social positions.

In Ukraine, Russian language skills were cultivated for both practical and prestige reasons, being the vehicle for social advancement and the "language of common understanding," while Ukrainian had a long stigmatized history as a peasant language. Monolingual Ukrainians are stereotypically rural (Riabchouk 1998:89). [9] Even in the villages and small towns, however, where people speak Russian "badly," people habitually communicate in the surzhyk (Ukrainian-Russian) mixture which is not a prestigious language variety but one of widespread currency.[10] As a non-Russian speaking member of the diaspora it was plain to me that Russian and surzhyk were dominant in Kyiv; and in Cherkasy, too, I heard more Russian than Ukrainian in public. Those whom I engaged in conversation were often surprised at their own difficulty in expressing themselves exclusively in Ukrainian or apologized for their "bad" Ukrainian as they forged ahead, because I do not speak Russian. Some marveled, "Where did you come from, that there is no trace of Russian in your speech?" There were also occasions on which I was elevated to the

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[9] Riabchouk (1989:89) notes that 40-60 percent of Ukraine's population is Ukrainophone—40 percent actual speakers and 60 percent if the count includes those who claim Ukrainian as their native tongue. Half of these are rural residents.

[10] For a review of the phenomenon of surzhyk as a speech continuum and as a spectrum of admixture, please refer to Laada Bilaniuk's work (1997, 2006).

status of role model—"Look how the American learned to speak Ukrainian, in a foreign land!" by which they implied that on their own soil Ukrainians have neglected their language. I often regretted that I did not have better than passive comprehension of Russian, and that I wasn't part of a research team competent in both languages. I have noticed, however, that many researchers do not hesitate to work in Ukraine without a knowledge of Ukrainian without admission that choice of language can be significant—both for the expectations it signals and for the way it frames the context and even the content of an exchange.[11]

To speak Ukrainian is to perform a Ukrainian national identity (versus a Soviet or Russian one, generally speaking), which has been/is still at times a subversive or stigmatized act. Even though Ukrainian has been designated as the official language of the state (for government administration, and education, but not business) people have not fully embraced this practice, and Russian is again in 2010 eligible for second state language status. However, in the urban areas, "despite their *de facto* minority status, Ukrainophone Ukrainians prove to be much more active and visible on the political and cultural scene than their more numerous and better-established Russophone counterparts," notes Riabchouk (1998:89). Because non-governmental civic society appeared in Ukraine as a Ukrainophone milieu, it should be researched as such.

On occasion, I caught myself on tape performing a personal narrative alongside theirs. I noticed that I emphasized my student status and divorced myself from the expectation that I might represent another women's organization, or any potential funding agency or patron who would be evaluating or assessing them and their work. It also mattered to me that I not be viewed as a person of wealth and privilege, though I was often probed for the possibility that I

[11] Kuzio (2000a :200-208) notes the somewhat anomalous situation that researchers undertake their study of Ukraine without knowledge of Ukrainian and consider Russian sufficient for their research purposes. He also notes the automatic assumption that Diaspora researchers are "tainted by nationalism."

may put in a good word to someone who might have access to funds for projects. I admitted to living comfortably, but not of sufficient personal resources to underwrite projects. I did agree to carry letters back to the United States and facilitate contacts for various women.

The main variable is that my use of Ukrainian as the language of research is, of course, not value free. My presence as an Ukrainian-speaking academic weds a low prestige language variety with a high prestige social position and also asserts the independent functioning of Ukrainian identity through language (without any reference to colonial "Little Russian" identities). Not all Ukrainians, in fact, accept their own language as a worthy vehicle of communication; Russian is still esteemed as the more useful, beautiful and flexible language. There is also the effect of Russian propaganda: one woman, in a heart-breaking moment, asked me whether God understands the Ukrainian language, because her priest had told had told her that God will only listen to her prayers in Russian! As for myself, I was mostly concerned that my language would make me attractive to representatives of a more extreme nationalism and work to the detriment of my attempts to get at other worldviews. I believe that I was right to be wary, but that my anxiety was not substantiated. Rather, it seems to me that the language brought me close to a worldview that would be otherwise obscured and brought me in touch with facets of social activity that would remain otherwise unaddressed.

Part II: Strands of Ukrainian Women's Movement

Chapter Four: Early History of Organized Ukrainian Women's Activism

Introduction: Phases of Ukrainian Women's Movement

Part II explores the historical context for women's social activism in Ukraine. The pre-Soviet historical women's movement spans the 19th and 20th centuries in a wide transnational field of activism which I explored for a previous article (Kichorowska Kebalo 2007) and which serves as the basis for this chapter.

Through both indigenous and diaspora efforts, a growing body of historical scholarship is promoting a broader understanding of Ukrainian women's activism and their movement. The work of Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988) represents the first comprehensive historical treatment of the Ukrainian women's movement up to the Second World War. Her research, taken up in the 1970s at the request of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA, founded 1925), led her to the realization that community organizations were the hallmark of Ukrainian national existence through long decades of statelessness, and that these organizations provided Ukrainian society with a structure and a kind of self-determination in lieu of national independence (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1990b:10). When her 1988 book *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women in Ukrainian Community Life 1884-1939* was published in Ukrainian translation in Kyiv as *Bilym po bilomu* (white on white) in 1995, it was dedicated "To the women of Ukraine, so that they may understand the foundations upon which they build—To the women of the *Soiuz Ukrainok* of America [i.e. UNWLA], who in building anew, also preserved the memory of their history."

Since Ukraine's independence, one of the most significant contributions of indigenous scholarship on women's history in the empire is that of Lyudmyla Smolyar (1958-2004), director

of the Gender Research Center at the University of Odessa. Her life's work, entitled *Mynule zarady majbutnoho* (the past for the sake of future), the result of over a decade's research into the women's movement of Dnipro Ukraine,[1] was published in Odessa in 1998. Reviewing Smolyar's work, Bohachevsky-Chomiak praises not only the thorough examination of formerly unexplored archives but also its comprehensive treatment of Ukrainian society within the Russian empire, producing an account of the women's engagement in the Ukrainian national movement that effectively integrates it into the larger imperial context (1999:217-218). She also recognizes the value of Smolyar's book as a resource and guidepost for current post-Soviet women's activists.[2]

Unfortunately, Smolyar's book is not yet available in English translation, as it represents a complement to Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988 and supplement to the narrower (Russian-focused) narrative in the work of other historians of the imperial Russian feminist movement.

The Social Movement Field of the Imperial 19th Century

In 1785, on the eve of the great democratic revolution on the other end of the continent (the French revolution 1789-95), Catherine the Great dealt a final blow to the autonomy of the Cossack Hetmanate of Ukraine and in 1793 re-imposed serfdom upon peasants who for the past 13 decades had been accustomed to freedom. Ethnic Ukrainian lands, split between Russia and Poland in the 17th century, were reshuffled during the Partitions of Poland (1770s); and in the

[1] The concept of Dnipro Ukraine (*Naddniprianska Ukrajina*) embraces central Ukrainian lands through which the Dnipro River flows and which were part of the Russian Empire, including the contemporary territory of Cherkasy Oblast.

[2] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1999:217-218) notes that the title of Smolyar's book reveals the author's intent that history be regarded as a model. She asserts that Smolyar's work provides '*evidence of the viability of a network of community organizations that constituted a civil society*' (my emphasis). Smolyar herself describes 'women's movement' as *creating organizational capacity* for the furthering of an ideology (feminism being one possibility).

19th century, Ukrainian peasants and their Polish overlords were distributed between the Austrian and the Russian Empires. Within the Russian empire, the incorporation of Hetmanate lands brought Left Bank landowners (with Cossack genealogies) and Right Bank Polish and Polonized gentry into an increasingly Russified context, in which *Russian* covered both *Great Russian* and *Little Russian* identities, and the pejorative terms *khakhol* or *muzhyk* referred to the Ukrainophone peasant.

In the course of the 19th century, the assertion of Ukrainian identity came to be viewed as a direct challenge to the Czarist state. In Austrian Galicia, where the last vestiges of serfdom were abolished upon the Spring of Nations revolution of 1848, the Ruthenian (later Ukrainian) peasants had just started to assert themselves as an organized nationality, setting off what was to be a long Polish-Ukrainian rivalry in the territory. In the Austrian imperial setting where national identity was understood to function in a hierarchy of non-conflicting loyalties, Ukrainian identity was even briefly encouraged by imperial Vienna to fend off Polish demands within the empire.

In both empires, the larger field of movement involved a Romantic Herderian turn to the countryside, a strong identification of (Polish and Russian assimilated) new elites with the Ukrainian speaking peasantry. Using arguments similar to those of the abolitionists in the New World, the elites who advocated the emancipation of the serfs connected this issue with that of the liberation of women in one discourse of *slavery*. This larger movement fanned, in both Austria and Czarist Russia, a growing awareness of Ukrainian national particularity in opposition to both Polish and Russian identities. It became a process of forging a collective Ukrainian identity within and across imperial boundaries in which women played a prominent role. In time, this growing national consciousness culminated in a struggle for independence within the tumult

of the First World War, the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Russian Revolution.

Historians hesitate to claim that there was a feminist movement of any critical mass in the early to mid 19th century. The post-revolutionary period was a time of social repression in the Imperial Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German Confederation territories, when all reformist and radical publications and political, including feminist, activisms were severely suppressed. There was, however, fairly widespread feminist sensibility conducive to the beginnings of one. The repressions served to focus attention on women's rights and fanned the embers of discontent. Feminist ideas traveled eastward in translated texts and through individual converts to the women's cause (male and female) who had emigrated West for university schooling opportunities denied them within the empires. Women's collective activity within the easternmost territories of Europe was hampered, however, by women's legal disadvantage under Russian Imperial Law, by the limited educational opportunities for their gender, and by the prohibition of many kinds of organizations. Movement activity there was mostly clandestine. In Austria, the laws for registration of various kinds of organizations were more lax, especially after the 1867 extension of civil liberties. There, socially radical ideas could be shared and acted upon more freely.

Offen (2000:79) lists five intersecting developments that contributed to the spread of feminism across Europe despite post-1789 repression: (1) the rise of literacy and gains for female education; (2) the rise of nationalism and establishment of various nation-states; (3) the participation of women in urban workforces; (4) dynamics creating tension between feminist and socialist actors in social change; and (5) the development of national and international feminist organizations. All of these factors apply to the Ukrainian case; but because Ukrainian women's

activism develops in an agricultural and colonial context, its evolution differs somewhat from that of women's movements in industrialized settings. In addition, there are three themes, or legacies, that affect the women's movement: (1) Ukraine's prolonged statelessness, (2) an ethnic history that plays out in the competitive settings of imperial pluralism, and (3) the political and philosophical trend of populism. Each of these contributes to the development of a movement that is more focused on shoring up the particulate ethnic community than on seeking cross-group or internationalist cooperation.

As a result of its pre-1991 statelessness, Ukraine belongs to the category of *non-historical* nations by virtue of its lack, in the 19th century (after the 18th century demise of the Cossack state), of a noble class identifying itself as Ukrainian (Himka 1983:4-5).[3] Political conditions served to keep Ukrainians in the status of a predominately rural peasant people, setting the stage for populism which is arguably pervasive in Ukrainian politics, culture and community activism from the 19th into the 20th centuries (Pavlychko 1999:27). Populism appears in Ukraine as a political discourse that identifies the peasants as the authentic people and as a practice that is based on immersion in the grassroots, primarily because it is a movement to draw the peasantry into cultural and political participation in the life of the nation (Himka 1983:45). Populism also recurs in various guises in the Ukrainian national revival, in Ukrainian socialism, in Ukrainian nationalism, and in Ukrainian anti-elitist *peasantism* (Ionescu and Gellner 1969). The recommendations of Ivan Franko, Galician Ukrainian literary figure and populist turned radical socialist, seem to reflect the thread of immersion practices that links the *khlopomany* (peasant

[3] Supporting John Paul Himka's (1983) assertion is the fact that populism, regardless of whether it is seen as an ideology or as a "recurring mentality" is understood to appear where "the middle social factors were either missing or too weak" (Ionescsu and Gellner 1969:3).

lovers movement), the *narodovtsi* (the Ukrainian populists*)*, the socialists and communist idealists, and even many of Ukraine's contemporary activist as well:

> The intelligentsia should above all be intelligentsia, a community of broadly educated individuals, with developed character and sincere feelings for the *narod* (the people); and so, the intelligentsia should identify with the people and be one with them, to stand among them as brothers, as equals, as those who belong there, working with them, but also serving them as lawyers, doctors, teachers, and as advisors in all affairs, as good neighbors and helpers in need. The intelligentsia should live with and among the people, not as a stratum unto themselves, but as an inseparable part of the narod. The intelligentsia should not preach, but through their work and their own lives, should be a model for the people. The intelligentsia should be as that cultural and educational yeast, saturating the organism of the narod, and fermenting it into life, into growth. [Ivan Franko quoted in Pavlychko (1990:30), my translation]

This populist ideal is reflected in various phases and aspects of Ukrainian women's organizational work—in its anti-elitist democratic tendencies, for example, in its unfortunate lack of theorizing, and most detrimentally, in the invisibility of its greatest efforts.

The competitive setting of imperial pluralism, however, was the critically formative condition and opportunity for the historical women's movements of Eastern Europe, including the Ukrainian movement. In the 19th century, when European women's movements were getting underway, national competition for resources within the large autocratic empires of the Holy Alliance, Prussian, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires was a major political factor.[4]

Women inspired by feminist ideas from Western Europe in theory recognized the value of overcoming local ethnic community conflicts but did so with difficulty, particularly when their state practiced nationality favoritism. Apparently, while nationalism may promote women's cooperation *within* ethnic groups, it appears to mostly interfere with cooperation with one another across ethnic lines. For example, the campaigns for women's suffrage in both the Russian Empire and in Austro-Hungary became a vehicle or context in which minorities also promoted national rights.

In Galicia, where hostile competition and caste-like insularity characterized the relations of separate Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian ethnic communities, feminists managed to approach Parliament on behalf of suffrage in a common front, though their agitation was done in separate ethnic community meetings. Bruce Garver asserts that "no feminist movements, charitable organizations or trade unions embracing women of *all nationalities*, religions and social classes emerged…Rather the division of women by nationality and within each nationality according to social status, occupation, or religion was reflected in the diversity of women's aims and organizations" (1985:65, my emphasis). In some respects this diversity can be seen as competition for resources within an autocratic empire, as it was with Ukrainian-Polish relations;[5] but in some instances it could be interpreted as the women of Austria's national communities

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[4] Johanna Leitenberger, who was invited to pen the report on the status of women in imperial Austria for Theodore Stanton's 1884, *The Women Question in Europe*, noted that "It is a great impediment to progress and reform that Austria is composed of so many separate races, speaking so many different languages and having dissimilar customs and aims." (Stanton, 1884, 1970:188)

[5] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988:64) describes the demonstrations Ukrainian and Polish women in Eastern Galicia held jointly in the 1890s in support of the women's suffrage and higher education. The issue of education, however, ended up in a struggle between the Polish and Ukrainian communities, over the official language of instruction (Polish or Ukrainian) at the University in Lviv.

trying to duplicate, rather than challenge, each other's efforts. For instance, when the *Zenske listy* (women's gazette) printed Eliska Krasnohorska's (1847-1926) petition for Czech women's higher education in 1890 (David 1991:28), the Ukrainian feminist Natalia Kobrynska quickly organized a similar petition, not to negate the Czech claim, but to assert the Ukrainians' desire for the same. In this atmosphere of competitive imitation,[6] the Czech women's movement served both as a model and a stimulus for Ukrainian women's activism. The women's activities on behalf of their own women's community become the beginning point of a national women's movement history for what later were recognized as separate nations.

Generally women who were not in direct local competition supported each other by translating each others' work and sharing strategies. They agreed that in theory women's common concerns should allow their cross-national cooperation, as the international conventions of women abolitionists, socialists, temperance movement workers, and anti-trafficking activists had proven possible. The first *lasting* framework for such international women's cooperation, however, appeared in 1888 with the establishment of the International Council of Women (ICW). Ironically, this forum, too, was constructed along the nationality principle, even as it tried to transcend it (Rupp 1997).

In the Russian Empire, there were similar roadblocks to cooperation but with a different twist. In 1905-08 the Czarist law on associations loosened restrictions on organizations and made possible the initiation of an All-Russian Empire women's movement (Offen 2000:209). As analyzed by Stites (1978), the women's movement in the Russian empire (1869-1930)

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[6] The subtitle of Katherine David's article ('The First in Austria') betrays some of this benign competition. Irena Knysh (1957:147) relates how Kobrynska and the Galician Ukrainian women sent a congratulatory letter to the Czechs for their initiative, using the phrase *first in Austria* and that this letter and the Czech women's reply were printed in the Lviv paper *Dilo* at the time.

reaches its pinnacle in the suffrage campaign of 1905-07. The Russian Union for Women's Equality, created by Russian activists in Moscow in January 1905, spread to 20 Russian and Ukrainian cities and held the first women's political meeting in Russian history on April 10 and their first congress—with 26 local chapters represented by 70 participating delegates—in Moscow over May 7-10, 1905.

From the perspective of the non-Russian women delegates, they came from all corners of the empire to support universal suffrage not only in theory or in principle but also for its potential role in the solution of their respective national grievances—the desires for national local autonomy and a relaxation of the cultural Russification of their territories. According to Stites, the congress adopted provisions for national autonomy and for the equal rights of peasant women in any future land reform (both especially critical demands brought forth by Ukrainian delegates), but he offers no comment on the genesis or the implications of these demands for the national groups within the empire (1978:199-200). Smolyar (1998) reveals that subsequent women's congresses continued to engage these nationality issues. During the second conference in October 1905, the women supported a resolution requiring the reorganization of the empire into a federated political structure. During a third conference, they adopted a provision granting sub-regional member organizations the right to separate language groupings reflecting national composition. It was the Russian Social Democrats (including Alexandra Kollontai), however, who put up resistance, fearing the bourgeois disruption of working class unity. The Duma of 1906, therefore, did not ratify women's suffrage. Disappointed, 20 thousand women of 122 Ukrainian locales signed a petition in a show of support for the Union for Women's Equality as an organization that had demonstrated sensitivity to the multi-national composition of the empire.

After the revolution of 1905-07, however, the government curtailed the activities of the Union and the various regional chapters dispersed (Stites 1978:210). By the time of the First All-Russian Women's Conference in St Petersburg in 1908, it was clear that there were serious philosophical rifts in the union. The Russian women now resisted acknowledging the legitimacy of the non-Russian nationalities' right to autonomy and started to ignore the fact that national autonomy might be even more important to them than the women's connection across national lines. The Russian women interpreted the non-Russian women's stance as obstinate and parochial. The non-Russian women understood the Russians to be arrogantly defining their situation for them (Smolyar 1998). This conflict would not be resolved by the Revolution, nor during the Soviet period that followed, and it remains a hallmark of the post-Soviet Ukrainian-Russian relations.

Phase I: Building Community Across Imperial Boundaries

The earliest traces of the Ukrainian women's movement are to be found in the collective actions taken up by women on their own behalf as women in the mid-19th century in imperial Russia. As subjects of the Russian empire, Ukrainian women participated in the establishment of early charitable societies, the movement for women's education and suffrage, and a multitude of projects arising out of a concern for the social welfare of impoverished peasants flooding the cities after the abolition of serfdom (1861). They were also prominent in the activism surrounding the growth of Ukrainian national consciousness that lead to radical demands for Ukrainian national rights within the Empire—such as the right to publication in Ukrainian language, forbidden by the Valuev Decree of 1963, a punitive response to the Ukrainian populist *khlopomany* (peasant lovers) movement (Magocsi 1996: 366-371). Women were especially

important to the Sunday schools of the *Hromada* (community) movement and to its ethnographic and literacy activity that was a major stimulus for the Ukrainian national revival.

Women's activism in the Dnipro-Ukrainian territories of the Russian empire began in the mid-1850s, during the short-lived period of reform after the Crimean War (1853-56), which allowed the registration of charitable associations. The post-emancipation (post 1861) changes to the social composition of the urban areas sharpened the acuteness of various social problems addressed by these organizations. Imperial industrialization of Ukrainian cities attracted peasant women to the urban clothing factories and the food industries, especially the sugar refineries. For example, in Cherkasy, sugar production and even more so, the imperial tobacco factory, the largest in the region, predominately employed women as its workforce (Hamm 1993:155).[7]

These conditions were the context for the women's self-help movement of the 19th century. Women's professional and personal ambitions found moral and financial support in women's cooperatives, publishing projects and ateliers.[8] Another category of activism arose out of imperial educational reforms, which in 1859 introduced universal secondary schooling. In the earlier decades of the 19th century only daughters of nobility enjoyed this opportunity as students

[7] Hamm (1993:170) also notes that in 1897, 60 percent of the Ukrainian women of Kyiv worked as domestic servants or day workers. He makes use of arrest records support the claim that they were often abused, channeled from domestic work into the sex trade. During the revolution and the years of the First World War, the rapid growth of sexual exploitation of such women and girls, lead women in the cities of Odessa, Kyiv and Kharkiv to create Societies for the Defense of Women (In Odessa, 1904-17); in Kyiv 1905-17). In 1904 in Kyiv, several hundred women, mostly university students, attended the first meeting of this organization. (Hamm 1993:159)

[8] Maria Markovych, who wrote under the pen name of Marko Vovchok (and whose writings had comparable impact on serfdom as did Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin on slavery) organized a publishing concern that, between the years of 1869-70, printed translations of foreign works by Ukrainian women. Other women of this 1860s generation organized ateliers (in Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Odessa) that were cooperatives where women created the kind of labor relations they wanted to see in the general society. In the1870s-90s these cooperatives developed into mutual support societies for working women.

of the women's institutes founded in Kharkiv and Poltava in 1818, Odessa in 1829) and in Kyiv in 1833. Higher education was, however, a more controversial issue. Briefly, from 1860-62, women were allowed access to Kyiv's University of St. Vladimir, established in 1834; but the government withdrew this privilege when it noticed a connection between university attendance and subversion in the radical and populist (Hromada-inspired) vein of social activism (Magocsi 1996:368). Women desiring higher education emigrated to Zurich and to other hospitable cities such as Helsinki, Philadelphia, and Paris, sometimes resorting to fictitious marriage arrangements in order to secure permission for the sojourn abroad. The government reinstated the women's courses in 1878-86, after which courses were again offered only in 1905; but the issue of education reform had set off a chain of events drawing women into the work of self-emancipation.

Smolyar (1998) treats this period as a full spectrum of women's activisms addressing education, literacy, women's social welfare, employment, sexual exploitation, suffrage, and national consciousness. She presents these projects as micro-movements which overlapped and cleaved within a larger field of movement. Smolyar identifies the micro-movements as representing different strands of political orientation—liberal-democratic, social-democratic (radical socialist), and national democratic—each attracting a different sort of movement participant in terms of class status. The working intelligentsia, for one, sought involvement primarily in the liberal-democratic trend of charitable works, agitation for education and the running of schools, and women's self-help groups.

The Hromada movement represents the national-democratic strand of activism (Magocsi 1996:357).[9] Their Ukrainian ethnographic and literacy activity, which promoted the use of the

vernacular, was critical to the Ukrainian national revival (Hamm 1993:96). The Hromada drew mostly individuals with some relation to the old Cossack genealogies of Ukraine whose separatist ambitions were fueled by the Crimean War. The earliest members of the Hromada were *khlopomany* (peasant lovers) who, like the later populists, took to living in the villages among the people. They collected ethnographic materials for the advancement of national identity; they also promoted peasant literacy and organized Sunday schooling for the new urban proletariat, developing reading materials in the Ukrainian vernacular. In 1860-62 several Sunday schools were permitted to open, upon academic certification, across the territories of Dnipro Ukraine; and, depending on the private political bent of the school organizer, several schools leaned towards Hromada-supported Ukrainophilism. The instructors in these schools were professors, university students, or educated women. The women activists learned by doing and by teaching, lecturing on various topics, from the right cause of the emancipation of serfs to the importance of women's opportunities.

Although the Hromada groups were mostly male clubs, overall, the rank and file Hromada activists were mostly women. Women tended to take responsibility for the hands-on work of establishing village libraries and reading rooms, running village discussion groups, and serving as village teachers and midwives. In general, the women were most productive and influential in the work of literacy and publishing, so crucial to the movement because it opened up a dialogue in Ukrainian language and created a public space of cultural production and innovation. Several very prominent women were high-level co-workers within the Hromada and

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[9] The Hromada stemmed from the freethinkers'circles (*kruzhky*) of the 1860-70s. Their roots in turn are traced to the Brotherhood of Cyril and Methodius (1846-48), whose members Panteleimon Kulish, Mykola Kostomarov and Taras Shevchenko, were imprisoned for their views. The Brotherhood promoted the emancipation of the serfs, linking the women question with it. Their statement on "The Liberation of Women" (1847) made a connection between women's social freedom with cultural-national-regional self-determination.

took responsibility for significant projects such as the founding of a dormitory school for children of the proletariat. Finally, in 1901-05, the wives of the Old Hromada founded their own *Zhinocha Hromada* (women's community).[10]

The early period of the social-democratic strand, the predominately Ukrainian *narodnytstvo* (populist) movement of the late 1860s and early 1870s involved mainly university students who carried revolutionary messages to the peasants. Among these activists were members of women's *kruzhky* (circles), essentially political and feminist consciousness-raising groups, such as the one run in Kharkiv (1859-61) by Elizaveta Kovalska, who introduced her protégés to radical ideas from revolutionary literature of Western European origin (Smolyar 1998:204-5). Also prominent among these activists were women attending the Ukrainian Women's Higher Courses in Kyiv, who frequented the kruzhky organized by Hromada activists such as Olena Dobrohraieva (1883-88) (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:269).

The widespread activities of the Hromada groups radicalized university students and attracted them to the populist movement carrying revolutionary messages to the countryside. Starting late in 1873 and by the following summer, the movement turned into a mass migration of students to the villages. Within this movement young women, having acquired an education at home or abroad, could also pursue a career, taking on positions as rural teachers, midwives, and doctors, while simultaneously spreading political and social propaganda (Smolyar1998:170). Many women prepared for their village forays within the Kyiv Commune of 1874, learning the practical trades of ateliers and workshops that would later serve to facilitate their propaganda work. Their activist efforts, conducted in the Ukrainian vernacular, are believed to have

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[10] One of the founding members was Maria Chykalenko, mother of Hanna Chykalenko-Keller,who becomes a very significant activist in the interwar period. The post-Soviet women's organization Zhinocha Hromada (1992) refers back to this historical precedent.

heightened the Ukrainian national consciousness among the peasants (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:22-23). Branded as Ukrainophiles, the young activists were subjected to mass arrests (1873-75) and harsh punishment, regardless of gender.

The activism of the women's circles extended into the work of the Ukrainian *Prosvita* (enlightenment) societies founded in 1905, as well as in the *zemstvo* and cooperatives movements. Women were deeply involved in all of these strands of activism regarded as dangerously subversive in the eyes of the government (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:27). During the 1890s the most active revolutionaries were arrested; some emerged later in Marxist groups. The populists formed the All-Russian (All-Empire) Social-Revolutionary Organization and then the Revolutionary Party in 1903.

In the latter half of the 1870s, when czarist anti-Ukrainian repressions intensified, the leaders of the Hromada movement sought the cooperation of their fellow ethnics in Galicia, who, as subjects of the Austrian monarchy, enjoyed a more lenient climate on organizations.[11] Their initial goal was access to publication in Galician journals, due to the strict restriction on Ukrainian language in Russia; but cooperation flourished on many fronts, partly thanks to the expansion of the railway systems of the empires. Through the 1870s-80s, the opportunity to travel by rail increased contacts between the two imperial communities enough to solidify stereotypes of the Galicians as provincial, rigid, and conservative and of the Dnipro area Ukrainians as extremist troublemakers.[12] Galician women were often unnerved by the

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[11] Magocsi (1996:436ff) identifies 1771-1848 as the years of the Ruthenian National Awakening that provided the foundations for this cooperation. Both Magocsi (1996) and Snyder (2003:124) devote attention to the ascendance of the Ukrainophile orientation which by the 1890s, had, with Vienna's support, become dominant.

revolutionary manners of their Eastern counterparts, but these same traits inspired many to admire the Dnieper Ukrainian women as being not only more cosmopolitan but somehow more confident and more successful than the Galicians.[13]

The specifically Ukrainian women's movement is usually understood to have begun during this time of trans-border cooperation of nationally-conscious Ukrainian activists. Officially, the date 1884 is offered for the inception of the organized movement, since this is the first year when officially registered Ukrainian women's organizations existed on both sides of the imperial divide. These were the *Tovarystvo Rus'kykh Zhinok* (Society of Ruthenian Women), the first secular women's organization in Galicia, founded in 1884 by Natalia Kobrynska (1851-1920), a socialist and self-avowed feminist[14] and the Women's Higher Courses run by Olena Dobrohraieva in Kyiv (1883-88). More significant, however, was the publication in 1887 of the first Ukrainian women's almanac, *Pershyj Vinok* (first wreath), representing the first tangible product of Ukrainian women's transnational cooperation. This volume, edited jointly by Kobrynska and Olha Kosach,[15] a cultural activist from Kyiv, included fiction, poetry

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[12] Irena Knysh (1957:73) describes how Olena Dobrohrajeva of the Kyievan Women's Higher Courses was in Galicia in 1885 on a summer vacation trip (as students from the Russian empire often did to get acquainted with varieties of Ukrainian ethnographic local color) and received a cool reception at a gathering of Galician women who branded her as an eastern nihilist.

[13] In her introduction to the First Wreath (1887), Kobrynska writes, "For the first time, we come out (in print) together with our elder (more experienced) sisters in the name of national unity in response to the general issues and problems common to all women." (Knysh 1957, my translation)

[14] Knysh 1957; Offen 2000:217-218; and Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988, 2006) discuss the work and life of Natalia Ozarkevych Kobrynska (1851-1920). A biography of Kobrynska prepared by Bohachevsky-Chomiak is included in the *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements*, edited by Francisca DeHaan et al., 2005.

[15] Olha Kosach (whose pen name was Olena Pchilka) was the sister of socialist political activist and philosopher Mykhailo Drahomanov and the mother of Larysa Kosach-Kvitka better known

and ethnographic studies penned by women from both empires. It was the first of an ambitious series of publications produced or planned by Kobrynska as a women's library of readings.[16]

Through the 1890s, Kobrynska's efforts focused on motivating women to organized activism and to the application of socialist (and practical) solutions to women's problems. Under the leadership of the respected Hermina Shukhevych, the Ruthenian Women's Club in Lviv (1893) sponsored the Society for Day Care Centers (1899), the *Trud* (labor) Cooperative (1901), and the Society for the Care of Servants and Working Women (1903). The younger generation of progressive women of Galicia, however, was drawn to a more radical mainstream socialism than they saw in Kobrynska's brand of socialist feminism. Hermina's daughter, Daria Shukhevych Starosolska, was one of the founders of the Circle of Ukrainian Girls, who considered themselves to be radical socialists and rejected Kobrynska's feminist discourse in favor of more revolutionary slogans. In 1905 the girls matured into the Circle of Ukrainian Women with a network of chapters in various cities of Galicia and a journal entitled *Meta* (aim). It was this group that later, in 1917, called for the creation of an organization that would unite the Ruthenian Women's Clubs and the Circles of Ukrainian Women under one umbrella.[17]

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as Lesia Ukrajinka, whose writings exhibit one of the strongest feminist voices in the Ukrainian literary canon.

[16] Kobrynska and Pchilka's *First Wreath Almanac* was significant for bringing together the fiction, poetry and ethnographic studies written by women from both empires. Kobrynska continued with her efforts to publish, producing three volumes (in 1893, 1895 and 1896) of the women's almanac *Nasha Dolia* (our fate) in which she included both fiction and essays and translations of feminist writing. She had plans to publish a Women's Library series (*Zhinocha Knyha*), of significant creative and scholarly feminist works, which would have included a translation of German social democrat August Bebel's *Women and Socialism* (1879).

[17] In 1917, an umbrella organization called the Soiuz Ukrainok was proposed as a federation of various women's organizations fusing women's clubs, ladies philanthropic societies, war-relief committees and clubs of socialist women under one heading. The other proposal was to create a new centralized women's organization, which they would have named Hromada. (note: The first

Phase II: (Dis)Continuities in the Interwar Period

The 1878 women's rights congress in Paris initiated an international phase of women's cooperation (Offen 2000:151), heralded by the creation of the International Council of Women (ICW) in 1888. The ICW was followed by the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA, 1905, which later became the International Alliance of Women IAW in 1926) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).[18] A few years later, during WWI, the international women's community faced its first great consternation and serious challenge to its philosophy of pacifism. While the ICW Women's Congress at The Hague in 1915 claimed to speak for all the world's women in protesting the commencement of armed conflict, Ukrainian women were already making difficult choices as to how to react to the cataclysmic political changes happening on their own territory.[19] At the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the Ukrainian community of Eastern Galicia actually hoped that *both* Austria and Russia would fall and imagined that a new Ukrainian nation-state, consisting of its unified western and eastern ethnic territories, could emerge as an entity independent of either empire. Thus, with Austria collapsing, the Galician Ukrainians proclaimed the *Zakhidno Ukrainska Narodna Respublika* (ZUNR, the West Ukrainian National Republic) on November 1, 1918. The ZUNR was immediately at war with the Poles, who considered Eastern Galicia as historically Polish

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two post-Soviet women's organizations of the Rukh milieu were also again Soiuz Ukrainok and the Women's Hromada).

[18] For a comprehensive history of the international women's organizations see Leila Rupp's *Worlds of Women* (1997).

[19] Having been shut out of a 1912 meeting in which the Ukrainian male politicians agreed to lend support to Austria (against the Russian Czar), the women in Lviv held their own meeting. The women argued against blind Austrophilism and recommended holding off until Austria's position on Ukraine was clear. Ultimately, several of these women took up arms within the ranks of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (organized under Austria within the Ukrainian Galician Army) which came to the aid of the Ukrainian People's Republic declared in Kyiv in 1917.

territory. The Western Ukrainian Republic nonetheless forged ahead with plans to unite with their fellow Ukrainians in Dnieper Ukraine, where the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) had been proclaimed in Kyiv in 1917. On January 22, 1919, the two Ukrainian Republics declared their union as one sovereign nation, but the unified Ukrainian state lasted only into July.

Several prominent women had been drawn into the government of the UNR in 1917-18. Their influence is apparent in the fact that the Ukrainian constitution of April 29, 1918 gave women full and equal rights, including suffrage. With the establishment of a unified Ukraine, an eminent group of women activists representing both western and eastern Ukrainian territories created an All-Ukrainian National Women's Council on August 13, 1919, designed to fit the requirements for membership in the ICW.[20]

Within the next two years, however, swift successive changes in government, extreme disorder in the country, including and especially poor support from the peasantry (Wilson 2000: 125-126), ultimately doomed the success of the Ukrainian revolution and the independence of the fledgling state. The Ukrainian National Republic met its inglorious end by December 1920 and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was created in 1922 on its territories (with western Ukrainian Galicia remaining outside of the USSR). With the change of political climate, the Ukrainian feminist nationalist activists in Kyiv were stymied and stigmatized: many of its leaders were exiled or lost to the purges (Smolyar 1998).

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[20] See Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988:138ff) for a full discussion of the fate of the All-Ukrainian Women's Center of the Women's Council (Zhinocha Rada) created under the Directory (November 1918 to February 1920). After the fall of the Ukrainian government, the council operated briefly in exile from Berlin (1919) in the person of Mary Zarchy, a Ukrainian feminist of Jewish origin, and wife of the head of Ukraine's Berlin diplomatic mission; subsequently in 1924 it moved to Prague.

Women's organizations in general were all replaced by the Ukrainian Women's Section of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Alexandra Kollontai until 1923 (and discontinued in 1930). The Bolshevik feminists, especially Kollontai, called for changes in the status of women to free them from servitude to the state, family, and society (Hyer1996:114). In the early 1920s, Kollontai focused on the economic contributions of women's work and on their role in the reproduction of socialist labor. She called for state protection of maternity (with a focus on maternal health) and for the public care of children in order to allow women to work more effectively in the collectives. Although she was opposed to feminist projects on the grounds that the female proletariat should not be distracted from the socialist project, Kollontai obviously tried to inject feminist ideas into the Russian socialist program (Offen 2000:210). With her dismissal in 1923, Bolshevik feminist demands were silenced by Stalin's priorities: The promotion of women's maternity as "an active economic and political agent of society and as a mother and nurturer of new communists" (echoing discourse readily associated with nationalism as well) won out (Stites (1978:262).

After the First World War, Ukrainian exiled and émigré activists cooperated across several diaspora communities in Vienna, Geneva, Prague, and Paris. They also worked closely with a new Ukrainian women's group allowed to register in Polish-ruled Ukrainian Galicia in 1921 under the name of *Soiuz Ukrainok.*[21] Many of the Ukrainian women who found themselves in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Ukrainian National Republic had worked together earlier. They immediately addressed themselves to gaining entry into the three international women's

[21] Bohachevsky Chomiak (1988) refers to this organization as the "Union of Ukrainian Women;" in its "revived" form in contemporary Ukraine (1991). I refer to it as Soiuz Ukrainok to minimize terminological confusion.

structures: the ICW, IWSA and WILPF.[22] In 1920, the Ukrainian National Republic in exile accredited two women activists, [23] both at that time employed at the Ukrainian embassy in Berlin, to attend the ICW Congress in Oslo (Kristiania). In the early 1920s, Ukrainian women's groups cooperated to enhance their visibility as activists by registering chapters of the international women's organizations and created a network that informed the participants of international conferences about Ukraine's situation and hoped that their lobbying would influence the ultimate fate of Ukrainian Galicia, aiming for autonomous republic status. They were greatly disappointed when the Council of Allied Ambassadors (1921-23) within the League of Nations decided, despite their professed principles of national self-determination, to officially annex Ukrainian Galicia as of March 1923 to the Polish Second Republic.

Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988:261-280) demonstrates how the handful of Ukrainian émigré Ukrainian women who started to network the women's conferences in Europe in the 1920s, found their way, through a small number of personal connections, into the international women's circles.[24] The women acquired membership in the WILPF and the IAW, but the

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[22] See Rupp (1997) for a comprehensive history of women's international activism, including the Ukrainian women's interjections. Regarding the provenance of these specific organizations, the IWSA changed its name to International Alliance of Women IAW in 1926 and the WILPF actually began its existence as the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace at the 1915 ICW in the Hague, and adopted its permanent name WILPF in 1919 in Zurich.

[23] The two were Maria Zarchy and Hanna Chykalenko-Keller (1994-1964).

[24] For example, it was Lidia Shishmanova (1865-1935?), who introduced Chykalenko-Keller, a former *Zhinocha Hromada* activist of the prominent Kyiv political family, to the international circuit. Chykalenko-Keller had studied in Scotland at Edinburgh, the university from which Crystal MacMillan, then secretary of the IWSA, had graduated (1988:265) and it was MacMillan who subsequently extended to Chykalenko-Keller an invitation for a Ukrainian delegation to participate in 1923 in the IWSA Congress in Rome (1988:270). It was also MacMillan who introduced Chykalenko-Keller to Emily Balch, then head of the WILPF, with whom Keller exchanged letters in 1920 concerning Ukrainian membership and the issue of pacifism

Ukrainian Women's Council in exile was not able to hold onto hopes of ICW membership as this was strictly tied to the status of nation-state (Zimmerman 2005:87). It was not for lack of effort, though. In 1922, Milena Rudnytska, then vice-president of the Galician Soiuz Ukrainok, actively sought recognition for her organization as representative of Ukrainian women; and Chykalenko-Keller even traveled to the 1925 ICW Congress in Washington, D.C., with a set of bylaws prepared in hopes of gaining ICW membership (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:256); and although Sofia Rusova (1856-1940), eminent pedagogue and head of the exiled All-Ukrainian Women's Council, addressed the 1925 international gathering (Lindfors-Mikhalevych1990:12), they were informed that, as an émigré organization, their council could not be granted regular membership.[25] In lieu of full status, the Ukrainian women were cordially invited to remain in the ICW as guests.

It was during this trip that Chykalenko-Keller headed straight from the conference to New York City, where she urged Ukrainian women émigrés there to bring their various local women's groups together under one Ukrainian-American women's umbrella organization. That federation of organizations took the name *Soiuz Ukrainok Ameryky* (literally, the Union of Ukrainian Women of America), registering itself in English as the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA, 1925).

Serious inter-ethnic conflict marred the interwar period of Polish-Ukrainian relations both due to Polish intolerance for Ukrainian claims to nationality rights and to Ukrainian provocation.[26] Tensions were so heightened that, in 1921, when the Galician Ukrainian women

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(1988:264). A Ukrainian section of the WILPF was organized in 1921 with six chapters and participated in the WILPF Congress in that same year (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:265).

[25] Finland was similarly turned down in 1904.

convened their first post-war congress, the Polish police dispersed the meeting on its first day, even before the program's second speaker had finished her address. That speaker was Milena Rudnytska, the former treasurer of the ill-fated Ukrainian Women's Council. She had just uttered what constituted a challenge to the Polish state in asserting that the Ukrainian women's movement must have as its goal to see a unified Ukraine (i.e. including Ukrainian Galicia which was then under Polish rule) with its capital in Kyiv (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:154).

Milena Rudnytska (1892-1979)[27] later came to head the Galician Soiuz Ukrainok, the organization that was the main vehicle for the Ukrainian women's movement in the interwar years. Rudnytska, an elected representative to the Polish Parliament, journalist, historian, and self-avowed feminist, was one of the most prominent Ukrainian women of her era. She picked up the feminist torch (though dropped the socialist one) from Kobrynska, who had died in 1920, and carried it into turbulent and complicated times. Despite periodic Polish government harassment,[28] the Soiuz Ukrainok enjoyed phenomenal growth under Rudnytska's leadership (1928-39). By 1931 it had up to one hundred thousand members, most of them village peasants,

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[26] Although, according to Payne (1995:141), the Pilsudski government (1926-1935) was a moderate military regime in which parliamentary elections were regularly conducted and in which Ukrainian political parties were encouraged to participate, it grew increasingly authoritarian, intolerant and conservative, described by some as nearly fascist (see also Dobrochna Kalwa 2003:157) Ukrainian interwar nationalism, as embodied by the *Ukrainska Viiskova Orhanizatsiia* (UVO, the Ukrainian Military Organisation) created in Prague at the end of war for the purpose of continued armed struggle, and by the *Orhanizatsiia Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv* (OUN, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists), founded in Vienna in 1929, itself had elements of fascism and totalitarianism, according to Subtelny (1988:442). The UVO conducted a campaign of sabotage during the preparations for the controversial 1922 Polish parliamentary elections.

[27] For an accessible biography of Milena Rudnytska see the Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms (DeHaan, Daskalova and Loutfi 2005). Rudnytska died without writing the history of the Ukrainian women's movement she had planned.

[28] It was banned in 1928 and again in 1938.

accounting for approximately one in every seven women of Ukrainian Galicia. The organization was structured as a three-tiered network of chapters, probably modeled on the three-level schema of Polish territorial administration, since these were mostly territorially defined village chapters (using the term *kruzhky*). The central office was in Lviv, and there were regional chapters based in the small-towns which were the liaison for the village circles. Its growth was orderly, and deliberately cultivated to promote women's participation in all aspects of their community, including, even especially, electoral politics.

Myroslava Diadiuk refers to this period as the "politicization of the Ukrainian women's movement" (2002:18). Historically, it was the first period in which Ukrainian women were legally allowed to join political parties and were openly encouraged to be politically involved. Also, this was a period of great inter-ethnic tension, in which in fact everything, even the most mundane matter, was potentially political. The work of the Soiuz Ukrainok flew in the face of the Polish nationalizing state and their ambitions to assimilate the Ukrainians as Polish citizens. The women's movement can also be understood to be politicized in the sense of becoming *radicalized*. Although the Soiuz Ukrainok was non-partisan, it was often perceived to be associated with the violence of the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN),[29] because some of its members and even leaders supported these organizations.[30] In any case, the Ukrainian women openly strove for Ukrainian local self-rule, i.e. Ukrainian Galician autonomy, a right the nationalizing Poles were loath to entertain.

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[29] For a history of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) see Subtelny (1988:440-474) and Wilson (1997:47-52). The OUN (1929) was a political movement dedicated to the establishment of an independent Ukraine, arising from the merger of the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO) and several nationalist student associations. Its membership, mostly students and young people, is estimated to have been as high as 20,000 in 1939. Tremendously influential, the OUN shaped the political outlook of an entire generation of western Ukrainians.

Rudnytska's feminism was, as was Kobrynska's, stronger than that of most of her colleagues in the women's movement. At the crux of her feminism was the value of civic involvement. She often emphasized that the achievement of rights by women was only the first step and that it was the exercising of one's rights that was the true meaning of emancipation. At a time when the community needed political leadership, she encouraged women to consider themselves equally responsible partners with Ukrainian men in the creation of their society. She did not see any purpose to women's groups if they were to segregate women in activities not specifically related to their gender. In 1919, Rudnytska wrote "Do We Need Separate Women's Organizations?"[31] In this article she argued that their main purpose was consciousness-raising, to help all women embrace emancipation and full civic participation. She proposed, most likely thinking about the envisioned mission of the recently defunct Ukrainian NCW, that a women's organization should promote women's interests, particularly in the realm of employment, state protection of motherhood, and legal equality; that it should monitor the application of laws against discrimination (laws for equal pay, equal educational opportunity, and the reform of divorce law); and that, in the future, a women's organization should enjoy the cooperation of women parliamentarians and other representatives to/of government, who would ensure the passage of laws favorable to women.

Rudnytska was also not enamored of Soviet-style women's political representation and participation, recognizing that the early women's sections were considered adjuncts to the

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[30] Myroslava Diadiuk (2002) and Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988) both note the death of *Soiuz Ukrainok* Treasurer, Olha Basarab, in 1924 at the hands of the Polish police, as a turning point. Most probably she lost her life for her involvement in the Ukrainian Military Organization, for which she was a courier.

[31] The full (Ukrainian language) text of Rudnystka's (1919) article is reprinted in Bohachevsky-Chomiak and Diadiuk (1998: 89-95).

Communist Party and that it was the party leadership, not the women themselves, who controlled the direction of change. In her own formulation of political involvement,[32] Rudnytska flatly rejected the idea (then being entertained by Galician Ukrainian political parties) to create women's wings. Rudnytska made it clear that she encouraged women to be members of political parties—any political party—as their civic duty and insisted that women commit themselves to political participation as individuals, not as passive members of groups recruited in collective membership. Similarly, she supported the democratic election of women to political posts, as opposed to their assignment as token representatives of their gender. During her term as President of the Soiuz Ukrainok, which coincided with her career as a parliamentarian, Rudnytska was an active member of a political party called the Ukrainian National Democratic Union (UNDO, 1925), but the women's organization always maintained strict non-partisan status.

The Soiuz Ukrainok program worked holistically, taking several directions: cultural-educational, economic, civic, and religious. Many Soiuz Ukrainok leader-activists were young peasant women who had the still-not-common opportunity to attend secondary schools. Returning to their villages, they worked in tandem with the Ukrainian Cooperatives and Credit Union movements, the Village Farmers Cooperatives, and the Prosvita Literacy Societies, to serve a disadvantaged peasantry. In contrast to the elite and middle-class composition of women's movement participants of the nineteenth century, when peasants tended to be the objects rather than the subjects of movement action, the membership of the interwar Soiuz Ukrainok was predominately peasant women (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1985:84). The populist

[32] Rudnytska's article (1919) "*Zhinotstvo I politychni partiji"* (Women and political parties) is reprinted in Bohachevsky-Chomiak and Diadiuk, eds. (1998:116-120).

programs of the Soiuz Ukrainok endeavored to bring the full practice of citizenship to peasant women, drawing them in as participants and co-creators of the women's movement.

After the Soiuz Ukrainok gained membership in the WILPF (1921), Rudnytska used these connections to raise international awareness of the violation of human and national rights in Poland and Soviet Ukraine. In 1928 Hanna Chykalenko-Keller introduced Rudnytska to Mary Sheepshanks, the successor of Emily Green Blach at the WILPF. Sheepshanks took an interest in the Ukrainians and invited Rudnytska to address the WILPF in Prague. A talented orator, Rudnytska spoke so forcefully about the Ukrainian experience under an intolerant Polish regime that she actually embarrassed some of the other Ukrainian émigré women who originated from the Russian arena of eastern Ukraine and thus did not share her Galician experience. Being former cosmopolitan denizens of the Russian empire, they found Rudnytska's passionate representation of Ukrainian victimization at Polish hands off-putting. Chykalenko-Keller was particularly concerned that Sheepshanks might be rubbed the wrong way (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:272). Instead, Rudnytska was invited to speak again in 1929 in Vienna. In 1930, Rudntyska invited Sheepshanks to tour some of the 800 Galician villages that had been subjected to the Polish action of retribution called the *pacification* (Subtelny1988:430-431). Sheepshanks subsequently witnessed on behalf of the Ukrainians against Poland at the Congress of National Minorities in Geneva in 1931 (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:275). She also graciously accepted an invitation to speak at the Soiuz Ukrainok Jubilee Congress celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Ukrainian women's movement held in 1934 in Stanyslaviv (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:272).

The Ukrainian women were not always well received for their blatantly nationalistic statements in the international women's forums (see Rupp 1997:116). However, given their

nation's current experiences, the Ukrainian women were eager to assert their national identity and were driven by the hope that the international women's community would embrace the Ukrainian cause (see Rupp 1997:209). Even on home ground, Rudnytska, who made many presentations and interventions for Ukraine in the international arena, including several appearances in the Council of Parliamentarians of Europe, was attacked in 1934 by the (nationalist) Ukrainian press for her *internationalist* activity. She responded that if by *internationalism* her detractors meant the contacts she was cultivating with various international women's organizations, "—thanks to which, frankly, Ukrainian women's organizations have been able to accomplish more than a few serious tasks for the promotion of the national cause—then can such internationalism be counted among the sins of the Ukrainian women's movement?" (Bohachevsky-Chomiak and Diadiuk 1998:171, my translation). Leila Rupp agrees that "international work could serve explicitly national purposes" (1997:122).

The Soiuz Ukrainok was a federation of Galician and émigré European Ukrainian women's organizations, by statute both non-partisan and non-denominational, though by virtue of Ukraine's failed revolution, it positioned itself as politically in exile from its national center. It could have no formal connection to any women's organization within the new Soviet Ukrainian Republic now embarking on the communist experiment, although it followed closely news of women's developments there. The Soiuz Ukrainok generally enjoyed the respect of the Ukrainian Galician community as well as the support of the Uniate Catholic Church in Lviv. The Soiuz Ukrainok members did not generally call themselves feminists, but time and again throughout the 1930s Rudnytska was moved to vigorously defend their feminist positions against the criticism of extreme nationalists within the broader Ukrainian community. Even under fire,

she never wavered from her advocacy of democracy and the electoral process or from her desire to steer the youth away from nationalist violence.

In the mid 1930s, when the Ukrainian strand of integral nationalism was strongest, Rudnytska came under attack from various quarters of the Ukrainian community and was pushed to justify her feminism. In 1934, the Lviv *Mariiska Druzhyna* (Marian Society) and nine other Catholic women's organizations publicly protested Rudnytska's allegedly antireligious positions and threatened to form their own Catholic federation. Rudnytska protested strongly, as she clearly considered the Soiuz Ukrainok to be the embodiment of the Ukrainian women's movement whose participants were predominately Catholic anyway (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:204-5). Perhaps to ease these tensions, an official Soiuz Ukrainok position statement from 1934 made the point of recognizing the family as the fundamental biological unit of the society but added the following caveat: "We cannot agree that the woman is to be locked in the domestic sphere and have that define her field of activity. It is ridiculous."[33] And then, she adds as an afterthought:

> It is equally ridiculous to think that women's sexuality is the central point of the women's movement…We hold motherhood to be important. Women are mothers of the nation. We should be citizens within the four walls of our homes and we should be mothers in the community life.[Bohachevsky and Diadiuk, eds 1998:203-204, my translation]

Also in 1934, Rudnytska wrote an important statement, *The Misunderstanding (or Conflict) with Feminism* (1998:170-176), in response to criticism in the Galician Ukrainian press

[33] Rudnytska's speech of June 23, 1934 entitled "*Ukrajinska dijsnist' I zavdannia zhinky"* (Ukrainian reality and women's responsibility) is reprinted in Bohachevsky-Chomiak and Diadiuk, eds.(1998:202).

of the Soiuz Ukrainok's plans to convene the Ukrainian Women's Congress that jubilee year (1884-1934). This piece re-stated, clarified, and defended her feminist position. Yet the following quote also suggests that she allowed her feminism to be disciplined by nationalism into submitting women's autonomy to the nation. After positioning herself as Kobrynska's successor, not in terms of her socialism but in terms of her feminism in service of the national community, she fends off her anti-feminist critics:

> Are they truly unaware that the Ukrainian women's movement has never preached the isolation of women from the general society? To the contrary, from its very inception fifty years ago, it has deliberately and purposefully worked towards the goal that Ukrainian women should become a vital and maximally active part of the nation. And one of its main goals is to draw the Ukrainian woman into community life and to prepare her for that role. And never has the Ukrainian women's movement been an egotistical movement in pursuit of narrowly defined women's interests. It has always put responsibility first and then rights; and when it talked of rights, it meant, foremost, the right of the Ukrainian woman to work for the nation, to serve the nation. [Rudnytska in Bohachevsky and Diadiuk 1998:171, my translation]

At the opening ceremonies of the Ukrainian Women's Congress of 1934 Rudnytska addressed the women gathered there as co-authors of Ukraine's future and delivered a speech on *Ukrainska dijsnist* (Ukrainian realities) in which she examined the difficult line Ukrainian women walked between feminism and their frustrated national aspirations. She preached national unity and made plain her regret that they were marking the fiftieth anniversary of the

Ukrainian women's movement still in statelessness and colonial relations of economic exploitation, and in cultural isolation, dealing with feelings of inferiority (Bohachevsky and Diadiuk 1998:185). She laid the blame at the feet of women themselves, particularly the intelligentsia. "It is *our fault* because we've allowed ourselves to stand paralyzed at the crossroads of history…we must take our fate into our own hands" (1998: 188).

As a transnational event, the Congress of 1934 was constructed to demonstrate to Ukrainian men as well as to the international community that there exists a global Ukrainian women's unity. The congress drew delegates from every diaspora community and from every non-Soviet Ukrainian women's organization (1998:257-258). As planned, the women adopted a resolution to establish a new body, the World Union of Ukrainian Women (1937).[34] As of 1939, this World Union, like its predecessor, the Ukrainian NCW, was disbanded in exile. Ultimately it was superseded by another organization, created by a congress of Ukrainian women that was held in the United States, in Philadelphia, in 1948. In the next chapter I will explore how the Ukrainian women's movement continued to evolve in a politicized diaspora setting.

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[34] The World Union of Ukrainian Women embraced all non-Soviet Ukrainian women's organizations, in Galicia, Volhynia, Transcarpathia, Bukovyna, Eastern and Western Europe, U.S. and Canada. Sofia Rusova was nominated Honorary President; Milena Rudnytska, President; O. Shtohryn, a delegate from Philadelphia was elected to the executive board (Bohachevsky and Diadiuk 1998: 258-259).

Part II: Strands of Ukrainian Women's Movement

Chapter Five: Ukrainian Women's Activism in the Diaspora

Since 1991, the history of the pre-Soviet Ukrainian women's movement to 1920 and its interwar period of the 1930s has become a regular topic of seminars and papers delivered at conferences sponsored by women's organizations in Ukraine. Even so, few women of post-Soviet Ukraine, even those of western Ukrainian territories, are aware of the history. The names of Natalia Kobrynska and Milena Rudnytska are often not known even to women living in Ivano-Frankivsk or Lviv, in close proximity to the places where these women lead others to feminist activism. The history of the post World War II diasporic women's organizations is even less well understood in Ukraine, and even in the diaspora since this more recent history has been only partially analyzed. Frances Swyripa (1993) published the history to the 1980s of Ukrainian women's organizations in Canada; but the history of the post 1948 women's organizations in the United States exists only in preliminary manuscript form produced in cooperation between Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak and Sophia Sluzar. This chapter represents my independent attempt to examine that history based on reading of various periodicals, including the *Our Life* magazine published by the UNWLA (1944-today). Here I examine how the diaspora history relates to the revival of women's movement in Ukraine and how the Ukraine's women's movement responds to the diaspora element in its immediate environment.

<u>Laying the foundations for a Transnational National Community</u>

Emblematic of the plight of the first All-Ukrainian National Women's Council (1919) was its loss of official membership in the ICW at the Washington, D.C. meeting in 1925. In response to this setback, Ukrainian women activists focused on mobilizing a network of émigré activists in Europe and even in the North American diaspora (Swyripa 1993:13). Hanna Chykalenko-Keller

(1884-1964), a feminist-nationalist activist and former Hromada member in Kyiv who attended the 1925 ICW congress, met with Ukrainian women leaders in New York City, urging them to organize a national umbrella organization. Later that year, several women's organizations formed a federation that they called the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA). [1] In Ukrainian, they adopted the name of *Soiuz Ukrainok Ameryky*, to underscore their solidarity with the then Galician *Soiuz Ukrainok* organization.[2] A similar development in Canada dating to this period was the establishment of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada (UWAC), which also identified itself and was seen as the Canadian counterpart to the Galician Soiuz Ukrainok (Swyripa 1993:171).

This was not the first instance of feminist-nationalist activists courting the diaspora for support. The Ukrainian migrants of the first wave to North America left their impoverished villages in Eastern Galicia (under Austro-Hungary) as self-identified Ruthenians—and their transformation into a Ukrainian diaspora was accomplished by 19th and early 20th century homeland activists, including Ukrainian women's movement leaders, who missionized them in support of national independence. Kobrynska was among the Galician activists who took an interest in the early North American migrant communities. Her particular hope was that women

[1] The UNWLA was first headquartered in Philadelphia, where it later shared offices with the WFUWO (1948) before they both relocated—the UNWLA to New York City in 1973, and the WFUWO to Toronto. As of 1944, the UNWLA published a bilingual magazine *Nashe Zhyttia/Our Life,* in which the WFUWO had a regular section devoted to international women's movement news until it launched its own publication *Ukrainka v Sviti/Ukrainian Woman in the World,* in 1963.

[2] Liubov Wolynets (personal communication) informs that the UNWLA adapted the statute of the Galician Soiuz Ukrainok to its own circumstances, but shared its principles of being nondenominational (but generally Christian), and nonpartisan (but anticommunist). Early chapters took names reflecting their desire to mitigate the divisive effect of politics on the community*: Z'hoda* (agreement), *Jednist'* (unity), *Liubov* (love)). By 1932 there were 42 branches; the UNWLA participated in the Chicago World's Fair in 1933.

would be able to provide a market, and a source of income, for their Galician counterparts. In 1904, she appealed to Ukrainian émigré women in the United States through the Svoboda Ukrainian daily newspaper, admonishing them, in a rather (for her) uncharacteristically nationalist tone to wake up and start working for their own as well as their nation's liberation. In the same appeal, she also revealed her grand expectations of both their opportunities for self-actualization and of the American appetite for embroidery:

> Where, but in America, can a woman emancipate herself? Where, if not in America, could she better make herself of service to the Ukrainian woman and culture, if only she would capture the interest the American public in the beautiful and artistic handiwork of our womenfolk? …Do not forget your native land and the sisters you've left behind! Do not sever your ties with them. Help them as much as you can. Organize women's groups that can cultivate a profitable market for the handicrafts of our women in Ukraine! [Knysh 1957:275-276, my translation]

The 1934 congress commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Ukrainian women's movement drew an international list of participants, among them women from North America. Both the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (Zbyr-Lobodych 1974:2) and the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada (UWAC) sent representatives and became founding members of a new global umbrella organization, the World Union of Women (Swyripa 1993:171). The women's World Union (1937) was the embodiment of an envisioned *transnational Ukrainian women's community* committed to the liberation and self-determination of the homeland.[3] The women's common stance combined liberal feminist goals with a distrust

of Soviet socialism, precipitated by the artificial famine inflicted upon Soviet Ukraine in the earlier 1930s, and a concern with the threat of denationalization (loss of national identity) of Ukrainian national communities worldwide.

The world union failed to survive the disruptions of World War II, but its mission as a transnational body found its ultimate expression in another similar organization, the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO) founded in Philadelphia in 1948 by representatives of both the older second and new third waves immigrants. In North America, where the women's organizations established in the 1920s and 1930s had already become members of large national coordinating bodies, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) and the Ukrainian Canadian Committee (UCC) both created in 1940,[4] the time was ripe for a women's umbrella organization. The UNWLA became a founding member of the WFUWO,[5] with which it cooperated in many joint social welfare projects over the years,[6] Later

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[3] Abramiuk-Wolynets (1974:4-7) provides the text of the appeal of the 1934 Congress to diaspora women: "Ukrainian woman! You, suffering immigrant, who were forced to leave your homeland, which languishes in the Russian Bolshevik prison! You, who in want and cold in a foreign land, do not lose faith in Victory, preparing for it through work and organization!"

[4] In Canada, however, the women created their own parallel structure, the Ukrainian Canadian Women's Committee (UCWC, 1944). In the U.S., the UNWLA, originally a federation of women's groups (it has since evolved into a chapter organization), served the same purpose as the UCWC, but being non-partisan, it did not absorb into its network any women's organizations that were wings of male-dominated political organizations, such as those affiliated with the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) Melnykite (m) and Banderite (b) branches: the Ukrainian Gold Cross (1931, OUN-m), the Women's Association for the Defense of the Four Freedoms for Ukraine (OUN-b).

[5] Olena Kysilewska, the Galician Soiuz Ukrainok organizer, who had settled in Canada after WWII, was the first President of the WFUWO (1948-56), followed by Olena Zalizniak (Canada). Olena Lototska of the UNWLA was WFUWO President from 1969-72.

[6] A large number of these activists were social workers by profession. The UNWLA established Social Service Offices staffed by volunteers in several UNWLA Regional Council areas:

these organizations would also work together to lay the groundwork for a universal umbrella, the World Congress of Free Ukrainians (WCFU) in 1967.

The WFUWO, however, started its institutional life with a shift in the feminist-nationalist balance that had characterized Rudnytska's leadership of the Galician Soiuz Ukrainok, by accepting the ascendance of nationalism that is the hallmark of the post-World War II period. Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1992) gives an account of how the ideological turn was precipitated: It arose in a rift between Rudnytska's feminism and the nationalist activist ambitions of Irene Pavlykowska, both trying to organize Ukrainian women displaced by the war in Europe.[7] Rudnytska called a congress to reconstitute the Soiuz Ukrainok in the fall of 1945 in Feldkirch, Austria (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1992:205). Her endeavor failed, partly due to community backlash stemming from the fact that Rudnytska had publicly rejected the male Ukrainian nationalist leadership as legitimate representation of the Ukrainian displaced persons (Third Wave diaspora) in the post World War II period.[8] The more immediate reason, however, was that Pavlykovska had been organizing women in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany for a competing organization, the Alliance of Ukrainian Women in Emigration, which she

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Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland and New York (Our Life 1972(4): 26-27). With limited funds, their assistance was more moral than material.

[7] For a comprehensive treatment of this period, see Dyczok (2000b). At the close of World War II in May 1945, there were three million Ukrainians displaced by the war residing in Europe. By autumn 1945, two hundred thousand of these had resisted Soviet repatriation and turned to displaced persons centers and organized themselves as a community (Dyczok 2000b: 74-80)

[8] Bohachevsky-Chomiak describes Rudnytska's rejection of the Ukrainian male political elite: "Not only did Rudnytska avoid easy rhetorical patriotism, but she openly criticized all who in any way had recognized Nazi authority during the war… Many women resented the fact that Rudnytska referred to her opponents as *fascists* ….Believing that women organization leaders, untainted by wartime cooperation with the Germans …could better morally represent the Ukrainian cause before the various humanitarian organizations." (1999:209).

successfully founded in Augsburg in December 1945 (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1992:208). Although Rudnytska made overtures to Pavlykovska to mend the rift between them, Pavlykovska rejected her gesture and convinced the UNWLA in New York to back her instead of Rudnytska. Rudntyska, therefore, although present in the Canadian diaspora, was not invited to attend the founding congress of the WFUWO, signaling a break with her ideology.[9]

The WFUWO was, however, the first to create a formal and lasting link between women's organizations in the diaspora, which in 1948 embraced the USA, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, France, Argentina, Venezuela, and Australia.[10] The goals of the WFUWO have consistently included the preservation and cultivation of Ukrainian national identity through a focus on family and the education of children and youth; charitable projects for the aid of mothers and families; protection of social equality and advancement for women; representation of Ukrainian women in the domestic and international women's movement organizations; and advocacy for Ukrainian political independence and the well-being of women in Soviet Ukraine. Most importantly, as an international organization, it has participated in cultivating a transnational *nationalist* community, with an emphasis on promoting awareness of Ukraine and its political quandary.

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[9] Frances Swyripa (1993: 186) describes this as "a split in the ranks that pushed the more moderate and feminist wing represented by Rudnytska to the background and altered the nature of Ukrainian Canadian women's foreign ties" in favor of a more nationalist position. The Ukrainian Women's Associations of Canada (UWAC), known as the Soiuz Ukrainok of Canada, abstained from joining, in solidarity with Rudnytska (finally joining in 2003).

[10] The initial members of the WFUWO (1948) were: the UNWLA, 1925; the Ukrainian Gold Cross (USA, 1931), the Olha Basarab Organization of Ukrainian Women in Canada (1926); the League of Ukrainian Catholic Women in Canada; the Association of Ukrainian Women in Germany; the Organization of Ukrainian Women of Great Britain; the Union of Ukrainian Women in Belgium; the Soiuz Ukrainok in France; the Women's Organization of Brazil; the Soiuz Ukrainok of Argentina; Union of Ukrainian Women of Venezuela and the Soiuz Ukrainok of Australia.

The post WWII diaspora women's organizations generally followed the male lead in closing ranks behind an anti-communist stance. Earlier waves of the diaspora had displayed a variety of political orientations, including support for socialist and communist parties. Although the Ukrainians were not leaders in these organizations,[11] the Party did allow for local divisions preserving the ethnic, social, and cultural practices of the members.[12] One of these specifically Ukrainian branches is reported to have sent a representative to the International Conference of Socialist Organizations and Groups in 1917 (Draper 1957:83). When Alexandra Kollontai, who was of Ukrainian-Russian-Finnish origins, visited the United States in 1915 to help organize the American Communist Party, it was at the invitation of the German Socialist Federation, however, not of the Ukrainian membership.[13]

The ascendant nationalism of the Cold War era had an impact on the women's organized sphere with regard to both internal community dynamics and external public relations. The third wave immigrants arrived in North America with collective organizing experience and an agreed-upon anti-assimilation stance, and they looked to women's cultural activism as an antidote to Soviet Russification of the homeland and as a bulwark against American processes of

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[11] Theodore Draper (2003:51) notes that the early leadership of the American socialist movement was mostly German, but the influx of Eastern European immigrant labor (1881-1900) brought Ruthenian-Ukrainians into the ranks.

[12] In the U.S. the Communist Party encouraged "language federations" until 1925; the Ukrainian one had 4000 members (Draper 1957(2003) cited in Kate Weigand 2001:16; Subtelny 1991:122-151).

[13] According to Draper (2003:74-75) Kollontai's trip lasted over three months and was motivated by Lenin's need for money and her own promotion of a Third International. Kollontai made another trip to America in 1916, followed in 1917, by Nikolai Bukharin and Leon Trotsky (see Draper 1957:76-77) marking the beginning of Russian socialist influence and of the Communist Party in the United States.

assimilation.[14] Within diaspora communities, women and their organizations were generally held responsible for the cultural—even more than the literally physical[15]—reproduction of community, with women viewed as the primary agents of socialization and the home its primary site. They framed young families as being in need of help and support; therefore, community structures of nurturing[16] became the charge of women's organizations—the daycare, pre-schooling and to some extent the community Saturday school programs, language classes for non-Ukrainian speaking spouses, in addition to cultural events and holiday celebrations—to help young families raise children who would identify as Ukrainian. While the women's organizations supported feminist goals of women's education, technical training, and professional advancement, they also communicated the expectation that young Ukrainian women would maintain the Ukrainian character of their homes (actually in physical furnishings and decoration) and home life (in terms of language spoken and leisure time activities) in the North American context. The magazine regularly provided traditional embroidery patterns (for sofa pillows and decorative and ritual cloths) as well as ideas for their application to modern dress; to secure the family's Ukrainian palate, the magazine devoted a page to recipes for both traditional

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[14] Nina Lindfors-Mykhalevych, granddaughter of Sofia Rusova Lindfors wrote "The mother's position in the emigration in particularly complex. Her responsibility in the diaspora among a foreign people is to preserve in her children their Ukrainian identity, traditions and culture of the nation. She may not allow her children to become, through assimilation, stateless (without a fatherland), internationalists!" (quoted in WFUWO 2002: 485, my translation).

[15] Physical reproduction was less of an issue, abortion was never discussed and birth control was neither condemned nor specifically promoted. Childlessness was not condemned but not valued. Adoption and the teaching of Ukrainian to "non-blood Ukrainians" was strongly encouraged, cultural reproduction taking precedent over physical.

[16] These kinds of programs are cultivated by all ideologies that base their success on total socialization. Here the daycare-kindergarten, a feature of progressive 19th century feminist-socialism, appears as a vehicle for nationalism.

holiday foods and those suitable for everyday occasions. Articles on the maintenance of Ukrainian language and customs in American conditions of assimilation were also a regular feature, along with the bulk of articles devoted to women's historical and contemporary cultural, political, academic, artistic and scientific achievement and women's community news.

Historian Orest Subtelny notes that the women's organizations established by the first and second wave immigrants tended to have contacts "more far-ranging and less insular than those of the male dominated organizations" which were more strictly political in their activities (1991:163). With the influx of the third wave, the division of labor within the sphere of external public relations encouraged the less political (i.e. less confrontational or ideologically sensitive) women's organizations to continue in their role as informal ambassadors of Ukraine. The women's organizations adapted successfully to North American multiculturalism by cultivating relations with other ethnic and mainstream women's groups along the common facet of gender mediated through ethnic diversity. The UNWLA established ties with the leadership of the National Council of Women of the United States (NCW/USA), of which it became a member in 1952.[17] In 1966, the WFUWO became the first international organization to join the General Federation of Women's Clubs (1889), whose motto was "Unity in Diversity." The GFWC is an ideologically conservative organization, anti-communist and advocating a kind of domestic feminism as an alternative route to women's self-authorization (Blair 1980:67).

The WFUWO continued its commitment to representing Ukrainian women on the international front by reviving its pre-war connection to the International Alliance of Women (IAW) in 1955 (Prociuk 1967:23) and sending delegates to meetings of the ICW. In 1950, the

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[17] The English language section of *Our Life* (November 1967:19) reports on the 1967 NCW/USA Annual Meeting in New York. Stefania Pushkar, then UNWLA President, was a NCW board member and chair of its Migration Committee.

WFUWO became one of the first international organizations to join the Mouvement Mondiale des Meres (MMM 1946, headquartered in Paris). When the MMM became an NGO in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) in 1974,[18] Olena Prociuk WFUWO representative to MMM was asked to serve as MMM's UN representative. After almost two decades of participating in UN initiatives, the WFUWO also achieved consultative status with ECOSOC in 1993.[19]

The repression of Soviet Ukrainian dissidents in the 1970s galvanized diaspora women's activism and motivated them to pay close attention to the international arena of the UN, in which they recognized a viable political forum for their pro-Ukrainian sentiments. The UN observance of the International Women's Year, (i.e. 1975, followed by the UN Decade for Women, 1976-85)[20] spurred a parallel proclamation by WCFU of the "Year of the Ukrainian Woman," setting the tone for the subsequent participation of the WFUWO and member organizations in the series of world women's conferences. Motivated by the reasonable conviction that Soviet Ukraine did not have a voice independent of Moscow at the UN, the diaspora women took up the mission of publicizing human rights violations in Soviet Ukraine in the international forum.

The UN discourse defined as human rights those expectations (for security) that should be safeguarded for every individual, in effect globalizing human rights (Doyle and Gardner

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[18] ECOSOC tracks international economic, social, educational, health and human rights issues, with the power to make recommendations to the UN General Assembly (GA), to UN country-members and to UN agencies. Components of ECOSOC are the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

[19] The World Congress of Ukrainians also was granted ECOSOC consultative status at the UN in 2002.

[20] For an overview of these events, see Hilkka Pietila and JeanneVickers (1996).

2003:3). [21] For the Ukrainian diaspora, this meant that it was now a legal right, not only a moral obligation, to defend those in its homeland under communism. Although the women focused on Soviet women's socio-economic conditions, they tended to frame these as intrinsic failings of the communist regime. They particularly focused on Soviet government's retribution against female citizens whose political activism was anathema to its ideology. The WFUWO and other women's and non-women's civic groups participated in the early development of transnational advocacy, whereby trans-border civic groups (gendered or not) as non-citizens attempt to subject a foreign government (in this case the Soviet regime) to accountability on behalf (or in cooperation with) another affected population (Sperling 2009:7). Taking a stance as legitimate representatives of their sisters in Soviet Ukraine, the diaspora women's groups made effective presentations in the UN world women's conferences: in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985).[22] They also participated in the 1995 Fourth World Conference on

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[21] Michael Doyle and Anne-Marie Gardner (2003:3) pinpoint the legal basis for transnational advocacy which is in the shift from an emphasis on the states' sovereign equalilty to that of individual human rights. "By granting rights to individuals, the conception of human rights limits state sovereignty—human rights abuses within state borders, even perpetrated by a government against its own people, are no longer matters solely within the purview of domestic affairs."

[22] The WFUWO (2002:397) report of the 1975 Mexico City Conference, indicates that the women of the official Soviet Ukrainian delegation were unpleasantly surprised by the participation of the diaspora women. In Copenhagen in 1980, the WFUWO delegation sponsored a hunger strike in solidarity with Ukrainian political prisoners and sponsored two panels, one of which "Discrimination against families of Soviet dissidents" featured the personal testimony of (released) dissident Nina Strokata-Karavanska. A leftist Mexican women's group disrupted the panel insisting that the official Soviet Ukrainian delegation be allowed to speak, which the diaspora women rejected (all this was reported on local TV). In Nairobi in 1985, 22 WFUWO delegates conducted a seminar during the NGO FORUM, on "Women's Organizations and their Role in Development" with Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak (WFUWO, USA) speaking about "The Ukrainian Women's Movement and the Contemporary Status of Women in Ukraine,"Christine Isajiw (WFUWO, Canada) on "Human Rights in Ukraine: Ukrainian political prisoners in the USSR." and Maria Dolishny about "The Destruction of Ukrainian Churches in Ukraine" (2002:397)

Women in Beijing, when they cooperated with women from Ukraine, since this was already a post-Soviet event.[23] This had become the Ukrainian diaspora women's way of participating in the transnational civil society being constructed around the global human rights regime encouraged by the UN (Grewal 2005:121). It had also become a gratifying outlet for their feminism without compromising their nationalist convictions.

In the later 1970s, emboldened by their international and national community successes, the women's leadership took up a feminist tone against the patriarchy of the Ukrainian male political establishment. In her keynote speech to the WFUWO congress of 1977, UNWLA president Iwanna Rozankowsky criticized the WFUWO's position within the male dominated World Congress (WCFU), becoming one of the first critics within the ranks of the women's organizations to do so. In particular, she criticized the pattern of exploiting women as community fund-raisers while excluding them from the community's decision-making processes. She proposed to her female colleagues that they remind themselves of Rudnytska's position in 1935, when she demanded of the male establishment of her day, "are we partners, or not?"[24]

Although the power imbalance in the proposed WCFU structure was corrected and the President of the WFUWO figures currently as the Second VP of the World Congress of

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[23] At Beijing 1995, the WFUWO presented a seminar on "Nuclear Disaster and its Effect on Women and Children," sponsoring Dr. Zoreslava Shkiriak-Nyzhnyk of the Kyiv Medical Institute, Division of Maternal and Child Health, as the expert speaker. Also a representative of the World Information Transfer (WIT), an NGO founded in 1987 by Dr. Christine Durbak in response to the Chornobyl tragedy, spoke on "Pollution of the Environment in Ukraine."

[24] Iwanna Rozankowsky refered to Rudnytska's speech printed in the earlier historic *Zhinka* magazine, former organ of the interwar Soiuz Ukrainok (January 15, 1935:2).

Ukrainians (WCU)[25], the organized diaspora women ultimately sacrificed the more feminist aspects of their agenda (i.e. freedom from community exploitation, with or without 'representation'), which may have been better served by maintaining a truly separate space for themselves (as per Weir 1987). While the WFUWO is officially autonomous, by becoming integral co-partners in the WCFU, it could be argued that the women relinquished their platform of separateness and thus complicated their chances of alternative women's views on future community projects and events.

First and Second Wave Feminism and the Diaspora

The First Wave (1848-1920) feminism that arose out of the North American abolitionist struggle in the 1830s and peaked in the 1890s era of social reform was a source of inspiration for the 19th century homeland and diaspora activists who espoused the feminist goals of suffrage, educational opportunity, legal reform, property rights, rights to inheritance and employment. After the passage in 1919 of the 19th Amendment that secured the vote for American women, the women's rights movement subsided in the U.S. and continued to abate over the 1930s in North America and Europe. This lull did not apply to Ukrainian women in interwar Poland, however. It was during these years that they built their women's movement as a vehicle for the empowerment of their politically subordinated community. The lull also did not apply to the women of the Ukrainian North American diaspora, who, appalled by the developments under Soviet communism—the genocidal famine, the Stalinist atrocities, deportations and executions, the persecution of the Church and murder of the clergy, the wholesale destruction of a Ukrainian way of life in the homeland —were starting to organize along nationalist lines.

[25] The WCU website shows the Executive Committee complying with gender parity (3 of 6 members are women, the First Vice-President, Second Vice President and the Financial Officer).

In the 1930s, this put the Ukrainian women's community (though not necessarily all of its individual "members") increasingly at odds with socialist liberals—particularly with the progressive North American women who continued to theorize women's rights within the Communist Party (CPUSA) platform and were joining its ranks in significant numbers. Kate Weigand, whose work traces the deep connections between the old feminist Left and the Second Wave of North American feminism (2001:131-158),[26] notes that until the mid 1930s thirty to forty percent of the CPUSA was women (2001:23) and that it was the American Left that supplied the movement its continuity through the period of 1945-1960s identified as the "doldrums" (Rupp and Taylor 1987), the movement being in "abeyance" (Taylor 1987) during these years. The fact is, that during these years, the politics of the UNWLA and other women's organizations in defense of the Ukrainian homeland—for example, the significant campaign waged by the UNWLA in the 1930s protesting American deliberate ignorance of the famine raging in Ukraine—put them in direct conflict with the socialist and communist left in the United States who branded them as fascists and later, as Nazi sympathizers (Subtelny 1991:148)

In contrast to the earlier diaspora profile characterized by a spectrum of politics (including strong socialist and communist sympathies), the third (post-WWII) wave of immigrants was overwhelmingly nationalist in orientation and for them, adherence to communism was nothing short of traitorous to Ukraine (Subtelny 1991:147). The women of this wave were generally well-educated, married with families, aware of women's rights, and ready to adapt to North American conditions. In every locus of émigré settlement, chapters of the UNWLA and other women's organizations appeared. Although an active member of the NCW,

[26] Kate Weigand's historical analysis brings out facts that she assumes would be surprising to current feminists, even asserting that not many participants of the Second Wave feminist movement would have recognized that it was built "upon a foundation laid in part by a Communist women's movement in the 1940s and 1950s" (2001:140).

the UNWLA seems not to have related strongly to the American feminist movement as it was revived in the 1960s. Betty Friedan's (1963) analysis of the boredom or discontent of the American housewife of the 1950s, seemed to have little to do with new immigrants, who were almost all working mothers and many were community activists. Even Friedan's mission statement for National Organization for Women (NOW) that galvanized the resurgence of the movement—"to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men" (1966)—which sounds word for word like vintage Rudnytska, did not move Ukrainian organized women to officially or whole-heartedly embrace the new developments in American feminism.

Perhaps believing themselves to already have been emancipated by their own Ukrainian women's movement and their own accomplishments, North American Ukrainian women may have deemed emancipation unnecessary; but it would be wrong to think that they were simply in the dark. A review of the UNWLA's journal, *Our Life*, and of the Ukrainian press, suggests that the Ukrainian women's organizations consistently informed their constituency of Second Wave feminist movement developments, of the accomplishments of prominent American women in academia and in politics, about the NOW and the National Women's Party and about the American woman's struggle (and failure in 1982) to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. But they stopped short of exhorting their members to participate in the general women's movement for their own feminist benefit and did not overtly align with feminism within their own ranks, continuing to prioritize their focus on the cultivation of strong national/ethnic community in the diaspora and on agitation for human rights in the Soviet-ruled homeland.

As Second Wave (1960s-1970s) feminism began to mobilize under a range of more personal issues such as reproductive rights and violence against women, the North American

women's movement divided into two wings. On the one hand, were the older professional women of liberal feminist views who pursued legal reform strategies through their larger and more institutionalized organizations, and on the other, the younger more radical feminist activists from the civil rights and New Left movements who worked through the small collective organizations and consciousness-raising groups of the women's liberation branch of feminism (Taylor et al. 2004:517). The diaspora Ukrainian women's organizations identified openly with the former but were wary of the latter, particularly because of their potential appeal and influence on the American-born generation of Ukrainians. There were feminists in the Ukrainian women's organizations but for the most part, attempts to provoke a dialogue on feminism were met with resistance from the older women and generally silence from the younger.[27]

In 1973, concerns around attrition and failure to recruit apparently moved Rozankowsky (at the time serving as vice-president of a UNWLA composed of 111 chapters in 16 states) to ask "Where are our women?" (1973:4-5). In a somewhat strange turn, she points out that if the community aims for one hundred percent participation of Ukrainian women in the United States, there are still over 100 thousand who are not organization members.[28] She described these women as failing to participate in Ukrainian community life, neglectful of the tradition of women's organized activism, and *bajduzhi* (indifferent) to the problems of their ethnic community. She notes that while multiculturalism appears to be resulting in a relaxation of

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[27] Articles penned by Ukrainian feminists such as Lidia Burachynsky, Marta Tarnawska, and Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak for the UNWLA's Our Life magazine reveal their soul-searching and information-sharing attitude.

[28] Later, in a 1986 program booklet prepared for the Women in Two Worlds Conference Rozankowska notes that only five percent of the 200 thousand women between the ages of 18-65 (of the 750 thousand population of persons of Ukrainian heritage in the United States) are members of a women's organization.

assimilation processes and a renewed embrace of ethnicity among Ukrainian youth (there were articles at the time about the importance of a secure ethnic identity as a foundation for mental health), there is also danger afoot in the "renewed battles for equality and new feminist demands for changes that may result in shift in the moral order of the family" (referring to the radical feminist view that advocates a fundamental transformation of society's institutions). She suggested that these conditions require that Ukrainian women take a definite stand on the processes current in their society.

A while earlier, in 1972, Bohachevsky-Chomiak had written a particularly revealing appeal for feminist consideration in an essay entitled *Navishcho nam feminizm*? (Why do we need feminism?) She argued that Ukrainian women need to reclaim their feminist history, accept the fact that it had a socialist origin, and face the reality that the rejection of feminism not only narrows the intellectual and growth horizons for the community's women but also risks alienating the younger generation. She wonderfully criticized the lifestyle that overwhelmed Ukrainian mothers with the busywork of sewing traditional costumes for stage dance recitals and ceaselessly chauffeuring their children to Ukrainian organized activities. In other words, she suggested that executing Ukrainian motherhood flawlessly in the conditions of the North American diaspora was depriving women of creative and productive energy for any significant personal advancement (1972:111). The women's organizations of North America were experiencing the same problems that Rudnytska had suffered in interwar Poland, except that in Rudnytska's case it was nationalist fervor that was deflecting membership from her more feminist organization. Here radical feminism might threaten to deflect young membership from the more conservative Ukrainian women's organization.

The multicultural project of the 1970s had, in fact, compounded the problems inherent in the lifestyle described above. Ever since the UNWLA organized a much-celebrated and truly stunning exhibit of Ukrainian folk art (embroidery, inlaid woodcarving, and the *pysanka* the uniquely Ukrainian Easter egg) for the Chicago World Fair in 1933, the beauty of Ukrainian handiwork has served as the Ukrainian calling card in North America (Swyripa 1993: 164-170, 175). Multiculturalism widened the opportunities for promoting Ukrainian crafts through a constant cycle of fairs and exhibits in which diaspora women ensured Ukrainian representation (dubbed *Ukrainianism* in Canada) as part of the North American ethnic mosaic. Despite the satisfaction inherent in self-affirming display, this unpaid and volunteer work took its toll on women's time and energy. It also fostered the experience of being objectified and actually contributing to the objectification of one's self by wearing one's ethnicity constantly on one's sleeve. The obligation to constantly represent the Ukrainian nation and the pressure to portray it constantly in a positive light –deflecting suggestions of pro-Nazi anti-Semitism, trying to redeem it from its Soviet-enforced image as a peasant community lacking high culture, or on occasion finding it necessary to insist that Ukraine even existed as a separate political and cultural entity apart from Russia—was for many, overwhelming.

But by the late 1970s, the differences between liberal and radical feminism had started to blur and issues of women's exploitation and vulnerability to violence were taken up by more organizations across the ideological spectrum. With the radical aspects of feminism desensitized, even the Ukrainian establishment was confronted with a feminist challenge. Partly it was launched by a coterie of Ukrainian student activists radicalized by the Ukrainian Students' Clubs of Canada (SUSK). Their student leadership had a strongly socialist orientation, which it

directed towards the defense of Soviet dissidents and political prisoners through a series of committees organized in the 1970s.[29]

Among these committees, was the Toronto-based Action for Women's Rights in the USSR committee (AWR), organized by a group of female SUSK members with a $2000 grant in Toronto city and Ontario provincial government funds designated for the support of women's activism (which they used for rallies, poster-making, a seminar, and participation in a leftist conference on the Lower East Side of New York City).[30] Olha Kuplowska, a member of the AWR founding committee, explained her early relationship with feminism:

> In the 1970s most of us didn't really think to call it feminist; feminism was more of a hate label. Of course, the 1960s and 1970s shaped us—we weren't immune to that—but in the early to mid 1970s, we didn't really feel like we were an integral part of it.[telephone interview, March 20, 2007]

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[29] The Ukrainian Students Club of Canada (SUSK) sponsored organizations working for the defense of Soviet political dissidents and prisoners, namely, the Set Them Free Committee, the Plyushch Committee, and the Moroz Committee, which were generally leftist (ranging from central to extreme left) in orientation. A former SUSK member explained that "They raised interesting issues, you did not have to agree on all points and did not have to be a supporter of the Fourth International or of the Trotsky position necessarily, but they informed and challenged us and were valuable to those of us who were curious about politics and the world beyond how the Ukrainian community usually presented things. So we did not necessarily have to buy into all aspects of the positions of the political left nor into all of aspects of the views of the Ukrainian community." (OK personal communication, March 20, 2007).

[30] The AWR also sent a delegate to the UN Conference in Mexico in 1975 (but not as part of the WFUWO group, which Kuplowska the perceived as the established traditional organizations of the Ukrainian mainstream. (Kuplowska's AWR papers have been donated to the University of Manitoba archives.)

Kuplowska was one of a group of such students who drove from Toronto to Winnipeg to confront a Ukrainian Canadian Congress with a demand for more democratic elections. Even though they did not accomplish any change, "it was a kind of watershed moment for us," she said of the moment of politicization.

The times were such that the feminist issue was ubiquitous: Swyripa confirms that "somehow by the end of the 80s, Ukrainian women's organizations and their members were questioning the patriarchy of their arrangements with the male counterparts in organizations" (1993:210). In the United States, Rozankowska of the UNWLA contemplated her organization's lack of ideological clarity and its failure to demand autonomy (1987:2). She raised the question of the historical conflict between Rudnytska and Pavlykovska, calling for an academic investigation while there were still individuals living who could remember its context, deeming it crucial for the UNWLA to confront the issues that had moved them away from feminism onto a more nationalist track. "Can we with clean conscience consider ourselves the followers and heirs of the great figures of the past?" she asked, asserting that "our position obliges us to formulate our ideology and go beyond the common denominator of pragmatic altruism" (1987:4, my translation). It was this pragmatic altruism that had boxed diaspora women into the service of a nationalist agenda that raised their domestic activities to the level of national obligation and pushed their organizations into providing extended cradle services and the incessant fund-raising for various community projects (Swyripa 1993:163 notes the same). In fact, several women protested this exploitation of women's voluntary labor within the community, most audibly Sofia Kachor, who apparently made presentations at a round of meetings and conferences on the topic of "Why I am not a member of a Ukrainian women's organization" (Kachor 1984:6-8).

Kachor's manifesto had a ripple effect. The women of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee assessed the extent of the UCC's feminism and blamed the "the very limited impact of the [mainstream Canadian] women's movement…on our organizations and their members as a major reason for women's historical and current subordinate role in community life" (Swyripa 1993:209-210). Invoking a relational (as opposed to an individualist) feminism, they argued that women should figure as equal partners in the community to counteract the deleterious effects of what amounts to a "demographic crisis" of the Ukrainian community—the effects of assimilation, low fertility, high intermarriage and divorce. Women's exclusion from decision making precludes their input within the Ukrainian community on issues of concern to them, whereas "many women choose to work in the mainstream women's movement where their specific concerns *are* addressed" (Maryn 1985:89).

As for Rozankowska, in drawing attention to her organization's ideological ambivalence in 1987, I think she was trying to re-inject this relational feminism into, while at the same hoping to revive the autonomyof women's organizational life, along the example of Rudnytska's Soiuz Ukrainok in Galicia.[31] The Ukrainian women seemed to be feeling that they had lost something that their mother's generation had earlier attained (Kostash 1986:2). [32] The WFUWO organizations had in fact lost their autonomy when they agreed to partnership in the nationalist

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[31] Swyripa contrasts the non-autonomous style of women's interwar organizing in Canada with the style of the Soiuz Ukrainok of interwar Galicia which as "a mass organization founded to improve the quality of village life, mobilize women in the nation's service, and seek international forums to publicize the Ukrainian cause—was unaffiliated with any male body and jealously guarded its independence in community life." (1993:13)

[32] Kostash quotes a resolution of the 1934 Ukrainian Women's Congress which "affirms the absolute necessity of the further existence of separate women's organizations as centers for the crystallization of women's views and the activation of women's forces" and in reference to the 1985 Ukrainian feminists' conference, Kostash wrote: "This was something we had to relearn, we 70s feminists, emergent from the macho campaigns of the New Left" (1986:2).

agenda of the WCFU. Rozankowska had a window of opportunity in 1987 to formalize and revive the feminist positions of the women's organizations, and (unfortunately) she didn't.

In the course of the 1970s, the diaspora women's organizations saw declining membership, the ambivalent effects of multiculturalism, competition from North American individualist radical feminism, and the growing nationalist imperative to address the deteriorating human rights' situation in Soviet Ukraine. The pages of the *Our Life* magazine are a rich trove of the internal dialogue troubling the women's community. Several articles [33] open with a positive assessment of an aspect of equal rights feminist progress, after which the discussion deftly turns to a topic of higher, nationalist priority—that of the status of women in Soviet Ukraine.

In fact, in the early 1970s, the diaspora women's organizations were beginning to learn to fully exploit the wave of ethnic interest attending multiculturalism to advocate for female Soviet political dissidents during this particularly repressive Soviet decade. This discourse that rendered the diaspora woman invisible and focused attention on a Ukrainian woman external to the diaspora (a tendency that obtains to this day among the Ukrainian women's organizations and their projects) was apparently done both consciously and self-consciously. While the 1970s heralded a new engagement with events in the USSR, it is evident from articles in the women's periodicals that the North American diaspora was starting to acknowledge a creeping emotional and intellectual distance between themselves and the new Soviet generation in Ukraine (see Kostash 1986:3). Blaming this on lack of knowledge, the women's organization journals started to inform their readers about new research on the status of women in Soviet Ukraine, gleaned

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[33] For example, Burachynsky(1970:3-4) uses a photo of Congresswoman Martha Griffiths, equal rights proponent.

from the timely growth of Western historical and feminist scholarship on women under socialism. In their international UN work and in their North American political constituencies, they advocated for women political prisoners and their families.[34] The Ukrainian community erupted into a network of groups and organizations formed around the issue of human rights in Ukraine, and much of this activity was conceived, led, and facilitated by women. Some of them worked within the established women's organizations and some independently to lobby their representatives in Congress, stage demonstrations, and hunger strikes. They operated as an informal political action committee on a shoe string budget (I Jarosewych, personal communication, February 22 2007). Eventually, several Soviet Ukrainian political prisoners were released to the West.[35] The released women dissidents became prominent participants in many of the events (conferences, demonstrations, and the like) staged by the diaspora women's organizations.

Third Wave Feminism and the Diaspora; The Feminist Second Wreath Movement

In the 1960s and 1970s, many younger Ukrainian women drawn to the North American feminist movement participated in its organizations on their own, outside of the Ukrainian community and without necessary reference to their ethnic status. From the 1980s on, however, Third Wave (1980s-1990s) feminism, characterized by the theorizing of difference and plurality, encouraged exploration of the variation in women's social positioning and experiences. In the U.S., black feminists, in particular, pioneered theoretical work on the relations of race, class, gender,

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[34] For example, they took up the incarceration of Oksana Meshko, the murder of Alla Horska, the 1972 sentencing of Nina Strokata-Karavanska, and several others as their special issues.

[35] The mathematician Leonid Plyushch was the first to be released (1976) followed by General Grigorenko and Nadia Svitlychna, and in 1979 by Valentyn (and Raissa) Moroz, Nina Strokata, and Sviatoslav Karavansky.

ethnicity, and sexuality by taking as their starting point the real experiences of women of color (Mullings 1997:3) and examining their intersecting oppressions within historically-specific social institutions (Collins 2000:227-228). Within this paradigm, Ukrainian women, too, as North American ethnics, began to discover the contours of their own feminist experience: Kuplowska, who had become a feminist activist in Toronto by the 1980s, spoke of her generation as having a specifically Ukrainian experience:

> We did not feel ourselves to be one hundred percent mainstream Canadian. Many of us were born of immigrant parents or were even ourselves born in the DP camps. Most of us grew up with Ukrainian spoken in the home. We [SUSK members] were pioneers in some way, on the margin of a lot of things. Not all members of that post WWII immigrant wave were highly educated, but they invariably, even those of the Ukrainian working class, all valued and wanted education for their kids, boys and girls, without discrimination, and that included higher education. There never was any question of whether a girl should go to University. In this respect, the Ukrainians were different from some of the other ethnic groups. Within the community, there was that kind of equality that was already understood. Girls were encouraged to do their best, never to back down to make the boy look better or smarter, were encouraged to achieve, even in sports. The girls were pushed to excel—and very few of us had what you might see as a passive mother. Women ran the home in our community, and women had their dignity. Besides, they were survivors, they had to make it through WWII and they were strong women. So when Ukrainian ethnic feminists would attend the mainstream feminist events, they were faced with the realization that the mainstream feminist discourse simply did not adequately apply to them. It did not address the experience of Ukrainian ethnic women. [O. Kuplowska, telephone interview, March 20, 2007]

Women like Kuplowska who felt the need to articulate their specific Ukrainian experience within feminism found an outlet in the activities, primarily a series of conferences, sponsored by a group founded in Edmonton that called itself the Second Wreath Society. Its

name alludes to the *Pershyj Vinok* (first wreath), the women's almanac jointly published by Natalia Kobrynska (of Austro-Hungarian Galicia) and Olena Pchilka (of Tsarist Ukraine) in 1887. I refer to complex of activities and attitudes it spawned as a *movement* because these had wider grassroots manifestations and repercussions than simple reference to a conference would imply. There were two distinctly feminist Ukrainian women's conferences in the 1980s: Second Wreath I (1985, in Edmonton, Alberta) and Second Wreath II (1988 in Toronto, Ontario). They not only mark a rediscovery of Ukrainian feminism within wider developments in feminist theory (see also Epp et al. 2004) but also represent a groundswell of grassroots feminist self-expression.

Socialist Roots of the Feminist Second Wreath Movement

As a movement, Second Wreath arose out the context of Ukrainian student socialist radicalism. It was spearheaded by a submerged network of activists from within the ranks of the socialist students of the Canadian Ukrainian students clubs led by a core member of an organization called *Ukrajinska Hromada*, which like its 19th century Kyivan predecessor espoused a mix of feminist, socialist, and nationalist ideas. The movement found impetus in both the release of Ukrainian Soviet dissidents to the West and the preparations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Ukrainian women's movement (1884). As it evolved, Second Wreath both theorized and embodied a rift developing between younger Ukrainian feminists and the long-standing diaspora women's organizations that were now understood to be part of the Ukrainian community establishment and more traditionalist than the newer distinctly feminist groups.

There had always been a strong socialist activist tradition in Canada, and a strong Ukrainian contingent to the labor and socialist movement, including women's organizations.[36] In the 1970s, the Ukrainian Students' Clubs of Canada, especially those at the Universities of Alberta and Toronto, had a strong interest in the Ukrainian Trotskyist Left (though few were actually party members). They championed the Soviet Ukrainian dissidents for national rights within true socialism and harbored hopes for the rehabilitation of socialism in the Ukrainian community.[37] Within this student network, there was a core group of Hromada members committed to Ukrainian liberation, but no less to feminism and socialist ideals. In this nexus of movement, the lives of those who had come to feminist views within the student network of the young Ukrainian socialist Left intersected with individual feminists from within the Canadian New Left who after having rejected the lifestyle of the Ukrainian Canadian mainstream, were coming around to a re-examination of the effect of their ethnic origins.

One such individual was the Canadian-Ukrainian feminist writer, Myrna Kostash, who later was involved with some of the first feminist efforts in Ukraine in the early years of the transition. During the mid 1970s, when Kostash was researching and writing her signature work,

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[36] The Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association was the women's organization of the Ukrainian socialist movement, self-described as progressive and anti-nationalist (Subtelny 1991:124-128; Swyripa 1993:144-45).

[37] In Canada, Ukrainian socialism was stronger than in the US, especially the Trotskyist variety which embraced feminism and coupled socialism with support for Ukrainian independence. The Canadian Ukrainian New Left rallied around the release in 1976 of Leonid Plyushch (arrested 1972 in Kyiv) from a Soviet psychiatric hospital, secured through the joint efforts of European (especially French and Italian) activists. The Ukrainian Trotskyist student activists, especially those involved in the New Left publication Meta, saw in this a vindication for the Ukrainian nationalist position and predicted the strengthening of socialism in the Ukrainian diaspora. This did not happen ultimately.

All of Baba's Children (1977) [38] events were unfolding leading to the spectacular release to the West from Soviet psychiatric hospitalization of the dissident mathematician Leonid Plyushch in 1976. It was her encounter with the activists of the Canadian Hromada that brought her around to combining a deeper understanding of Ukrainian struggles with her feminism. She wrote

> The others had already done a lot of politics on the New Left as Ukrainian national liberationists in the 1970s campaigns to free Ukrainian political prisoners. The first I knew of their perspective—that it was possible to be on the New Left and pro-Ukrainian independence at the same time—was in the early 1970s when I was contacted by the group around *Meta*[39], a New-Left journal in Toronto. They wanted to reprint a magazine article I had recently published in a mainstream Canadian magazine. When I returned to Alberta to research and write *All of Baba's Children* in 1975, I published the article *Baba was a Bohunk* [1975] which provoked the invitation from Roman Petryshyn and Bohdan Krawchenko,[40] both graduate students at the CIUS, to meet and talk with the newly-fledged cultural-political circle Hromada. This is where I discovered that not only could you be New Left and pro-Ukrainian but you could—must!—be feminist as well. But I was a relative late-comer to this perspective. [e-mail to author, December 11, 2006]

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[38] Myrna Kostash describes herself as a writer of non-fiction on historical topics and in this case, a chronicler of the first non-immigrant (and subsequent) generations of Ukrainian-Canadians. *All of Baba's Children* (1977) was critical of the tendency of the Ukrainian Canadian community to support a politically correct and fundamentally revisionist version of Ukrainian prairie pioneer immigrant experience to fit into Canadian's multiculturalism programs.

[39] SUSK published both an English-language journal *Meta* (goal) and a Ukrainian language journal *Dialoh* (dialogue) from 1977-87. The Meta described itself as a "forum for left-wing analysis and discussion on the Ukrainian question, Eastern Europe and related international issues." (One of its contributing editors, Adrian Karatnycky, later of Freedom House, founded the Orange Circle (2005) in support of a continuation of democratic change after Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004).

[40] Kostash indicated that Bohdan Krawchenko was a member of the Hromada in the 1970s. He later became director of the CIUS in Edmonton and a supporter of the feminist scholar Solomea Pavlychko. It was he who asked Myrna Kostash to translate Pavlychko's *Letters from Kyiv* (email, December 11, 2006)

Kostash 1987 describes hearing Plyushch speak in Edmonton in 1977 and being transfixed by his Marxist convictions and critique of Western imperialism. In a published 1994 interview, Kostash related "as I sat in the audience, I could not believe my good luck. Here was a Ukrainian who represented both patriotism towards his own nation and a passion for social justice. It was as if the two parts of my self [sic] came into one whole with him" (Wynnyckyj 1994). In the process of reuniting socialisim with feminism in a Ukrainian context, Kostash also discovered just how controversial the Hromada's views on Ukrainian nationality rights were for the North American socialist left (see Ford 1991).[41]

> As an expression of my feminism in "other channels of pro-Ukrainian activities" I had a showdown with colleagues at a (non-Ukrainian) new-left magazine in Toronto where I was an editor in the 1980s when I tried to press for a feminist analysis of the situation of women in Soviet Ukraine. It was pretty nasty but was eventually published. [e-mail to author, December 11, 2006]

Kostash was referring to her (1986, 1992) *Will the Real Natasha Please Stand Up?:Women in the Soviet Union* [42] with which she challenged a Canadian feminist's account of discovering sisterly solidarity with a woman of the Muscovite *nomenklatura*, while presenting

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[41] See Chris Ford 's (1991) "Letter to the Editor of Revolutionary History" in *Revolutionary History,* v. 3, no. 3 Spring 1991 for an expose on how the Left censored and silenced the (especially Ukrainian) nationality question in the North American discussion and demonized the Ukrainian community for its nationalist views. Chris Ford's long letter to the editors was published in Revolutionary History v.3 no. 3 Spring 1991 in which he refers also to other articles written for, but not published in, v. 3 no. 1 due to censorship of the Ukrainian nationality question.

[42] Kostash 1992 "*Will the Real Natasha Please Stand Up?: Women in the Soviet Union"* was originally written for THIS magazine in response to Heather Robertson's "Heather Meets Natasha" published in Chatelaine in August 1986. The Kostash article was reprinted in Crean 1992.

her as being representative of Soviet women in general. Kostash's objections raised such an uproar that at least one subscriber actually cancelled his subscription. (Crean 1992: xviii)

This intersection of life trajectories within feminism, nationalism, and socialism resulted in the founding of the Second Wreath Cultural Society in Edmonton by Hromada activist Halyna Chomiak Freeland (1946-2007).[43] One source credits Bohachevsky-Chomiak's (1982) "Feminism in Ukrainian History" an article based on research eventually published in 1988 as a book in full-length treatment, as responsible for "kindling a flame that fired up the group of young women who became the Second Wreath Association" (Horban 1986:24, my translation). Kuplowska, who was a member of the Toronto chapter of the Second Wreath Cultural Society, confirms the submerged character of this network from which the Second Wreath activists emerged[44]

> In 1983, when Marta Bohachevsky-Chomiak and John-Paul Himka, who was married to Halyna Freeland's sister, were lecturing the Ukrainian summer circuit near Hunter Mountain, upstate New York, Halyna Freeland got inspired by the lecture on women's history research. But Halyna Freeland was actually already sowing the seeds of the Second Wreath Conference then, the lectures simply gelled her thoughts. [telephone interview, March 20, 2007]

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[43] Halyna Chomiak Freeland (1946-2007) died on July 6th in New York City. The obituary circulated on the internet lists several of her roles and accomplishments: "lawyer, activist, teacher, community organizer, bookstore founder, cooperative housing pioneer, politician, student, and international legal reformer; she was a single mother, an art collector, a gourmet cook and a voracious reader. She was a leader in the Ukrainian, feminist and leftist communities in Edmonton." See also her daughter Chrystia Freeland's tribute, "The Richness of Her Life" in the Financial Times, July 15, 2007, page 22.

[44] See also Khrystyna Khudchak (1984) for an interview with Halyna Freeland about the Second Wreath. The Second Wreath initiative was a product of its times, one of many efforts to further an anti-racist feminism (Weir 1987:99). The Second Wreath conference showcased Ukrainian Soviet dissident women and strove to reconnect Ukrainian feminism with the socialism of its original milieu.

Old-New Feminist Rift

Kuplowska went on to express what was then and still is today the quintessential Ukrainian feminist dilemma:

> We were kind of lost sheep, we didn't fit anywhere, we didn't feel at home in the non-Ukrainian feminist organizations, but weren't at home in the Ukrainian traditional women's organizations either. Mainstream feminism did not accurately define the needs of the women from the Ukrainian Canadian community, assuming women's subordination of a particular kind that did not ring true for Ukrainian women and calling for the rejection of all community expectations of womanhood. Ukrainian women were *not* ready to abandon family and community and nation and mainstream feminism could not understand why. It could not understand why you would want to maintain certain traditions and not just chuck it all out the window. [Halyna Freeland] politicized this issue for us and gave us a forum for the discussion of these issues, in a way that neither the traditional women's organizations nor the North American feminist women's organizations were allowing us to do.[Kuplowska, telephone interview, March 20, 2007]

Freeland came out to Toronto from Edmonton in 1983 to drum up interest in the Second Wreath conference. Several women joined to form the Second Wreath Toronto branch, and met informally in each other's homes to plan a public relations campaign for the conference. They decided on a project that subscribed to the feminist trend of cultivating woman-centered culture, a series called "Evenings with Interesting Women." They prepared a room in the (Ukrainian) St.Vladimir Institute in the University of Toronto campus area, outfitting it cabaret-style, with small round tables and candles, and provided a dessert and coffee buffet to complement the program: one spotlighted guest speaker for each evening.[45] The evenings were a great success: the first one attracted 30-40 people, but eventually the program drew over a hundred participants.

> We repeated our Mantra: "We founded Second Wreath because we don't feel like we fit in to any of the existing community structures!" And women responded! We thought, "What a rush this is! This is really not *nothing*!" And the reaction from the established women's organizations—chagrin: "Why can't you do what you're doing but do it within our framework?" But we just didn't want the interference of community directives, like criticism that we got from one quarter over the fact that we had not invited a priest to officiate with a prayer before the commencement of one of the conferences we had organized earlier. We had nothing against religion, but we didn't appreciate the criticism if we didn't do it just so and the attempts to interfere with our style…we had no head table, just little round tables. [Kuplowska, telephone interview, March 20, 2007]

Their feminist effort, inspired by a more radical than strictly equal rights feminism, or at least a youthful commitment to new feminist ideas, was successful.[46] In 1985, a group of 50-60 women flew from Toronto to Edmonton for the Conference, which Kuplowska proudly assessed as "very professional." The first Second Wreath Conference (October 11-14, 1985 at the University of Alberta)[47] drew some 200 participants from the United States and Canada, who came to examine

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[45] Kuplowska recalls that their first speaker was Anastasia Shkilnyk, who had worked with Canadian aboriginals and wrote on the spiritualism of Native Peoples of Canada. They did two rounds of these Evenings with Interesting women, one series before the 1985 Second Wreath in Edmonton and one series after, that is before the 1988 Second Wreath in Toronto. They had a huge Toronto contingent go out for the Edmonton Second Wreath (50-60 women) as a result. (personal communication March 20 2007).

[46] According to Taylor, et al,"The strategy of creating autonomous institutions is rooted in radical feminist ideology, which emphasizes that women need to have places and events away from patriarchal society where they can develop strength and pride as women" (2004:525)

[47] Kostash 1986 includes a reproduction of the program booklet prepared for the Second Wreath Conference. The text of the program booklet cover reads: "Second Wreath: A Conference Exploring Ethnicity and Feminism in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Ukrainian Women's Movement, October 11-14, 1985, sponsored by The Second Wreath Cultural Society and the University of Alberta's Women's Program, Faculty of Extension, the University of Alberta's President's Advisory Committee on Women's Studies and Athabasca University Women's Studies".

Ukrainian women's positions within their community, explore the implications of ethnic identity, and reconnect with the history of the Ukrainian women's movement. According to Swyripa, "the conference also addressed the need to promote ethnic issues among mainstream feminists and feminist ideas in ethnic communities" (1993:209).

The Second Wreath conference was also informed by a closer understanding of Soviet Ukraine gained by the women's community through marshalling support for the Ukrainian dissident movement over the prior decade. Two special guests, Raissa Moroz, formerly married to the Ukrainian political prisoner Valentyn Moroz, and Nadia Svitlychna, sister of political prisoner Ivan Svitlychnyj, brought a contemporary Soviet Ukrainian women's experience to the conference.

Many of the presenters in the conference line-up were (as were the contributors to the First Wreath) feminist women writers and artists.[48] Other lines of feminist inquiry and activism were also explored through presentations by non-Ukrainian ethnic (specifically, Jewish and Canadian Native Indian) feminists.[49] The conference formally covered five themes: History of the Ukrainian Women's Movement; Feminism; Ethnicity and Feminism; Literature, Art and Folk Art; and Contemporary Dilemmas. The invited speakers represented a variety of ethnicities and, tucked discretely under the heading of "contemporary dilemmas," the conference also included a formal discussion of lesbianism by Evelyn Tornton Beck, author of *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian*

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[48] Some of the participants were the Ukrainian-American feminist writer Irene Zabytko, the Canadian-Ukrainian feminist writer and historian Myrna Kostash, the Canadian-Ukrainian artists Natalka Husar and Primrose Pidhirny-Diakiw, and media professionals Olenka Demianchuk (then with CBC's The Journal) and Marika Hurko (a producer at As It Happens program).

[49] Kostash (1986:3) lists the non-Ukrainian ethnic feminists: Ellie Silverman, a Jewish-Canadian feminist, Evelyn Tornton Beck, a Jewish feminist scholar from Maryland, Jenny Margetts from the Indian Rights for Indian Women (Canadian) organization.

Anthology (1980). Beck's personal interjections during the forum raised the controversial issue of Ukrainian historical anti-Semitism, making this conference one of the few public meetings where these topics were discussed openly.[50] But it was also noted that "dialogue with and participation by women from *traditionalist [not radical feminist]* Ukrainian Canadian women's organizations was limited and strained" (Swyripa 1993:209, my emphasis).

North American Ukrainian feminists did not, as it turns out, develop a specifically Ukrainian diasporic feminism in the way Jewish diasporic feminists did (see Bourne 1987), even though there are many cultural parallels to their experience. Jewish diasporic women felt the need to preserve Jewishness in their homes and lives because they feared the extinction of their nation and culture, a discourse that corresponds to the nationalist mission emphasized also in Ukrainian diaspora communities. Like Jewish feminists in their support of Israel, diaspora Ukrainians go to great lengths to support Ukraine. They never quite had to go through the ambivalence of being in support of Zionism and the existence of Israel but not of the state's aggression, for example, against Lebanon. Ukrainians have only recently come to the experience of recognizing an elected Ukrainian government as legitimate and dealing with its actions.

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[50] Irene Zabytko, writer, who flew to the conference together with Evelyn Beck told me that Dr. Beck was a little concerned that she may encounter anti-Semitism at the Ukrainian feminists' conference. In fact, her references to Bohdan Khmelnyckyj as an anti-Jewish aggressor were not uniformly understood as benign, according to the reports and reactions to the conference; but in general the conference participants thought that the exchange was great. For a full description of the Second Wreath program, see Horban (1986:26) and also Swyripa (1993:209). Regarding homosexuality, to this day there is no frank discussion of the topic in any official forum of the traditional women's organizations.

After the success of the Second Wreath Conference, another was planned for Toronto in 1988.[51] This conference was also academic in flavor, seeking a comparative perspective of ethnic women's experiences and a preliminary report from Ukrainian feminists active in mainstream feminism (a panel moderated by Daria Ivanochko, with Halyna Freeland as a presenter) as well as scholarship on the Ukrainian women's movement. But it also incorporated a broader spectrum of practical Ukrainian women's social welfare concerns, including day care issues and violence within the family.

During the same period, the more traditionalist UNWLA also organized two major conferences under the slogan "Ukrainian Woman in Two Worlds" that, although not identified as specifically *feminist*, were nonetheless *experienced* as feminist by the Ukrainian women who attended (I. Jarosewych, personal communication). These twin conferences, one in 1982 (October 2-3 in Kerhonksen, New York, at the Ukrainian Soyuzivka resort[52]) and in 1986 (October 4-5 in Princeton, New Jersey) were feminist-nationalist in tone, as opposed to exploratory of Ukrainian feminism, per se. The conferences were dedicated to the "harmonious integration of the two worlds" in which Ukrainian American women live: the world which requires the preservation and transmission of Ukrainian heritage and the other in which

[51] The second Second Wreath conference was held at the St. Vladimir Institute in Toronto (October 28-30, 1988). Entitled "Ukrainian Women: Tradition and Change-A Conference Exploring Themes of Feminism and Ethnicity," it was organized by an expanded Second Wreath Toronto Conference Committee of eleven women and was funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate, Ministry of Citizenship, as a multiculturalism project.

[52] My personal archives remind me that in 1982 I chaired a panel at this conference on "Ukrainian Women in American Politics." Among my panelists was Katherine Chumachenko (-Yushchenko), Ukraine's recent First Lady, with whom I had worked briefly at the Ukrainian National Information Service in Washington D.C.

Ukrainian-American women aspire to full participation—in politics and media, in professional life and employment, alongside marriage and family.

In contrast to the mantra of the Toronto Second Wreath members, i.e. "we don't fit in," the mantra of this round of conferences was "every woman should find a way to fit in" and become an active member of a Ukrainian women's organization.[53] The leadership of the traditional women's organizations could not understand why the Ukrainian feminists of the Second Wreath movement would not want to join them, especially since the more traditional organizations were actually eager to harness the vitality and spirit of Second Wreath to revive their own ranks. One explanation is the sensed understanding that feminism reined in by nationalism becomes inhibited and rigid. For example, in her review of the Second Wreath conference, Horban (1986) demonstrates how nationalist discourse inclines representatives of the traditional women's organizations to think of the Ukrainian women's movement as preserved in a timeless unchanging form: her wording implied that Ukrainian nationalism and the women's organized activity that it engenders are in an essentially eternal symbiotic relationship. In a turn of phrase reminiscent of Anne McClintock's description of "Nation-Time" (1995:358-359), Horban gushed that the fact that "Kobrynska's ideas [i.e. her feminism and communal solutions to women's burdens], rejected by her contemporaries, breathed new life after these hundred years in a corner of the work where it would seem the Ukrainian women's questions should no longer resound, proves their timelessness and profundity" (1986:25). By melding their feminism into their nationalism, women of this persuasion entertain a feminism frozen in its development,

[53] The 1986 conference program booklet published an address from Iwanna Rozankowsky admonishing women to take example from American women, 25 percent of whom claim to be members of some women's organization.

divorced from history, and elevated to myth. This formulation of feminism does not allow it the berth it must have to grow or change (Ferree and Hess 1985:182).

And yet, feminism thrived informally in an unspecified, and yet particularly Ukrainian, form throughout the 1980s within and beyond the women's organizations. First, it provided an opportunity for Ukrainian self-discovery through history and a bridge between the present and the Ukrainian women's conference of 1934 Stanyslaviv, while also connecting them to "new themes and debates and conflicts generated from the experience of post-60s feminists" (Kostash 1986:3). The conferences of the 1980s, whether those called Second Wreath or those sponsored by the UNWLA were part of a groundswell of feminist self-awareness and a sense of "Ukrainian woman-power" encouraging self-discovery and self-critique along feminist lines, a kind of feminist nationalism that soon felt the pull of the national imperative. By the late 1980s, diaspora activists were engaging with the perestroika-era Rukh Movement for the Restructuring of Ukraine. In the general post feminism of the 1980s in the United States, diaspora women abandoned focusing on their own status within feminist ideals and turned to support of Ukraine's nation-building processes.

<u>After Second Wreath, a Return to Nationalist Engagement</u>

After 1988, the Toronto Second Wreath committee met a few times until 1993. In 1994, Kostash confirmed that a Third Wreath group had formed in Edmonton and that she had hopes for another conference involving the participation of feminists from independent Ukraine. Wynnyckyj 1994 reports interviewing Kostash and asking her about her perception of where feminism stands in Ukraine:

> Ah, feminism. In 1991 I gave a lecture at the Institute of Literature in Kyiv, with six people attending - Solomea Pavlychko, some of her friends…At any rate, I gave this

> lecture to six people about the main ideas of Western feminism. There was a great deal of interest at the meeting, and we immediately began discussing the prospects for a conference with the Edmonton chapter of Third Wreath. But after I got back, it just fizzled. We tried to kick start it with a series of letters, they wrote back that yes, yes, they were interested, but nothing came of it. That's pretty typical of the movement there, both in terms of attendance at the lecture, and the follow through of our suggestions. [Kostash quoted in Wynnyckyj 1994]

Nonetheless, Second Wreath appears at least to have attracted two seminal Ukrainian feminists to Edmonton's University of Alberta: Svitlana Kupryashkina, who wrote that she was first exposed to feminism there in 1990 and then went on to found the first Center for Women's Studies in Kyiv in 1992; and Solomea Pavlychko, who taught at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies in 1990 and then founded the Gender Center at the Kyivan Academy of Sciences (headed in 2000 by Nila Zborowska). There were also diaspora feminists, especially Martha Bohachevsky Chomiak and Marian J. Rubchak (Senior Research Professor at Valparaiso University)[54] who visited Ukraine several times to interact with and mentor Ukrainian feminist scholars and whose work helped to stimulated original feminist thought in Ukraine.

Feminism had a rocky start, however. Kuplowska, now in retirement and a volunteer for the Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies in Toronto, remembers Halyna Freeland introducing her to Pavlychko with whom she discussed feminism's prospects. Kuplowska noted:

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[54] Marian J. Rubchak has published steadily on problems of Ukrainian feminism, her most recent (2011) publication being a collection of essays, *Mapping Difference: the Many Faces of Women in Contemporary Ukraine.* As described by Catherine Wanner in her Foreword, this volume "represents a unique and unprecendented effort to bring together the views of Ukrainian and North American scholars on issues relating to gender and gender politics in Ukraine today" (2011:ix). Rubchak's influence was particularly formative to the work of Nila Zborowska, feminist writer, briefly head of the Gender Center at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kyiv, and a native of Cherkasy.

> The Ukrainians were women struggling to come to terms with their role in a new country. They were deciding what they would take for themselves from feminism, but feminism took a back seat in the reality of post-Soviet troubles, when both men and women suffered so much, [not too surprisingly, since] even the diaspora does not casually accept feminist as a label for themselves. [telephone interview March 20, 2007]

In North America, Ukrainian communities had witnessed a tremendous growth of Ukraine-targeted activism in the 1970s and 80s—most of it lead, organized, and sustained by women. This did not involve a rush to fill the ranks of the traditional women's organizations but rather a swelling of women's involvement in substantive political work with the goal of helping women (and not only) in Soviet Ukraine. One example was a Ukrainian community network operating in the Metropolitan area of Washington D.C., the Ukrainian American Community Network (UACN) organized by Larissa Fontana.[55] In 1987 the UACN cooperated closely with the Americans for Human Rights in Ukraine (AHRU) headed by Bozena Olshaniwsky and operating out of Newark N.J., which put out a simple newsletter, Ukrainian Network News. The AHRU informed the community and advised on how to support Ukrainian political prisoners and the activities of the Ukrainian Helsinki Monitoring Group, relying on credible information provided by Osyp Zinkewych, founder of Smoloskyp Information Service, which operated out of his house near Baltimore, Maryland.[56]

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[55] The UACN of the Maryland-District of Columbia-Virgina area, was based on longstanding informal activist practices of the Washington, D.C. Ukrainian-American community, formalized and coordinated by Dr.Larissa Fontana in the mid-1980s. The network, represented in 1993 by a telephone tree embracing some 50 individuals, 90% of whom were women. They mailed packets of articles about Ukraine clipped from the press and Xeroxed; and sent out ACTION Alerts on issues requiring community advocacy.

[56] In October 2010, the now Kyiv-based Smoloskyp published the first encyclopedia of the Soviet era dissident movement in Ukraine, Resistance Movement in Ukraine 1960-90: An Encyclopedia.

The diaspora community also responded swiftly to the Chornobyl disaster of April 26, 1986. The AHRU and the UACN conducted a campaign demanding that the USSR loosen up its policies on international contact with the West, so that private Ukrainian American citizens and Western humanitarian organizations would be allowed to send food and medicines to Ukraine. Early community action groups appeared, among them the Chornobyl Committee of Washington D.C. which established the Save a Life project to recruit persons of Ukrainian and other east European ancestry for the National Marrow Donor Program. The diaspora community supported the visits to Ukraine of the American Dr. Robert Gale to inform the Ukrainian public about the long-term dangers of exposure to radiation. After hearing Dr. Gale speak, a group of mothers in Kyiv formed the Mama-86 organization, one of the most high-profile environmental activist groups in Ukraine to date (see Chapter 6).

In the North American diaspora, two major organizations still operating in 2010 arose around the Chornobyl issue: the Canadian Help us Help the Children (CHHC)[57] and the Children of Chornobyl Relief Fund (CCRF), both women-organized and women-run operations functioning on a huge scale. The CCRF, which was founded by Dr. and Mrs. Matkiwsky in 1989 and expanded quickly to 13 chapters under its Short Hills, New Jersey headquarters, has made 31 airlifts—its 27th coinciding with the shutdown of the 3rd reactor at the Chornobyl station on December 15, 2000 (CCRF 2000:7)—and 15 sea shipments of medical supplies, bringing aid valued at over $51 million to Ukraine's hospitals in radiation-affected areas.[58]

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[57] The Help Us Help the Children (HHCC), a volunteer project of the Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund was founded by Ruslana Wrzesenwskyj.

[58] The CCRF's publication Chornobyl Chronicle (spring 1998 issue) noted that Belarus and Ukraine lead in the incidence of pediatric thyroid cancer, with Kyiv, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Rivne

Other early organizations include Sabre-Svitlo Foundation, founded in 1990 by Tania Vitvitsky (its 2005 Annual reports the provision of over a million books to Ukrainian schools and institutions); the Ukrainian Orphans' Aid Society, founded by Anna Jowyk in 1992 (connecting over 1500 orphans with North American sponsors, and sending over a quarter million dollars of medical supplies over the years); and the World Information Transfer (WIT) founded by Dr. Christine Durbak in 1992 which works in consultative status to ECOSOC United Nations providing a forum for international experts on post-Chornobyl global environmental issues.[59]

The diaspora encourages its members to dedicate time and money to aid Ukraine and also to travel and work there. The U.S.-Ukraine Foundation (USUF), founded by Nadia Komarnycky-McConnell in 1991, whose most visible program is a US AID funded city-to-city Community Partnership Program (CPP) which had its training center in Cherkasy.[60] One USUF publication published a list of ideas about "what can you do in Ukraine?" (e.g., volunteer at an orphanage, attend summer session at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, serve as an elections monitor)

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and Cherkasy Oblasts being most affected in Ukraine. The Cherkasy Hospital and Diabetes Clinic are beneficiaries of CCRF aid.

[59] Since 1992, the World Information Transfer (WIT), a non-profit, international, NGO in consultative status with the UN, has provided a forum for the presentation of scientific papers by international experts on a variety of global environmental issues, including Chornobyl. It runs internship, scholarship, CD ROM library and humanitarian aid programs, and since 1989, publishes the World Ecology Report, a quarterly digest, in the official languages of the United Nations, and also Ukrainian.

[60] The goals of the USUF are "to build peace and prosperity in Ukraine through shared democratic values" and to "facilitate democratic development, encourage free market reform, enhance human rights in Ukraine…to advance Ukraine as a cornerstone of regional stability and full partnership of the community of European nations." The program has its roots in the Kuchma-Gore talks and Katherine Chumachenko was one of the USUF founders. The USUF publishes INFO-Link, a bilingual newsletter (www.usukraine.org).

and conversely, "what can I do in the U.S. (to help Ukraine)? Many young adults of the diaspora have sought to serve Ukraine by joining general North American NGO programs, e.g. as Peace Corps volunteers, workers for various charitable organizations, or as contract or career employees of U.S. agencies and their programs operating in Ukraine.

Some diaspora Ukrainians have also attempted to do business with or open up business ventures in Ukraine, with some trouble. In 1999, Ukraine's foreign aid package from the U.S. was significantly diminished due to the inhospitable business climate suffered by American businesses. The American Chamber of Commerce was greatly concerned over corruption in Ukraine, a problem some experts analyzed as a Soviet legacy to be overcome with solid support from the West (Shelley 1999; Sawkiw 1998), but a view that is ever harder to support.

With Ukraine's independence, the Ukrainian transnational cultural space expanded its transnational religious, academic, professional, cultural and business networks. This expansion involves new global organizations,[61] enlivened academic exchange opportunities, artistic performances, exhibits, and print and visual journalism, including internet media—besides being a conduit for information these activities provide vehicles for advocacy within the transnational community. The transnational space not only became more complex but also more de-centered, as various organizations take up transborder activism.[62] This means that the WCU cannot coordinate or control the broad spectrum of transnational activity, even as it provides some semblance of a central authority officially representing the diaspora community.

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[61] For example, the International Association of Ukrainian Studies (IAUS), founded August 1990, elected George Grabovych, of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, as its president. New transnational professional associations, such as the World Federation of Ukrainian Medical Associations (WFUMA) held its world congress in Kyiv in August 1990.

[62] Taras Kuzio and Orest Deychakiwsky (2005) offer an overview of the effect of these organizations, including the Action Ukraine Coalition (UAC), the Ukrainian American Coordinating Council (UACC), Ukrainian Federation of America (UFA), the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation (USUF), and the Ukraine-U.S. Business Council (USUBC).

In the 1990s Ukrainians may have viewed the diaspora as wealthy and powerful force, but this image is now tempered by a more realistic assessment of its resources and influence. Although significant, diaspora spending on Ukraine can be only a fraction of the U.S. Government foreign aid to Ukraine.[63] Diaspora contributions would include cash and care packages sent to Ukraine, not to mention remittances sent home by temporary migrants. A WCU Social Service Committee (2000) estimated $50 million US and $27 million Canadian dollars earmarked for Ukraine over its first decade of independence through the efforts of the various member organizations under the WCU umbrella, with the women's organizations doing much of the work of fund-raising and aid distribution.[64] In addition, after independence, much of the female activist talent of the diaspora turned to supporting Ukraine's fledgling state. One activist noted that "All the women-run activist networks of the1980s, all of a sudden in 1991, got "sucked up into the vacuum of the nation-building focus. All the women were suddenly fund-raising to purchase and furnish a building for the new Ukrainian embassy in Washington D.C." (personal communication, February 22, 2007).[65] While diaspora women did not abandon their

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[63] One source put it at $225 million in 1998 and $195 million in 1999.

[64] It is difficult for the North American community to calculate its contributions to projects in Ukraine over the last decades. These figures reflect the WCU the Combined Report (2000) for North America based on the annual reports of member organizations 1990-1999 and the WCU 2003 report, and the WCU Social Services report, Appendix 4 "Aid to Ukraine 1991-2001." Among the charitable programs sponsored by women's groups under the WFUWO umbrella are the UNWLA's "A Roll and Glass of Milk" breakfast program for needy grade-schoolers and its long-standing student sponsorship program for socially vulnerable girls. The UNWLA, the Ukrainian Gold Cross, the United Ukrainian Relief Committee and other organizations also send aid to Ukraine's orphanages, arrange medical help for special cases, and send care packages or even ship containers of supplies to help the needy.

[65] This was in fact one of the major examples of diasporan largesse and commitment. Because the Russian Federation appropriated the Soviet Embassy in Washington D.C., the Ukrainian community of the Metropolitan Area helped Ukraine's diplomats arrange for their own quarters

feminism, most of their energy was now directed towards nation with a focus on projects that more generally impact the social dynamics of gender in Ukraine. For example, in 1972 Halyna Freeland (1946-2007), the nodal person of the Second Wreath,[66] founded and headed the non-governmental and non-profit Ukrainian Legal Foundation (ULF) which established a legal library, a printing press, an international legal exchange programs and a law school in Ukraine. Freeland also assisted in the drafting the Constitution of Ukraine and of its Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes. There are many women of the Second Wreath generation, who like Freelend, have been involved in aspects of Ukraine' nation and state-building efforts emanating from the ties offered within the transnational national community space. For them feminism, though a critically important thread, had become the unstated subtext.[67]

The Diaspora Finds Itself in a Feminist Moment

During perestroika and into the first decade of Ukraine's independence the diaspora engaged in extensive self-analysis, particularly with regard to the need to strengthen community structures to help Ukraine (Deychakiwsky 1997; Ivanciw 1992; Kuzio 2005). The leadership of the global diaspora, particularly in North America, agreed that the diaspora should be generous but not heavy-handed in its aid. There was never any question that the diaspora community would solidly and avidly support all aspects of Ukrainian de-Sovietization, including the retooling of Ukraine's economic sphere for incorporation into global economic structures. There

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in the US capital. A specifically women's initiative called the "500 Club,"-Friends of the Consulate General in Chicago (1992-2009) raised funds for the Ukrainian representation there.

[66] Halyna Freeland supplemented her legal and feminist activist resume with a masters' degree on Women in Soviet Ukraine (University of Alberta 1990-1992) and moved to Ukraine in 1992.

[67] Verta Taylor noted that 1960s-70s feminism continued to inform the lives of women into the 1980-90s, despite the cessation of formal activism: "even the consciousness and lives of woman who did not identify as feminist have been altered by the women's movement" (2004:524).

was no critical discussion in the diaspora community of how the structural adjustment policies (SAPs) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would affect Ukraine, despite the fact that much information was available for other Third World contexts. (Ukraine was part of the Second World, after all, not yet identified as being in the company of those countries that fall into the "not First World" category.)

The rediscovery of family ties and mutual visits with long-lost relatives occupied the personal lives of many diaspora Ukrainians in the 1990s and many North American families found themselves hosting temporary migrants eager for a chance to earn some cash and return home to Ukraine with honor. Within the decade, this stream of migrants would become noticeably female, as it was easier for women to find work off the books in domestic child or eldercare situations, than it was for men to find construction jobs. As the transition became messier, there was more turning to opportunities to make money in North American, with the assistance of extended family in the diaspora.

What's more, in the 1990s, the organized women of the diaspora had intensified their involvement in the United Nations-lead international women's movement that was promoting new configurations of transnational activity. Diaspora women—either through their women's organizations or otherwise as individuals—found ways to participate in efforts on the behalf of women in Ukraine's post (and anti) Soviet transition. The new neoliberal context of cultivation of women's activism in Ukraine as part of the Second World allowed the diaspora to exercise a feminist sensibility in a way that did not conflict with their nationalist, or more to the point, anti-communist sentiments.

However, the moment that inspired feminist outrage and an outpouring of activist energy in the diaspora was the *New York Times* story that exposed the new pattern of exploitation of

Ukrainian women in international sex-trafficking circles (Spector 1998).[68] The story caused a seismic shift in the diaspora women's perception of their Ukrainian counterparts.[69] The image of the long-suffering grandmother-*babushka* that had been the global face of Ukraine during perestroika and early 1991-92 shifted right past the image of the Ukrainian mail-order bride straight to the stark image of the young female victim of human trafficking, later given the name *Natasha* by Victor Malarek (2003).[70] The rapid community response organized by women associated with WFUWO in New York[71] established a precedent for the open discussion of violence against women, still a relatively taboo topic both in Ukraine and in the diaspora. Thus, the issue of global trafficking became a window for diaspora commitment to an overtly feminist project, with the leadership of the women's organizations standing their ground against male hegemonic disapproval. When challenged by an official of Ukraine's government, Iryna Kurowyckyj of UNWLA and bearing ICW credentials retorted that discussion of trafficking is not "unladylike" but rather an appropriate and especially critical reality for women's organizations to take up (personal communication)[72] Since then, their diaspora organizations

[68] Specter exposed the magnitude of the sex trafficking problem, affecting large numbers of young women from Ukraine. This was the first impetus for renewed women's activism along feminist lines.

[69] Anecdotally, many diaspora couples divorced after business trips to Ukraine: Ukrainian women often gloated that they were the feminine mate Ukrainian American men really wanted.

[70] Victor Malarek, a Ukrainian-Canadian award winning investigative journalist, wrote *The Natashas* to expose trafficking as "organized crime's fastest growing business" (2003). The name Natasha has come to generically represent the trafficked Ukrainian woman.

[71] Members of the WFUWO UN's representation (Olya Stawnychy 2002) and of BRAMA the Ukrainian web portal (H. Krill), organized an informational campaign that included a conference (June 1998) demonstrations, seminars, and trainings, in cooperation with Ukraine's La Strada (Kyiv, 1997) represented by Kateryna Levchenko and other Ukrainian activists.

have addressed Ukraine's HIV/AIDS epidemic, the resulting orphaning of children; the vulnerability of young girls graduating from youth homes (Rudd 2003);[73] problems of migration and the trafficking of children. These priorities inform the work of the WFUWO and its monitoring of Ukraine's progress relative to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to which Ukraine was a signatory in 2000 and have motivated its joining a Coalition Against Trafficking (CAT USA), which supports the Canadian Help Us Help the Children (CHHC) Trafficking Project.

By the summer of 2000 Winrock International was expanding its Trafficking Prevention Program, planning to establish centers (modeled on the Kyivan Women for Women Center) in various oblasts. The director of this program and my Kyiv host, Marta Kolomayets,[74] then director of the U.S. AID Ukrainian Marketing Reform Education Project, UMREP (both of the diaspora) invited me to a meeting of the Winrock Board in June 2000 organized to brief an

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[72] In an even uglier exchange, Kuchma, the President of Ukraine, suggested that the women who are trafficked are prostitutes, having gone by their own choice abroad. A mother in the crowd retorted publicly, "Mr President, if my daughter is a prostitute, then you are her pimp." (personal communication.)

[73] When Jane Rudd (2003) exposed the connection between the experience of violence (sexual or physical abuse) and trafficking of Ukrainian young socio-economically vulnerable girls (Rudd 2003:349-400), the diaspora realized that girls raised by *internaty*, the youth homes for orphans or half-orphans, are especially at risk. In addition to the scholarship programs that the diaspora has traditionally offered vulnerable youth, UCARE (the U.S. counterpart of Help Us Help the Children) now makes scholarships available to those leaving the *internaty* upon coming of age

[74] Marta Kolomayets, correspondent for the Ukrainian Weekly (Jersey City, NJ) was one of the first U.S. journalists to work directly out of Kyiv. She established the Kyiv Press Bureau for the Ukrainian National Association (UNA) in 1991. In 2000, she knew no fewer than 30 diasporan individuals working in Ukraine. She estimated that the number of expatriates in Kyiv stood at about 50, far fewer than in the early 1990s before disillusionment with Ukraine set in.

emissary of the White House, Melanne Verveer,[75] who as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Vital Voices Global Partnership considered anti-trafficking a priority issue.[76]

The activities and activism of the Ukrainian diaspora are dimensions of the economic, cultural, and political contexts of globalization processes. In particular, the political activism of the diasporan women's organizations is a precursor of current developments in which non-citizen populations assist national populations in challenging their governments through the UN and other supraterritorial and transborder organizations (Sperling 2009:7). In the next chapter I will examine how the spectrum of women's organizations emerging at the cusp of Ukraine's independence presents itself and its history.

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[75] Melanne Starinshak Verveer was born in Shamokin, Pennsylvania of Ukrainian heritage,and attended high school at the Ukrainian St Mary's Villa Academy in Sloatsburg, NY. She served as deputy assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for the First Lady (1993-97) before becoming advisor to the President and chief of staff, making her the highest ranking Ukrainian American in the Clinton Administration. She travelled to Ukraine with the President for his state visit in 1995.and again with the First Lady. She currently serves President Barack Obama as his Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues. On June 22, 2010 in Kyiv Verveer thanked Natalia Karbowska and members of Ukrainian Women's Fund established by Olena Suslova for gathering on the 15th Anniversary of the UN 4th World Conference (Beijing, 1995) and reminded them that Ukraine was among the 189 countries that signed conference resolutions. The Women's Voices Democracy Initiative was established in July 1997 by the First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright. It became an NGO in June 2000 and is headed by Verveer.

[76] At that meeting I described to Verveer my research plans in Cherkasy Oblast mentioning community activism as a possible alternative to emigration, which she found interesting.

Part II Strands of Ukrainian Women's Movement

Chapter Six: Post-Soviet Transformations of Organized Women's Activism

The (Re-) Emergence of a National Women's Movement

My first copy of Lyudmyla Smolyar's 1998 history of the imperial-era Ukrainian women's movement was a samizdat-like Xerox of a Xerox passed through several hands; and it was an eye-opener for this Ukrainophone diaspora woman. In certain circles, it created as much a stir in the United States as the 1995 Ukrainian translation of Bohachevsky-Chomiak's 1988 history of the Ukrainian women's movement did in Ukraine. Smolyar's book represents one of the ways in which feminism and nationalism have found a compatible symbiosis in Ukraine, i.e. in the post-Soviet validation of the historical Ukrainian women's movement.

As a history suppressed by the Soviet narrative, its promotion has not gone smoothly in all respects. In the fall of 2000, I visited the village of Bolekhiv in western Ukraine, where Natalia Kobrynska, the first overtly feminist activist within the Ukrainian population of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, made her home at the turn of the century. I visited the Kobrynska Musuem there and met with Larysa Darmokhval, caretaker of her former residence and gravesite, who confessed that even a stone boulder marking the original site of Kobrynska's house had been repeatedly vandalized over the 1990s, apparently by anti-feminists or anti-nationalists, or both. In 2000, the history of the pre-Soviet women's movement was still largely unknown outside of western Ukraine, and not uniformly recognized, even among western Ukrainians. With the help of the diaspora, the nation's large women's organizations were starting to revive an awareness of the pre-Soviet movement, bringing the names of its leaders to the attention of the Ukrainian general public. In this chapter, I will discuss how the

contemporary women's movement is remembering, reclaiming, and propagating the example of this earlier Ukrainian women's activism.

Given the history of Ukrainian women's organizing in the pre-Soviet period and the growth of transnational activism in recent decades, it seems pre-determined that a discourse about a resumed Ukrainian women's movement would surface. From a Soviet-grounded point of view, women's continued involvement in the public social sphere is a logical and necessary extension of women's official Soviet-era social activism rather than a break with it; but from another indigenous view, the post-Soviet women's organizations represent a clear ideological break with the Soviet past**.** In her account of the beginnings of women's movement in post-1991 Ukraine, Lyudmyla Smolyar (1998, 2000a) frames it as a restoration of pre-Soviet priorities. She locates the movement's re-emergence in the first independent women's associations of the Rukh milieu in 1988-89, followed by a period (1991-1994) of legal registration of various and ideologically diverse women's organizations, crowned by the promise of a unified women's front initiated by the February 1994 First All-Ukraine Congress of Ukrainian Women's Organizations.

In 1999 a new Ukrainian National Council of Women (UNCW) formally embodied this tenuously unified front. Smolyar celebrates the UNCW as a full participant in the international women's movement and an active partner in the UN-led global initiatives for women, suggesting that its pre-Soviet feminist traditions will help it promote gender equality in Ukraine (Smolyar 1999, 2000a:21). This front is actually more diverse and its dynamics less consensual than this suggests, and its influence in furthering women's parity and the application of gender mainstreaming has been negligible (Hankivsky and Salnykova 2010). What follows is an account of the origins of Ukraine's women's organizations, woven together from various

sources, as an initial attempt to describe the chaotic and serendipitous connections as well as continuities and regularities that are responsible for the movement's contemporary diversity.

While not currently noted for its mass participation, the contemporary sphere of women's activism exhibits strands stemming from the grassroots tumult of late perestroika, when women were the "basic moving force" of social movements (Pavlychko 1997:220). Women's involvement underpinned the dissident groups of the 1960s-70s that are the antecedents of the unofficial independent organizations of the 1980s (Lane 1992:110). Women's energy also fueled the early environmentalist and post-Chornobyl anti-nuclear movements that morphed into nationalist protests (Dawson 1996:16, 87[1]) and filled the ranks of the Rukh movement for perestroika that turned pro-independence in 1990. Other strands of the movement stem from the Soviet women's councils. In fact, I will argue that the work of the councils, as historically available practices, was very influential, not only in defining the expected sphere of women's activism into the transition period but also as served as a catalyst for the creation in 1989 of the first women's organizations free of Party control in several decades (since 1919 in Ukraine's central oblasts).

Soviet Organization of Women

In the Ukrainian SSR the Soviet system encouraged the integration of major societal groups into official state structures, and thus the organized movement of people within large social organizations supervised by the Party was a regular feature of Soviet society. The workers belonged to trade unions and the youth to the Komsomol (Communist Youth League);[2] and at

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[1] Dawson notes that the movement was dependent on grassroots informal leadership and organization (1996:16) and describes a particularly dynamic woman activist, among the teachers and low level civil servants who were the mainstay of the movement (1996:87).

times the USSR also applied this logic to women as members of women's divisions in the 1920s until 1930 and of women's councils from the 1960s on. Alexandra Kollontai, who headed the *Zhenotdel* (the Women's Department of the Communist Party's Central Committee Secretariat, 1919-30) from 1919-23, is often credited with championing the first women's divisions (*zhinviddily*) in Ukraine. Their introduction into the Ukrainian-speaking villages, however, was accomplished by Ukrainophone national communists under the leadership of Marusia Levkovych (1924-26), until she was replaced with a Russophone woman and the work suffered (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:292),[3] very likely because the women's structures had become channels for local protest against collectivization (Hrycak 2002:66). From 1941, the Soviet Women's Committee (SWC) [4] represented the women of the USSR at international women's congresses and later at the UN;[5] but the zhenotdel type of community activism was revived only with the creation of the Soviet women's councils in the 1960s. The work of these re-established

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[2] It was also a regularity in the USSR for girls to join the Komsomol alongside the boys as part of their school experience, and in fact to be more activist than the boys. This was a stepping stone to personal advancement and possible, but not necessarily, Communist party membership.

[3] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (1988:292) describes those who worked with Levkovych and her successor within the Ukrainian zhinviddily, and the two main CPU women's journals associated with their work, the *Komunarka Ukrainy* (Communist Woman of Ukraine, 1921) and *Selianka Ukrainy* (Peasant Woman of Ukraine, 1924) published in Ukrainian.

[4] The SWC (1941) was created as an anti-fascist vehicle, and in the international arena, propagated the image of Soviet women as enjoying high economic and political status. The SWC was headed for almost 30 years by the first woman astronaut Tereshkova (1959-87), and then by Zoya Pukhova during the Gorbachev years. One of the earliest representatives to the SWC from the Ukrainian SSR was Ninel' (Lenin spelled backwards) Prykhodko, the editor of the *Radianska Zhinka* (Soviet Woman) who died in a plane crash in 1972 (Romaniuk 2000).

[5] The SWC monopolized women's international representation. The Ukrainian SSR had UN member status (1949) but no independent voice in that forum. By virtue of their ratification of the CEDAW convention in 1983 Ukraine/USSR should have been required to produce reports on the status of women, though there was low awareness of these processes in the USSR (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000).

women's groups was neither SWC- nor self-directed but rather they were guided by the Party through its local officials.[6] The Soviet state promulgated women's councils especially in areas where national or religious cultures presented resistance to socialist consciousness: one report from 1964 counted 57 thousand of them in the Ukrainian SSR (Browning 1987:141). These women-only councils typically existed in residential communities (villages), and in workplaces embedded within or alongside the trade unions and other social organizations through which activist women could become delegates to local councils (the people's soviets). Genia K. Browning (1992:98) notes that the women's councils occasionally flourished, as during the Khrushchev years and in 1975 during the UN-led International Women's Year, but that even after 1987 when Gorbachev mandated their reinvigoration,[7] the councils though numerous were not highly regarded. Other than these, only nominally societal (*obshchestvennyi*) groups were permitted by Soviet law with official government or CPSU sponsorship, and they were prohibited from communication or financial support from foreign sources (Kotkin 1991:84, Lane 1992). Some voluntary avenues of association were exercised but were often subject to repression, particularly if of a dissident (including feminist[8]) bent.

The networks of Ukrainian dissent in the 1960s-70s involved many women, some figuring in their own name but also mostly as wives and sisters.[9] While they were the lifeblood

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[6] Genia K. Browning (1992:98) discusses the role of the women's councils in encouraging women to support CPSU policies (socialist political consciousness-raising) and working closely with the trade unions *profspilky* (distributing benefits) a practice that still continues.

[7] Hrycak (2002:67) reports that in April 1988 there were 236 thousand such councils with 2.3 million members Union-wide

[8] Alix Holt (1985:251-255) describes the fate of the Russian feminists of Leningrad in 1979-80.

[9]Their circumstances are known through interviews and writings; In August 1998 in Kyiv I interviewed a dissident couple who were members of the 1960s Shestydesiatnyky. Vira Klish

of the movement, there is no evidence that Ukrainian women of the nationalist dissident circles were inclined to frame their grievances as gendered. Copious anecdotal evidence, however, informs us of the magnitude of Soviet women's discontent with their work conditions and the shortages or lack of domestic and personal goods by which the Soviet system failed them.[10]

The April 26, 1987 disaster at the Chornobyl nuclear power station north of Kyiv, became a catalyst for movement, but concerns over environmental degradation and pollution-induced illness affecting women and children were starting to surface as early as the 1970s (e.g. see Cengel 2001).[11] During the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU of June 1987,[12] Gorbachev is already anticipating criticism from the Writers' Unions over the Chornobyl cover-up (1987:68, 83).[13] During this same meeting, Gorbachev shared his plans for the reinvigoration and

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and Natalia Danylenko (1990:24-25) report an interview with Rukh activist E. Sverstiuk who named several women of Rukh, among them dissident T. Chornomaz of Uman, L. Skoryk, M. Odvienko of Brovary, Nina Matvienko (wife of dissident Z. Antoniuk) Lida Orel an ethnographer in Kyiv, Lina Kostenko ,and Mykhailyna Kotsiubynsky.

[10] The accounts of women's complaints about the Soviet system of consumer good production and distribution are numerous. Filtzer (1996) analyzes the role of the contraction of light industry (incentive goods) in undermining economic perestroika. Women constantly confirmed to me their feelings of degradation over the state's neglect of planning to produce even the most elementary of women's products, not to mention time-saving appliances.

[11] Cengel (2001) relates an account by the head of an environmental NGO group in Cherkasy regarding the link between pollution and illness in the 1970's-80s, when respiratory disease and of juvenile (airborn) acetone poisoning coincided with peak factory production. In 2001, the Cherkasy Health Department acknowledged the lingering high incidence of cancers, asthma, miscarriages and birth defects. The USSR movement was supported even pre-Chornobyl, by Western organizations such as ISAR (1983) which still provides resources for environmentalist activism in former Soviet countries.

[12] The 27th Congress of the CPSU convened from February 23, to March 6, just before the April 26, 1986 Chornobyl disaster.

[13] Gorbachev voiced concerns over the state's inadequate response to the demands of the creative intelligentsia and of the increasingly vocal masses, ostensibly referring to economic perestroika, but also to the emotional criticism starting to build.

politicization of the women's councils, no doubt with an eye to neutralizing women's protest. Women were already rallying in 1980 around protests initiated by Russian feminists against the Afghanistan military action (Holt 1985:251). Chornobyl would surely prove a crowning event in terms of women's discontent.[14] There were many women among the grassroots activists of the Ukrainian ecological association, *Zelenyj svit* (green world, 1987),[15] which registered in 1988 on an All-Republic basis as an umbrella for environmental and anti-nuclear clubs all over Soviet Ukraine. During 1989 women helped collect tens of thousands of signatures for petitions,[16] and by 1990 they were sufficiently emboldened to use disruptive tactics, so intense was the resentment against Soviet rule.[17] Not only was it a national issue, but, on another level, Ukrainian women took it personally: in 1998 and 2000 they were still repeating with fresh

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[14] Dawson (1996:69) notes that the intelligentsia would have had access to foreign news since 1985, when the USSR ceased its jamming of international radio broadcasts (from Radio Liberty, Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation BBC). All official news sources in Ukraine remained silent on the magnitude of the disaster and managed to misinform the public for another two years (to 1989). The writers' union output, the only venue for frank discussion of the nuclear incident in 1987-1989, was not widely accessible.

[15] The Americans for Human Rights in Ukraine (AHRU) supported by grants from the National Endowment for Democracy NED, was also involved with Zelenyj Svit. Bozhena Olshanivska (2006) writes that 250 Americans participated in the Odessa-Kyiv Peace March of 1988. She calls the march a "Gorbachev show," nonetheless it was an opportunity for the AHRU it was an opportunity to meet with Ukrainian Helsinki Group and Zelenyj Svit activists. In Cherkasy, they met with Lev Khmelkowsky (now an employee of the Ukrainian Weekly/Svoboda newspaper), then head editor of the Cherkasy TeleRadioKompanija, TV/Radio Station.

[16] In Cherkasy Oblast protesters halted the construction of a new Atomic Energy Station in Chyhyryn (see Dawson 1996:75). Several women in Cherkasy related to me how they collected signatures for petitions against it.

[17] Marples 1986, 1991; Wilson 2000; Motyl 1993; and Dawson 1996, are all good sources for a discussion of the Soviet government's perceived cover up of the radioactive hazard presented by the Chornobyl disaster, which heightened awareness of Moscow's colonial stance towards Ukraine and brought Ukrainian alienation regardless of passport nationality to a critical point.

indignation the fact that Party officials did nothing to prevent their children from radiation exposure, allowing them to participation in the scheduled May Day parade in Kyiv a few days after the disaster while the children of the party elite were being secretly evacuated to safety.[18] With feelings of alienation from the leadership reaching a critical point, sentiments quickly grew anti-nuclear and then decidedly nationalist (Dawson 1996:73), when conditions led to the ascendance of Rukh.[19]

When Gorbachev suggested that women focus on domestic duties (Marsh 1996:287), he also expected them to feel indebted to and obligated to support the Soviet government.[20] The response was less than enthusiastic (Pavlychko 1996:308, Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000:266-7) when the women's councils came under the SWC umbrella[21], a body heretofore divorced from the local women's groups (Sperling 1999:108; Racciopi and See 2000:215). The state's intention was to harness women's heightened political consciousness and provide a channel for

[18] One of my interlocutors, a former Kyiv Transit Authority employee told me that she, the wife of a former high Soviet government official, honestly believed that the Chornobyl disaster was brought purposely upon Ukraine (which makes no sense, even from a geographical argument).

[19] Dawson (1996) argues that Ukraine's anti-nuclear activism was to some degree (not completely) a front for nationalism, a view supported by Ukraine's post-independence resumption of its nuclear program. As part of the USSR, Ukraine has had nuclear power since 1977. Ukraine is currently heavily dependent on nuclear energy, with 15 reactors (4 in Rivne, 2 in Khmelnytsky, 3 in Southern Ukraine and 6 in Zaporizhzhia) generating about half of its electricity. In 2009 Ukraine got 41% of its power from coal and gas (in equal parts); 48% from nuclear energy and 7% from hydro. It gets its nuclear services and fuel from Russia.

[20] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (2000 fn3) quote Gorbachev as saying that "Women, who continually experience the paternal care of the party, support its policy of speeding up the socio-economic development of the country with all their heart."

[21] Also during the summer of 1990, the World Congress of Women was held in Moscow, organized by the Women's International Democratic Federations, originally organized by the SWC in 1945. By the late 1980s, the WIDF was a large international women's organization embracing 136 national organizations from 118 socialist, capitalist and developing countries. Almost three thousand women from 154 countries attended, but the conference did not make special arrangements to involve the Soviet women's councils.

their effective political participation within the official system (e.g. Taranenko 1989).[22] Later, these SWC-directed women's councils were viewed as potential infrastructure for a post-Soviet women's movement (Racciopi and See 2000:215-216; Browning 1992:97) as there were no other organizations wielding comparable human and material resources at the time.[23] The close ties that the women's councils enjoyed with the trade unions that controlled social insurance and managed the sanatoriums and resorts for tourism, physical training, sports, and children's recreation were very valuable social and political capital. The Soviet era positioning of the women's councils also underscores the framing of women as "working mothers" within the Soviet system of representation, and sets the stage for various forms of maternalist activism that continues as a main channel of protest into the years of transition-independence (Hrycak 2002:67).

Feminist groups were just getting underway in Russia when a related and equally remarkable grassroots development was uniting women who were neither intellectuals nor scholars or feminist insiders in political activism that was erupting outside of the usual Soviet women's venues (Marsh 1996:287).[24] The first of these groups, self-organized by mothers of

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[22] Liudmyla Taranenko's (1989:8-9) article "While We are Still Together" in Radianska Zhinka is an example of Ukrainian activist venting, but also it is an appeal to women to use their access to the workplace and community women's councils to press for the environment's return to ecological health. The editors of the women's journal encouraged women to take Taranenko's words to heart and to write in with suggestions about how women might approach ecological issues within their own communities.

[23] Linda Racciopi and Katherine See (2000:216) note that in Russia these women's councils ultimately banded as a voluntary union under the name of the Union of Women of Russia. This organization, "employing powerful national and international connections forged during the communist era" became the first interpreter for the West of the gendered aspects of the early Russian transition. In Ukraine, a parallel union appeared as the Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy (1991).

conscripts into Soviet military service, appeared in 1989 in Moscow.[25] By June 1990 the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers had established itself on an all-Union level (Marsh 1996:289) and held its first all-Union congress in September 1990 in Moscow (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000:268). Mothers—including Ukrainian women who shared many concerns in common with all mothers of Soviet soldiers[26]—were moved to protest by Soviet army abuse leading to injury and death of their sons. Earlier, they may have remained stoic in their grief (see Elkner 2004) or at most turned to the women's councils to mediate for reparations; now they took to the street.

By the summer of 1990, women's activism in the USSR was starting to fragment along lines of nationality, and a growing number of organizations arose on a republican basis. Optimistic observers projected that these groups too could provide women with political experience for a future women's movement (Nechemias 1991:79).[27] Local mothers' committees started to form on Ukrainian territory in the fall of 1989 (Olynyk 2000); and in July 1990 the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of Ukraine (OSMU) headed by Liudmyla D. Trukhmanova, a

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[24] Rosalind Marsh (1996:288-289) categorizes the unofficial women's groups of the late perestroika as political (a category which includes the Rukh-related groups), feminist (groups devoted to consciousness-raising); women's professional associations and (most numerous) the grassroots mothers' groups, the best known being the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers.

[25] Sperling (1999:206) reports an interview with V. Mel'nikova, press secretary of the CSM, in which she relates that "Our first group gathered in spring 1989, because their boys were taken from their institutes of higher education into the army." (Registered students are exempt.)

[26] It was no secret that Soviet army conscripts were often subjected to torture, starvation and humiliation, routinely denied medical care, even murdered or provoked into suicide. See the Summer 2000 issue of Give and Take,Vol 3/Issue 2, where it is reported that 5-11 thousand Soviet soldiers died annually due to hazing violence and abuse by army officers. See also Bohachevsky-Chomiak (2000:268).

[27] Nechemias (1991:79) expected that women "will be drawn into national movements and may also form separate organizations to pursue particular goals...In the long run, participation in national causes may spur the development of a women's movement by facilitating opportunities for women to learn relevant skills and to experience a struggle for liberation."

Bulgarian-Ukrainian, became the first formal organization recognized upon Ukraine's Declaration of Sovereignty on July 16. Pyskir 1994 describes OSMU activism as a critical component of the wider movement towards Ukraine's independence: as a swelling mobilization of women and a formidable political force cooperating with the anti-nuclear and then with the Rukh independence movement and an instrumental agent in the establishment of an independent Ukrainian military.[28] In August 1990 the OSMU held its first convention and mass rally in Zaporizhzhia (the site of Ukraine's largest nuclear facility) during which they declared support for an independent Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, essentially a nationalist demand.[29] The OSMU was officially registered on September 30, 1990 as a national advocacy group and thus, they became the first—not just the first *women's*—organization to formally register in Ukraine.[30]

The committees from Ukraine attended the September 1990 All-Union Congress of the CSM in Moscow, even though the Ukrainian groups were already in the process of separating

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[28] Bohdan Pyskir (1994) relates how the OSMU complicated the draft for the USSR in 1990 by providing safe houses for soldiers who were unwilling to return to their Soviet military units, but willing to serve in a specifically Ukrainian army. Although the OSMU is currently classified as a social welfare organization (UNDP Gender Analysis of Ukraine 1999, Smoliar 2000; Sperling 1999) it is unique in its perestroika grassroots origins and in its social movement organization (SMO) status.

[29] Svitlana Kassian's interviews with me (2000) are relevant to the question of the ideology motivating the Ukrainian OSM's activity. Bohachevsky-Chomiak (2000) sees the women's grievances as individual, not ideologically motivated and claims that the label *nationalist* was attributed to them pejoratively by Soviet-sympathizing detractors as well as by the ever-hopeful nationalist Ukrainian diaspora and home-territory patriots. However, both Pyskir (1994) and Olynyk (2000:70) accept that the OSMU was motivated by a nationalist agenda judging solely from its programmatic actions. On a motivational level, it is impossible to know the thoughts of every movement participant, but the leadership of the OSMU (Kassian being one of them) does not reject the framing as nationalist. Moreover, several of the OSMU leaders were not mothers of soldiers themselves, but were in fact deeply involved with the Rukh movement.

[30] Zelenyj Svit was the first independent organization to register during perestroika, July 27, 1989. The OSMU was the first to register in post-Soviet Ukraine after July 1990, and received a grant from the Transatlantic US-EU Civil Society Initiative Program for Ukraine.

out of the All-Union framework. Svitlana Kassian, the head of the OSMU chapter in Cherkasy in 2000, was among the delegates at the 1990 Moscow meeting and was among the women granted an audience with Gorbachev whom he promised to create a Presidential Inquiry Commission to investigate army conditions. Kassian maintained, however, that the meeting only strengthened her conviction that Ukraine should have a separate army that could be more easily monitored. [31] During 1990 and 1991, when the actions of the Committee of Soldier's Mothers were "frustrating the draft for the Soviet Army" (Wilson 1997:81-82) resentment against Ukrainian national ambitions was running high. Kassian told me that around the time of the Referendum for Ukrainian Independence on December 1, 1991, the mutilated bodies of many young Ukrainian draftees were returned to their mothers with the Ukrainian national symbol, the trident, carved into their backs.[32]

Earlier in 1991, on March 17, the people of Ukraine voted in a referendum on proposed Union Treaty that would create a federation of soviet states. The OSMU was party to a women's coalition in support of Ukrainian independence against the Union Treaty (Kolomayets 1991:1,10).[33] On March 8, International Women's Day, the women of Rukh (that is the newly-organized Soiuz Ukrainok, see below) spearheaded a rally which resulted in the most visible

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[31] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (2000:269) relates that over the course of 1990 the women of OSMU had already been agitating for a separated Ukrainian army and had started organizing the safehouses for soldiers unwilling to return to their distant Soviet posts, even while the Soviet Ukrainian Parliament was still deliberating its next move.

[32] Kassian insisted that these were not isolated incidents, and they speak to a specific anti-Ukrainian political climate, which is confirmed by Julie Elkner (2004:5).

[33] Kolomayets (1991:1,10) reported that USSR Deputy Vilen Martyrosian, a colonel of the Soviet Army and Rukh sympathizer who also worked closely with the women of the OSMU, addressed a mass rally in Rivne shortly before March 17 asking the electorate to deliver a *no* vote on the Union Referendum, that is, Gorbachev's proposed Union Treaty that would create a federation of soviet states, and to vote *yes* for Ukraine's sovereignty and a republican plebiscite.

mass demonstration by women of the period.[34] Participating in the rally, other than the Soiuz Ukrainok and the OSMU, were women of the Committee of Families with Many Children and the Mama-86 group (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000:270).

This women's coalition was a significant and, in the barely post-Soviet context, radically innovative organizational cohort: (1) The Committee of Families with Many Children, which began forming in 1989, represents a subset of women remain in the women's councils sphere[35] whose members-clients constitute a pre-existing Soviet category that continues to be concerned with the preservation of social support and state benefits in a post-Soviet context;[36] (2) Mama-86, which was founded in 1990 by a group of mothers in Kyiv after hearing the American Dr. Gale speak on the hazards of exposure to radiation and is still a high-profile environmental activist group working on industrial pollution and clean water supply issues;[37]and (3) The Soiuz

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[34] Kolomayets (1991:1, 10) estimated that the movement of democratic opposition numbered some 633,000 Rukh members and over five million Rukh sympathizers at this point (1991:1,10).

[35] Hrycak (2002:69) notes that by 1993 these groups were in close relations with the former women's councils. Indeed, in my fieldwork in Cherkasy in 2000, I found that the local women's councils invariably reported cooperation with a number of satellite groups including the Organization of Families with Many Children, federations of families with disabled children, vulnerable families, pensioners, and various youth groups and professional clubs.

[36] David Lane (1992:266) explains that since "additional entitlement is available to women also who have two or more children under twelve years of age; these women also have priority for leave in the summer or at holiday time and the right to two extra weeks unpaid leave and fourteen days paid leave per annum to look after a sick child," that is, working mothers would be on the trade union lists as eligible for extra benefits.

[37] Mama-86 has no fixed membership. It was registered as a charitable organization caring for health and environment issues as they affect women and children. Today Mama-86 is a national environmental NGO network of 17 organizations from various regions of Ukraine and active partner in Women in Europe for a Common Future. In 1997, it kicked off the Drinking Water in Ukraine campaign along with 11 organizations from its network. The Mama-86 Drinking Water Campaign was instrumental in getting the Cabinet of Ministers to approve the National

Ukrainok (also translated as the Union of Ukrainian Women[38]) obviously named for the Galician women's organization of 1917-39, which was created by women Rukh activists for the purpose of channeling women's talents into promotion of the national project.

The Soiuz Ukrainok had taken shape a month after the Rukh founding Congress in 1989 and a scant 18 months before the March 1991 Referendum on the initiative of Nadia Kharchuk, a Rukh activist in Lviv, from a core of 30 female Rukh members who had begun to meet regularly in Lviv. By February 1990, this group was ready to legalize their existence with a formal statute, and elected a coordinating council of 20 persons, including Atena Pashko (wife of future Rukh leader Vyacheslav Chornovil). Thus, Atena Pashko, a poet and the widow of fallen Rukh founder, activist and leader (1997- 1999), Vyacheslav Chornovil,[39] was neither the organization's first head nor its original organizer, as is often assumed. Pashko would later be elected the organization's president at the founding congress held in Kyiv in December 1991 and held the post until 2001, when she was succeeded by Lilia Hryhorovych, deputy to Parliament.

In its still-Soviet context, the Soiuz Ukrainok was, like the other organizations of the March 8 coalition sympathetic to a maternalist stance, but it was also, like the OSMU, distinctive in its contentious Ukrainian civic-mindedness. By 1992 seventy women's groups had affiliated with the Soiuz Ukrainok, which registered as an All-Ukraine women's organization on February 17, 1992. Because of the diversity of projects taken up by these groups, the organization

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Environmental and Health Action Plan in October 2000. Mama-86 was not active in Cherkasy in 2000, as far as I know.

[38] Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000 refers to the Soiuz Ukrainok alternately as "Women's Union" or "Union of Ukrainian Women". In order to be clear, I simply refer to them as *Soiuz Ukrainok.*

[39] Vyacheslav.Chornovil succeeded Ivan. Drach (1990-1997) as head of Narodnyj Rukh Ukrainy in October 1997, but died on March 25, 1999 in what many considered a suspicious automobile accident on the highway between Kyiv and Cherkasy enroute to Kirovograd

established sections devoted to politics, culture, and ethnographic work. They established Ukrainian reading rooms in army barracks, created discussion groups in the schools of Lviv, visited institutions with lectures, and distributed humanitarian aid (most likely provided by the diaspora). Their work was not limited to the propagation of Mother's Day in Ukraine (though they did this, too) and they revived other Ukrainian traditional holidays as well, such as the Feast Day of Saint Nicholas (December 19) as a means of re-socializing children and young families to non-Soviet Ukrainian customs.

The most significant work of the Soiuz Ukrainok, however, was in the politicization of women's activism in a Ukrainian, non-Soviet direction. Yaroslava Shurma, head of the political section, coordinated the organizations' political platform, ran conferences, arranged radio interviews and television appearances, and headed the organizing committee for the March 8 referendum rally. In 1989 she organized a conference on "women and the struggle for the freedom of Ukraine" (my translation) that was attended by women from Ukraine and also co-ethnics from Lithuania and Russia. The organization expanded rapidly in the western oblasts of Ukraine and made inroads in the central and eastern areas, bringing a new style of nationally-conscious collective women's activism compatible with liberal women's rights feminism to oblasts that had a longer history under Soviet rule.

Building Institutions: the Post-1991 Ascendance of the Traditional Organizations

The modern Russian women's movement had as its foundation a feminist movement that began in 1979 with the first appearance of Mamonova's feminist almanac (which also coincided with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and creating the context for the first soldiers' mothers' protests). The swift arrest of several of the most prominent early feminists brought them to the attention of the West (see Holt 1985); by 1989 the Russian feminists had published a manifesto

(Marsh 1996:288)[40] and in April-May of 1990 established a Center for Gender Research within the Institute for Socio-Economic Problems of the Population within the Academy of Sciences in Moscow (Marsh 1996:288; Racciopi and See 2000:220-221).[41] Contacts with Western feminists facilitated the participation of Soviet women in large women's forums, in the U.S., in Alushta,[42] and in a 1990 women's congress in Moscow held on an All-Union basis. In March 1991 Russian activists organized the First Independent Women's Forum in Dubna near Moscow.[43]

This perestroika-era activity in Russia does not amount to a feminist movement (Buckley 1992:54; Lipovskaja 1992:79[44]) even if among the new non-SWC affiliated groups there were self-avowedly feminist ones (Buckley 1992:62). Even more so in Ukraine there were only faint glimmers of feminism at the time: a few young academics from Ukraine had opportunity to study in Moscow or abroad where they learned of feminism—for example, Svitlana Kupryashkina

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[40] I am referring to the manifesto "How We Solve the Women's Problem" written by A Posadskaia, N Zakharova and N Rimashevskaia published on Women's Day March 8, 1989.

[41] The Institute was headed by the feminist Natalia Rimashevskaia and the Gender Center's first director was the feminist Anastasiia Posadskaia

[42] See Olga Lipovskaja (1996) and Racioppi (1997:128). The World Summit in the US in May 1990 and the Soviet-American conference in Alushta in November 1990 represented opportunities for official women from the USSR to meet American feminists. The Russian feminist Gender Center opened in Moscow, April 1990.

[43] The activist-scholars at the Moscow Center for Gender Studies were the organizers of the First Independent Women's Forum at Dubna March 29-31 in 1991 and the Second one again in November 1992. The Independent Women's Forum, which created a network of women's groups in Russia, is the sister association of the Center for Gender Studies arising out of the organization of these conferences The First Independent Women's Forum in Dubna, north of Moscow on 29-31 March 1991 (which put out the slogan"Democracy without women is not real democracy")—was the first independent women's conference in Russia since the All-Russian Women's Congress of 1908.

[44] Lipovskaia, a Leningrad feminist activist and editor of the *Zhenskoe Chtenie* journal, contrasted the situation in the USSR with that of parts of Eastern Europe, including Poland and Czechoslovakia, where there were beginnings of feminist movement (1992:79).

(2007) [45] and Solomea Pavlychko (1992a) [46]—and returned to promote feminism in Ukraine at the cusp of independence. In general, however, during perestroika and very early transition, feminist contacts and exposure to feminist materials would have been mostly Russia-mediated and not regularly available. Besides, in 1990-1991 Ukraine was in the throes of extrication from the USSR, which had greater consequences for the subordinate Soviet Republic than it did for Russia, the center of the Soviet Ministerial social infrastructure.

The First Women's Forum of March 1991 in Dubna, organized by the Moscow Gender Center, was the first independent women's conference in Russia since the All-Women Congress of 1908 (the last at which the Ukrainian women had voiced their views). The first forum involved few Ukrainian women; but at least one Ukrainian organization participated in the Second Dubna Women's Forum in November1992, to which many came from the CIS beyond the Russian Federation and from the West (Sperling 1999: 9; Racciopi and See 1997:2, 127-149). During this period, Winrock International started organizing the US-NIS Women's Consortium (1990).[47] Although at first the Winrock served Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia under one

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[45] Svitlana Kupryashkina was a graduate of Kyiv's Shevchenko University who participated in the first Gender Seminar in the USSR in Moscow in 1991, organized by UNESCO and supported by the Union of Soviet Women and by the Gender Research Center of the USSR Academy of Sciences. While in the U.S., she made contact with the diaspora (noted in the UNWLA's Our Life magazine). In 1990 she founded the first Center for Women's Studies in Kyiv.

[46] Solomea Pavlychko (1958-1999) daughter of the founder of the Shevchenko Language Society in Kyiv, who was a visiting professor January-April 1990 at the CIUS in Edmonton, returned to Kyiv a feminist and Rukh activist. She attended a meeting in March 1991 of the Canadians for Rukh Committee during which she spoke about the "feminist movement in Ukraine." From May 12 to March 25 1991 she wrote the letters published as Letters from Kyiv (1992) in which she professes her feminism.

[47] Sperling (1999:241-243) calls the US-NIS Women's Consortium an "artificial coalition" and describes the creation in December 1995 of the Association of Independent Women's Organizations that by March 1996 was working very well as a coalition.

(Russophone and inevitably Russia-centric) umbrella, it entered Ukraine in 1992, setting up a separate (bilingual Ukrainian-Russian) operation in Kyiv.

By 1992 Ukraine had a heterogeneous collection of women's organizations. The All-Ukraine federated national associations are the women's organizations with the highest public visibility. These groups (which include the Soiuz Ukrainok) are commonly classified (indigenously and by outside scholars) as *traditional.* [48] The term traditional is an ambiguous category, since it can be taken to mean organizations referencing themselves to a historical antecedent; organizations with a large All-Ukraine territorial structure (and hence with a somewhat Soviet traditional hierarchical appearance[49]); or, as Hrycak 2006 explains it, organizations that adhere to a traditional definition of gender roles, therefore taking a relatively conservative, potentially un-feminist stance. Along with their deficiency of feminism, it appears that a concern with the politics of transition (nationalist, neo-nationalist, neo-socialist) also earned these organizations a reputation as being "political" or even "too political" at the expense of feminism (Pavlychko 1997:229; Kupryashkina 1997 and others). Unfortunately, Western

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[48] The phrase *traditional women's organizations* was used by Smolyar and adopted by the UNDP for its 1999 publication, Gender Analysis of Ukraine. Hrycak 2006 uses the term to denote women's organizations that resist making radical changes in gender relations. The typologies used in UNDP1999, Smolyar 2000 and Marsh 1996, are similar, categorizing organizations as either traditional, social welfare oriented or feminist. Sperling 1999 also employs contrasting terms *traditionalist* vs *feminist* to convey ideological differences.

[49] Arguably, the designation *traditional* could be applied for reasons having to do with organizational structure as well. Yulia Tykhomyrova of the Counterpart Creative Center in Kyiv told me that organizations were officially required to register on territorial levels that reflected the Soviet territorial administration system of oblasts, cities, and towns/villages. In order to register as an organization of significance on a district level, there would need to be proof of three town or village chapters. To register on the "oblast level", three chapters were required within the oblast territory. Each chapter must be shown to have at least three (verifiable) members belonging at that location. Ten or more people were required for "collective membership," a Soviet-era practice maintained by the Spilka in the post-Soviet period.

NGOs viewed these organizations, despite their great potential to reach the women in their provincial grassroots, as too "old school" to be appropriate vehicles for gender reform (Browning1992:98; Hrycak 2002:71).

After the very early 1990s, support for the development of civil society by foreign donors started to shift to more support for feminist activism to the detriment of more nation-building projects in which the All-Ukraine traditional organizations were engaged, despite the fact that these larger organizations represented a huge human resource, embracing most of the country's women activists. By the mid 1990s there were three channels of movement mobilization resources fueling Ukraine's developing NGO landscape: (1) state resources controlled by the nomenklatura; (2) diaspora funds and information networks; and (3) influx of funds through Western aid organizations. The first in Ukraine was the Soros International Renaissance Foundation (IRF) in Kyiv which started supporting Ukrainian and Ukrainophone civil society as of April 1990. The IRF promoted women's NGOs and provided grants for the translation of feminist literature and the development of women's studies in Ukraine.[50] Other than Winrock's program, the establishment of the UNDP Gender in Development Program[51] in Kyiv did much to promote feminist/gender awareness in Ukraine.

While these influential agents were establishing themselves in Ukraine, it is reasonable to think, on the model of the German women's movement (Lang 1997:102), that Ukraine's

[50] The lack of feminist literature in Ukrainian translation was remedied by IRF funding and support for Solomea Pavlychko's Osnovy Publishing House. There was also an internet journal Kruhlovyd produced by the Kyiv Gender Center at the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences. The independent culturological journal "Ji" published in Lviv, devoted volume 17 (2000) to the topic of Gender Studies in Ukraine. Sofia Onufriv and Oksana Kis were special editors for this volume, which shows the late Solomea Pavlychko (1958-99) on the cover.

[51] In 2000, the UNDP Gender program was head by Larisa Kobelianska (interview December 2000) who also founded the Ukraine 50/50 Women's League of Voters.

organized women too may have been caught up in the work of institution-building in the transitional period. Of all the women's organizations of the early transition, only the Ukrainian heirs to the Soviet Women's Council (SWC) had access to a ready Soviet-era institutional foundation, formalized in 1987 when Gorbachev allowed for the creation of nine republican-level SWCs (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000:276).[52] Maria Orlyk, a vice-president of the Soviet Council of Ministers with 12 years of Cabinet-level experience, was at that time appointed head of the Ukrainian Republic's Council of Women.[53] Orlyk would soon take the helm of the reorganized successor, the *Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy* (translated by Hrycak 2006 as the Confederation of Women of Ukraine, hereon referred to as the *Spilka*), which is still the largest of Ukraine's women's organizations.

Orlyk and other Spilka leaders feel they have the bragging rights as the first (by rights of pre-existence) and premier women's organization of independent Ukraine. The organization was officially registered in July 1991, after which it commenced the formal reorganization of the Soviet women's councils in September 1991; the Spilka took two years to conduct regional conferences in all oblasts of Ukraine to this end, or, as Bohachevsky-Chomiak notes, "Orlyk used [her official position within] the [Republican Soviet Women's] Council to revitalize old Party lines and to keep women in an organizational structure" (2000:267fn4). There were also suspicions, since the CPU was banned from 1991 to 1993, that resources that the Party was

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[52] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (2000:266) contends that the creation of separate Republican Women's Councils was a concession to the separate soviet socialist republics, where discontent was rising. She also points out that, in the case of Ukraine, the forming of a new Ukrainian Council of Women also unintentionally revived the memory of the Ukrainian Council of Women of the 1920s.

[53] Significantly, her assistants were Svitlana S. Evtushenko, Deputy Chairman of the Ukrainian Trade Union Council, and Z. I. Kovshova, employee of the Darnytsia textile factory near Kyiv (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000:267).

required to relinquish were laundered through the coffers of the newly registered Spilka.[54] But it is true also that this network represents some of the cooler heads of the perestroika period and that many Ukrainian women work within the ranks of this organization, both out of idealism and personal career interests.

In July 28, 2000, the Spilka's headquarters at 16 Instytuts'ka was not far from the Parliament and presidential residence and still bears the bronze plate identifying it as the Republican office of the Ukrainian Council of Women (Soviet phrasing), despite the fact that the new official Ukrainian National Council of Women has just been accepted (on July 2) into the International Council of Women in Helsinki. When I spoke to Maria Orlyk, I was mostly curious to hear about how the Women's Council reorganized into the Spilka, but her response was vague. Orlyk limited her comments to the fact that the women's councils, once a Soviet feature under the SWC but now they are independent women's organizations of the *Republic* (using the 1990-1991 term *Respublikanski Zhinochi Orhanizatsiji*) and have formed their own independent umbrella. Reflecting Soviet practices, the Spilka continues to recruit on a collective basis, that is, whole groups are considered unit-members. Soviet accounting practices also allowed Orlyk to quickly calculate that with some 10 thousand local groups, her organization was close to 100 thousand members strong.[55]

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[54] Bohachevsky Chomiak (2000:281 fn4) notes that the banned CPU was required to relinquish property to the state, but in a footnoted reference, citing two Ukrainian sources, she claims that Spilka accounts were used to launder or save CPU coffers. The text of the footnote reads: "Respublikanska Rada Zhinok" Visti z Ukrainy, no. 4 (1987):2: "Valentyna S. Shevchenko, who served as the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine and V. A. Ivashko, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and Gorbachev Party stalwart, helped organize the Council. Later, charges were made that the Women's Councils were used to launder party coffers," see Samostiina Ukraina, no. 13 (September 1991):3)."

Since independence, the Spilka has taken on patriotic and civic nationalist stances and attends primarily to the economic self-sufficiency of women. The members of the higher level women's councils—that is, those on the oblast and district (*rayon* within oblast) levels, which are higher in status than the women's councils on the grassroots level, primarily in the villages—are generally prominent women occupying key positions in education, industry or social welfare provision.[56] In the first decade of Ukraine's independence, this organization has been supportive of the presidential administrations and has refrained from the kind of oppositional confrontations engaged by the women of organizations associated with the Socialist Party of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Communist Party (who are vehemently opposed to post-Soviet developments).[57] However, in 2000 the Spilka, despite its official neo-nationalist positions, continues to be viewed in some quarters as a shadow presence of the former Soviet order.

The women who maintain the Spilka are openly former communists,[58] usually identifying themselves in the post-Soviet period as *pozapartijni* (nonpartisan). The organization has rejected

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[55] Bohachevsky-Chomiak (2000:275) cites 50 thousand, but by Orlyk's calculations, 10 thousand school- and workplace-based groups with collective membership (groups of ten qualify for collective membership) add up to a total membership of 100 thousand. Orlyk insisted that the work of her organization touches the lives of almost a million people.

[56] It is an interesting and sometimes disorienting linguistic trick, to take advantage of the fact that in local parlance, *spilka* means union/confederation –i.e. a group or organization. So it can be made ambiguous whether one is talking about the official local chapter of the Spilka organization or some not specifically identified *spilka* (group) of women which may not identify specifically with the Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy.

[57] When I interviewed Nina Pokotylo deputy to the Verkhovna Rada from the Socialist Party of Ukraine, and head of the socialist women's organization for the Future of the Children of Ukraine, she complained that Orlyk as head of Spilka was "like Stalin said of Mao Tse Dung—'red on the outside white on the inside.'" She asserted that Orlyk and her organization will support anyone who sits in office at Ukraine's Presidential Administration (interview, October 29, 2000 in Kyiv).

Soviet symbols, since its re-registration with the Ministry of Justice in 1993, but, as Bohachevsky-Chomiak aptly observed, has not adopted any new non-Soviet symbols or logos, either (1997:7). The Spilka also publishes a glossy-covered magazine called *Zhinka* (woman) which is the open successor and heir to the readership of the earlier *Radianska Zhinka* (Soviet Woman), which started its life in 1920 as the *Komunarka Ukrainy* (the Ukrainian woman communist).[59]

The discourse of the Spilka is immediately recognizable in their ready invocations of peace for the avoidance of armed conflict the preservation of civility, suggesting that these concerns are uniquely theirs. This reflects their SWC heritage (a co-founder of the Women's International Democratic Federation, WIDF, in 1945) and also functions as a discursive barrier between themselves and the perestroika-era nationalist activists, who were often defamed as unruly, drunken mobs. Currently, the Spilka mission expresses both civic patriotism, invoking

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[58] Halyna Martynova, head of the women's council in Chyhyryn explained: "Earlier, a greater part of us belonged to the Communist Party of Ukraine. It was the only party we had, and we were generally CPU members, or at least Komsomol members. But right now, I do not see any CPU members among our women. . But the women do have their political sympathies. The older women, they are inclined to support the communists, simply because they are older! And the younger women, they, apparently have no enthusiasm for the CPU or any party" [interview 2000] Liubov Kononenko, head of the agro-firm 'Bile Ozero' in the village of Biloziria near Cherkasy confirmed that the members of the women's council were not necessarily expected to be CPU members in the past. "They were simply women with a calling"—the *aktyvistky* (activists).[interview August, 1998]

[59] Edited by Lidia Mazur, the *Zhinka* continues to be popular as a women's magazine. The first issue came out in November 1920 as *Komunarka Ukrainy* (Female communist of Ukraine). The November 2000 issue of *Zhinka* is hailed as the "80th Anniversary jubilee issue" in which the editor's note relates: "Of all the magazines, we got special recognition because we actually did mass-organizing work. Among our readership, we had the mekhanizatorky ("mechanizers of agricultural work) and we did a story on it "Mekhanizator, profession of our times"—and we embraced all whose who worked in the women's councils, in the regional and oblast level women's councils, and simply brought together all of our activists, contributors to the magazine, and the women who were the war veterans of the Great Patriotic War" (Zhinka, November 2000 ISSN 0131-6753)

protection of Ukraine's independence, and liberal feminism, with promises to help women survive the transformations of the economy. The Spilka addressed the latter quite well, using its monopoly on resources and influence to help maintain women in their posts or provide them the training they would need to take over small businesses ready for privatization.[60]

My field observations in Cherkasy confirm Hrycak's view that the Spilka itself is a significant sector of the machinery of the state and that it was even complicit with machinations to "consolidate autocratic rule, launder money and fix elections" (2006:92 fn46). The Spilka was uniquely poised to exploit a certain vacuum at the cusp of Ukraine's move towards independence and, as individuals known to and trusted by the male cadres of the (ex)-CPU, former women's council activists would have been favored for hiring into the new state administration. They also may have had easier access to the initial phase of Ukraine's privatization processes. As early as 1992, the Spilka organized the Coordinating Council of Women Entrepreneurs (1992) and in 1995 created the "Businesswoman Center: The Principles of Entrepreneurship" program, which trained 300 women for employment in the oblast regions as managers of factory-based businesses and as small business owners. For this Spilka won a grant from the Technological Assistance to CIS countries (TACIS) program of the European Union, applying together with the Ministry of Labor as their government partner. Orlyk, as a former Vice Premier of the Cabinet of Ministers, was surely able to recruit the very best of trainers from the areas of tax law, accounting, and management practices for the women in training. Even as late as 2000, this

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[60] Dawson (1996:25) notes that one of the legacies of the Soviet period (alongside resource scarcity and salience of national identities) is that of the manipulation of the distribution of mobilizational resources. Fish (1995) describes how during Russia's early transition formerly/current Communist nomenklatura elites retained positions of privilege with respect to all ilk of resources, including mobilizational-electoral.

unequal access to resources was evident in the contrasting physical circumstances in which I discovered the Spilka and Soiuz Ukrainok, for example**.**

On the day I visited, there was construction going on in the office building housing the Spilka, making access to the upstairs offices inconvenient because the elevator was blocked. I located the office despite its out-dated plaque. Maria Orlyk was expecting me, because Irena Holubieva, the head of the new Ukrainian National Council of Women, with whom I had just met, had called ahead to announce my desire to visit.

> I rang the bell and the door opened onto an old-style office, and I could see down a long corridor from the doorway. There stood a tall woman, her white-grey hair swept softly up into a classic bun, she had on a pastel blouse, softly ruffled and buttoned high at the neck. She was motherly, openly warm. I was amused to find myself making mental notes about her in terms that followed the stereotypical journalistic descriptions of prominent women. She swept me into her office and motioned for me to sit at one side of a small table, placed just in front of her great work desk, and the small table was set for tea. I started to recognize a pattern in the few women's offices (i.e. government offices) I had ventured into so far—the work desk supplemented by a conference table or small table where one could move out of official position into a more democratic space to play the role of hostess with one's guests. Here there were golden doilies against a dark tablecloth, a real porcelain teapot, and biscuits. She took the chair closer to the telephone, just in case. My back was to the door…Maria Orlyk informed me that the last Conference (of the Spilka) was in March 2000, there being a voting conference every three years (1991, 1994, 1997, 2000). All of the Oblast level Spilka organizations send their reports on their activity by February 1, annually. Maria Orlyk instructed me to ask Inna Hubenko, the head of the Cherkasy Oblast Spilka for hers, since there were no statistics or reports available from this office. [field notes, July 28 2000]

Three weeks earlier I had visited the offices of the Soiuz Ukrainok in another section of the city near Sophia Square, where the Cathedral of St Sophia, St Michael's Monastery, and the bronze monument to Bohdan Khmelnystky share space.

I'm off to find the Soiuz Ukrainok office. I have the address (Volodymyrska 6) but do a double take, because it's completely different than anything I had imagined. The building is on the corner of Volodymyrska Street and Provulok Desiatynnoji. To get there I walked by the former KGB prison at 33 Volodymyrska, now the *Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy* (SBU, Security Services of Ukraine) and thought how terrified people were once to hear that address. The building is old and not renovated, and really needs it. It has been painted pink somewhat recently, though. The entrance to the Soiuz Ukrainok is in back, from the *provulok* (lane) side and it really is more like an alley. I had to walk down a narrow driveway, along a very high metal fence, where someone from the neighboring building had posted a sign *Uvaha! Zla sobaka* (Danger! Vicious dog)! Yes, there was the dog, a big angry-looking one, barking loudly from behind the fence. I was more than a little unnerved… There was a flight of concrete stairs going down into a covered basement entrance. It was cold and clammy at the bottom of the stairs. At the basement entrance, immediately to the right, a door marked *toilet* had been left a little ajar, revealing a toilet at the far end on a raised platform.

In the first large room, there was a large conference table and one desk at the far right end of the room, where a woman sat with a telephone. Two women were standing there talking to her. The woman behind the desk was Motria Brunko, a middle-aged brunette with handsome features, her straight hair pulled into a French twist in back. She did not know about my appointment, since apparently I had talked to someone else when making my arrangements. But never mind! Motria explained to me the the Soiuz Ukrainok has an All Ukraine coordinating council, to which all of the heads of the oblast organizations belong (there are 28, three of whom are from Crimea). She took out paper files where she had statistics regarding membership, updated quarterly, showing membership totals and the number of chapters in each oblast. They don't keep information about social characteristics of their membership, she says, but adds with confidence, that for the most part, it is "the intelligentsia".

She takes out a separate file marked #24: Cherkasy Oblast in which she finds reports from the head of the Cherkasy Oblast chapter, Alla Buchkovska. She was all praises for Alla—energetic, able to draw people in, has created a number of new chapters. "Under Alla, it's growing! In 1998, there are ten chapters, and in 2000, already

> 21 chapters!" According to the file, in 1998, there were 97 members and in 2000 there are 293. In the Eastern areas of Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Donetsk, there are very few members –"these are Russophone areas"—but in the western and central oblasts, there are more. Motrija handed me her originals, in fact the whole file, and suggested that I might want to take it down the block to a copy machine at the post office on Volodymyrska.
>
> I decided to sit at the conference table and copy several sheets of information out long-hand while I observed the comings and goings in the office.I noticed how cold it is in the basement, despite the fact that this is July. Motria has a little space heater by her desk. She tells me that the basement is really very damp the whole summer, until the central heating goes on again in the fall. (on October 15). And they say that the coldest days of the fall are the first two weeks of October! She said that she wrote four letters already to the government for a change in office space, but there is no answer. They have three rooms here, this waiting room, and an archives room.
>
> Later, when Zoya Milchenko, who is head of the Boryspil (Kyiv suburb) chapter came by, we sat in the cramped back room behind Motria's front desk and drank tea out of chipped cups. Zoya's chapter uses a room down the hall for their meetings. They invite me to return, because there is much to tell and learn. They said that there was a Frenchwoman who was here looking for information about women organizations, and they showed me a copy of the extensive questionnaire they had filled out for her research project. They make a point of emphasizing the fact that the Soiuz Ukrainok was never a governmental organization and never had any subsidy from the state. Their members pay dues, but most are pensioners and don't have much. [field notes, July 4, 2000]

The Soiuz Ukrainok's official activities are described as taking four directions: the national revival, educational and charitable works, and the support of women in the civil society. The organization is officially and in practice nonpartisan, but most of the women sympathize with the Rukh parties (Rukh and Narodnyj Rukh Ukrainy emerged from a split in 1999). Early in the decade, they supported the Christian Party of Women lead by Olena Horyn' (founded in

Lviv in 1991), but it did not survive Ukrainian politics (Smolyar 2000:23). While the word *soiuz* might superficially suggest a Soviet legacy, the Soiuz Ukrainok resembles its pre-Soviet Galician predecessor in program and style of activism; and indeed its first chapters arose in many of the same village locations where the original Soiuz Ukrainok had been active in the 1920s and 30s (Bilyk 2002).[61] By the early 1990s the organization represented a significant grassroots movement spreading Ukraine-wide.

Ukraine's post-Soviet Soiuz Ukrainok was revived in such a way that it might appear that the initiative had come from the diaspora as much as from the indigenous women themselves. However, the core group had already gelled in Lviv (by February 1990) by the time Bohachevsky-Chomiak, then vice-president of the UNWLA (the U.S. Soiuz Ukrainok, see chapter 4), might have passed the official torch on her trip to attend the first congress of the transnational Association of Ukrainianists in Kyiv in August 1990. During this visit she was invited to address a large Rukh meeting, at which she shared her thoughts on the Ukrainian women's movement and made the encouraging argument that "community organizations, including women's, carried the idea of statehood and even embodied forms of community sovereignty at times when Ukraine could not otherwise exist" (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1990:6). Later that same year, Larysa Skoryk, a Rukh delegate elected to the Ukrainian Parliament in 1990, spoke at a UNWLA conference where she stressed the importance of personal contacts in movement growth, crediting the decision to resurrect the name of Soiuz Ukrainok in Ukraine not "to [the] sentiment for our history and the existence of the *Soiuz Ukrainok* in the past but [to] the knowledge that the *Soiuz Ukrainok* existed without interruption in your persons … that

[61] As per chapter reports supplied to Zoriana Bilyk (2002) when she was compiling documentation for the history of the Soiuz Ukrainok of the Lviv Oblast 1990-2002.

motivated our women to follow in your footsteps" (Skoryk 1990:9). The diaspora and indigenous organizations cooperate but relate to each other as autonomous equals.

The Kyiv-based All-Ukraine and international [62] organization *Zhinocha Hromada* (women's community of Rukh) was founded and headed as of December 1992, by Maria Drach, the wife of the first head of Rukh, Ivan Drach,the prominent intellectual and Ukrainian Parliamentarian. Like Rukh, the Women's Hromada took a strong stance on pluralism, establishing itself as an umbrella for various ethnic organizations.[63] The Women's Hromada also references a historic predecessor, in this case the 19th century Hromada activists of Kyiv. It is quite possible that they were also aware of the Canadian Hromada group of the 1970s through Solomea Pavlychko's contacts at the CIUS University of Alberta, since Pavlychko helped draft their statute and infused it with a distinctly feminist tone. The goals of the Hromada, whose membership is mostly professional and intellectual women, are both patriotic and feminist, including the promotion of women as national and civic political leaders. The Women's Hromada has conducted small business/marketing training programs and founded a business training school for women (supported by TACIS) in 1997. Judging primarily from their organizational logo—the Virgin Oranta[64] with arms upraised in prayer (an image related to the berehynia, which is also used by the ubiquitously advertised Oranta Insurance Company of

[62] The Zhinocha Hromada reportedly has international chapters in the Czech Republic, Russia, France, Latvia, Moldavia, Canada and the USA, but I have not researched this aspect of the organization.

[63] Its member organizations included Ukrainian, Jewish, Tatar groups and a collective of small ethnicities headed by a Korean-Ukrainian, Svidlana Li.

[64] This choice of logo echoes developments in the contemporary Russian feminist movement, which in 1979 experienced a split between the liberal feminists on a Western model and the more religious feminists, who published another samizdat journal called *Maria* (Holt 1985).

Ukraine)—their projected feminism resembles that of the early Leningrad-based group who published the journal, *Maria* (see Holt 1985:242).

In May 1993 (prior to 1994 parliamentary elections) the Women's Hromada held an international conference on "Woman in Nation Building" issues, including equal opportunity for holding political office. The Hromada has consistently promoted the idea of a Gender Expertise Commission at the Ukrainian Parliament, and Maria Drach herself arranged the first hearing on the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in the independent Ukrainian Parliament on July 12, 1995 (Kupryashkina's Center prepared the briefs for reports before Parliament). In June before the September 1995 United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, the Hromada hosted a "Women and Democracy" conference to discuss the Ukrainian Plan of Action. Participants included Iryna Kurowyckyj of New York City, who was then President of the UNWLA, and also head of the NCW/US ("coordinating the work of 33 women's organizations in the US and representing 17 million American women" to quote the conference Proceedings), which was a source of pride, prestige, and hope to the Ukrainian women assembled.

Pavlychko was an active participant in early women's movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s. But after independence, by mid-decade, she had started to criticize the All-Ukraine women's organizations of the democratic front for being more concerned with the national revival than with women's issues. Frustrated with political developments and disillusioned with the prospects of feminism in Ukraine, she lamented that "they have swallowed the rhetoric of national revival and were lost among the scores of political and community organizations advancing similar goals" **(**Pavlychko 1996:229). In other words, she was concerned that by framing their common mission as a nationalist, and in some cases as even an ethno-nationalist,

rather than a feminist one, they were missing the chance to be leaders in the promotion of a specifically women's agenda. The political climate of the mid 1990s was certainly conducive to nationalist fever, being the years of the reconfiguration and resurgence of Ukraine's political left. The initial promise of focusing on women's issues was overshadowed by a struggle for the state (Wimmer 1996).

Searching for Unity in Diversity While Struggling for the State

The Olena Teliha Society: Seeking Recognition from the State

Another organization with close ties to the diaspora is *Tovarystvo Oleny Telihy* (the Olena Teliha Society). First conceived in 1993 as a women's organization at the Oleh Olzhych Foundation publishing house,[65] it was established in June 1994 and registered as an international organization in January 1995. The society is associated with the revived Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in Kyiv, which was diaspora-lead and influenced in the early 1990s, but it is not connected with the political party.[66]

The Olena Teliha Society is the only contemporary Ukrainian women's organization named after a historical personage, Olena Shovhenova Teliha (1906-42). Unlike the feminist activists of the women's movement's pre-Soviet (e.g. Kobrynska, Rudnytska) and Soviet (e.g. Kollontai) periods, the figure of Teliha potentially resonates with a broader (and younger)

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[65] The publishing house is named after Olzhych who was the head of the Cultural Section of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which recruited Olena Teliha in Krakow in 1939.

[66]Because the diasporan OUN was initially reluctant to conduct overt political activity in Ukraine, they provided only indirect support to indigenous Ukrainian parties in 1989-91. In 1992 however, the OUN set up the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists KUN, which was led by Slava Stetsko and had its own women's organization The League of Ukrainian Women, which I encountered in Cherkasy.

Ukrainian female public, due to Teliha's status as a beautiful and romantic literary figure and as a tragic victim of the Nazi occupation of Soviet Ukraine. In February of 1942, Teliha, a western Ukrainian in Kyiv as an activist of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and head of the Ukrainian Writers' Union, was arrested along with the entire staff of the *Ukrajinske slovo* (Ukrainian word) newspaper.[67] She and several of her colleagues were executed in Babij Yar, where a monument to her memory stands near the one honouring the Jewish victims of the same regime.[68]

The organization has enjoyed rapid growth, with 200 chapters reported in 2003.[69] Dedicated primarily to the continuation of the progressive tradition of the Ukrainian organized women's movement, the society focuses on the cultivation of national awareness, the revival of national traditions, and the memory of the suppressed history of Ukraine's liberation struggle. The society approaches the revival of Ukrainian national consciousness through conferences and literary evenings of Teliha's poetry—the lyrical and passionate expression of one woman's dedication to a cause larger than herself—and marked the 90th anniversary of her birth with an All-Ukraine Conference (1997) exploring the example Teliha provides of the "Spiritual and

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[67] Nadia Myronets (1999) Olena Teliha biographer and editor of her collected works, relates that Teliha left for Ukraine in July 1941 with one of the OUN expeditionary or "advance" groups reaching Kyiv ahead of the German Occupation in October 1941. In Kyiv, Teliha edited the literary journal Litavry, an addition to the newspaper Ukrainske slovo (Ukrainian word), and was a member of the Ukrainian National Council in Kyiv.

[68] A cross was erected in Baby Yar in their memory 50 years later, on February 21, 1992. The Olena Teliha society honors her memory on the date of her birth (July 21) because the exact date of her execution is unknown. I was present at the 2000 ceremonies at Babij Yar and at a concert of her poetry set to music, at Kyiv's Middle School #97.

[69] Smolyar (2000:24) reports that the Olena Teliha Society had chapters in 13 oblasts in 1994, in 20 oblasts in 1996. Membership increased tenfold 1994-96; and 1993-2003 it grew from 2000 to 3000 individual members and had over 2000 chapters in all oblasts of Ukraine in 2003.

Community Calling of Women." The society also has a youth wing and maintains a museum dedicated to Teliha that is housed in Middle School #97 in Kyiv.

In its articulation of its feminism, the Olena Teliha Society, whose members are also mostly professional women (many with doctorate degrees) adamantly positions itself as heir to the Ukrainian women's movement begun by Natalia Kobrynska and as partners with diaspora women[70] through the WFUWO in UN-led women's initiatives. Olha Kobets, a journalist and former managing editor of the *Ukrainske Slovo* newspaper has led the Olena Teliha Society since 1996. In March 1999 she was one of the founders of the Ukrainian National Council of Women and travelled to Helsinki when the Ukrainian Women's Council was formally reinstated as a member of the ICW in 2000. In 2004 she participated in the 47th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York in 2004 together with the WFUWO's UN representatives group.

To further women's empowerment, the Society has sponsored small business training and also activist training;[71] but the main thrust of the society's work was exemplified by a conference entitled "The women's movement and the processes of state-building in Ukraine," held during my field work period in 2000 at the Ukrainian Kyiv Mohyla Academy (UKMA). (A conference side event was the dedication at UKMA of a new Resource and Information Center for Women's NGOs in Ukraine and in the Diaspora, a gift from the UNWLA and WFUWO activist Natalia

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[70] The January 2000 issue of the Socieity's magazine *Zhinochyj Svit* (woman's world) which includes two pages in English, thanks the Ukrainian Gold Cross USA (a diasporan women's organization, headed by Natalka Ivaniv) for their financial support of a children's summer camp held in Feodosia on Crimea during which the participants were treated to fieldtrips and creative activities set in a patriotic context including exposure to works of Olena Teliha.

[71] In 1995, the Olena Teliha Society organized a conference, co-sponsored by OWEN of Berlin and GROOTS International of New York City entitled "Communal Self-Help: Activities and Grassroots Women in Transnational Societies."

Danylenko and her husband, who have been prominent benefactors of the Ukrainian women's movement.) Kobets makes good use of the vehicle of her society's quarterly magazine *Zhinchyj Svit* (woman's world) to reflect on her political views and position as a woman leader. In the first issue (January 2000) she as editor made clear her vision that this magazine should strive to provide "food for the intellect, the heart and the cultivation of a nationally conscious generation," filling a void left by the Russophone press. In 2003 the magazine carried Kobets' address to the plenum of her organization's Fourth Congress which explained the importance of support of nation without sacrificing women's rights. The resolutions passed by the congress envision a "monolithic, united, energetic, active organization of women who work for the building of a truly rich and fortunate Ukrainian national state respected within the world community" (2003:10). Her address noted that despite the terms *nation* and *national* having lost some of their former stigma, many of Ukraine's government officials are still reluctant to use these words in official venues, exhibiting a lack of understanding for the value of national pride (Kobets 2003:7). Along these same lines, speaking for the pro-reform and civic nationalist right at an international conference on "The Ukrainian Women's Movement and the processes of nation-building," Kobets argued that the Kuchma government does not recognize the women's organizations as partners and agents of stability. Because of this, the women's organizations are forced to choose whether to oppose the state or to work alongside it. Furthermore, she contends, that the government's failure to act as a nationalizing state (or its retreat from that position), forces Ukrainian civil society and its women's organizations to take this work into their own hands (Kobets 2000:94-95).

Women Confronting the State: Women for the Future of Ukraine's Children

The reconfiguration of the political left looms as a significant development for women's organized activity both in the watchful diaspora and in Ukraine. [72] In 1990 the members of the CPU split along the lines of national communism versus orthodox (CPSU, Moscow loyal) communism. Although the CPU was formally dissolved with its banning on August 30, 1991, its role as the "human infrastructure of the old regime" (Fish 1995:205) was not at all over, neither in the country's representative councils nor in the provision of the necessities of life. When the CPU was allowed to reconstitute itself (holding congresses in March and June of 1993) and officially re-register in October 1993, it was once again the largest political party in Ukraine, with a majority presence in Parliament. Its political position was full nostalgia for the Soviet Union and the bitter condemnation of nationalism.[73] The temporary submerging of the CPU, however, spurred the creation of the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) as a regrouping of the leftist political opposition within the framework of the independent state. [74] Protesting the CPU banning as unconstitutional, the SPU held its founding congress in Kyiv October 26, 1991, and registered on November 25, 1991, taking Oleksander Moroz, the former leader of the communist majority in Parliament (Wilson 1997:104) as their head. Between 1991-1993, the SPU was the

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[72] According to the Political Parties Handbook (PPH) of Ukraine (1999) the leftist front is composed of the SPU (1991) the renewed CPU (1993), the PSPU (1996), the Party of Communists (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine (1992-93 in Dnipropetrovsk) and the Union of Communists and the Communist Party (of laborers).

[73] The PPH (1999:95-96) notes that the new CPU (registered July 19 1993) appealed to the UN General Secretary condemning Ukrainian nationalism: "TV, radio, periodicals have been made into vehicles for nationalist propaganda, disinformation…the cultivation of an individualistic rapacious psychology, the spoiling of the young, the propagation of anti-communist hysteria and anti-Russia sentiment." The first secretary of the Cherkasy Oblast CPU is Yeshchenko,,deputy to the Ukrainian Parliament.

[74] Wilson calls them "former communist moderates who were reconciled to Ukrainian independence" (1997:114).

largest party in Ukraine and became even more impressive once the Agrarian Party of Ukraine (registed January 1992) joined forces with it (Wilson 1997:74, 114)[75]

In 1994 a schoolteacher and former CPU Parliamentarian, Nina Pokotylo,[76] who had become a member of the SPU in its earliest moments, registered a women's organization, the (All-Ukraine) Union of Working Women for the Future of the Children of Ukraine (UWWU).[77] It figures publicly as the only women's organization with a prominent socialist orientation, understood to cooperate closely with both the SPU and the CPU (Smolyar 2000:8), but it represents the sentiments of a broader category of maternalist activists who turn their protest against the post-Soviet state. The socialist and communist oriented protestors have in fact more easily taken up the cause, and rhetoric of the cause, of women and their complaints, grounded fully in hard facts of hardship, have been punishing to Ukrainian nationalist causes, which are cast as being frivolous if not unreasonable or even traitorous in times of dire socio-economic crisis.

During its first organizational meeting in June 1993, the UWWU came out against capitalism, with its reduction of social guarantees. The women also focused on the demographic

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[75] Wilson (1997:74) identifies the Agrarian Union as "the only significant political force in the Ukrainian countryside" outside of western Ukrainian Galicia at the beginning of independence. He explains that the Agrarian Union was formed in September 1990 by the chairmen of the collective farms and heads of the agro-industrial complex i.e. the members of the Soviet-era rural Communist Party organizations and was registered as the Agrarian Party of Ukraine in January 1992.

[76] Nina Pokotylo is noted as being employed as the assistant director of the teaching-training school no. 204 in Kyiv alongside being the co-head of the SPU women's organization and also a member of the SPU political presidium in 1996. (PPH 1999)

[77] Smolyar (2000:8) notes the registration of the Union of Working Women of Ukraine or Union of Working Women "For the Future of the Children" of Ukraine" in 1994. Its first All-Ukraine meeting was in Chernihiv December 1994; regional conferences also were held that year.

crisis, the plight of the youth, and on children's health, appealing in March 1994 to the Attorney General's Office of Ukraine to condemn the "criminal attitude towards the upbringing of today's youth on the part of the Humanitarian Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine." Pokotylo spoke powerfully at the First Parliamentary Hearings on Ukraine's compliance with CEDAW in April 1995 (organized by Maria Drach of Zhinocha Hromada), blaming presidential power for all of Ukraine's societal ills.[78] Pokotylo described her position to me in an interview (October 2000 in Kyiv):

> Some support this regime, which is practically leading to the destruction of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, and there are those who cannot support this regime and cannot accept this terrible dictatorship…At the time of our founding, ours was really the only leftist organization in the country, because it was the women who felt intuitively what was needed, because what happened in 1991 [Ukraine's independence] was the beginning of a horrible tragedy…We do not accept this regimeand consider it necessary to destroy it. It simply cannot be. [interview, October 29, 2000]

A competing socialist position arose mid 1990s with the ouster from Moroz' Socialist Party (SPU) of Natalia Vitrenko (along with V. Marchenko) who founded the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine in February 1996. Her position is that a renewed progressive socialism is the vehicle for social justice in Ukraine. Her party holds sacred the history of the socialist revolution, but frames 1936-1985 as a deformation of socialist ideals. In its condemnation of the dismantling of socialist structures and its calls for more socialist democracy, it d oes not differ greatly from the SPU. But Vitrenko's discourse is less homespun that Moroz' style of talk, and more cliché and programmatically anti-capitalist, anti-market

[78] Because the Parliament was still dominated by the communists, she called for the "abolition of the Presidential system" and for the maintenance of the concentration of power in the *radas* (councils), i.e., the Councils of the Peoples' Deputies.

reform, anti-IMF, and against Ukraine's participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO. Her arguments were not without merit, but Vitrenko was a flamboyant and divisive figure, much derided, discredited and apparently neutralized before the Orange Revolution of 2004.

In the fall of 2000, upon the invitation of Nina Pokotylo's organization, I was in Kyiv at the Moroz SPU headquarters for their All-Ukraine convention. They were (but not obviously to me) deeply involved with the SPU operation mounting an anti-Kuchma campaign in the fall of 2000). They were, however, eager to impress upon me that they were different from the Communist Party per se, claiming that the communists' ideas were no longer realistic. They mentioned that the Union of *Women Workers* (*zhinok trudivnyts*) referred to a communist grouping, and that they, the socialist women, had adjusted their name to Union of *Women* 'For the Future of the Children' of Ukraine to differentiate themselves from the communists. I noticed that in conversation they also sometimes omitted the phrase *of the Children* to call themselves the Union of Women for the Future of Ukraine (which later would serve to confuse them with yet another politically strategic grouping); but they never wavered on their concern for young people growing up in the dire conditions of the economic transition imposed on Ukraine. They called for Moroz to be elected president; and while they did talk about the need to impeach Kuchma, they were not indulging in talk about abolishing the presidential function, which earlier was part of the leftist rhetoric. In 2000 this women's organization openly displayed its allegiance to the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) (all female members of the SPU were automatically members of the women's organization, but not vice-versa), and I met a few who had worked in the election campaigns of Oleksander Moroz, the SPU leader. Most interestingly, during the October 2000 meeting in Kyiv, I spoke with women from various oblasts who

described their methods of establishing women's chapters and especially youth groups, which they proudly identified as a revived Komsomol, explaining that they wanted to instill a sense of community responsibility and morality in the next generation.

Political Exploitation and Manipulation of the Women's Niche

By the end of Ukraine's first independent decade, it seemed that literally every significant political party had attached to itself a women's organization. The socialist Union of Women for the Future of the Children of Ukraine was only one of several that, with varying degrees of transparency, functioned as de facto wings of political parties while being registered with the Ministry of Justice as independent organizations. As preparations for parliamentary elections in 1998 and 2002 got underway, this became an increasingly obvious trend in the political and social life of the women's movement.[79]

The Soiuz Ukrainok, the Zhinocha Hromada, and the Olena Teliha are organizations sometimes described as political in that they have distinct political ideological loyalties, but they are neither gendered wings nor officially under the wing of any political party. The Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (organized in 1992 and headed from 1997-2001 by Yaroslava Stetsko) is very closely linked to the All-Ukraine League of Ukrainian Women (registered in March 1996, and headed by Daria Husiak), which is one of the eleven members of the Ukrainian National Council of Women. Because these organizations emerge from a specific political milieu but are headed by activist women who are not the political party leaders themselves, I would classify these organizations as *organically* political.

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[79] Smolyar mentioned this to me during a reception at a Women's Conference at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, September 1-2, 2000 (personal communication).

Other women's organizations can be seen as being *instrumentally* political, in that they are specifically created by leaders of political parties. These would include the All-Ukraine *Solidarnist* (solidarity) founded by Parliamentarian Valentyna Hoshovska of the Agrarian Party of Ukraine (APU, organized in 1992). She is one of only two women in the leadership of the APU, the other being the head of the Parliamentary Land Reform Committee. As far as I know, the all-Ukrainian Party of Women's Initiatives lead by Valentyna Datsenko, which is represented entirely by women on the regional leadership level, does not have a women's organizations attached to it. But the Party of Women of Ukraine (1997) headed by Alina Komarova, which joined the SDPU(O) party in 1998 in the voting bloc "Our Choice—Leonid Kuchma!" seems to have one. In fact, Komarova's All-Ukraine Community organization "Women and Children of Ukraine" (registered October 2, 1997) was one of the six founding members of the 1999 organizing committee for the National Council of Women of Ukraine (she was the one Orlyk could not remember).

In 2000 when the country was revving up for the next Parliamentarian elections, more women's organizations of this type started to appear. In January 2000, Natalia Vitrenko (leader of the PSPU) registered an All-Ukraine women's organization called *Dar Zhyttia* (gift of life) under her own leadership.[80] Another such organizations is the All-Ukraine Women's Association *Slavija*, headed by Hanna Antonieva, head of the Democratic Party of Ukraine

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[80] I came into possession of a copy of the newsletter, *Darynka,* quite by chance in Odessa during a demonstration protesting Ukraine's cooperation with NATO training exercises. I noticed a prim, elderly woman chastising a kiosk attendant for displaying smutty literature. She offered me an issue of *Darynka,* printed by *Dosvitni Vohni* a publishing house established by the PSPU in 1996, detailing the founding of the *Dar Zhyttia* women's organization and its extensive charitable works. I was not able to contact the Cherkasy representative and did not see any evidence of the group again.

(DemPU).[81] Slavija was created immediately after the DemPU's 9th Congress during which the party agreed to back Kuchma for re-election against the left challenge from Moroz of the SPU.[82] In central Ukraine, the Slavija was first introduced in Kirovograd in November 1999 and was being organized under Olena Hasko in Cherkasy in 2000**.**

When asked about the formal connection between belonging to Slavija and membership in the DemPU, Hasko tried to clarify that this is nothing abnormal:

> OH: It is not a wing of the party, formally. For some reason, this is the way it is with us in Ukraine today. Every party is creating a set of organizations for itself: a women's organization, a youth organization, professional unions and such. They are even thinking of creating associations of businesses connected to the party somehow…and that is how this organization came about. And why not? The Soiuz Ukrainok also works with the Rukh party. You have to count that it is part of their structure…It's like that everywhere, with all the parties. In all the women's organizations, it's a similar situation…It's true that the Soiuz Ukrainok has existed longer than many other women's organizations, and that it seems more independent in its relationship to the Rukh party compared to others…But even if Soiuz Ukrainok did exist in the pre-Rukh past, who knew about it, that is, here in central Ukraine in Cherkasy, anyway? For us, Rukh appeared and Soiuz Ukrainok appeared with it. Slavija is not a wing of the DemPU. It is an officially independent and self-sufficient organization. It is neither commercial nor is it partisan. It is a community organization and that's all.

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[81] Hanna Antonieva replaced Volodymyr Yavorivskyj as DemPU leader in March 1999. A brochure distributed in 2000 by the DemPU informs that the party was founded in May 1990 by Dmytro Pavlychko (father of Solomea), Ivan Drach and others, getting 24 deputies elected to Parliament that year. From 1991-1999 Yavorivsky lead the DemPU until the 1999 congress when the party agreed to back Kuchma for re-election *in order to protect Ukraine from a resurgence of the political left.* Antonieva's *Slavija* appeared less than a week later.

[82] The current DemPU discourse sounds in mild challenge to the presidential administration. The thrust is to secure national and individual human rights. They come out for the rule of law, for one (Ukrainian) as the official language (though the brochure, sporting a stork sitting atop a map of Ukraine, is itself in Russian).

> MK: So then for what purpose are these women's organizations created by the party, if a woman can simply work for the party instead?
> OH: Yes, I understand what you are asking… Well, I think that men are not very much concerned with the problems of women. We have our own specific problems. [interview, October 23, 2000]

One of the most politically influential women's organizations of the latter years of the Ukraine's first decade (towards the 2004 revolution) was the All-Ukraine Women's National Democratic Association, *Diya* (*diya* means action) which registered as a community organization in 1997. Diya openly identifies itself as deliberately organized as the women's wing of the National Democratic Party of Ukraine (NDPU). The appearance of Diya and the discourse of its founder Tetiana Kondratiuk heralded a phase of blatant acknowledgment of women's political ambition and enmeshment of their organizations in party politics. In a 2000 interview, Kondratiuk claimed that "the next round of elections will start and I am sure that each of the women's organization will join forces with one or another of the political contenders. We (the women of Diya) do not hide our political orientation, ever. And on this we base our optimism for the stability of political life in Ukraine" (Romaniuk 2000:4).

Kondratiuk was a young (25 years old in 2000) businesswoman,[83] owner-manager of a production line and successful chain of fashion outlets called Vidivan.[84] She jokes that the organization's name Diya also stands for the first syllable in the word *divchata* (girls) and the

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[83] Also, from her photos, beautiful with obviously mixed-race features, reminiscent of the models used in the USA Apparel advertising campaign (see Korotkov 2002:20).

[84] According to Nadija Romaniuk (2000:4-5) Kondratiuk reported that Vidivan had 13 stores in ten cities of Ukraine, and boasted that 40 percent of her garments are domestically made. One of these Vidivan stores was on the fashionable Khreshchatyk in the center of Kyiv. The shopping experience and prices were comparable to New York's Fifth Avenue.

word *ya* (I, me) which makes it shorthand for "me and the girls" and claimed that her organization contributes 18 thousand women to the ranks of Ukraine's women's movement (Korotkov 2002:20). In fact, I found that Diya was one of the very few women's organizations accredited with the UN ECOSOC as an NGO. In a UNICEF Young People's Health and Development Program Evaluation (UNICEF 2001), the NGO Diya is mentioned along with other organizations as cooperating with the All-Ukraine Center called *Volyunter* (volunteer) which was very active in the city of Cherkasy. Apparently they organized street theatre projects and seminars in June 2000, some of which involved the participation of the Theatre KVK, a branch of which was headed by Tetiana Kyrychuk through her position as Cherkasy Oblast head of the Ukrainian National Committee of Youth Organizations. In 2000 it was quite obvious that Diya's star was rising; at the time, I believed this was because it enjoyed state support, but perhaps even more so, this was because it was under the influence of the SDPU(o).[85]

Kondratiuk notes that not every member of Diya is also a member of the NDPU and that there is provision for collective membership. By 2002 the organization had 27 regional chapters and 30 thousand members, an increase of 12 thousand in two years (Korotkov 2002:20-21). The main goal of Diya is the promotion of economic and social development in Ukraine through the passage of laws that will support the flourishing of small business, with a secondary objective being the promotion of women candidates to parliament through training in its school of political

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[85] This would be true at least in Cherkasy oblast. There, Tetiana Kyrychuk was simultaneously head of the Diya oblast organization, while also serving as head of the Cherkasy Oblast structure of the Ukrainian National Committee of Youth Organizations (NCYO registered in Cherkasy on October 1, 1997). In 2000 the UNCYO embraced 23 groups in the oblast and 17 youth groups registered in the city of Cherkasy. Her offices in Cherkasy's Rosava Hotel were better funded than most. Wilson asserts that the SDPU(o) "exercised powerful behind the scenes influence over the UNCYO set up in 1992, ensuring that it enjoyed the monopoly right to distribute state funds allocated for youth projects (13 million hryvnias in 2001)" (2005:138-39)

leadership. Its political training program is called the *Podiya* (the happening), which is a clever combination of the words *polityka* (politics) and *diya.* The school offers distance-learning by e-mail, in which women more experienced in political races mentor the novices. The school is expensive, 264 Ukrainian *hryvni* (approximately $50) per monthly session, but the school was subsidized by Vidivan. In 2002, 352 Diya members were running for political office in various oblast and city-level councils (Korotkov 2002:20), and Kondratiuk herself campaigned for a Supreme Parliament position through the For a United Ukraine bloc of Kuchma supporters in that same year.

Another example of the manipulation of the women's movement niche came in January 2001, when Kuchma directed the formation of a pro-presidential voting bloc called "The Women for the Future." Registered as a political party, it was headed by Valentyna Dovzhenko, former Minister of Affairs of Family, Children and Youth, who was then the head of the Committee on Family and Youth, the top women's advocacy position in the Ukrainian government. The bloc was active in the parliamentary elections in 2002 and presidential elections of 2004.[86]

Coda: The National Council of Women

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[86] Tetiana Chornovil (2002) reports on a January 12, 2002 meeting of women activists lead by Valentyna Dovzhenko (former Minister of Affairs of Family, Children and Youth, then head of Committee for Family and Youth, career CPU of the Dnipropetrovsk region) to organize a new Party, or electoral association called "Women for the Future." The electoral association was extremely active in charitable work through the months of October to December 2001, spending the equivalent of five million dollars on children, veterans, soldiers serving their drafted duty, etc. Their meeting on January 12, 2002 was kept secret from the press, according to the *Polityka and Kultura* magazine. Similarly the entry in PPH 1999 for the Women's People's Party simply states "established in 1998, headed by Nina Lavrentieva, whose offices are at a Dnipropetrovsk address, and that their voting bloc is "Our Choice—Leonid Kuchma!" "No further information available" (or necessary).

Thus, within Ukraine's first post-Soviet decade, women's organizations aligned themselves with parties positioned along Ukraine's political spectrum—from the far Right (the ethno-nationalist League of Ukrainian Women of the OUN) to the far Left (CPU Women Laborers for the Future of the Children of Ukraine). In the middle ground stood an array of political parties along with the non-aligned "beyond party" crowd. In 2000, the political Center included the middle class, the financial elites (the oligarchs), all the democratic parties that supported the Kuchma administration, and also the nationalist and democratic reformers. Almost all of the women's organizations, most of the women's movement niche, fell in along a spectrum within this political middle ground. An exception was the new left (SPU) represented by Nina Pokotylo's socialist Women for the Future of the Children (UWFCU) which entered into dialogue with the other women's organizations but maintained a starkly oppositional stance to the policies of the presidential administration, whereas the others tended to try to work with it.

Early in the transition, observers hesitated to call this a women's movement because it was not overtly feminist and it was unclear whether it was uniformly women-centered. By 1995, however, after the first All-Ukraine Women's Congress in 1994, the phrase seemed to apply.[87] This did not mean there was no dissonance or ambiguity around the definition of "the Ukrainian woman" who is the subject of this movement (Palvychko 1996:308). Pavlychko (1992, 1996, 1997) worries over issues of nationalism, national identity and the feminist ground lost in Ukraine during the Soviet era; and she addresses the problem of the "split ethos" that is found in the clash between those who cling to the Soviet past and a Soviet identity, and those who reject things Soviet in favor of a specifically Ukrainian future. Given that she was writing at the time

[87] Lavrinenko of the Ukrainian Institute of Sociology and its Gender Research Center wrote and article entitled "The Women's Movement in Post-Communist Ukraine: Achievements and Setbacks" (1995) suggesting that Ukraine's women were self-identifying with the idea of *movement* which is one important criterion (Gerlach and Hine 1970).

of the negotiations over the new NCW/Ukriane, we can assume that Pavlychko is referring to the sentiment that there would be no unity for the women's movement unless all the women's organizations would agree to be united under a new and decidedly non-Soviet-era umbrella.

By the mid 1990s the women's organizations with All-Ukraine status (most of them of the traditional designation) were trying to agree on addressing their common concerns: the nation, the economy, and gender equality. They started to negotiate a consensus, and either exploiting or succumbing to the Soviet habit of equating centralization with unity—decided to create a new umbrella organization as an alternative to the old SWC. It is to Maria Orlyk's great credit that she did not allow her own ambition for her own organizational structure to stand in the way (personal communication, Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000). It was difficult enough for the women at the extremes of the political spectrum to agree on working within the same representative body. Each organization had anxiety about its own autonomy and the specter of being co-opted (or appearing to be co-opted) into some alliance not consonant with their own political convictions. Therefore, it was a great achievement for the 400 representatives of the major women's organizations that met in 1994 at the First All-Ukraine Congress of Women's Organizations to agree to work on the creation of an All-Ukraine Council of Women in Ukraine.

The process involved years of negotiations and meetings,[88] but in July 1997 the leaders of 12 women's organizations discussed the restoration of a National Women's Council (modeled on the one of the 1920s) with the goal of being finally (re-)admitted into the International Council of Women (ICW). On March 20, 1999, six women's organizations of International and All-Ukraine status came to the agreement at the National Women's Conference. The Spilka Zhinok

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[88] For a full chronology of meetings in this direction, see Smolyar 2000, also Bohachevsky-Chomiak 2000, Hrycak 2002.

Ukrainy, the Soiuz Ukrainok, the Zhinocha Hromada, and the Olena Teliha Society were joined by two relative newcomers, Alina Komarova's Organization of Women and Children of Ukraine (1997) and Tetiana Kondratiuk's Diya (1997). By 2000 this initial group of six had grown to eleven.[89] Iryna Holubieva, a career CPU was elected to head this new body. I first met her at the Olena Teliha memorial service at Babyj Yar in July 2000, just after a triumphant event in Helsinki during the Twenty-Ninth General Assembly of the ICW in July 2000.

On July 2 the ICW welcomed Ukraine as a full-fledged member. That the Ukrainian council was so warmly received was probably due in part to the fact that Iryna Kurowyckyj, former head of the UNWLA was also then President of the NCW/US. Although the ultimate effectiveness of the Ukraine's Council is debatable (no budget, limited opportunity for effective advocacy), its reinstatement in the ICW opens opportunities for participation in the international women's sphere. Most important to the council is to exert public pressure on the government to improve its dismal record on women's issues. Ukraine's Council aims to serve as an umbrella representing all of Ukraine's women's associations, and as such it is one of the very few bodies in which Ukrainian (not in the ethnic, but civic sense) women voluntarily cooperate in a unified front.

Olha Kobets of the Olena Teliha Society spoke for the women's movement of Ukraine when she objected to a statement often repeated in NGO development circles: that the women's

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[89] The member organizations of the NCW/Ukraine (2000) are the four original founders, Soiuz Ukrainok (Pashko, A.); Zhinocha Hromada (Drach, M.); Olena Teliha Society (Kobets, O.); Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy (Orlyk, M.); and seven organizations that joined them soon after: Zhinky I Dity Ukrainy (women and children of Ukraine) (Komarov, A, I); La Strada Ukraine (Levchenko, K.); Solidarnist (solidarity) (Hoshovska, V.; Slaviya (Antonieva, H.); League of Mothers and Sisters of Ukrainian Youth (Komarova, A. I.); League of Ukrainian Women (Husiak, D.); and Diya (Kondratiuk, T.).

movement will get underway in Ukraine only when civil society is in place.[90] "On the contrary" she insisted, "every time people unite in a non-governmental, non-profit organization, on their own initiative and not on orders of their state government, they are automatically creating a piece of civil society"(Kobets 2000:95). She argued that the activism of countless women contributed to the emergence of the Rukh movement in the mid 1980s and that the milieu of the opposition movement became the cradle of the independent women's organizations that signal the birth of civil society in Ukraine. In other words, it is not civil society that allowed the women's movement to develop, but it is the very appearance of the organizations, among them the women's, that constitutes the first building blocks of civil society. The national women's organizations are, therefore, not peripheral to some idealized future women's movement narrowly defined as consisting of Western-style feminist activity; on the contrary, their activism and priorities are central to the women's movement in Ukraine in every way, in its motivation, in its genesis, and in its evolution.

[90] UNDP (1999:19-33) does not seem to carry the offending quote, but Kobets clearly rejects any analysis that defines the women's movement as confined to its specifically feminist manifestations. Kobets and Smolyar are in agreement when Smolyar (1999:178-179) asserts that "The activism of the women's organizations, the appearance of new various forms of women's collectivities, the increase in the number of women's initiatives alongside the activism of political parties and various civil society organizations, are an indicator of the readiness competence for social self-organization of the civil society, which is the main condition for the existence of an informal (independent) women's movement" (my translation).

PART III: Activism and Activists in Cherkasy

Chapter Seven: Early Women's Activism in Cherkasy

The last chapter of Part II considered the re-appearance of independent women's organizations in Ukraine, especially the collection of national federated women's organizations. Part III will now turn the focus onto Cherkasy oblast. My discussion will start with the evolution of a women's niche of activism during perestroika; then I will introduce the collection of women's organizations active within the oblast's territorial communities. This section will also present the women embraced by my informal survey and will explore how they talk about themselves as activists, in their own words.

Introduction: Cherkasy as Backdrop for Women's Activism

By 2000, the economic and political dynamics had triggered new forms and configurations of social difference within the oblast. It seemed to me that the city of Cherkasy had cleaved into clusters—of people, media outlets (newspapers, TV and radio stations), businesses, cultural, and entertainment establishments, of non-governmental organizations, perhaps even neighborhoods, state government offices, and political organizations—generally identified with certain political or ideological leanings and connected to one another by some common source of financial support. There appeared to be three, perhaps four discernable (somewhat overlapping) groupings of community and women's organizations clustered in what may be described as camps of influence across which cooperation was difficult. Moreover there are also seemed to be competition for influence over, or control of, women's networks as resources for these camps.

One such camp was the Cherkasy Oblast Administration of the central government itself, which was becoming increasingly dominated the oligarchic machine of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (united), theSDPU(o). The nationalist Rukh-sympathizing organizations

seemed to cooperate reluctantly with this party of power, not willing to upset the cart of the state and desiring fuller partnership in legislative and community development processes. An opposite camp was clustered around the administration of Cherkasy's mayor, Volodymyr Olijnyk, which gained prestige from the fact that Cherkasy was the hub of the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation's Community Partnership Program (US-UF CPP), through which Cherkasy was partnered with DesMoines, Iowa.[1] The City administration was often roiling with excitement over visitors from the United States, bearing new ideas for local self-government practices and development projects. Yet another camp can be loosely described as "leftist" which would include the unreformed communists and the socialists whenever they choose to align with CPU loyalists for the purposes of protesting from the platform of government-state "outsider." This general camp would include war veterans (the Union of Soviet Officers), a high proportion of pensioners, and anyone who would bear significant losses in a contraction of the Soviet social welfare structure. This camp includes both male and female persons, the sector was framed as female and it was consistently the women who were apprehended in acts of civil disobedience that were described derisively in the press.

The first volleys of conflict that started this path of differentiation is encapsulated in a joke (anekdot) told to me as a true story in 1998 at a meeting of the nationalist women's group Soiuz Ukrainok in Cherkasy. As it goes, a woman was selling her produce (suggesting her rurality) in Cherkasy's market in the earlier 1990s. A man approaches the vender's display and starts feeling her tomatoes, to which she takes exception. He retorts that he has the right to do so

[1] US-UF CPP for the Promotion of Local Expertise in Self-Government is a city to city partnership program to help "transform local government in Ukraine and support grassroots and constituent-directed reform." In 1998, Cherkasy was home to the US-UF CPP Training Center and one of 18 cities partnered with US communities for three years. CPP exchange programs gave many Cherkasy residents (officials, community and business representatives) a chance to visit the U.S. for conferences, professional meetings, and training in the U.S. and Cherkasy.

because he is a veteran of the Great War. She chides him "You can be a Great War veteran 20 times over but you still can't squeeze my tomatoes! You had the right to do it earlier, but now we have the right to tell you NO!" [fn 080998 cherkasy SUU meeting] .

As the retelling of a social situation, the joke illustrates the reversals occasioned by the of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's declaration of independence. The first reversal was the new legitimacy of a Ukrainian national identity and the rehabilitation of the nationalist patriot who could now trump or rival persons enjoying Soviet-era privilege. The new legitimacy of Ukrainian national identity raises Ukrainian rurality to national significance (no longer officially in diglossic relationship with Russian as examplars of low vs high culture). It also related the re-evaluation of the feminine, since the category of women is made significant in the post-Soviet era both domestically and in being supported by Western agents of democratization. It is significant that the punch line was told in the plural "we"—a new constituency, a community, was being invoked, with a sense of rights adhering to that named group status. What follows is an exploration of the differentiation and manipulation of community in the emergence of a specifically women's sphere of *community activism* in Cherkasy.

Cherkasy from Perestroika to Post-Soviet Independence

In August 1998, my host, Liudmila Taranenko, then head of the oblast's Writer's Union, initiated my education about Cherkasy with a visit to the grave of the poet Volodymyr Symonenko (1935-1963), Cherkasy's native son. It was his poetry that gave voice to the politicized yearning for liberty that animated the dissident movement of the 1960s. Though she was then very young, she remembered the sudden removal of the Ukrainian national communist Petro Shelest from the helm of the Ukrainian SSR in 1971 and the mass arrests of intellectuals and literary figures that

followed in 1972—decimating the ranks of Ukraine's most creative cohort, the Shestydesiatnyky (the sixties generation). Born in 1948 in Smila, she spent the first part of her adult career as a chemist in the local sugar refinery during Shcherbytsky's long tenure (1972-September 1989) as First Secretary of the CPU. Although she had always been a poet and writer, it was only when she joined the Writers Union (1987) after Chornobyl that she earned her journalist credentials by reporting on the environmental and cultural movements. She took part in the protests that halted the construction of a new nuclear power station at Chyhyryn and wrote a passionate appeal to women to take up environmental issues through their women's councils. It was through environmental activism that she had come to a leadership role in the Rukh movement in Cherkasy.

Back in 1998 Liudmila encouraged me to accept an invitation to visit Uman and stay for a few days in the home of Bohdan and Tetiana Chornomaz, the first Rukh activists and organizers in the oblast. Bohdan Chornomaz had been among those arrested for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda in 1972, [2] based on his involvement with the printing (as self-published *samvydav*) of Dziuba's 1969 *Russification or Internationalism?* Bohdan's life story is emblematic of the real consequences people suffered for their convictions.[3] He and a colleague took the fall for a woman, Olha Didenko, a respected ethnographer at the local museum and one

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[2] According to the lists provided by Vasyl Ovsienko (2008), those arrested on January 12, 1972 in several cities across Soviet Ukraine for violation of article 62, included *Bohdan Chornomaz in Uman, and Vasyl Zakharchenko in Cherkasy.*

[3] Ovsienko (2008) describes how those cooperating with the activists of the 60s generation were arrested, or released from employment, or removed from waiting lists for apartments. They were or their children were barred from higher education or expelled from institutes and denied regular career advancement. Some of those arrested recanted, some went into "internal exile", some left for Russia, some threw blame at the West and the diaspora, some informed on their colleagues,and some committed suicide.

of the progressives who frequented the residence of the prominent Soviet dissident Nadia Sourovtseva (1896-1985) whose home in Uman had become a dissident atelier. It was Didenko who was the actual operator of the samvydav press and who much later became the central figure for an ethnographic society Bohdan created in 1989 and named Berehynia.

Bohdan's wife Tetiana shared his life's work in defiance of the Soviet authorities, and was herself well known in dissident circles. I heard from Tetiana herself how the authorities tried to dissuade her from consorting with Bohdan and arrested him on the night before their wedding: she followed him out to the gulag, getting special permission to be married there. After serving out his time, Bohdan returned to Uman, where in 1988 he and Tetiana collaborated to establish the first groups of the national front, eventually named Rukh. They then hooked up with another Rukh chapter that had appeared in Kaniv and embarked on the process of spreading Rukh throughout the Oblast. Bohdan set up offices for Rukh in a small building near the oblast Council in Cherkasy (now the Oblast State Administration) and commenced a career as an aggressive anti-corruption activist in the early 1990s phase of initial privatizations. Over a weekend in 1998 and several days in 2000, the Chornomaz couple regaled me for hours with stories about their exploits of resistance.

Perestroika in Cherkasy was by all accounts a heady time, marked by an atmosphere of volunteerism and infectious optimism. It felt like independence came rather suddenly to Ukraine, they told me, partly because perestroika came to Soviet Ukraine so late; but even if it all happened without a shot, it was not without violence. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Rukh activists and supporters suffered physical attacks. I was told of many who apparently lost their lives under suspicious circumstances. By 2000 much of the patriotic momentum had dissipated and people were disillusioned or in despair. Irena Bozhko, however, a participant in the

Ukrainian cultural revival in Cherkasy in the 1990s, a Soiuz Ukrainok activist and forever the noble optimist, told me

> An elite group of patriots appeared among us, who have already departed. We have them no longer among us—they have all died…They gave of themselves and their time has passed. It is a short life for us, so what more is there to say? And there were others who came forth with such motivations, what can I say—Oh! Such an uplifting rush! …We had our rise to the crest of the wave and now things are bad, we're scraping bottom. But no, if you've ever had it in your soul, it will never disappear, it endures. [interview, December 18, 2000]

Women participated prominently in all aspects of this movement. They were among the members of the *Zapovit* (named after Shevchenko's "Testament"), an organization that was active in Cherkasy from 1988 to 1990[4] and of the Cherkasy chapter of the Ukrainian Language Society[5] which after 1990 morphed into the *Prosvita* (enlightenment). From 1992-1996 *Prosvita* members dedicated themselves to monitoring whether or not the Ukrainian language was being used in the state offices of the city and oblast administration. The *Zapovit* and *Prosvita* membership overlapped somewhat with a bigger cluster of politico-cultural organizations loosely connected to the Rukh movement, including the local chapter of the Society of the Repressed (*Tovarystvo Represovanykh*), the Brotherhood of the Ukrainian Partisan Army (UPA), and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Many, but not all, of these early activist women

[4] This narrative is based on materials from the Cherkasy Oblast and City Archives, but also on an interviews with O Feshchenko, head of Cherkasy Oblast Prosvita organization and director of the Oblast State Division of Internal Affairs (October 31, 2000) and others. I take responsibility for all interpretations made.

[5] The Ukrainian Language Society (ULS) was founded by I. Drach, P. Movchan and V. Yavorivskyj in Kyiv 1988. The Cherkasy Chapter was founded by L. Taranenko and P. Batrak, assistant to the head of the department of education at the University of Cherkasy.

had been in the gulag or were born to parents who were politically repressed. Several prominent activists were of western Ukrainian origins but, being barred from returning to their place of origin after Soviet prison and/or exile, had decided to settle in Cherkasy. It was not uncommon for Rukh activists of either gender to be the first to lose their jobs in a reduction in force as retribution for their political involvement.

The Cherkasy archives document not only some of the activities of the early organizations, and also the vehemence of the loyal communists to the nationalist campaigns, especially to the anti-corruption campaigns spearheaded by Rukh during the early phase of privatizations. The viewpoint of the Soviet loyalists is illustrated by the paper trail left by Oleksander Malinowsky, the leader of the Cherkasy Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) who relates a thoroughly oppositional perspective on the changes of the 1990s. Malinowsky published a brief history of the organizing efforts to establish the SPU as a replacement for the banned CPU (1991), noting that it "started in difficult circumstances of informational blockade, in the debauchery of anti-communist and nationalist psychosis, which at that time afflicted a significant part of the population" (Malinowsky 2000). The Cherkasy archives confirm the animosity, with mutual accusations of drunken violence between the Rukh activists and the socialists marking the narratives of change preserved in the documents of the first years of the 1990s. Malinowsky 2000 invokes the imagery of a battle of the flags, the red versus the nationalist blue-yellow against a chronology of SPU struggles. There was the 1992 meeting in remembrance of the fact that 80 percent of the pre-war members of the CPU lay down their lives in the battle against fascism, the August 1993 call for impeachment of President Leonid Krawchuk, and the summer of 1998 burning of President Kuchma's regime in effigy on the streets of Cherkasy. In 1999, the SPU created a citizen's group to organize a referendum to impeach Cherkasy mayor Volodymyr

Olijnyk. From June to October 2000 they staged demonstrations from the tent city by the walls of the State Administration, at the feet of Lenin, which space they declared to be the "people's space free from the influence of the President and his appointed henchmen"[i.e. heading the oblast administration] (Malinowsky 2000); while from the (neo-) nationalist perspective, Cherkasy's (and Ukraine's) difficulties stemmed partly from the inadequate purging of the CPU from existing administrative structures, including Ukraine's Parliament where they managed to neutralize reform legislation.[6]

Campaigning around the March 1998 elections to Parliament was all about the dire economic situation: In Cherkasy production levels were falling, debts were rising, pension payments were three months in arrears, factory and collective farmers had not received regular salaries for seven years, and overall unemployment was up 50 percent since 1997. Most critically, the crisis of the agro-industrial sector was worsening. In the Parliamentary elections of 1998, resistance to the land reform resulted in a strong showing for the left: the CPU, SPU, Peasant Party (PPU), and Progressive Socialists (PSPU) together commanded 50 percent of the vote. In almost every rural region of the oblast, the PPU got 30 percent or better of the vote; in most large cities of the oblast, the CPU had 20 percent of the vote or better. A report of the 1998 election results published in the summer 1998 issue of *Spilna Sprava* magazine published by the Cherkasy Oblast administration labeled the lefist victory "the disease of the elderly" because of the demographic composition of the rural villages.

During the summer of 1998, my Cherkasy guides railed against the "Mafia government," against the embezzlers protected by the party of power, and against Ukraine's Parliamentarians,

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[6] The left dominated Ukraine's Supreme Parliament, until "the Velvet revolution" of January-February 2000 which removed the Parliament's most prominent left-wing leadership.

who, once elected, forgot their campaign promises and cared only for their own comfort and financial security. They described the elections as an exercise in corruption, alleging that Tkachenko, the Peasant Party candidate to Parliament from Cherkasy Oblast, bought votes by using *vermishel* (macaroni) as "slush capital"(Fish 1995:195).[7] They also pointed, however, to a new power-broker, the "Godfather of Cherkasy," Serhij Podobiedov,[8] elected to Parliament as a candidate from the SDPU(o) which was supporting Kuchma. Podobiedov ran on promises of land and market reform, and allegedly used his control of Naftaenerho in his dealings with the CAEs to divert votes from leftist candidates in exchange for bribes.[9]

In Oblast politics, Kuchma's front, increasingly bolstered by the SDPU(o) countered leftist influence in the region by consolidating presidential power.[10] In March 1998 Kuchma appointed Anatolij Danylenko to replace Tsybenko, Cherkasy's first elected governor. Danylenko quickly introduced fundamental changes in cadres and saw to the expansion of the

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[7] Fish (1995:195) notes that a candidate's access to an enterprise's funds or output serves to allow the exchange of something people need for their votes in an election.

[8] Serhij Podobiedov, born in 1956, was a candidate to Supreme Parliament from Cherkasy district #197 running on the SDPU(o) ticket. He is a member of the Parliamentary agrarian policy committee.

[9] Nadia Krupska, director of the Agrostation Elita in Smila, spoke of her dependence on Naftaenerho "Take me for example. I sold my soul to the Naftaenerho!—and why? It was because I had to. He gave me 150 tons of gasoline (soliarka) and…80 tons of benzene and a loan of 22,000 for work that needed to be done on the gas line. But don't think that he gave me this for free!—There will still be accounts to settle with him! He gave me the loan and the goods at the time that I needed them—the loan was interest-free and he sold me the soliarka at 38 kopijky and the benzene at 41 kopijky. But I was not thinking about myself or my own backyard—I was thinking, how am I going to plant the fields? Rumor has it that they pay a bribe of 150 hryvni to anyone who makes a deal with Podobiedov in return for bringing him the votes? I didn't get any 150 hryvni! I don't know about that…I guess they figured that Krupska will support Podobiedov anyway" (interview August 1998).

[10] Some analysts speculated that Kuchma may have deliberately cultivated the left, to gain the support of the right.

state's local media capability, both, reportedly, through strong arm tactics with an eye towards monopolizing power (Mozgova and Savun 1998).[11] During this period, large numbers of the regional government officials went over to the ranks of the SDPU(o).[12] The SDPU(o) had made a good pitch to the people of Cherkasy in 1998. They commiserated with the people over price hikes for communal services, promised to take care of the education of children, promised to secure the welfare of the cultural and medical workers in the villages, to see to the economic and social development of the oblast, to work with non-governmental organizations as civil society, and to bring efficiency to organs of local self-government (Chekalenko1998:3). They were one of the few parties in whose party program women's rights were discussed—though they said that the guaranteeing of women's rights should be the work of the women themselves. When President Kuchma flew into the moribund Cherkasy airport to visit Cherkasy's businesses, he first inspected the AZOT factory then went on to the Weisse, a Ukrainian-Lithuanian Join Venture sewing factory, leaving its director, Natalia Sirenko, a member of the presidium of the Cherkasy Spilka women's councils, with a promise of a contract to sew uniforms for the security service under the Department of Internal Affairs. During the same trip he also visited Chyhyryn's *Viktoria*, a woman-run shoe factory, granting its director a coveted contract to make

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[11] Mozgova and Savun (1999) reporting in *Molod' Cherkashchyny* assert that presidential control of the media started in 1998 with the consolidation under Mykhailo Kalinichenko who became general director of the Oblast Radio station and had ambitions regarding television broadcasting as well, dubbing this the oblast's "propaganda monster." They also noted strong-arm tactics by Kalinichenko and Governor Danylenko threatening to fire officials reticent to cooperate with the *nova doba* (new era). The new *Nova Doba* newspaper, edited by Kalinichenko, was intended to inform the public about social and economic issues, supplementing the cultural and historical slant of reporting in the other older (pre-independence) oblast newspaper, the *Cherkas'kyj Kraj* (Cherkasy Country).

[12] Since 1998, 500 officials across the oblast have crossed over to the SDPU(o) according to N.K., personal communication, November 2000.

boots for the same outfit. These political favors went a ways to garner support for Kuchma and the SPDU(o) socio-economic empire.

Not too long after, Kuchma tightened his grip on the oblast by replacing Danylenko with his second in command, Volodymyr Lukianets (SDPU(o)). Lukianets, who in his capacity as deputy had also served as head of the oblast council since March 1998,[13] never resigned from his Chairmanship of the Oblast Council when he ascended to the governorship. Wearing two hats made his power over executive and legislative branches complete. Governing without the supervision of checks and balances, he was effectively "reporting to himself," as people humorously put it.

Perhaps the greatest drama, bordering on soap opera, gripping Cherkasy in 2000 was a conflict that seems to have its roots in the story of the Kaniv Four, four left-wing challengers to Kuchma's presidential bid in 1998. [14] One of those four, Cherkasy's mayor Volodymyr Olijnyk, survived the immediate political fall-out of his national debut into presidential politics---and managed to retain his posts as elected mayor and as head of the Association of Mayors of Ukraine. His city also gained in prominence. In December 1998, Cherkasy became the site of the Central Ukrainian Regional Training Center of the US-UF CPP. An initiative concerned with the quality of Cherkasy's municipal water supply was the showcase project in this overall

[13] He had also been governor Tsybenko's former assistant, and before that had served as head of the Khrystynivka city administration, according to an interview in *Spilna Sprava* 1/6 1998).

[14] The story of the "Kaniv Four" is an apparent attempt to oust Kuchma in his bid for the Presidency in 1998-1999. Four candidates created a leftist opposition to Kuchma, who was being supported by the oligarchic SDPU(o): Oleksander Moroz of the Socialist Party; O Tkachenko of Zemlia I Liudy infamy; Yevhen Marchuk, who was backed by the Rukh party in this configuration; and Volodymyr Olijnyk of Cherkasy, a relatively junior political player in this elite grouping. Olijnyk and Tkachenko dropped out of the race, leaving Moroz and Marchuk in a run-off, with Tkachenko supporting Moroz.

program, running from 1998-2001 and administered through the Cherkasy Business Center.[15] In 1999, the Cherkasy City Council formed an Action Committee of 20 representatives of the local government, NGOs and businesses, which in September of 2000, adopted a draft of the "Strategic Plan for City Development" which set priorities for the social welfare of the city. The first project was to be an analysis of the municipal water supply, followed by projects to remedy Cherkasy's unemployment (cited to be at 30 percent or more), enhancing health care, and public participation in the processes of governance.[16]

Hounded by the Kuchma administration, Olijnyk was singled out for ridicule by Kuchma's Minister of Internal Affairs, Yurii Kravchenko, in an interview in 2000, for having "changed his colors" once too many times.[17] But Olijnyk survived, enjoying the support of Western agents. Apparently feeling invincible, Olijnyk took the stage during the anti-Kuchma

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[15] The US-UF training center was set up under the direction of G.Linevych on the premises of Cherkasy's Business Center which is managed by A. Rekun, the Head of the Association of Specialists on Industrial Management. In 1999-2000 Rekun was an active US-UF participant and co-head of the Action Committee. The Business Center also served as a conduit for and supervisor of the use of grant monies distributed through the Counterpart Creative Center in Kyiv. For this reason, one of my informants called the Business Center operation a "grants sieve," and quipped that the Center was staffed by children of the *nomenklatura*. Through this program, Cherkasy's "talent elite"(as opposed to political elite) was exposed to new ideas regarding local economic development, budget formulation, housing and municipal services management, public transport, and citizen participation in government and community service.

[16]The last of these caused Olijnyk the most problems. The people of Cherkasy were generally not well-informed about the projects going on at the mayor's building. His money management problems exposed him to severe criticism, accusations of theft and/or squandering of public funds for "hare-brained" schemes and personal comfort. The impeachment campaign took its toll. He lost his bid for reelection to Anatolij Voloshyn, owner of the Yuria dairy products enterprise, who was by all reports, continuing the CPP project and refurbishing the city.

[17] According to Kravchenko, Olijnyk, a former Komsomol, had abruptly turned "yellow and blue" (as post-independence Ukrainian patriot), then turned "red" again (referring to the Kaniv Four period), after which he turned "green" (introducing foreign-funded ecological projects through the city administration). Finally, Kravchenko claimed, he's going to prove that Olijnyk is "just yellow," that is, afraid of Kuchma, who has him on the run.

demonstrations in Kyiv 2000-2001 to denounce the President, telling the gathering throngs that "Kuchma has no moral right to be the head of state" (Woronowycz 2001).

Obviously, this was a political struggle that involved even bigger players and influenced much, if not most, of what transpired in the economic and political life of Cherkasy. At the time I certainly understood only a fraction of what I saw and heard. To me as an outsider, Cherkasy seemed strangely changed in the two years between 1998 and 2000. The city seemed greyer and sorrier, but also many people seemed themselves changed. Not all, but several of my earlier contacts were decidedly different, as if they were no longer interested in being the same people any more. Some seemed to have adjusted to a new ongoing condition in response to some subtle change in politics. Certain people had come into sudden money. Some had openly taken a career turn within the presidential administration machinery and were no longer involved in Ukrainian patriotic community work. Some of the people I had counted on as local support for my fieldwork were suddenly no longer available. I had the distinct feeling of faces hiding under a layering of masks, of a continuous experimentation in the performances of self. But the spheres of performance seemed compartmentalized, as if one did not have the leeway to hold two statuses simultaneously but had to give oneself over and avoid those left behind.

On November 3, 2000, as I stood with the community organizations of Cherkasy gathered by the theatre on Shevchenko Boulevard for the Flag Day ceremonies, I was reminded of that initial feeling about how people had changed. As I listened intently to all the speeches, I was particularly struck by Mayor Olijnyk's charismatic self presentation. He admitted to the crowd that in 1990 at the time of the first flag-raising he was not yet among the patriots—and had only later come to comprehend the significance of the rights for which they were fighting. Back at home that evening, watching the televised news I saw film footage from the first official

post-independence Flag Day of 1991. Recognizing some of the activists on the screen as individuals I knew in 2000, I was amazed at the transformations some of them had visited upon themselves over the decade. It was also on that day that the intersection of Bayda Vyshnevetsky Street and Shevchenko Boulevard as the Cherkasy's administrative center presented itself to me as the focal point of some strange political triangle: socialsit Lenin vs nationalist Shevchenko vs the Wild West of Olijnyk's city politics. This was the stage upon which women's social activism emerged, evolved and played out.

By mid-decade after independence, Cherkasy came into its heyday of foreign aid and investment. This created good will between the citizens of Cherkasy and the U.S. but also was cause for some local resentment, since it appeared that individuals from the Soviet nomenklatura were usually the first to benefit from these perks. Moreover, the nationalist front was having an image problem with the West which was at the time especially distrustful of nationalism, and they were feeling disenfranchised at what they had expected to be their moment of triumph. In this context, when the population was engulfed in economic chaos, the Rukh-related women's organizations, promoting what must have seemed somewhat esoteric concerns of cultural and language revival, were not able to take root effectively.

The mid 1990s mood of the nationalist front is reflected in a journal published (with diaspora backing) by the Ukrainian Writers' Union, called *Kholodnyj Yar* after the ravine (just south of Cherkasy) that was the traditional gathering place of the rebel *haidamak* resistance movement of the 18th century.[18] Liudmila Taranenko, who edited the journal (1993-1998) also

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[18] In the Chyhyryn area of the oblast, supporters of the Ukrainian National Republic proclaimed the renegade Republic of the *Kholodnyj Yar* (cold ravine) in 1918-1922. The Cherkasy Ethnographic museum informs that Vasyl Chuchupaka, the organizer of the Republic became the leader of a partisan force numbering 35-40,000 under the Ukrainian yellow and blue flag. After

for a brief time flirted with the ultra- nationalist Ukrainian Nationalist Assembly Ukrainian Self-Defense Force (UNA-UNSO)[19] during those years. She edited a newsletter for them entitled *Cherkaska zona* (the Cherkasy zone), an allusion to the Chornobyl zone, as a place exhibiting an unnatural phenomenon—in the case of Cherkasy, the anti-Ukrainian atmosphere and sense of post-Soviet moral decay. In this period of heightened nationalist anxiety over the future of Ukraine, the extremist UNA-UNSO gained temporary support; but most moderate nationalists, including Taranenko, very soon turned away from them. There was suspicion that the UNA UNSO were actually a KGB- infiltrated operation out to provoke anti-nationalist sentiment.

By 1998, Ukrainian nationalist hopes were waning, and by 2000 many idealists had apparently succumbed to a practical need to cooperate with the Kuchma government. The significance of the patriotic network of Ukrainian organizations waned and faded in the mid 1990s, as the anti-nationalist atmosphere intensified and the Ukrainian nationalist democratic front fragmented. By the end of the 1990s the organizations of the early Ukrainian renaissance were only a shadow of their former selves. But their former activity had left traces in the practices of communal life in Cherkasy of 2000. The former Prosvita activists still considered the basement of the Kobzar[20] Museum a space central to its existence. The museum itself, just a

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their defeat, they were destroyed, to the last man. Evan Mawdsley (1987) provides a particularly good overview of the "Great Civil War" which was the Ukrainian Revolution (1917-1922) during which time this territory dissembled into an all-out fight against all comers: the White Army, the Red Army, and the Ukrainian Revolutionary government

[19] See Wilson (1977:77-78) for a summary of the post 1991 appearance and extent of influence of this ultra nationalist organization inspired by the political thought of Dmytro Dontsov (1883-1973) who advocated an authoritarian nation-state.

[20] The museum at 37 Bayda Vyshnevetsky street is devoted to the life and work of Taras Shevchenko (1814-61) . *Kobzar* refers to a player of the *kobza*, a traditional instrument similar to the Ukrainian bandura. It is also the title of Shevchenko's collected works, first published in 1840.

block away from the Shevchenko monument on the eponymous central boulevard, continued to serve as the gathering ground for participants in various nationalist-patriotic events. This is where the procession to the Flag Day ceremony formed on November 1, 2000 to commemorate the first turbulent raising of the Ukrainian blue and yellow flag in Cherkasy in November 1990.[21]

Women's Activism in Cherkasy from Perestroika to 2000

There was an abundance of women's activism in the post-Chornobyl years; but women's activism of that period is better described, in the terminology suggested by Beckwith 2000, as women in movement as opposed to women's movement. Women were prominent in the environmental activism and also held local leadership positions in the large movement organizations of the nationalist front but generally took an undifferentiated role in these organizations.

Women emerged in their own right in 1990 with the activism of the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers. Svitlana Kassian—a physician, oblast council delegate and head Cherkasy's OSMU recalled how in 1990 and 1991, she personally led so many demonstrations that the assistant head of the oblast council begged her "Svitlano Serhijivna, please do not cause a peoples' uprising (*ne pidnimajte narod*!)" (interview, October 2000). Svitliana had also attended the early conferences and meetings of the Soiuz Ukrainok in 1991, which by that time was a mass movement in itself in Western Ukraine. The Soiuz Ukrainok had difficulties taking root in Cherkasy, however. The repression of all things politically Ukrainian—the blue and yellow flag, the songs of the Ukrainian resistance movements, the Ukrainian national anthem and heraldic

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[21] Although the Ukrainian Parliament declared sovereignty on July 16, 1990 it was still taboo to display the Ukrainian blue and yellow flag openly and this first flag-raising was a scene of conflict.

symbols, the open display of elements of old Ukrainian religious customs, the use of Ukrainian language itself in public places,—was so complete, that the introduction of these elements into public performance by this women's organization elicited some anxiety from the public which experienced it all as extraordinarily nationalistic. .

The backstory of the appearance of the Soiuz Ukrainok in Cherkasy, as pieced together from interviews [22] and corroborated by documents from the Cherkasy City and Oblast Archives, begins in the deep submerged networks of the Ukrainian revival organizations emanating from the activist node of Bohdan Chornomaz, starting with the Zapovit organization. Irena Bozhko[23] and her husband Ihor were among the first to join the Zapovit. There were seven original members, all journalists and writers, two of them women.[24] Mykola Vakulenko, then head of the Cherkasy City Rukh organization, and Sasha Reshetylo went together to the Cherkasy Ministry of Culture to register their new organization.

Because in those years (1988-89) it was still illegal to bring out the Ukrainian flag in open patriotic display, Bozhko suggested that she, an avid reader if not a literary specialist, would organize a series of evening programs featuring the dissident poets of the 1960s and 1970s. One of the male Zapovit members made book-buying trips to Lviv, Irena wrote up and delivered the lectures, and at the end of the evenings the books regularly sold out. They held the

[22] I make use of interviews with Irena Bozhko, Tamara Strypko, Olena Feshchenko, Liudmila Taranenko among others. Again, I take responsibility for knitting information together.

[23] Irena Bozhko (interview December 2000) is the granddaughter of a repressed Ukrainian Orthodox priest of the Western regions of Ukraine. She was orphaned, made her own way to a profession, and was a long-time resident of Cherkasy.

[24] These were Irena Bozhko and Ol'ha Mykailivna Sharapa. In her account, Olena Feshchenko current Prosvita head, listed six men as founding members: Mykhailo Vakulenko, Oleksander Reshetylo, Mykhajlo Gedz, Stanislav Hubar, Andrij Khymko and Vasyl' Zakharchenko, the last of whom was one of those arrested in the sweep of dissidents in 1972.

soirees in the three-room basement of the Kobzar Museum, just a few doors down from where the Rukh and Writers' Union shared bunker-like office space. In time, the literary evenings became popular among university students as well as older citizens. They filled the Zapovit reading room (the *svitlytsia*, a word the old Prosvita also used) to hear guest lecturers such as Ivan V. Buchovskyj, a historian from Lviv, and Professor Hubar of the Cherkasy Institute. Soon the museum basement proved too tight a space for the crowds, not to mention the extensive lending library of Ukrainian literature that the Zapovit had amassed. Bozhko told me that she also brought treasured volumes in from home to share with others who had never had the good fortune to see such publications.

One day without warning they found that their meeting and library space had been closed down by the Fire Department on order of the City Council, ruling the premises a fire hazard. Zapovit never regained access, and all of their books were lost, apparently confiscated. It was the first of a series of heartbreaks, Bozhko told me. She related other similar situations in which she had risked placing something she personally cherished in the public domain with the idea of serving the common good, only to have her trust in the community severely challenged. Trust is a recognized and theorized prerequisite of civil society participation: the state (or rather, the orthodox communists still dominating the state administration) did everything possible to hinder its development.

Understanding their plight, the then-mayor of Cherkasy, whom Bozhko described as an intelligent good-hearted young man who also happened to be the former ideology secretary of the Cherkasy CPU, allowed the Zapovit group to hold its meetings in Room #206 of the city administration building. He was soon deposed from his mayoral post and died at age 38. After that, the group met wherever they could—"even at the feet of the monument to Lenin if need

be." The Zapovit became a collective member of the Cherkasy Rukh organization. Sometime after that, Bozhko concludes, their group disintegrated. Each member made commitments to one of a range of new political parties. At one point, the Cherkasy Ethnographic Museum offered the Zapovit group the use of its auditorium, but some of the group's members were ambivalent about continuing the lecture program and the group ceased to be active.

The Prosvita organization followed in the wake of Zapovit, embracing some of the same people—fewer were involved, says Bozhko, but they were wonderful people. The first head of Cherkasy's Prosvita was Hanna Peredrij, a doctoral candidate in Philology at the Cherkasy University (she was also the daughter of a man who had suffered Stalinist repression), under whose leadership the society conducted a survey to determine whether Cherkasy's city and oblast government offices were in compliance with usage of Ukrainian as the official state language. This group also fragmented however, and ultimately the Prosvita stagnated under the stewardship of Olena Feshchenko, who in 2000 was the Secretary of Internal Affairs in the Oblast Administration. By Feshchenko's own account, because Prosvita appeared to be the direct successor of Zapovit, it suffered from the same fate of the state's continuing policy of non-accommodation (interview with November, 2000). Feschenko admitted that for the last ten years the city has refused to designate office space for Prosvita, which has been forced, for lack of its own facilities, to store its organizational archives in the old Cherkasy Hotel in the offices of Cherkasy's DemPU, headed by Vakulenko.[25] For the last five years, Prosvita had managed to maintain visibility by conducting an annual "Master of Ukrainian Language Competition,"

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[25] Feshchenko indicated that Cherkasy is the only Oblast in which Prosvita does not have office space to work out of; despite her official position, she was apparently unable to remedy this situation. Other oblast centers have National Homes (as an oblast-level house of culture) out of which the Prosvita generally conducts its programs.

supported locally by the mayor's office, and funded by its patron Mykhajlo Slaboshpytskyj director of the League of Ukrainian Philanthropists in Kyiv, who reportedly gets his money from a diaspora businessman from Australia.

Early experience of the Soiuz Ukrainok in Cherkasy

During one of my first evenings with the Soiuz Ukrainok community in Cherkasy, back in August 1998, was a gathering in the home of one of the Cherkasy city chapters called *Zlahoda*, whose leader was Tetiana Vasylyshyn. The women of Tetiana's Zlahoda chapter told me that they were currently cooperating with another Soiuz Ukrainok chapter in the city that was called *Simia* [family] and was a group composed of mothers with large families. They were jointly preparing a traditional *vertep* (nativity scene/Christmas program) in which their children will perform. That would be later in the year. This particular evening's meeting, however, was dedicated to the preparations for the celebration of Ukrainian Independence Day in Cherkasy on August 24th 1998. There would be a *moleben* (prayer service) and a procession from the Khmelnytskyj monument to the Taras Shevchenko monument. The Soiuz Ukrainok women will walk together as a group in their embroidered blouses and their Soiuz Ukrainok embroidered pins and they will be singing Ukrainian songs. They had to practice.

But before that, Tetiana and her colleagues explained to me how their group had formed, back in November 1993. All 32 of their original members had also been members of a newly organized parish of the Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church lead by Father Nazarij. Many of them were members of Rukh as well. As their mission was to raise Ukrainian national awareness, which they would do by taking demonstrations of Ukrainian folk arts to the children's homes and schools, one of their first public acts was to take to the streets with

traditional Ukrainian Christmas caroling (the *koliada*) to awaken the dormant recognition of Ukrainian community:

> Our first action was to bring the koliada to the homes and streets of Cherkasy, and we even sang in the trolleys and at the bus stops. We collected 18 000 karbovantsi (yes! That's about 18 kopijky [cents] now!) We sang five carols on the trolleybus and people loved it! Father Nazarij had told us not to be embarrassed, to sing! And we did. Well, that wouldn't work nowadays, such a pity! But anyway, that is now. We are describing what it was like then! We greeted people with the traditional Christmas wishes: "Vitajemo Vas dobri liudy, shchoby bulo dobre u vashij Rodyni, My soiuz UKrainok" (We greet you good people, and wish the best for your family, we are the Soiuz Ukrainok!) People cried with joy when they heard us! One old *babusia* fell to her knees when she saw us on the street, dressed for koliada, carrying the symbolic star of Bethlehem –she fell to her knees and exclaimed through joyous tears " I've been waiting) for you, my children, for 40 years!" [Tetiana, Cherkasy, 080998]

From the viewpoint of activist Irena Bozhko (interview, December 18, 2000) her career deepened sometime late 1989 into 1990, when she was working with the Zapovit reading room, and although she already had her hands full, allowed herself to get involved with two more organizations—the new parish affiliated with the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.[26]. and the Soiuz Ukrainok.. The people who were interested in these two new associations represented a small community of Cherkasy residents hailing originally from western Ukraine, like herself. A group of women consolidated around the Zapovit activities were also eager to organize a Soiuz Ukrainok chapter in Cherkasy; but Bozhko comments that because these

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[26] The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church (UAOC), founded in 1919 in Kyiv during the years of the Ukrainian National Republic, was re-legalized in Ukraine after 1991. There were at least 107 parishes of the UAOC throughout Cherkasy oblast in the late 1920s (Kryvenkno 1991) as listed in Volume 2 of *Rodovid*, edited by Lydia Lykhach.).

women were mostly former political prisoners and spoke in a western Ukrainian accent that set them off from others, their potential to recruit others was very limited. “It turned women away, literally scared them off,” says Bozhko. Among those who were not put off were Taranenko of the Writers’ Union and Liuba Hryhorijivna Vakhnij. But even Liuba’s first reaction, recalls Bozhko, was “I can’t, I’m not going to associate with those “criminals!”

The group formed and elected Tetiana as their head. But because of their public relations difficulties, they approached Bozhko, whose Zapovit involvement was waning, asking her to devote some of her skill to advertizing the Soiuz Ukrainok. Reportedly, another woman, who had worked as a tour guide and as such was knowledgeable about the cultural heritage of the oblast, was also interested in activating membership. She had frequented the Zapovit lectures in the spirit of continuing education about the history of the region, and was now interested in energizing the Soiuz Ukrainok organization. Would Bozhko work with the woman to this end?

Thus is happened that the woman was elected with Bozhko as her assistant, but a working relationship did not develop between the two. When the two finally met to discuss plans, Bozhko was informed that that her new co-activist had canvassed the entire city and “no one wanted to join.” Later, the other woman joined a second Soiuz Ukrainok chapter that had gelled around the Cherkasy artist Alexandra Telizhenko, creator of wonderful folk-motif banners (which I saw displayed at the Cherkasy Ethnographic Museum in August 1998). There were those who complained that this new group was focused more on cultivating ties with America to sell Telizhenko’s art work than anything else. Even within the superficially altruistic nationalist organizations, personal gain, or the pursuit of mutually beneficial exchanges is always present, as are petty jealousies and ambitions.

Western Donors and the Women's NGO Sphere in Cherkasy

Western agents provided moral support and funds to promote the creation of NGOs through which citizens could engage the government, the reform of local self-government, general participation in elections, running for local office, small business entrepreneurship, religious pluralism, and the argument for the legitimacy of a social cultural space that might be Ukrainian in nature. One day, a young man declared to me that "Cherkasy is the most American of Ukrainian cities!" I never had the opportunity to probe him on why, but there certainly was a concentration of visible American institutions in this provincial city. There was a McDonald's in town, not far from where the Peace Corps, which had entered Ukraine in 1992, had established its Training Center for Ukraine Volunteers.[27] During certain cycles of Peace Corps Ukraine operations, the young Americans are present in force in the city. Some were assigned to Cherkasy, teaching English, assisting the city administration, and, especially, encouraging women in business projects. I imagine they joined their Ukrainian counterparts in enjoying the popular discoteque called Elvis near the big downtown movie theatre showing American films. For me these were among the obvious initial reminders of an American presence in the city. Other than that, as in many Ukrainian cities, English has become the most popular foreign language taught (next to German). And there were also other interesting, even peculiar third-sector type institutions: Cherkasy is the only place in Eastern Europe where there is an

[27] During my visit to the offices of Peace Corps/Cherkasy I learned that of the 200 PCVolunteers in Ukraine, six were in Cherkasy Oblast (two teaching business in Cherkasy,two in Smila teaching English, one in Uman (working partly with the Chornomaz couple), one in Vatutino in city administration, ecology and environment. Gail Warneke and Marta Baziuk, director of the Kyiv office of the Women's Consortium, attended the opening of the Cherkasy PC training center. The PC sponsors the Women in Development, Gender and Development programs to support women's empowerment. PC Cherkasy had planned to place a PCV at the Ya Zhinka Women's Center but instead the PCV was assigned to the "Women in Business" training project through the Mayor's office.

operational Buddhist temple (the White Lotus), for example, and in the Cherkasy Hotel, I found devotees of Sri Chin Moy (whose community thrives in my home neighborhood in Jamaica, Queens) running a copy business. Or maybe the young man was referring to the fact that Cherkasy ranks 5th in Ukraine for automobiles per every thousand residents, or maybe it was an allusion to the wild west atmosphere of the undisciplined capitalism that had come to stir up the place.

In the years immediately following independence and after the passing of the June 16, 1992 law on community organizations, Western models of women's collective initiatives also began to appear. The entry of Winrock International into Ukraine (in Kyiv since 1992) spotlighted specifically women's needs as a reason for organizing. In the mid-1990s, these donor organizations were starting to enter Cherkasy, offering opportunities for women to learn about Western business practices and lifestyles. Many women of Cherkasy were able to take advantage of opportunities to visit the United States on exchanges, through the Project Harmony's Community Connections Programs, for example, which accepts small and medium business representatives for practical business internships in the U.S. [28] One of them was Anna Pruts'ka, the founder of LadyStar, Cherkasy's first upscale hairstylist and spa (interviewed in August 2000). During this period, Cherkasy also got its first glitzy restaurant Niko, which was a hub for Cherkasy's participation in events that amounted to spectacles of Western lifestyle. [29]

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[28] See www.projectharmony.kiev.

[29] Lady Star was owned by Anna Pruts'ka (32), married to the owner-manager of the Niko Restaurant located near the Mayakowsky Library and the Peace Corps offices. The Peace Corps invited Prutska as a representative of the "new type of business woman in Ukraine" to be a speaker at the Peace Corps Business Seminars (Fashion business, Institute for Business and Management, a community development program). She had been to the US with the Community Connections Program, in the spring of 1998, shortly after the opening of her Lady Star salon on

The earliest Western presence in Cherkasy was that of the Sister Cities International program, which began its Soviet program in 1972 (with the pairing of Seattle-Tashkent). The Sister Cities program was, therefore, a natural first player in civil society. It was one of the most influential programs as early as 1992, when the official partnerships between Chyhyryn-Sebastopol and Cherkasy-Santa Rosa were sealed and the web of relationships around these programs started to shape the fate of Cherkasy's NGO sphere. In the summer of 1998, I met the Birko family of Chyhyryn, with whom I also stayed briefly in 2000: Liudmila Birko is a teacher of English at the local school in Chyhyryn and her husband, Ivan, a retired captain of the city firefighters station re-fashioned himself as the chairman of the Chyhyryn –Sebastopol World Friends Committee which was organized by the Sebastopol California City commission in 1990 and registered in Ukraine as an international organization in 1991. In 1992 Liudmila became the coordinator of the Sister Cities Exchanges program, organizing summer-long stays among families in Chyhyryn for youth and other groups from the U.S.

Only later in 2000, did I realize the network of relationships around the Sister Cities efforts had also led to the creation of the remarkable Western-style feminist center for women called the Ya Zhinka (I am Woman) Center in Cherkasy. In fact, this dense network of Western contacts gave rise to a cluster of organizations in Cherkasy—among them, the Women's Center and the Business Institute and Business Center—which later becomes a hub for NGOs. In Chyhyryn, a grant from the Eurasia Foundation (Byrne 2000:1) received on the strength of the

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Khreshchatyk street in March. The CCP trip afforded her a one month stay in Wausau Wisconsin for a course in hair salon management. Upon her return to Cherkasy, she renovated her Lady Star bringing it up to Western standards and organized a demonstration of new hair fashions at the Cherkasy Theatre (the evening's program was called "Hot Heads"). Alongside the more regular events, she arranged for a memorable x-rated "Ladies' Night" (by select invitation only) at her husband's restaurant.

Sister City exchange program, contributed to the rapid and dramatic increase in the number of NGOs in the city. This flurry of NGO activity and money circulating in Cherkasy coincided with the 1998 Program of Socioeconomic Development, proposed by the SDPU(o) for the ailing Cherkasy Oblast. They promised that the representatives elected to the councils, workers of the government oblast administration, academics, representatives of workers and professional unions (the *profspilky*), community organizations, and political parties would all be brought in on the process of identifying socioeconomic priorities and seeing to their reflection in corresponding budget formulation. All organizations were required to re-register in 1998, heralding the beginning of official registers of community organizations within the Cherkasy Oblast administration's division of the Ministries of Justice and of Internal Affairs. Among these, lists of women's organizations as such were also kept, signaling that the growing women's movement arena had itself become an attractive vehicle for political change.

Women's organizations registered in Cherkasy in 2000

In the summer of 2000, I found 65 NGOs listed in the Counterpart Creative Center's Handbook of NGOs, eleven of which were, by name and leadership, identifiably women's organizations; in addition Kyiv's Innovation and Development Center (IDC) kept a list of the members of the Cherkasy Association of Nonprofit Community Organizations (ANHO) coordinated by the Cherkasy Business Center.[30] Within the oblast administration, lists of officially registered organizations were kept by the Division of Registration and Legalization of Organizations under

[30] The list of Association members included Kesher, the Cherkasy City community organization of Jewish women (registered in 1998); Povernennia, an anti-drug addiction group (1999); Diya, Soiuz Ukrainok, OSMU Cherkasy Oblast chapter, Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy; Nepovna Simya (the incomplete family; the Cherkasy Women's Center (1997) and Ya Zhinka magazine women's center, and Zakhyst.

the Oblast Ministry of Justice (See Appendix for list of Cherkasy Oblast organizations).[31] Overall, they had 260 organizations registered (43 of them within the last year) on the oblast level as of 2000. Of these, 11 were women's organizations registered as regional level organizations. Two of them had recently registered in 1999.

Other than the Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy, the OSMU, and the Committee of Families with Many Children—all structures of some longevity and continuity of leadership—there were newer structures here as well: *Diya*; the Union of Women (Workers) for the Future of the Children of Ukraine; and the Soiuz Ukrainok. There was also a newcomer, the *Slavija*,whose oblast representative was in the process of recruiting women in the local districts (interview with Olena Hasko, October 2000), and the League of Women's Initiatives, an association of former officers' wives, which provided support for women's entrepreneurship among families of the Afghan conflict veterans and also of laid-off servicemen.[32] In addition, some of the All-Ukraine women's organizations had a spotty presence in the oblast, for example, the Olena Teliha Society had one small chapter in Uman only, and the Zhinocha Hromada of Rukh was active in the

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[31] The list provided to me on October 31, 2000 by Viktor Yeltsov, head specialist of the office of the Division of Registration, Legalization, Legal Documentation under the Oblast Department of Justice, oblast State Administration.
Spilka Zhinok Ukrajiny (Hubenko, Inna Yakivna)
Komitet Bahatoditnykh Simej (Committee of Large Families) (Chornovol, Valentyna)
All-Ukraine Women's People's Democratice Association DIYA (Kyrychuk, Tetiana)
Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Ukraine (Svitliana Kassian) statute: 15.02.98 Reg. 31.07.98
Soiuz of Women-Laborers for the Future of the Children of Ukraine (Berestianko, Ol'ha) statute: 18.12.96 Reg. 07.05.98
Soiuz Ukrainok (Buchkovska, Alla)
League of Women's Initiatives (1999) (Mel'nychenko, Liarysa)
Organization of the party of Military Wives (Barovva, Ol'ha Serhijivna)
Center of the All-Ukraine Association of Women Slavia (Hasko, Olena)
Spilka of Soldier's Mothers of Cherkashchyna (Bratseva, Ol'ha)

[32] Olynyk (2000:74-75) gives an accounting of how drastically Ukraine needed to reduce the size of its post-Soviet inherited armed forces 1992-1999 (particularly ground, air, air defense; Ukraine's navy still needed to evolve out of the Black Sea Fleet).

historic village of Subotiv near Chyhyryn, where they were organizing a museum and running ethnographic programs for school-age children.

Rural chapters seemed to be a rarity. As a rule, the only organizations that had more than the token village chapter were the Spilka (that is, the district women's councils and the village women's councils) and the Soiuz Ukrainok, which appeared to be eager to absorb newly formed rural women's groups, despite the difficulties of maintaining communication between urban and village *oseredky* (chapters). At the end of the Soviet era, many villages were still without asphalt roads, without gas and electricity, and other infrastructural amenities. The post-Soviet curtailment of public transportation between villages and district centers, the dearth of print materials (subscriptions are a prohibitively expensive luxury), the vagaries of the energy supply (for basic heat and light), combined with crushingly heavy work, and deepening poverty make many a village a "black hole." The new national women's organizations are at a disadvantage in terms of exposure in the countryside.

From the perspective of its potential as an alternative to the women's councils, the Soiuz Ukrainok's chapter count was at 21 in 2000[33]: with a strong oblast headquarters, four Cherkasy city chapters, [34] ten urban chapters in other oblast cities,[35] and three village chapters; [36] the Soiuz

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[33] The May 2000 report listed 21 chapters (oseredky) all together, counting 293 members oblast wide, up from 217 on December 3, 1999.

[34] The chapter I got to know best was the Zlahoda group; I visited the Simia (family) chapter which was basically a Many-Children Family association; but did not attend any meetings of the Orianna (headed by the artist Oleksandra Telizhenko) chapter, nor of the Cherkasy youth chapter.

[35] Soiuz Ukrainok had city chapters in Kaniv; Vatutino; Uman ; Khrystynivka ; Shevchenkivske ; Tal'ne. Its chapters within the city of Cherkasy included Zlahoda (head Tetiana Vasylyshyn); Simia (head Valentyna Brysova); Orianna (head Oleksandra Telizhenko); and a youth chapter (head Svitlana Melnyk).

Ukrainok also had three urban youth chapters, which I did not explore.[37] The Soiuz Ukrainok reported cooperation with several other organizations of the centrist democratic persuasion on various joint projects and events. Among these partners were the *Zakhkyst* (security), a legal aid program; *Sim'ia* (family); *Ukrainska rodyna* (Ukrainian family); *Slavija* (the DemPu women's organizations); and *Mij Dim Cherkasy* (my home Cherkasy), a cultural-educational program; the OSMU; and the League of Women's Initiatives. Thus local cooperation between organizations was actually quite high.

In the early fall of 2000, the Soiuz Ukrainok oblast chapter headquarters was nested into the same small ramshackle building on Bayda Vyshnevetsky Street that was occupied by the Writer's Union and the Cherkasy office of Udovenko's Rukh. In 1998 there was still a public laundry operating in the back section of this building, but it was gone in 2000. The building was in terrible disrepair. The roof leaked so badly that even the minimal furniture had to be covered with plastic sheeting and buckets set out whenever it rained, which in September was often. By the end of 2000, the Soiuz Ukrainok had received permission from the city to use a room in the decrepit Hotel Cherkasy that was becoming home to many and various budget-poor NGOs. [38]

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[36] The village chapters included the one named "Tarasyk" in Shevchenkove , in Krasnosillia; in Khudiaky; there was one forming in Tereshky of the Shpola district and one just starting to gel in Borovytsia. In contrast, the interwar period Soiuz Ukrainok under Milena Rudnytska's leadership (1928-1939) had up to 70 district chapters and over 1000 village groups in Ukrainian eastern Galicia under Poland.

[37] For some reason, I did not notice this until it was too late to explore. This is a practice not engaged by the diaspora Soiuz Ukrainok (UNWLA), and seems to me a Soviet-era tendency, where youth divisions of major organizational structures were used as a recruitment channel and ideological training grounds.

[38] During 2000. the Soiuz Ukrainiok, the Committee of Large Families and Slavija received office space in Hotel Cherkasy on another floor from the OSMU The Diya in contrast had much nicer quarters in the newer Rosava Hotel.

It seemed to me at the time that the most politically cautious of the women's groups was the socialist Union of Women (Workers) for the Future of the Children of Ukraine (UWFCU), whose oblast leader (whom I unfortunately did not interview) was said to be a very powerful woman, Olha Berestianko, of Smila. The small group of UWFCU Cherkasy membership was nested in the headquarters of the Cherkasy Oblast Socialist Party, and my impression was that they were the most male-dominated in terms of directives of any women's organization I encountered in Ukraine. Their every move appeared to be supervised by the head of the Cherkasy Oblast SPU, Volodymyr Malinowsky, who interrupted my visit with the women's group. (I had earlier made his amiable acquaintance at the tent city demonstration at the Lenin Monument, but I was getting impatient with his constant presence here). Joining him were his men; he and his colleagues dominated the conversation for most of my visit there.[39] The women confessed to me that they had doubted that I would even honor their invitation, being aware of diaspora wariness of socialism. They provided me with SPU literature, which connects the party with the ideology of the early Ukrainian revolutionaries and champions of Ukrainian independence—Hrushevsky, Drahomanov, Lesia Ukrainka—and made clear their commitment both to Ukraine as a cultural community and as a socialist society. They explained that they

[39] Ironically, in retrospect this is one of my most surprising interviews, given the proximity of this interview (October 24, 2000) to the disappearance of journalist Hryhorii Gongadze (September 16, 2000) and the resignation of Melnychenko (October 23), the security officer whose clandestinely made taperecordings revealed the extent of Kuchma's manipulation of the 1999 elections and set off the anti-Kuchma protest movement of December 2000-early 2001. See Wilson (2005a:51-55), however, he does not treat provincial developments in Cherkasy. From my perspective, Malinowsky may have been trying to "check me out" but I was not a journalist and not privy to any interesting information. The mounting political tension might explain the women's cagey behavior.

were not to be confused with the Woman-*Workers* for the Future of Ukraine who are the Communist women, whose politics they find outmoded and unsustainable.[40]

After our meeting, the women invited me to travel with them to Kyiv for an All-Ukraine gathering of their organization. On October 29 we left Cherkasy by (the SPU's) chauffeured car to Kyiv where they brought me to Nina Pokotylo whom I interviewed in the presence of several women of her entourage. She explained her career, the origins of her organization, the social ills that confirmed her in her ideological convictions, and her lack of financial support from any donors, Western or diaspora, and of course, the current Ukrainian government. I was not invited to stay for the full run of the conference, asked to leave before Oleksander Moroz, the SPU leader, was to address the gathering; however, I was allowed to administer my questionnaire and to speak freely with several women activists who had travelled from various oblasts.

The women were mostly from central and eastern Ukraine—I was struck by the excitement generated among them by the arrival of some delegates from the western oblasts (the tone seemed to be that they had won someone over from the opposition). They described a very vigorous and deliberate expansion of the hierarchical network of women's chapters throughout the regions.[41] One woman explained to me how they were organizing youth groups—and specifically referred to these as a revived *Komsomol* (the Communist Youth League) with the

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[40] As one can easily imagine, the ease with which the names of the ostensibly separate socialist and communist women's organizations morphed into one another, sometimes spelling out and sometimes omitting the cumbersome phrase "for the Children" and sometimes specifying women *Workers* and sometimes not, made it seem all the more likely that they were really one and the same, with informal divisions on the ground that account for the flexibility of the organization name. The use of the word Soiuz for "union" followed by Zhinok "of women" also put them in contrast , but also in a position to be confused with the Soiuz (union) Ukrainok (of Ukrainian women).

[41] The technique described to me was to appoint a head of the chapter and tell her to find 3-4 women to work with.

purpose of reviving socialist idealism among the youth. Suddenly, the woman was interrupted by Nina Pokotylo's return to the waiting room, and by the look on the woman's face (I didn't catch the look Pokotylo might have given her), I sensed that the woman had been given to understand that she had perhaps spoken "too freely" –that is, that she had not recognized me as "diaspora," and had erroneously assumed that I would be a fellow socialist sympathizer. I also have a photo of some of the handiwork the women put on display at their conference, including a portrait of Lenin embroidered in colorful cross-stitch, much like the needle-point portraits of Taras Shevchenko I am more familiar with in the diaspora.

The Diya women's organization was registered in Cherkasy oblast in 1997. It was the best politically-connected and seemingly the best-funded of the women's organizations and also the one with most successful youth outreach, by virtue of its connections with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Tourism. Tatiana Kyrychuk, oblast head for Diya, boasted of chapters in 13 (of 20) district centers.[42] Cherkasy's major textile firm, Weisse, is an honorary member of Diya. Diya estimates approximately one thousand members (a little under one hundred in each district). The head of Diya in Chyhyryn (Natalia Horbatiuk) told me that they are very much concerned with the massive unemployment in the Chyhyryn area and with the family problems that arose in that context. In Smila (headed by Marianna Herasymenko), the local Diya formed a center called Your Victory for young drug addicts. The Smila chapter has over 200 women and they are organizing a women's drop-in center where women can come to get legal advice and other services. In the city of Zolotonosha, the Diya group created a women's credit union.

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[42]Diya is organized in all of the larger cities and district centers of the oblast—Cherkasy, Smila, Zolotonosha, Kaniv, Khrystynivka, Tal'ne, Uman, Korsun'-Shevchenkivske, Kamianka, Zvenyhorodka, Chornobaj,and Irklijiv.

The Cherkasy Diya is associated throughout the oblast with the Ukrainian National Committee for Youth Organizations (UNCYO, registered in Cherkasy on October 1, 1997). Kyrychuk, the head of Diya, also directs the UNCYO's oblast network of 23 youth organizations in the districts and 17 city-level groups. In addition, she is president of the oblast's MODUS association of creative youth. One of the component programs of MODUS, is the KVN (KVN—Russ., KKV—Ukr.) which translates as "the club of the clever and innovative." The KVN specializes in improvisational comedy and talent shows very popular among the students.[43].

Kyrychuk ran both the Cherkasy Diya and the UNCYO youth activities out of the same office in the renovated Rosava Hotel in Cherkasy, Room 216. Down the hall, in Room 213, they were outfitting a professional recording studio for their youthful singers and were advertising voice and dance lessons for pay. By way of Diya's accreditation with the UN ECOSOC, Tetiana is also the coordinator for the UNDP program in the region that includes Cherkasy. Tetiana was soon to add another cap to her collection: she was to take on the leadership of an association of women's organizations in the oblast of Cherkasy.

In 2000 the Ya Zhinka (I am Woman) center (founded in 1994) was not registered on the oblast level, despite its three oblast-wide chapters, because it identified more accurately as a Cherkasy city organization than an All-Ukraine structure. The center had come into existence in the tightly interconnected relationships cultivated in the contact with the Sister City International Program. At some point, John Masura, the vice president of Sister Cities Sebastopo, whose great-grandparents were Ukrainian, met Viktoria Kuzmina of Cherkasy, a journalist who would become his wife. Viktoria was at this time embarking on a new career, launching a feminist

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[43] There is an All-Ukraine KKV (*Kliub Kmitlykvykh I Vynakhidchyvykh*) and an oblast level KKV, and a division at all of Ukraine's Universities.

magazine called Ya Zhinka (I am Woman) around which a community formed and evolved into the Women's Center. The center had a beautiful apartment devoted entirely to the women's programs, a gift in 1995 from Ellen Masland Salyer (who died in a plane crash in 2000), a feminist activist of Sebastopol and Santa Rosa Sister Cities programs.

In the oblast, the Ya Zhinka was joined in its feminism by another organization, AELITA, in the neighboring city of Smila.[44] Tamara Skotarenko of AELITA admitted that she thought there was an oblast-wide need for the kind of training her group does, but that grant money does not stretch far enough. The International Renaissance Fund (IRF) gave them support in the past but last year took away the line item for office rent, leaving AELITA without the means to pay the $30 a month presented to them for city office space. She and one paid staffer (the bookkeeper) ran the office from Tamara's apartment, while the physician who worked their hotline took calls from her own home phone.

The Fractured Coalition of the Women's Community

After 1998 the Oblast Department of Interior Affairs moved to create an Association of Women's Organizations (Hemment 2007 reports the same efforts in Russia's oblasts in 1998 as well). In 2000 I attended the third meeting of the group in the offices of the Cherkasy Oblast Department of the Interior: The Soiuz Ukrainok (A. Buchkowska), the Diya (T. Kyrychuk), Slavija (O. Hasko), League of Ukrainian Women (KUN, V. Barushynska), the League of Women's Initiatives (L.Melnychenko), and the Organization of Families with Many Children (V. Chornovol) were there. Berestianko of the socialist women was on the list but not present on

[44] Occasionally I heard that Ya Zhinka has a Smila chapter but this was never clarified. My suspicions are that sometimes the women around the AELITA may have served as the Center's Smila contingent. But AELITA formally rejected the idea that it should consolidate with the Women's center under one organization.

that day. The man running the meeting claimed that he had been to a UN training seminar on how to organize the women's movement and he was impressed with the idea of creating an oblast-wide network of youth and women's organizations. The idea was to be able to pool resources of materials, money, and volunteer labor; he would be the coordinator. He assured the women that the most important aspect of this initiative was women's issues and that political differences were secondary. Much discussion ensued over who would be elected as head, and taking advantage of Berestianko's absence, there was also open airing of some strong misgivings. The problem was more serious than the impractical suggestion of sharing resources; it was the composition of their proposed association that presented a political quandary for certain members who were unwilling to enter into coalition with any group whose politics are sufficiently leftist as to be potentially hostile to Ukrainian cultural integrity and sovereignty.

Particularly troubled was the leader of the local Women's Wing of KUN who commented that it would be impossible for her to even sit on the same committee, much less work under the leadership, of someone who is an organizer of the resurrected Komsomol. Alla Buchkovska acknowledged that ideological nuances do matter and that each member would need to consider the statute and principles of her own organization; Tania Kyrychuk, as head of state youth programs, pointed out that Ukraine has one state umbrella embracing all 400 existing youth organizations and provides funding to them regardless of political orientation and suggested that as a model. Knowing that Tania was expected to be elected head of this coordinating council, Borushynska objected that she nonetheless could not take directives from anyone representing the Komsomol. "How can I belong to this group? I should leave. I *sat* [did time in the gulag] for *my* ideals! Our common goal should be to produce a young generation that will love their

Ukraine—what can the Komsomol contribute to that end? It's not even a matter of [what happened over] the last 70 years (of Soviet rule)—it goes much deeper than that!"

The women finally decided that Tania Kyrychuk should head the group, being the only one who was politically neutral enough, well-connected enough as well as energetic and motivated enough to head the group (it would serve her political resume as well). In the end, the women complied with the state and legalized their association, Tania Kyrychuk was elected head, and Borushynska declined to join narrowing the potential coalition.

The next chapter will discuss how women actually participate in/with the governmental offices of the government of Ukraine's central administration and how they aspire to participate in the imagined possibilities of Ukraine's promised model of local self-governance. Because women are said to occupy 30-50% of the politically representative positions on the lowest, village council, levels of governance, I examine how the women's councils, in villages formerly organized as collective farms operate as a political aspect of these communities of governance and local self-government—with the caveat that local self-government is still an idealization, since Ukraine remains an extremely centrally-controlled environment and the attributes and parameters of even its geographical territorially-defined communities are still on strongly contested terrain.

Part III Women Activism and Activists in Cherkasy

Chapter Eight: Organized Women and Local Self-Government

In the first half of this chapter, I will examine how women in Cherkasy oblast participate in an aspect of civic society that appears to be a state lead initiative and how this affects local self-government. Civil society is theoretically a social space independent of government control and represents a platform from which to influence government. When women's groups are mandated and given state directives, they are, at its worst, vulnerable to being used as part of the political machinery (robbing them of any voice) and at best, are collectively exploited for their volunteer labor (even if truly volunteered) as "unpaid stop-gags for the system" (Browning 1992).
In the second half of this chapter I will discuss how involvement in women's organizations and the organizations themselves provide a base of political support for women interested in competing for political representation and a chance to represent the concerns of their (gendered) constituency for the purposes of molding legislations and influencing the distributions of resources within their local polity.

The Spilka: Women's Councils and Local Government

Before arriving in Cherkasy, I read about Inna Yakivna Hubenko, director of the Cherkasy Medical College and supervisor of its nursing program (Trokhymenko 2000), who was also head of the Cherkasy Oblast Spilka, and noticed that the members of the presidium of the oblast Spilka were similarly important public figures in education, social services, business, and industry.[1] Several were known for decades-long dedication to community work, some even

[1] Women whose names I encountered in other public settings were Valentyna Artiukh, Natalia Sirenko (the director of the Weisse factory), Lora Rubchenko, Ol'ha Zhaldak, Vira Bondarenko,

honored with the Order of Princess Olha Medal of Achievement bestowed upon them by the Kuchma administration.[2] Hubenko's organization was described as a network of women's groups whose mission is to encourage women's participation in the processes affecting their local communities, repeating the well-worn phrase, "Who will do it, if not we?" Hubenko's comments revolved around the current sentiment (which encapsulates a great truth) that women need "to take their fate into their own hands" even as she couched it in the deceptively ingratiating wisdom that "if you want a job done right, send a woman."

Once in Cherkasy, I found that given Hubenko's busy schedule, my contact would be her second-in-command, Zinajida Dolmatova, whom I met in one of the large spaces of the old Friendship of Nations building (September 12, 2000). Dolmatova briefed me on the local roster: a total of 76 women's councils, including the oblast central, three Cherkasy city chapters, 26 district chapters (one in each of the six larger cities and 21 district centers) and 46 *pervynni* (original) chapters in the oblast. Without offering a listing, or explaining how the original chapters differed from the others, she insisted that the Spilka is literally in every settlement.

Apparently the reorganization of the women's councils into a Spilka confederation was intended to resemble a hierarchical structure of groups of responsible women at each of the levels of Ukraine's regional state administration. At the oblast level, the elite Spilka body, the presidium, monitors the city and district level women's councils, which in turn assist in the work of the village level women's councils, wherever they were preserved. I could not ascertain how many women's councils existed in Ukraine during perestroika and at the time of independence.

Valentyna Zubava, and Valentyna Ivashkevych (head of the Sosniv borough council, city of Cherkasy).

[2] Both Inna Yakivna Hubenko, and Liubov Kononenko, head of the "Bile Ozero" CAE, with whom I met in 1998 had been honored in this way.

There are 28, 585 rural settlements, 456 cities, and 886 towns in Ukraine (UNDP 2008:28) which means that the high number of 57 thousand women's councils in 1964 (cited in Browning 1987:141[3]) seems excessively high, even if the councils were a feature of every collective farm and urban workplace. In 2000, the Spilka in Kyiv reported 27 oblast administrative units Ukraine-wide and over 10,000 local chapters, which suggests that in post-Soviet circumstances, not every village of Ukraine has a functioning women's council. Even in my superficial run through the oblast's rural areas, I confirmed that many of the approximately 540 rural points of settlement in the Cherkasy oblast had no women's council associated with it.

The Women's Council of Bile Ozero

My first encounter with the women's councils was in 1998, through a meeting arranged by Liudmila Taranenko with the head of the agro-firm[4] *Bile Ozero* (white lake) in the village of Bilozirya on the outskirts of Cherkasy. Liubov Kononenko was a rural woman leader with an exemplary communist career. [5] In 1998, Kononenko, who was appointed to the agro-firm in

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[3] Browning (1987:141, Appendix 4, Table 8) provides a a listing of all found references to zhensovety in Soviet literature. The information is chronically spotty, but there is a reference by Nasriddinova (1964) to the existence of 57,000 women's councils in Ukraine.

[4] In August 1998 I asked Kononenko about the difference between an agro-firm and a collective farm—She explained that the collective farm (kolhosp) is the creator of raw materials, the enterprise which creates agricultural products, grain, milk, meat. An agrofirm is a structure which also produces (vyrobliaje), but also makes it over (pererobliaje) and sells (realizuje) the product. She explained that she has the necessary machinery here and that they sell their produce from their own shops.

[5] Kononenko told me that she was born in the village in Bilozirya, and worked in the fields of the collective farm with her mother and grandmother who was a cook for the tractor brigade. In middle school, she considered being a teacher of history and Ukrainian language, but lacking financial resources for university, she enrolled at the institute of light industry, but disliking it, she returned to the land. Kononenko entered the Uman Institute of Agriculture and worked in the collective farm (kolhosp of the 22nd Convention). After her studies, she ended up back in her own village, keeping records for the first 1 and ½ years, and then was assigned to lead the

1992, was one of only 11 female directors of the new Collective Agricultural Enterprises (CAEs), of which there were 420 oblast-wide, and in the immediate district she was the only woman of 23 persons in similar positions of responsibility. Her agro-firm and its cultivated land comprised an especially well-run enterprise, and one that had laudable internal relations, taking care of all the dependents (primarily pensioners) of the former collective while also managing to treat fairly those who opted to try their hand at private family farming. She was also sensitive to the needs of the younger generation, whom she encouraged to pursue an education towards careers as specialists or entrepreneurs, hoping to see them come back to apply their talents in their home village. Kononenko was featured in the August 1997 Spilna Sprava magazine (she's on the cover) which praised her as a model berehynia of the Ukrainian village. She had agreed to talk about women's roles in her community.

Liudmila steered the interview directly towards gender by mentioning that she had just heard Governor Danylenko on the radio saying that "where women have taken the leadership, there we have order, across the board."[6] Kononenko responded to the effect that women do indeed get results and chalked it up to women's involvement in both private and public spheres. Especially because women are mindful of the domestic angle, whereas men tend to divorce themselves from any consciousness of the home front, women should apply their expertise

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agricultural brigade. She served as the head of the worker's union (*profspilka*), and was chosen secretary of the CPU organization for the next eight years. She became the assistant to the head of the regional division department of agriculture, as an economist, despite being an agronomist by training. Later she was assigned to be the assistant to the head of the regional department of agriculture for economic questions, where she worked for three years. Finally, returned to the land, as economist for the neighboring village Dubijivka. She was there for 2 years, and then when there were elections in the village agro-firma, Bile Ozero—she *found out that she had been elected head* of the agrofirm (that was 7 years ago, that means 1991).

[6] Frigga Haug (1991:41) points out that such flattery usually signals that there is a problem afoot.

through deeper political involvement. When I asked her about women's groups or initiatives in Bilozirya, she responded:

> We have the women's council, and I am head of the presidium of our women's council here. And we have a council that works quite well. We work with the families with many children, and vulnerable families, and although we can't say that we fully clothe and put shoes on all of these kids, but mostly within our limited possibilities, we try to help individual families and such children. The women's council is a community organization, and they are concerned with the problems of women, the problems of families of the village.

In addition to these aspects of securing the social welfare of the collective community, she added that the women of the council also take responsibility for the commemoration of holidays within the village:

> They participate in the Orthodox religious observances, and other holidays, commemorative holidays, and such. On such days no one works, and everyone takes a break only we feed the animals. We do this all in a Christian way I would say.

In general, she described it as a non-controversial utopian engagement in communal life that continues to draw the same Soviet-era activist constituents in to the degree that this is possible to do in the post-Soviet setting.

> The council has 11 persons, and if we counted all the women who participate in its work, I'd say they'd be about 200---practically all of the intelligentsia of the village, and the teachers, and the workers of the children's daycare, and all of our workers in the village administration—these we can count on to participate in the projects of the women's council….the council has been active since the time when the Communist Party was strong. I've worked in the council for 24 years. We also have a workers union which works well here. In the past they were more active—providing passes for the health resorts, the pioneer camps for the children, passes for children to get well at the rest

resorts and for the pensioners. The village council of veterans is also strong here. There are also many veterans of labor and veterans of war here. [interview, August 12, 1998]

The Village Council of Dubijika

In 2000 I stumbled onto the question of the relationship of the village women's council to the village sphere of self-government rather unintentionally. In the course of our conversation in Cherkasy, Dolmatova had made an off-hand comment that the Spilka cooperates with local bodies of state administration and that in the case of working with women in the villages, there are unique problems that require a "special approach." To give me a taste of the village-level work that is done, Dolmatova kindly arranged for the vice-president of the Cherkasy City Spilka to guide me to Dubijivka, and thus I went to meet the women's council, but managed to learn even more about the village council as a representative body of self-government.

Dubijivka, a scant 18 kilometers from Cherkasy, was once a large collective farm, with a *kolhosp* (kolkhoz) council of the network established in 1969[7] now reconfigured as the village council (*silska rada* or *silrada*). The village has 3, 600 residents, 2,300 of them women; 1,120 are pensioners and 700 children, 500 of school age and 200 pre-schoolers. Most of the young people are working abroad, leaving only the middle aged as the able-bodied personnel. The women are struggling to make a living out of dairying. In the past about 700 of its residents used to commute to Cherkasy to work, but now no more than 200 of them work in the city, mostly in the chemical factory. Dubijivka's collective farm was reorganized and officially registered as an agricultural joint stock company. Dubijvka looked to be a model village experiencing the land

[7] Judith Sedaitis and Jim Butterfield explain that "These councils were thoroughly dominated by agricultural managers, however. Ministers of agriculture, or comparable officials at lower levels, were automatically elected to chair them. The network of councils has existed and functioned continuously since the early 1970s" (1991:48).

reform peacefully and getting through the economic transition in relative comfort, given their paved road, full access to natural gas, and the general appearance of their public buildings.

My meeting with the head of the village, Kateryna Tonkonohova, took place in her office in the two-story village administration building dating to the 1980s. On the wall next to her desk was a portrait of Taras Shevchenko. She said she was born and schooled here, and served as the principal of the village school before being elected to head the village council. She told me that in the past, it was the collective farm director who assigned the village head, but that now it is the head of the collective farm who serves at the pleasure of the village head. In 1994, in Dubijivka's first democratic elections, Kateryna won over the former head of the kolhosp council and another candidate from the village historical association.

Tonkonohova explained that the women's council which was defunct from 1991 to 1994 was revived at the urging of the local state officials. The first 1960s women's council had not been a voluntary association—women who were considered *aktyvisty* (activists) were appointed to it mainly as representatives of various spheres of village life: one from the village library, one from the collective farm, one from the village school, one from the village house of culture, one from the orchard. After 1994 the revived women's council resumed its work; but Tonkonohova emphasized that it is a voluntary entity separate from the official village council and started to elaborate on that more official organ of local self-government.

The Dubijivka village council is a small operation, consisting of four executive government positions: the head, the secretary, the cadastral specialist (male), and a social welfare specialist. Other than that, there are people who are salaried but are not officially government employees: the cashier, the bookkeeper-accountant, and also a man who keeps track of the young men nearing army recruitment age (18). He gathers the young men in mid-October for the

village send-off after which they leave for the compulsory military service.[8] The cashier collects land and transportation taxes annually from each household and exacts monthly taxes from the businesses. The cashier and the accountant are both women who had in the past worked for the communist village administration; although they could have been legally replaced, they were kept on because Tonkonohova's secretary knew them and worked with them well. Tonkonohova thought that her village may be unusual in its female-dominated leadership (actually it is not). Thus, while the Dubijivka women's council was primarily involved in cultural work –described to me as collection of oral history from the elderly, holiday celebrations and seeing to the social welfare of the infirm or needy—the village council addressed village administration, though it also was not a body of elected officials (except for the head), and its representation functions were obviously limited.

Women's Councils and a Centralized Government

UNDP reports published over the last decade have noted that despite its constitutional commitment to local self-government,[9] Ukraine is still a centralized state (Nordberg 1998:48;

[8] The village farewell (reproduced in every residential community) involves each boy's mother tying an embroidered cloth around his arm or chest, and presenting him with a clump of native soil, among other gifts.

[9] Local self-government was instated upon independence, with elections of village, district and oblast heads. Ukraine's Constitution (1996) guarantees local self-government. Chapter XI, Article 140 states "Local self-government is the right of a territorial community—residents of a village or voluntary association of residents of several villages into one village community, or residents of a settlement and a town—to independently resolve locally significant issues in the framework of the Constitution and the Laws of Ukraine." This is in compliance with the European Charter on Local Self Government signed by Ukraine and ratified by the Supreme Parliament on 15 July 1997. In addition, the laws on Local self-Government in Ukraine (1997) and Local State Administration (1999), all ratified and passed during the Kuchma years in office, are the basis of the present system of local state administration and local self-government.

D'Anieri 1999:129; Council of Europe 2001; UNDP 2003, 2008).[10] In specific, a problem exists on the regional levels, where despite the provisions of the 1996 Constitution, the oblast, city, and district representative councils continue to be without their own independent executive structures, and are, instead, dependent on the local executive branches of the state (national government), i.e. the oblast state administration and the district state administration. The cadres of these offices work at the behest of the central government and are not accountable to the decisions made by the people's elected representatives to the local councils. This circumvents the efforts of Ukrainian constituents—individuals and civil society groups—to influence the course of their community affairs. In the villages, the village council is again a combination of state employees and locally elected individuals, with no clear distinction between central state executive and local self-government functions.

Ukraine's women's groups are apparently variously positioned with regard to the state. Most, as non-governmental organizations, work autonomously to influence the processes of local self-government, including preparing their members to run for office in representative decision-making bodies of government. Others, such as the Spilka, are better described as government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGO) with the national Spilka umbrella serving as a para-statal structure (Hrycak 2006:92) whose chapters act as adjuncts to organs of state

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[10] Marc Nordberg (1998:48) refers to Kuchma's Dnipropetrovsk mafia as an "ominous centralization of power given that it has been estimated that only about 200 people actually govern Ukraine." D'Anieri et al (1999:129) elaborate on the "vertical structure of power" cultivated by Kuchma since 1994 (Refer also to D'Anieri et al. 1999: 130 figure 4.5 which shows a "Schema of Ukraine's Government" D. Lempert (1992:12) notes that the Ukrainian constitution limits citizen participation in government to voting (as it was during the Soviet period) and that posts of power (prosecutors, military, judges, secret police and some local officials) are appointed by the national leaders. The Council of Europe (2001) and UNDP reports (2003, 2008) confirm the consolidation of this trend, with little progress towards effective practice of local self-government and greater citizen power through representation in the councils.

government. This allows the state to directly dictate the priorities of their work and to use their members' labor as informal extensions of state power. Such groups working in tandem with the state are vulnerable to state manipulation and are rendered unsuitable as conduits for alternative women's perspectives on official policy.

The District Center of Horodyshche

Not long after my visit to Dubijika, I was invited to the town of Horodyshche which is one of the district centers of Cherkasy Oblast. I was visiting a women's center created under the auspices of *Zakhyst* (protection), an NGO operating as a legal aid association. Alina, the co-manager, was explaining the necessity of a women's center here, since women are fully 57 percent of the district's residents [11] and 65 percent of its pensioners. She decided to walk me over to the district center's administrative offices to meet Tetiana Horidko, head of the Horodyshche district council since April 9, 1998. Horidko is one of only three women in the oblast to hold this top position among the 21 districts of the oblast [12] Horidko picked up on Alina's train of thought: of the 60 members of the Horodyshche council, 16 are women, including herself, and women head the committees on socio-economic and cultural development, budget and finance, and ethics. Many of these women have served on the district council for three or four terms –meaning eight to twelve years in office, since 1988 or 1992, either before or

[11] That means 51,500 by the state administration count, 49,300 as per the 2001 census

[12] The other two were Valentyna Shwed of Mankiw District and Kateryna Prishchenko of Katerynopilsk (Ofitsijna Ukraina Siohodni, Official Ukraine Today 2000:463)

at the cusp of independence. All are listed as "without party affiliation," except one which is openly CPU.[13]

Horidko also mentioned that almost the entire "executive branch" of the district council[14] (i.e. the state administrative offices) is composed of women. In fact, she did not hide the fact that she was proud that so many women held top positions in the district, most significantly the local division of the Department of Family and Youth. She described a cluster of organizations and individuals who cooperate with the state's efforts in this social welfare arena—the local women's council, several deputies of the district council who advocate for the needs of the local orphans, the women's committee for families with many children, and the union of disabled women. She then launched into an enumeration of the positions held locally by women: the head of the finance and budget office, the head of the local tax inspection, the notary public, the division of social security and employment, the wire communications center, the post office, the cooling industry factory, the land registry, the pension fund, and the sanatorium. In addition, the director of the Children's House, the director of the Youth building, the head librarian, eight of 27 directors of the district's schools and the assistant to the head of the local state administration with respect to women's issues, were also all women. In addition, five out of the 20 villages within her district were, like Dubijivka, headed by women. She maintained that this is the pattern all across the oblast's districts. "This means," she said pointedly, that women are even "better represented in local positions now than they ever were under Soviet rule." The pattern, she

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[13] I am using the publication of the IRI which is a directory of the deputies of Cherkasy Oblast Councils published in Kyiv in 1999.

[14] She herself referred to it as the executive branch, confirming the power arrangement that was explained by the 2008 UNDP Human Development Report for Ukraine as "*the actual power at the rayon [district] levels belongs not to rayon [district] councils, but to rayon [district] state administrations that are local state government bodies"* (2008:28))

continued, describing a stark change in gender relations, started over the last 10-15 years, and, especially over the last ten. In short, since independence, she said, her tone becoming more and more tinged with resentment, "the women are pulling the cart,"implying of course that men were no longer interested in doing the same.

Women Pulling the Cart

Ukraine-wide, it was the same pattern: women were fully 80 percent of rank-and-file office workers, and 77 percent of specialists executing state programs, but in terms of those occupying decision making positions, women were only five percent (Liashenko 1999).[15] Women were also sparse in the upper management and higher-level specialist ranks. In Cherkasy Oblast in 2000, there were only six women in the oblast's 85 top government positions. Of eight executive positions under the governor, only the head bookkeeper was a woman. Among the heads of the oblast's 25 state divisions, there were only two women: one heading the Social Welfare division, and another, the oblast archives. No women headed the 20 district state administrations. However, everywhere, the offices were full of female employees.

According to the 2008 data women are still excluded from decision making at the higher levels of public administration and politics, and continue to dominate the lower levels of every public service sector in the lower echelons of state administration, with the proportion of women increasing on the continuum from oblast to village. A recent MDG report states that the overall "share of women's representation within local administrative authorities was 37 percent; among the members of oblast-level authorities 12 percent; rayon [district] authorities 23 per cent; town authorities 28 per cent; *and small and big village councils 51 and 46 percent, respectively"*

[15] The Millennium Development Goals report published by the Ukrainian Economic Ministry (2010:56) provides identical figures for 2008, a decade later.

(2010:56, my emphasis). The point I am making is that this report inadvertently admits that the village councils are in reality part of the executive arm of the centralized government. The implication is that because lower levels of state administration have more limited access to big money and resources than higher government officials do, these local administrative authorities are ceded to women.

Without accusing women of gross corruption, it stands to reason that even on the small town or city level, state employees may, too, have opportunities to influence the distribution of funds, entitlements, or social services (and be influenced by political machines in their disposition of same). By extension of this logic, if the local government employees and the women's groups (i.e. the women's councils) overlap in membership, they may have greater local leverage. In the city locales, I was struck by the modus operandi of these women, engaging in the same old "government by telephone" manner which would suggest the image of an Old Girls' Network of Ukraine: one word to a colleague and the matter is decided. One of my interviewees in a middle-sized town that is a district center of the oblast, herself a local women's council member, described it as a group composed of a selection of well-positioned heads of local state service departments. In a moment of candor, she explained that, although she understood the benefit of women's small group interactions along the lines of "how a real women's organization is supposed to work," they had minimal time for this, and too much discussion was senseless since they had all known each other for years.

When asked about women's organizations in Horodyshche, Horid'ko, too, said she regretted that other than the local women's councils, there were none, especially none that operated as autonomous groups. The creation of such a group was however an ideal she kept in mind, her personal vision of resistance, as she clearly sympathized with feminist ideals:

> To tell the truth, when I leave this position of mine, I will voluntarily take it upon myself to have a women's organization. I love the idea, it appeals to me—the meetings, evening programs, discussion groups, defending women's rights through legal channels—there is so much we can do for women! But we often simply do not have the time (*ne dokhodiat' ruky*")…and we still have a ways to go. [interview, October 18, 2000]. 16

In her revisiting of the women's councils in the Ivanovo kolkhoz setting in Russia, Browning found that the women's councils continued to work very much in the former Soviet-era style, particularly in that fact that "the predominant role of the *zhensovety* remains that of social welfare, with activists engaged as unpaid stopgaps for the system" (1992:111). My own observations suggest to me that during the Soviet period, Ukrainian and Russian women's councils had similar working conditions and directives and their work in Cherkasy has also not changed much. Concern for the elderly and infirm, sponsoring caring projects for pensioners, honoring veterans of the Great War, bolstering the stability of young families, identifying and helping vulnerable families, were still the mainstays of their program. Each women's council had a cluster of social-welfare recipient groups and committees monitoring welfare benefits as its organizational satellites—that is, the committees and groups serving families with many children, the croups young families, single-headed households, and families of Afghanistan veterans.

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[16] She explained the problem as a lack of opportunity for full self-realization. When I asked her whether she meant this in a feminist sense, she said "no, we are companion-friendly women here" (not anti-male) and that by *realization* she meant work appropriate to a woman's training. "It's the unemployment... Most of our women, regardless of their education, …are all standing out there at the bazaars. I have 100 resumes from women with higher education lying on my desk.We do not have the right to fire the pensioners, and yet the young people need the work too. We have 491 women now on the unemployment rolls. Last year we found jobs for 196 women and retrained 54."(October 18, 2000)

In the Horodyshche district, the office of the national Department of Family and Youth worked in tandem with the Committee of Families with Many Children. Some of the members of the Committee are volunteers who work to collect and distribute charity contributed from various sources for the benefit of struggling families, but most of the members are actually clients receiving help from the organization. As the head of the council explained, "We gather up those on our lists and we give them the aid they need." Alina, the manager of the Zakhyst women's center, admitted that she too has been personally involved in actions ("raids") targeting vulnerable families that the Family and Youth department conducts in cooperation with local schoolteachers. The logic behind this is that by virtue of daily contact with the children of the community, it is often the teacher who first notices that a child is suffering from poverty, hunger, or abuse. Teachers report potentially maltreated child and the state officials organize an impromptu "visit" to uncover the conditions under which the child is being raised (interview October 18, 2000). Indeed I found that in several district locations, women admitted that identifying and hopefully assisting such vulnerable families was the major thrust of the work of the women's council, even though there were district-level programs in place through the office of the division of Family and Youth. "All of it is of the initiative of the *organs of self-government, that is, the government offices here"* one woman told me, reflecting the common confounding of the two concepts.

The District Level Women's Council of Khrystynivka

In the small city of Khrystynivka in the western end of the oblast, I received a full description of the how the district level women's council operates to help the needy, involving not only the employees of the city administration but also the directors of the local factory:

> I've been working in it for 12 years already [since 1988]. Our district Spilka Zhinok has a women's council (zhinocha rada) with 18 members and each has her own area of responsibility. In the district there are 450 of us. Within every village council there is a women's council. In the small villages the women's council might have 5 members, in the larger ones up to 17. Each member has her own realm of responsibility on the village level, too. When we [from the district Spilka] come to visit them, we make plans of work with them, which guide their monthly activity. ..The teachers help us a lot in the villages…In the district we took care of the preparations for Women's Day on March 8. Those of us who still have our jobs—I am the assistant director of the office of employment—work in this women's council on a volunteer basis. There are women who are employed by the office of social welfare who work with us to go visit families with many children and single-headed households. We also call all of the heads of the village women's councils to a meeting where we discuss what requests were made for assistance, for example, with painting a house, or fixing a roof that has caved in I'm sure you have seen for yourself how drastic things are in the villages these days because there are so many families without a safety net. We have no funds of our own to distribute, but we go to the businesses and they do not refuse us. We administer the aid, and when someone applies to us for help I call the director of the factory and he provides me with a statement that I sign off on and the woman can then go and redeem the paint she needs, for example. The businesses that help us are the food factory, the dairy products factory and the general goods factory. [interview, November 19,2000]

By the later 1990s the state also became interested in "helping' to coordinate the activities and resources commanded by various women's organizations, by encouraging the creation of state-sanctioned coordinating councils on the city and oblast levels. Ostensibly this was to facilitate cooperation between the women's organizations, but surely also between these organizations and the government. By calling together a "women's coordinating council" of this sort, the state is gathering up most of what could be seen as the local NGO community –and then charges this group, made up of mostly women's organizations, with a set of issues representing

mostly problems of social reproduction, which is them effectively equated with women's responsibility. The Soviet period expectation that women's groups represent voluntary labor and the blurring of boundaries continued to create ambivalence for new post-Soviet women's groups with regard to their obligations to the state, as illustrated by the NGO experience in Smila.

The Women's Coordinating Council of Smila

In describing her own organization to me, Tamara Skotarenko, the founder of AELITA, a feminist women's organization conducting HIV/AIDS and sexual health training for teenagers in the city of Smila, (registered in March 1998), placed it within an impromptu typology of post-Soviet women's collectives: In doing so, she made a fundamental distinction between "independent" groups—including women's clubs and also various more formal women's organizations, women's centers, resource and informational centers, and networks (using the spectrum of terms applied to Western-inspired feminist collectivities)—and those that were not independent of the state. In the latter category, she listed state-embedded women's councils and the coordinating councils of women's organizations that enlist the heads of local organizations as members. She specified that these kinds of organizations are "territorially defined" as in old Soviet practice. On this point, she made a strong distinction between her own group and the local women's council (*zhinocha rada*), which she described as subordinated to the executive branch of the city administration, i.e. the state.

When I asked her about the local women's council's status as a chapter of the post-Soviet national federation called Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy, Tamara was skeptical.

> I have not heard of them being an official chapter of Maria Orlyk's Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy or anything like that. And what's more, if there ever existed a chapter or this spilka here in Smila, I never once in my life … heard about it from my women

> colleagues. What's more, when I went to register my organization, they challenged me "Women's organization? We have no need for any women's organization! I tell you, we were barely able to register! [interview, October 19, 2000]

This statement is somewhat shocking, even for the provinces, since AELITA was registering mid-1997 to March 1998, and generally, by the 1990s women's groups were already an expected presence and an accepted arena for affecting and effecting change.

In the early months of 1999, the assistant to the mayor of Smila with responsibility for community affairs, whom Tamara described as an energetic and progressive woman, invited Tamara to join an initiative for a new coordinating council for women's issues. Interestingly, a similar coordinating council was also being organized by the Cherkasy Oblast State Administration in 1999-2000, which lends some perspective on the consolidation practices being applied oblast-wide. The members of the Smila coordinating council were to be the heads of the various Smila-based women's organizations—of the Women's Council, the independent women's NGOs—but also the directors of the local schools, and the head of the workers union who happened to be women.

Tamara confessed to initially having some misgivings about being part of an umbrella committee to which she would be required to report, and that later she felt disappointed by the group's inactivity, as there had been no progress at all on any of their plans. Now however, she is content with the pragmatic benefit of having a formal connection to a respected city official whose backing she may need when applying for project grants:

> As an organization, we (AELITA) have plenty to report out, so that I'm not at all worried about. But, for me personally to be able to say that I am a member of this council, was a plus, because if a need to present a project, I can say that I will have the support of the city administration. This is very important, particularly on the city level. Everyone

> knows her [the assistant to the mayor], so that if I can say that I come recommended by her, that makes a big difference. [interview October 19, 2000]

Tamara's observations suggest that even in the cities, the women's councils continue to be understood as the same bodies that operated during the Soviet era. In their current form, these councils and other similar groups are not likely to be manifestations of women's independent activism. Moreover, the model for NGO involvement with the state is not to do the state's bidding nor to take advantage of its largesse, but rather to influence government decisions and temper state control.

Women's NGOs and the Politics of Representation

Since independence, women have not exceeded eight percent as their gender's share of Ukraine's Supreme Parliamentary positions, varying from four percent in 1994 to eight percent in 1998, and dipping to five percent again in 2002-2006, well below the 30 percent boasted in Soviet times, when women's quotas were enforced—which puts Ukraine as a representative of the FSU within the range of women's political participation in the West. Feminists rightly focus on representation as an indication of women's potential influence for social change, thus observers of post-Soviet transition have paid special attention to these numbers and Ukrainian women themselves hold Sweden up as their model Parliament: Larysa Kobelianska, director of Ukraine's UNDP Gender Program in Kyiv, established the League of Ukrainian Women Voters 50/50 in 1997 as an All-Ukraine NGO aspiring to help Ukraine's women match Sweden's accomplishment of gender-parity in Parliament. Pavlychko (1997) also stressed how important it would be that Parliament hear the views of women who also represented a broader range of Ukraine's viable political ideologies (not only CPU which dominates Parliament), a sentiment soon shared by Western aid groups as well.

Women Deputies to Lower Level Councils

Despite the admitted fact that in Ukraine it is only in the Supreme Parliament that decisions of any consequence are made, it remains a panacea to repeat that although women's representation is very poor in Ukraine's highest legislative body, their absence on that level is compensated by their significantly higher representation in the councils on the oblast and district levels, where it is 30 percent and on the village levels, where it is 50 percent (Ukraine's MDG Report 2010). The UNDP (1999) analysis of gender in Ukraine, reported that in 1998 women's overall share of lower level council positions was 37.64 percent.[17] In Cherkasy Oblast, where in 1994 there were 572 councils (542 of these being village councils) a total of 2614 women (36 percent of 7634) served as deputies of the various councils on all administrative levels.[18] In 1998, the International Republican Institute (IRI) compiled a roster of delegates elected to oblast, city, and district councils of Cherkasy Oblast that year, giving names, dates of birth, education, professional position and party of affiliation. (It did not include the representatives of the village level councils however.)[19] The IRI roster for Cherkasy Oblast listed 2665 elected officials, among whom, by my count 349 (or 13 percent) were women.[20] My calculations suggested that

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[17] UNDP Gender Analysis of Ukrainian Society (1999:60), Table 8 "The composition of Ukrainian Local Councils of Deputies, elected on March 29, 1998, breakdown by sex" shows that for a total of 12, 068 local councils, there were 229,549 deputies elected, 37.64 percent of whom (86,409) were women (data collected by the Supreme Parliament Secretariat).

[18] See the UNDP (1999:60) Table 7 "Deputies in Ukraine, by Sex (Elections of 26 June 1994)" where the information is given by oblast. For Cherkasy Oblast, there are 572 local councils to which 7634 deputies were elected, 2614 of them (or 36 percent) were women.

[19] My sincere thanks to Halyna Koshulap, IRI Office Manager in Kyiv, who helped me better understand the context of the information compiled in this roster-report. If there are any misconceptions, they are artifacts of my own analysis, however.

[20].Only the Sosniv borough council in Cherkasy city had a higher percentage of women delegates, 15 of 36, or 42 percent

the 542 village councils of Cherkasy oblast should account for approximately 5000 delegates,[21] suspiciously in line with the general rule of estimating ten persons in any given "collective." Another simple calculation [22] brought me to the conclusion that of the 5000 delegates, about half (four or five women per village council?) are assumed to be women. The IRI reported to me that recording the delegates to each village council represented, at the time, a challenge to time and cost-effectiveness, and so they were not included in the report. (personal communication). This is also not surprising, given that some of these village councils might even be non-existent, in that the UNDP 2008 report indicates that many are unviable as self-governing units; in conjunction with the ethnographic evidence above that the village councils are not strictly elected bodies.

What is significant in this, is that the UNDP statistics, provided by the Supreme Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) Secretariat in 1994, most likely reflect a "Soviet" calculation rather than transition-period reality, and I am concerned that these potentially inflated numbers are being used to bolster a mirage that Ukrainian women have real power in the lower echelons of state government and in the elected bodies of their local self-government.

Nonetheless, women's participation in Cherkasy's district and oblast councils might be indicative of their chances to eventually break through to higher levels of power. In 2000 the Cherkasy Oblast Council had 78 deputies of which 13 are women, or 17 percent (IRI 1999); the statistics for the district councils (for example Horodyschche, where women are 16 of 60 or 25

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[21] The difference between the total numbers of delegates reported for 1994 (7634) and listed in 1998 (2665) represent the total number of delegates serving in the village councils, which the IRI report did not include. .

[22] Subtracting the known named delegates of 1998, from the total of women delegates reported for 1994, that is 2,614-349=2,255.

percent of the deputies) hover around that mark across the board, and in the city councils, the numbers are closer to 30 percent (IRI 1999). In terms of party affiliation[23], even a cursory examination of the roster of district and oblast councils in Cherkasy (IRI 1999) reveals that the delegates overwhelmingly identify as *pozapartijni* (without party affiliation), including the women. There were three parties listed by the UNDP office in Kyiv as enrolling a high percentage of female members: the People's Movement of Ukraine Rukh (40%), the Liberal party of Ukraine (40%), the Socialist Party of Ukraine (45%), Green Party (45%) and Communist Party of Ukraine (50%), ironically none of these being one of the six Ukrainian political parties that were actually headed by women in 1999 (Handbook of Political Parties 1999). Only a very few women delegates indicated party membership, however, and if so, it was either Rukh or CPU (IRI 1999).[24]

Organized Women Seeking Legislative Influence

Social Reproduction

[23] In Cherkasy, in 2000, a handful of parties ruled. The strongest ones were the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) headed in Cherkasy by Volodymyr Yeshchenko, also a VR representative; the Peasant Party headed by Oleksander Shkid'ko; the Socialist Party of Ukraine headed by V. Malinowsky; the Narodnyj Rukh Ukrainy of Udovenko) headed in Cherkasy, by Jurij D. Hromovskyj; the Ukrainskyj Narodnyj Rukh of Jurij Kostenko (that split off from Rukh in 1999) headed in Cherkasy by Mykola Kotko; the Democratic Party of Ukraine (DemPU), headed by Mykhailo Jakovych Vakulenko, Oblast Office of Internal Affairs; the NDPU, the People's Democratic Party of Ukraine, headed in Cherkasy by Pustovoijt,[23] the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (not the oligarchic one) headed in Cherkasy by Jurij Buzduhan ;[23] and the SDPU(o) the oligarchic one---in 1999-2000, the SDPU(o) in Cherkasy is headed by Vadim Lyoshenko, assistant governor in the Oblast State Administration

[24] The Cherkasy Oblast Council however, remained overwhelmingly in the control of the "pozapartijni", mostly old communists, and in the rural areas it often boiled down to a contest between the communist and Rukh . Wilson discusses the resilience of Rukh to against "divide and rule" tactics and how the intelligentsia (in city, town and village) continued to vote for candidates who represented the continuation of its ideals, so that Rukh was still a serious contenders even in the 2002 elections (2005b:153)

Social reproduction issues are women's issues and the disposition of budgeted funds available for education, health, and income support are recognized gendered issues of special importance for both gender and class relations (Walby 1990:165). Under the Soviet system, caring functions were taken out of the realm of the household, but continued to be performed by women in the public sphere. Thus, under Soviet state patriarchy, women predominated in the occupations that were state-salaried positions and paid out of the local budgets. In the post-Soviet period women still account for 70 percent or more of workers in both education (particularly daycare workers, primary and secondary level teachers) and health (as midwives, nurses and doctors). In addition, women as caretakers within the private sphere, continue to be very much concerned with the availability of state aid (*pil'hy*, or benefits) that are paid, for example, to mothers of young children, to the physically impaired and the chronically ill, or to those who served in the Great War.

The benefits may mean outright payments or reductions in the cost of public transportation and other communal services, which in the past included heat, water, and electricity. They are thus substantial benefits (Melnyk 1999). They appear even more important when one realizes that the Ukrainian pension inadequately reflects the "*prozhytkovyj minimum*" or the minimum survival (similar to the U.S. poverty level index) because inflation eats away the value of the currency. Liubov Majboroda, a Cherkasy politician, noted in one of her campaign brochures that 80 percent of the population of Ukraine does not have an income that even matches the minimum established by the Ukrainian government. Women, therefore, constitute the majority of those who are called the *malozabezpecheni* or those with inadequate social safety net.[25]

A final category of budget salaries is reflected in the payments the government makes to workers of the state enterprises. This means that any industrial plant that has not been privatized and is still operating under state ownership incurs debt to the state budget in terms of both salary payments and contributions to the Pension Fund. The crisis of employment in Cherkasy affected both genders, but because women were both discriminated in the processes of privatization and also among the first to be let go from ailing enterprises, they suffered deeper and longer unemployment than men.[26] The women of Cherkasy, therefore, have a vested interest in the budget, which is the source of not only their salaries but also of all social welfare, medical care, education, cultural and communal services affecting their homes and children. [27] It is a truism to say that women need to be represented in politics as policy makers and council members, to have input into the budgets being passed on the city and oblast levels, rather than participating solely as voters and NGO budget watchdogs.

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[25] This point is rarely made in just this way. Alina Komarova Party of Women of Ukraine though does spell it out in the Party Platform published in the Political Parties Handbook (PPH) 1999)

[26] In 1998, Cherkasy's two largest chemical producing enterprises in Ukraine, the Azot and the Khimvolokno, employed only 1.8 percent of the city's workers. There were 30 light industry enterprises, among them producers of silks, knitted wear, footwear, sewing goods, leather dressing. By 2002 the city recorded 1000 businesses that have managed to reorganize and register, and women have found new niches in the labor market of Cherkasy: In 2002, women are 57.2 percent of the labor force. The Oblast Employment office reported however that over 70 thousand women were affected by cutbacks and one in nine needed to be retrained. In Cherkasy oblast in 2002, women were in hotel/restaurant work 82%; financial services 72%; trade (markets) 75% ; education 73%; healthcare 81%; civil service 66%; postal/communications workers 65%, the last 4 categories being state-salaried. (Lytvyn and Stepanov 2002)

[27] I have notes that the city budget includes obligations for education, housing, social protection, healthcare (including maintenance and supplying of the city hospitals and salary payments to doctors, nurses and staff) law, traffic and roads maintenance, youth affairs and culture; and that 75 percent of the budget was needed to pay salaries, leaving only 25 percent for social services, not leaving anything for the development of businesses in the city.

The irony of the situation is that the while Ukraine is officially striving for local competency to collect taxes and finance local public services, such self-government exists in practice in only 176 (of 456 total) of Ukraine's larger cities (including Cherkasy). Most of Ukraine's cities, and the oblast and district level state administrations, however, are still allotted "budget funds" from Kyiv [28] and village settlements then get budget allocations from the district. Therefore, there really is not much budget leeway for the councils to control.

In a 2000 interview, Valentyna Ivashkevych, a Spilka member and head of the Sosniv borough council within the city Cherkasy, explained that in her district—which houses 60 percent of the city's residents, 27 thousand of whom are pensioners, 9.5 thousand disabled, 22 thousand elderly who live alone and 1.8 thousand chronically unemployed—if it were not for the fact that she has two of Cherkasy's most successful joint ventures (the Reemstma tobacco plant and the Hrafija-Ukraina printing house) locally, and if not for the help of the Ukrainian Red Cross, the budget –"if you can call it a budget," would be a disaster (Pavliuk 2000). [29]

Women Seeking Representation

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[28] Under the Soviet system, budgets to regional bodies were allotted from above (from Moscow, not Kyiv) without alteration. The local government organs had no authority to supplement their budgets with local taxes or contributions of any sort. There is a new (post-soviet) provision that the local city budget may be supplemented by extra-budget funds. (taxes and I would think any money gotten from other external sources, including investment and gift-grants). One of the responsibilities of the local governments is to calculate how much money will be necessary to provide (legally, constitutionally) guaranteed social services to the residents of its territory of authority. It is the responsibility of the local governments, then to fill the gap between the allotted amount from above by bringing money into the budget through contributions from below, in the form of income taxes and if need be, fines.

[29] V. Pavliuk (2000) reports that in 1998 her committee figured that they would need a minimum of 15 million *hryvni* to satisfy their obligations, but got 4.9 million one year, 7.1 million the next. They are expected to raise the balance from taxes and fines, "and everyone knows what percentage of these taxes the center takes for itself,"

By 1998 a period by which Ukraine's women's organizations were sufficiently politicized to start agitating for office, the NGOs started to prepare women for effective participation in the political arena around social reproduction issues. In theory, the city, district and oblast councils should have significant input; but unfortunately, as I heard a political commentator put it, "the regional councils are window dressing." As the UNDP acknowledges, the regional councils do not have real power to make local law and do not really govern the budget.

> At the oblast level…the oblast councils represent local self-government, whereas the oblast state administration represents the state… Elections are held to appoint all city mayors, town and village heads as well as of village, town and city, and also rayon [district] and oblast council deputies. However, the heads of rayon [district] state administrations are appointed by the orders of the President of Ukraine and the heads of oblast state administrations by the decrees of the President of Ukraine…Citizens can influence decisions through election of the heads of their localities, and of the local, rayon and oblast council deputies. However...the heads and council deputies have few decision-making powers…The actual power at oblast [and] rayon [district]…belongs to the heads of oblast and rayon [district] administrations. Since they are appointed from the top and are not elected by relevant local and regional constituencies, they are not accountable to the people. [UNDP HDR 2008:28]

Women's participation in the administration of central government is restricted to the lower levels. In Cherkasy's 20 districts there is not a single woman heading the (executive branch) district state administrations. Making matters worse, services such as education, health care, social welfare, and culture services, which are constitutionally under the principles of self-

government, are understood to be the responsibility of the district and oblast. It is, however, precisely on these levels of the district and oblast, that voters are least able to exercise influence on the decision makers (UNDP 2008:29).

Political Accession and Competition

When I first met Valentyna Ivashkevych, the head of Cherkasy's Sosniv Borough Council, it was during the September 2000 festivities of the Days of Cherkasy celebration. I had been invited to a buffet lunch at the city's Victory Park after which there would be a concert on a stage set up on the park grounds. When I told Valentyna that I was interested in the recent history of the women's movement of the region, she exclaimed "you can't write the story of the women's movement without us!" (I assumed she meant the Spilka). Ivashkevych, former Komsomol from Kharkiv, and CPU-trained functionary, started her life in Cherkasy as the senior economist for the oblast division of communal services in 1975. Her political career took off when she was tapped to serve as a representative to the District Council in 1981. Then, she became the assistant to the head in 1984, and was elected to its top position in 1987. She has lead the Sosniv borough council ever since, and is for this reason, bestowed the title of Berehynia of Sosniv. Other nicknames mentioned were "commander in a skirt," woman with "pepper" (meaning having a sharp tongue), an independent woman leader "doing a man's job."

It was Valentyna Ivashchkevych, now appearing as "pozapartijna" (without party affiliation) in her role as the head of the borough council, who organized the Cherkasy Oblast Association of Women Delegates to the various councils of Cherkasy Oblast. Upon formal registration this group became a member of the Ukraine-wide Congress of Women Delegates which (they said) had been active in Ukraine since mid 1998. Fifty one women representatives to regional councils of Cherkasy Oblast (seven Oblast Council members, ten city and city district

council members, 20 regional Council members, and 14 village council members) met on December 8, 2000, to formally elect Valentyna as leader of the new Association. [30] Not all of the women council members who attended were pleased with the turn of events, especially the women of the Rukh contingent who complained that this was a typical soviet style meeting where the outcome of the "elections" was predetermined, pre-empting any semblance of democratic process.

The protest had to do with the fact that women representing the Rukh faction of politics wanted to have better opportunities for participation in the committee work of the oblast council and were looking to break in with a different, Ukrainian nationalist and reform-minded, "voice." The program paper prepared by the Association reiterated much of the same phrases about the discrimination of women in the transition that was starting to sound rather worn and tired cliché, even if true. The Rukh women could not deny the general outline of it, but they were impatient with the superficial discourse that was keeping the representatives of the old Soviet system in, and locking them out as if they were insensitive to human suffering and the needs of their fellow citizens.

Since Ukraine's first days of independence, Western aid donors are also wondering how to help, not only women, but people with fresh political views, into the ranks of Ukrainian parliamentary and council representation; and the turnover of communist loyal representatives in the local councils is going as slowly as it is in the Supreme Parliament. One of my sources, a

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[30] The wording of the Association's prepared mission statement was as follows: "sometimes there are no words, to describe the horror of our contemporary reality. In addition, it is the woman, the child and the family who are most affected by the social stress of these conditions. Loss of the safety net of social services, lawlessness and uncertainty give birth to a desire to search for way out of this extremely limiting position. We the women-deputies do not have the right to stand on the sidelines as observers, because we are deeply convinced, that only a woman who has the mandate of representation in the council can help the women."

homegrown political analyst politically of the Rukh persuasion, has a theory about the echelons of power. She asserted that a great percentage of the first Parliament of Ukraine was composed of men of the highest ranks of the CPU, i.e. the secretaries of the oblast central committees. Many of these delegates to the first post-Soviet session of the Ukrainian Parliament have since gone into the lucrative field of business. Next in line for seats in Parliament was the cohort of former CPU heads of the regional oblasts (whose colleagues are still among those heading the oblast state administrations). The following wave, she predicted, will be from the third echelon of Soviet power, i.e. the leaders of the Komsomol; and at this point, there will be many more women in the ranks [31] So, in her opinion, the promise to move women into top positions may be fulfilled simply as a stage in the workings of Soviet-style social capital, unless, of course, something intervenes and interrupts the scheme. Obviously, my friend did not consider the pozapartijni to have shed their CPU habits or to have rejected the benefits of old connections. Looking at the composition of the Cherkasy Oblast council I find that of 78 members, there are 62 pozapartijni, and ten of these are women. Delegates identifying with other political parties are not numerous. There are six CPU (one of them a woman); three NDP (one woman); two APU (one woman, Liubov Kononenko of Bile Ozero); and one male delegate each from the SPU, NRU, and the Green Party. Valentyna Ivashkevych was one of several women in Cherkasy that I thought seemed poised for that automatic climb up that ladder of succession.

Women's groups that want to present a challenge to this expected pattern can provide a training ground for the cultivation of oppositional political views. Their grassroots orientation helps women gain local knowledge and experience necessary for public policy making and broadens their network of contacts. Also they can help women learn how to get elected, because

[31] Browning (1985: 208) confirms that women were 50 percent of the Komsomol, but I do not know about the Komsomol leadership.

since 1992, foreign donors in Ukraine have been keen on helping non-CPU candidates make an effective run for office. From 2000 on, NGOs were looking to support a shift of local politics in the hard to reach rural areas, an effort that continues on into the later years of the decade.[32] In 2006, the IRI was developing a voter education program focusing on rural women (IRI 2007).

By 2000 several women's organizations had also decided to help train women to run for office and deal in politics effectively. Nina Pokotylo informed me that the SPU had already had such a political training for women which she called a political leadership school (actually it was a one-day conference entitled "Women and Power" on December 25, 1999) in which 237 women participated, ten of whom were from the Cherkasy Oblast (SPU, 1999). Other women's organizations had had similar conferences in which women academics presented their research on gendered aspects of demographic, ecological, health, political, and economic conditions in Ukraine, but generally, women had not had much opportunity for formal political training. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) are two of the prime funders of political training seminars for Ukrainian prospective politicians—men. In 2000, IRI decided to try something new and support a women's organization as a training ground for teaching women stronger political habits.

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[32] For example, the 2005 annual report of the Ukraine Women's Fund (founded in 2000) disclosed the initiatives of the NGO Young Cherkasy, a coalition of youth community organizations in the Oblast, who had created a project for activating a community movement in the rural areas, Viktoria Feofilova, Project Manager of Young Cherkasy, wrote the following statement: "Who's going to revive the countryside if not rural communities themselves? As it happened, the women got it much better. They also proved to be more active in the community than men. Of course, during the course of the project we did run into the problem that there is little systematic work going on in rural areas. Right now, we're preparing a handbook on "Activating a community movement in rural area" It should be of use to those who want to work with rural populations, because not all approaches that work in the city are going to work in the country" (Ukraine Women's Fund 2005). In 2011, the UWF is currently funding the Association of Rural Women of Ukraine to involve rural women in small business. (www.uwf.kiev.ua/en-index.html).

The Women in Politics Seminar Hosted by the Soiuz Ukrainok of Cherkasy

The Soiuz Ukrainok was in a period of expansion in year 2000 and the IRI-sponsored Women in Politics project was a new direction of work for the Cherkasy oblast chapters. As described earlier, the Soiuz Ukrainok had a difficult start in Cherkasy. The early focus and continuous thread of the work of the Soiuz Ukrainok is related to nation-building and the revival of Ukrainian culture and values; but the organization was under the new leadership and its mission broadened to formally incorporate feminist goals of gender parity and political diversity in women's participation in government.

In August 1998 I was invited to visit one of the Soiuz Ukrainok's three city chapters. They had just come under the new leadership of Alla Buchkowska whose energy and personal resume served to bridge the gap between the older women (whose identity was that of victims of Soviet repression) and younger women whose lives did not necessarily include such experiences. It did not hurt that Alla's husband was a wonderful man of Russian ethnicity who spoke Ukrainian beautifully and publicly as a matter of principle (of citizenship) as well as patriotism.

The meeting of the Zlahoda chapter was planned for August 9 in the home of Tetiana, the group's leader. The women had prepared a feast, including a platter of fried fish that Alla's husband had caught in the Dnipro River just that morning. Finally, ready for the business of the meeting, Alla took the floor to share her vision of what the Soiuz Ukrainok could accomplish:

> We just had our Parliamentary elections this past March. I worked as the press secretary for the candidates running on the Narodnyj Rukh Ukrainy party ticket [party of Vyacheslav Chornovil]. I gained a lot of experience in campaigning (*agitatsija)* and I want to say that the Soiuz Ukrainok women in particular were very helpful. They came to the office a lot, called in and worked with me. And no, it was not just Tetiana who did that, there were a great many that came to help. Woman Power is important! We know that the Soiuz Ukrainok is officially a non-partisan organization, not a political

> organization, but a community organization, and maybe, in fact, we have a lot of divergent political views represented among our members--be it communist, or green, or Rukh sympathizing, or what—But let me tell you, the men like to lead, but the women worked even better than the men did. When women get together to work—they generate a wealth of wonderful ideas, and all we need to do is to decide to put those ideas into action…I was very satisfied with the level of cooperation. Of the 200 candidates altogether, we had 19 candidates from Rukh. For example, we were campaigning for Rubtsov from Kyiv—the people here were practically unaware of him as a politician at first, but after the 1ast half month of our campaigning people did get to know him and he came in fourth of the list of nineteen. Now, Tetiana, please tell us more about how the women worked—mind you, these are women working in politics! [Buchkovska, August 9 1998]

When I returned to Cherkasy two years later, Alla was still head of the oblast Soiuz Ukrainok, and seemed to be very much exhilarated by her successes. Her office space was in the same broken-down building as the Ukrainian Writers' Union office and the headquarters of the Narodnyj Rukh party, but apparently Alla had impressed an important donor organization, the IRI. The IRI had already run practical conferences and seminar trainings for activists of Ukraine's democratically inclined parties in various oblasts including Cherkasy. [33] When I visited the IRI Kyiv headquarters they explained to me that the grant received by the Soiuz Ukrainok for the Women in Politics seminar represented IRI's first foray into specifically women's political training.

The seminar was a great success. Alla planned the seminars as a once monthly two-day event, to which she invited a wide network of interested women. The grant allowed her to cover

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[33] The IRI founded in 1984 as an independent non-profit ngo had been in Ukraine since 1995 and had already run programs promoting democratic practices in Cherkasy, Odessa, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv, and Chernivets oblasts as well as in the Autonomour Republic of Crimea).

travel expenses as well as room and board for the conference participants, who would never have been able to afford a trip to Cherkasy otherwise. It was a very valuable experience providing exposure to knowledgeable speakers, hands-on training, and to possibilities for networking. The women who gathered for the seminar were a constantly changing group, and through them, I encountered new activist groups and received invitations out to their home districts. Other than the Soiuz Ukrainok, representatives of Slavija, Zhinocha Hromada, the women of the Rukh Party, the young Rukh, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, and even the Socialist Women for the Future of the Children of Ukraine attended. The prominent Cherkasy Spilka women were not in evidence, and neither were the women of the Cherkasy Women's Center Ya Zhinka.

The program was designed to be a combination of special guest speakers, hands-on training, including simulations of campaign situations and even radio and television interviewing. The line-up of guest speakers included deputies to Parliament, and officials from the regional state administrative offices; topics included election law, political coalitions, blocs and parties, the land reform, pension reform, aspects of self-government and community activism. The women created campaign platforms and acted out door- to-door campaign situations (nothing new, one of them said, because as Rukh volunteers they had done this all before!). I heard them think aloud about how they would work with people and examine what skills might help a leader be effective. The women knew that they had to be prepared for all kinds of dirty politics as well, since they well know that a variety of tactics developed in the former USSR to weaken political opposition continues to be used aggressively in post-Soviet Ukraine (Wilson 2001:151).

The tone of the seminar steered clear of the usual discourse that politics is a natural male domain and did not indulge in the rhetoric describing women in positions of authority as delicate

feminine creatures bravely taking on the burdens of the world. The Soiuz Ukrainok avoided discourses on such gendered divisions of labor, but rather, emphasized that women who want to have a role in politics need to be trained for effective participation, just as they would need to have training for any other line of work. Alla, as the host of the seminar, and Liubov Majboroda, the IRI in-house trainer, as well as the participants themselves, counteracted instances of verbal sexism as they arose, immediately correcting lexical lapses whether their own or of an invited guest speaker. It is telling of the difficulties women's organizations and individual women with political ambition face, when even in the context of their own "Women in Politics" leadership training, they are addressed in a patronizing way. I heard a Parliamentarian refer to the women as *zhinochky* (literally, the diminutive form of *women*). "We are *zhinky* (women), not zhinochky," they retorted. This same speaker also either inadvertently or intentionally denigrated the nuanced political difference between the women's organization hosting the seminar, and the organization that was perhaps their most formidable rival, by referring to Alla Buchkowska's organizations as "you women of the Soiuz or Spilka or whatever you are."[34]

Preparing for the Elections of 2002

[34] This is worth dwelling on a moment. There are various terms employed by women in Ukraine to refer to their own collectivities. In general women's groups identify themselves as *kolektyvy* if they are artistic (music, dance) performance groups; some groups identify as clubs, the Soiuz Ukrainok uses the traditional terms *kruzhky* (circles)" and *viddily* (chapters). It seemed to me that it was common still in 2000 for any local group of women activists to dub their group a *zhinocha rada* (women's council), but also women used the terms *soiuz* (union) and *spilka* (association/confederation) to refer to women's groups in a generic sense. Sometimes this was done to humorous effect, in a manner which suggested to me that the terms were being used to obfuscate political affiliations. For example, in Cherkasy, I was witness to the deliberate manipulation of *soiuz/Soiuz* and*spilka/Spilka*, taking advantage of the fact that in conversation one could not always be sure whether the a speaker was referring to "our spilka" as a generic women's group, or whether they were using it as a shorthand reference for one of the two most visibly competing women's organizations in Cherkasy—i.e. the Spilka(Zhinok Ukrainy) and the Soiuz(Ukrainok). Only in print (when the words would be either capitalized or not) would one's intended meaning by truly unambiguous.

In 2000 the women were still digesting the experience of the 1998 Parliamentary elections. They acknowledged the local machinery that had supported the candidacy of Serhij Podobiedov to Parliament and recalled the patronage during the campaign period in order to win votes. They evaluated the performance of officials their votes had helped elect. They complained about how Tkachenko, once he had made it into Parliament, abandoned the problems of the villages in his native region of central Cherkasy. They discussed the presidential elections of 1999. And even as they prepared for new Parliamentary elections in 2002, they speculated on how Yulia Tymoshenko, then one of Prime Minister Yushchenko's Cabinet members, would look as a political candidate for President in 2004.

In the new democratic electoral politics, women are a newly recognized hot commodity, in that they make up the majority of the voters in Ukraine and are also more likely to actually go and vote, than are the men. As recognized by the journalist Irena Havrylova (1999) women are under threat of being used as "soft administrative resources" when they allow themselves to be "bought" –an admittedly gender-blind hazard, however affecting women more subversively in the way they are morally co-opted. Women's organizations, even while they are ostensibly working for women's benefit, end up being exploited, blatantly but even indirectly, for their votes.

It was clear in 2000, that several new women's organizations in the Ukrainian NGO field were being cultivated as the gendered informal arms of political parties. The results of later elections from 2002 on suggest that women leaders of such women's organizations benefited from the name recognitions and votes as they themselves vied for political office as female politicians. But the scenario that happened with women working in Cherkasy's state administrations in 2001 was an example of manipulation of the women's movement as "soft

administrative resources" par excellence. In 2001, a structure called the Women for the Future was registered in Kyiv as a political party, just in time to be allowed to take part in the 2002 elections (the rule is that the organization must be registered for at least one year). In the Kyiv press, the Women for the Future were sometimes identified as Liudmila Kuchma's organization, i.e. Kuchma supporters. In 2002 The Women for the Future Party came out at a pre-election conference with none other than Valentyna Dovzhenko, former Minister, now Head of the Department of Family and Youth Affairs, leading the bloc.[35]

As things got more desperate for Kuchma, in 2003, the Cherkasy media reports (Lytvyn 2003) that the Women for the Future, which was not at all in evidence in Cherkasy in 2000, was now the largest *women's organization* (his phrase) of the oblast, 7,000 strong, all over the district centers. Another source mentions that literally all of the female employees of Cherkasy's oblast state administration offices had gone over to the Women for the Future Party, much as the employees of the state had moved into the SDPU(o) in earlier years. The press also reported that, in 2003, the head of the Women for the Future in Cherkasy oblast was none other than Inna Hubenko, head of the Cherkasy Oblast Spilka. This led to thoughts of women as a crucial element of Kuchma's store of "administrative resources" and of those who warned about the President's manipulation of women, their representatives in Parliament and their organizations. Men politicians think the women's organizations can be "pocketed" and that the female electorate is easy to exploit (Havrylova 1999).

Thus, significant political representation eludes women, and all the while they fill the lowest levels of state government, and administer the villages and small towns, doing the most responsible work of keeping the communities intact, but enjoying little political control or voice

[35] One explanation for this is that the SDPU(o) oligarchs had started to cool on Kuchma after Gongadzegate, and Kuchma was looking to secure votes via the women's bloc.

in important matters. I felt sympathy for the position of these women, realizing the degree to which many of them were not only idealists but tremendously burdened and exploited and it seemed to me that many women were getting angry about it. The situation in the city was more nuanced than in the rural areas where the confrontation on the village level was all about ousting the old communist village leadership while trying to introduce democratic processes of local self-governance and personal freedom to the village and collective farm context.

It is clear, however, that women's organizations in the post-Soviet period continue to be, as they were throughout the Soviet period, political entities, doing political work (Browning 1992, 1987). They are also training grounds for oppositional political candidates and a resource as grassroots bases of political support. There were several women among the candidates running for various offices in Cherkasy in 2000. From the cluster of women's organizations close to the Rukh party, Liubov Majboroda, the IRI trainer, doctor and professional politician, was running for oblast council as an Our Ukraine candidate. From the cluster of women's organization that were financed by business and political parties, Tetiana Kyrychuk, the Cherkasy Oblast head of Diya, was vying for a seat in Parliament from the "For a United Ukraine Bloc" (Kuchma-supporting), from the district represented in 1998 by Podobiedov.[36] She seemed to be the most likely to succeed of the new crop of political hopefuls from the pool of women organization leaders, with the personality, drive, ambition, connections and resume to make her bid to the highest body quite realistic. Other candidates for oblast council seats were Irena Voloshchenko, a community-minded physician, Tamara Plakhuta, a teacher and

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[36] In 2000 Cherkasy Oblast had seven deputies to Parliament, one from each of its voting districts. Only one of these was a woman, Olha Yukhymets b 1948, CPU, district #196.

professional teacher's union worker, and Natalia Sirenko, the director of the garment factory Weisse, running as a member of the SDPU(o).

Svitlana Kassian, head of the Cherkasy Oblast OSMU, was also hoping for another term in the Cherkasy City Council. Hers was one of 300 NGOs attending a pre-elections forum in Kyiv sponsored by the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), the NGO Monitoring Committee "Democratic Initiatives" and the "Regional Initiatives" Funds, the "Freedom of Elections" coalition, and the Commission for Ethical Journalism (Konovalenko 2001). Madame Albright greeted the forum, admonishing the Kuchma government to ensure transparency of the elections. Kassian promised that the OSMU would ensure proper voting procedures were followed in the military units and expressed concern over the public endorsement, by Volodymyr Lytvyn, the head of the Presidential administration, of strong government, rather than strong civil society, as a remedy for Ukraine's problems.

The tensions in Cherkasy in 1998-2002 and beyond to 2004 were symptomatic of multi-layered change. The conflicts that arose in Cherkasy were caused by the pain of working out new social arrangements in a society where non-governmental groups did not yet have established ways of working, where there was no independent media, nor credible rule of law. Moreover, the "intermediary associations" that are ultimately supposed to provide an essential link between society and state, operated here in a way that blurred the expected distinctions and boundaries between what we think of when we hear "local self-government," "civil society organization," and "political party."

The neo-nationalist women's councils in their parastatal relationship are in effect conducting the nationalist goals of the state: promoting the homogeneity of the populace, through the village sponsoring of the state calendar of holidays. They are cultivating a stronger

awareness (where there may have been none, or where it was weakly felt before) of a common Ukrainian culture and tradition and particular history (local village, region and national). The women engaged in political representation politics, on the other hand, though they may also be invested in the nationalist project, are engaging with the state in a way that amounts to competition (with others vying for the same measure of power and influence) and challenge to the state's incomplete fulfillment of its roles and promises to its citizens.

Part III Women Activism and Activists in Cherkasy

Chapter Nine: Cherkasy's Women Activists and Their Personal Narratives

A Sampling of the Activist Community

The IRI-funded Seminar on Women in Politics in Cherkasy provided me with an opportunity not only to meet with but also to observe women activists (from a variety of organizations from various locations in the Oblast) interact with each other, discuss important issues, act out their campaign aspirations, and watch them communicating what is important to them. I also had a chance to see and hear how they were being trained, what ideas they were being exposed to through the IRI trainer, but also the presentations of a series of guest speakers, Cherkasy Oblast's elected deputies to Parliament or to the local councils, representatives of the central state government who addressed them. The seminar also led to my exposure to several venues of the oblast outside of Cherkasy. When I visited a chapter or women's group, whenever circumstances allowed, I administered my prepared questionnaire, which was designed to provide me with information about the social characteristics, social affiliation and attitudes typical of women who are involved in the organized women's niche in the oblast. The survey, then, supplements the information I would receive in the process of interviewing. The populations of my survey respondents and interviewees overlap but are not equivalent.

The sample of women who responded to my questionnaire is a non-random and opportunistic sample. I administered the 38-item questionnaire to a total of 137 women in 20 separate groups, typically during one of their meetings. Of the 20 surveyed groups, fifteen are urban groups, and five represent village-based collectives, one of these being a Spilka-affiliated women's council, one a chapter of the Soiuz Ukrainok federation, one a chapter of Zhinocha Hromada. Two of these rural women's groups were not yet associated with a national

organization and were considering their options. Most of these village groups were challenging established women's councils or filling a void. The overall sample represents a range of organization types and orientations, and reflects the variety of women's groups in Cherkasy oblast.

One of the groups surveyed, was the temporary collectivity of the seminar itself. Some 50 women attended the seminar sessions, not all on the same weekends, as the group changed somewhat from weekend to weekend, depending on people's availability. A quick glance revealed that most of the women at the seminar were middle-aged, only a handful of young women, who told me they were university students interested in the Rukh Party and sympathetic to the Soiuz Ukrainok, came to a few of the sessions. The survey results confirm that the seminar population was not unusual in its composition. My sampled activists ranged in age from 16-84 with only three persons at either extreme. The majority (87) of my respondents were between 30 and 50 years of age, born mostly in the 1950s and 1960s. (Twelve were 50-60 years old).

This means that most of the women were not only middle-aged, but also nearing retirement age.[1] Bridger (1987) reports that during the Soviet period women were more involved in social activism than men.[2] They were also most active in such work before marriage. By age

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[1] Below are figures from the national 2001 census in Ukraine: From this we can deduce that many women in their late 40s and 50s are not only middle-aged, they are grandmothers. Over 60 is quite advanced in years, considering life expectancy for women is 65 (and has fallen to 62 for men). (See www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/result)

National 2001 census figures for 30-60 year old women

20-24 group already 52.9% are married, 25-29 73.4% are married

30-39 group	78.1% married living together	4.9% single	2.2 widowed and	14.3 divorced
40-49 group	76.5 married	2.9 single	6.0 widowed	14.2 divorced
50-59 group	68.8 married	2.6 single	16.1 widowed	12.1 divorced

30 women would have typically given birth to one or two children and would be enmeshed in domestic obligations. At this stage of life, "their rate of participation in political work is no more than half that of men" (Bridger 1987:187). The majority of the women of my sample, being mostly middle aged in 2000, would have been witness to this young activist generation of the Soviet 1960s and 1970s, either as members or as direct beneficiaries of their work.

Several of my respondents were born outside of Ukraine (in Russia, Tajikistan, Moldova), but most of them were born in the Ukrainian SSR. In fact, the majority were born in Cherkasy, half of them in the villages of the oblast (61) or in the city of Cherkasy or one of the other cities of the oblast. Many are still residing in their village of birth which is indicative of the low residential mobility for the rural residents of the Ukrainian SSR.

In terms of other pertinent social characteristics, the women of my sample were well-educated. Only seven out of 137 claimed that they had failed to complete high school. Because a significant number (54 rural/83 urban) of my sample were residents of village settings, this points to the participation of the village intelligentsia, for the most part. Ukraine's MDG 2010 report indicates that although Ukraine boasts a 99.7 percent literacy rate, half of the women of Ukraine have only grade school education.[3] A very small number reported that their education stopped at the high school level and approximately half of my respondents claimed to have some or significant higher education training.

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[2] Bridger (1987:187) notes that girls were more active than boys in the Young Pioneers and the Komsomol, and "until marriage, young women are the majority of activists in social and political work and predominate in leadership positions in, for example, rural Soviet and Komsomol committees."

[3] This would certainly hold true only for rural residents of advanced age, but the MDG report does not break it down

Most of my rural respondents apparently had the opportunity to attend school an urban area technical school and then returned to the village. Overall, 58 of my sample indicated completion of middle school or technical training; only four indicated that they had not complete high school. A significant number (58) indicated completion of higher education—with four pursuing doctoral degrees. The rest have completed *instytut* (college) or university studies. In terms of professions, half of the women indicated that they worked as specialists in either health or education, several as elementary school teachers. Seventy-eight women identified themselves as specialists of technical studies. There were almost equal numbers (eight to twelve each) in the categories of unemployed pensioners, housewives not otherwise employed, those doing odd jobs, those occupied with small business or working for other business concerns, state administration employees, and collective farm members. Less numerous were WWII invalids, press and radio journalists, and factory workers. Ten of my respondents were elected deputies to local councils: one in the oblast council, four in city councils, and five in village councils.

Regarding characteristics that affect biographical availability for volunteer work in the public sphere, most of my sampled women were married (96 with six of these in a common law arrangement). Of my sample, 16 were divorced, five were widowed and 12 were single. All of the single women (except for one) had no children; 97 of my respondents were mothers of at least one or two children, but ten of them had three each. Most of these mothers reported having older, teen-aged or adult children. However, among those women who were members of one of the large families associations who had between four and eight children each, some of the children were very young. I unfortunately did not ask on the questionnaire about grandchildren, because it seems to me now that most of the women who are members of women's organizations are close to grandmother status.

In Ukraine, women tend to marry young, before the age of 25. Children who are over 22 years old were almost always reported as being on their own, indicating a custom of supporting children through university to their launching into the world. None over 25 were getting any significant support from the parents in my sample. Half of the respondents (67) reported no adult dependents. Another 33 indicated helping elderly dependents, (25 "physically," 18 "with money" and 10 "with food"). Of my sample, 34 were living in nuclear family households, 28 together with elderly parents and seven with their own children (where the children are helping them). Eight live alone or with a child. Only four indicted children in military service (my survey did not include one of the OSMU groups). Forty-two did not answer the question about household composition.

Financially, 60 reported that money is chronically in short supply, barely covering needs from one month to the next; 53 indicated that they feel they are deprived of necessities, even adequate food, due to money shortage; 25 said they were getting by, but that they had no savings. No one indicated that they are completely secure financially, but only 23 said they would emigrate to the West for work, and only seven thought they would leave Ukraine permanently if they had the opportunity to do so.

The survey also asked the women to report their status in terms of significant public affiliations: religious, ethnic, native language and habitual language usage, political party membership, and scope of feelings of citizenship. [4] Almost all in my sample claimed to be ethnic Ukrainians. Ten percent reported Russian or mixed ethnic heritage and of these, all had Ukrainian husbands. Residence patterns appeared to be virilocal/patrilocal, with women reported having moved to their husband's family or village of origin, husband's place of work.

[4] See Pawel Starosta (1998) for an example of research on this kind of social bond with territorial concepts.

Most of the women also indicated Ukrainian as their native tongue. Over half (76) of these reported speaking mostly Ukrainian at home, but over a third admitted to the regular (or in the case of 22, even exclusive) use of *surzhyk* [5] as the dominant form of communication (24 respondents). Except for the eleven respondents who claimed Russian as native language most of the habitual Ukrainian speakers also claimed Russian as the "other language known." In addition, women indicated that they were competent in German, English, Spanish, and Polish, often with disclaimers about needing to consult a dictionary.

As far as political party membership, in my sample, only two indicated Communist Party affiliation (one was a head accountant); 18 put down non-partisan, but 15 of these also added the comment that by this they mean they do not support any party rather than leave me with the impression that they are closet communists. There were 16 who were from the Socialist Party; six indicated the Social Democratic SDPU (not the SDPU(o); two described themselves as liberals, and two as right-wing nationalists. The largest group (44) indicated that they affiliated with the national democratic political orientation. Most of these specified Rukh as their party, but also the DemPU. A few wrote in extra comments of support for the Rukh party or the Green Party. About 20 indicated that they were confused or on the fence about politics, checking off the choice "hard to say" to the question of political sympathies.

The most interesting connections in terms of predictive value arose out of the categories of religious affiliation and political orientation. [6] Although 36 indicated no religious affiliation (and a few skipped the question), the majority (63) reported being Christians of the Ukrainian

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[5] See Laada Bilaniuk (2005) for more on the speech variety called surzhyk. It was interesting that five of my respondents indicated that they considered surzhyk as their native tongue.

[6] See Catherine Wanner (2007:131-132) for explanation of Orthodox Church in Ukraine and other church communities.

Orthodox Church. (Only a very few were Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) or Baptist, and one was Buddhist.[7]) Most of these Orthodox Christians reported belonging to the Kyivan Patriarchate (44) which is considered the more patriotic Ukrainian religious community. The only women who indicated affiliation with the Moscow Patriarchate (19) were members of the Spilka women's council of Dubijvka (because that it the denomination of their church in the village) and all the members of the Socialist Party's women's organization. Those affiliated with the Kyivan Patriarchate were as a rule also members of various non-socialist democratic parties. They were among a larger group that considered themselves to be citizens not only of an independent Ukraine (107) but a few (11) claimed in addition to feel themselves as belonging to Europe. Those affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate, if indicating *pozapartijnist*' (no party affiliation), also expressed some doubts about the future of Ukraine's nation-state status; those who indicated SPU Socialist party affiliation, also reported considering themselves to be citizens primarily of the CIS/FSU. But overall, 96 of the respondents indicated that they believe in Ukraine's chances to make it as an independent country, only three were decidedly pessimistic about Ukraine, but a significant number (35) reported being uncertain about it.

Observers of women's movement in FSU expected Soviet workplace and school affiliations to figure prominently in recruitment contexts for women's groups in the transition. This does seem to be true for Spilka-related groups. In terms of Spilka-satellite groups, such as committees of large families, for example, it was interesting to me that the women leaders of

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[7] My impression is that once having been recruited to the aggressively prosletyzing Western Protestant churches (Jehovah's Witness, Mormons), women tend to belong to the church community which absorbs their free time and activist energies. There were many of these church communities in Cherkasy oblast, in particular, the Mormons were strong. Baptists have always had a presence in Ukraine, but they were not among my sample. The Buddhist was a free-spirited woman who had some sort of ties with the Cherkasy local Buddhist temple that mainly taught the martial arts.

these groups in Cherkasy actually knew each other as children in the children's homes (*internat*, a type of Soviet boarding house)-orphanages. They claimed that the experience of growing up in a children's institution made them both like the feeling of having many others around them and also wanting to provide the family life they missed themselves to their own children (Valentyna Chornovol, Cherkasy, December 9, 2000). Most of the women activists of the nationalist bent confided that their groups are small and all members known personally (as family, friends or trusted individuals with whom they've worked in political campaigns). There is not enough communal trust to allow broadcast style of information dissemination or recruitment without the guarantee of a personal recommendation.

As for self-revelations about recruitment contexts provided in the interviews, it struck me that these are sometimes also a subjective exercise and part of the presentation of self. The topic is an opportunity to drop names (social capital) and an occasion to frame one's self as involved in a particular strategic activity appropriate for a future activist. With respect to my questionnaire, it was meant to be filled out anonymously, and yet several women took delight in writing their names down on the first page, exclaiming to me that they had nothing to hide! And yet, there was an instance where one woman carried my questionnaire to the leader of her group to ask whether it was ok to participate in my survey. (The leader knew me and approved of participation.)

An interesting pattern emerged among the women's groups that were village-based: almost all of them were native born to the village, but the leader of the group was almost invariably someone who had come from elsewhere, or at least had studied elsewhere for a while and then returned to the village setting. This may be a remnant of the practice of Soviet assignment of intelligentsia (women teachers usually) to work as teachers and

enlightenment/cultural workers in far away villages. Also village residents expect the outside local educator to be a leader of community events. Because many villages do not have a church, and therefore, a church hall, the schools and the buildings of culture were the logical meeting place for non-administrative groups (the setting for which would be the village council building and administrative offices).

Presentation of Self through the Interviews

Framing of self-election to activism

Women were accustomed to reading about prominent women (historic or contemporary) in the women's magazines and even in the daily press. They were also accustomed to seeing their national-level women leaders—not to mention North American women working in Ukraine within Western donor NGOs,[8]—interviewed in this manner. My interviewees were generally less prominent than those whose biographies would be of public interest, but they were not at all averse to explaining themselves to me in the same spirit.[9]

Two common discursive features of these personal narratives of social activism were (1) deployment of one of the labels currently applied to social activists, each of which has a particular nuances and pattern of application) and (2) an acknowledgement of the female gender of the activist (personal characteristics or in the role of mother, for example). In addition there

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[8] In the circles of the Cherkasy Women's Center, several Western women, including Kathy Ptukha, Ellen Salyer, Katherine Held were held as models for their Ukrainian counterparts, and more widely in Ukraine, Gail Warnecke of the Winrock Women's Consortium was photographed for the press with the caption "just do it!"

[9] This was a popular genre for the women's press, *Zhinka* magazine published by the Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy, the *Ya Zhinka* magazine of the Women's Center in Cherkasy, and others. This genre, a mainstay of feminist research, is also reflected in the activity of retrieving past women's lives from historical obscurity.

was a strong subtext of liberal feminism in the advocacy for equal rights and opportunities, including political representation. Another common feature of the narratives is the relating of a deciding moment that pushed the women into a particular vein of activism.

Gender Identities vs Activist Identities

Among the labels attached to women in Ukraine, are the terms *zhinochka*, (little woman, with all the same connotations we attach to that in the West); *dievushka,* the Russian word for *girl* which in Ukraine carries the sense of being cool and sexy and Russian-speaking; and *babushka,* the iconic elderly rural peasant woman (a softer more sympathetic variant of the word baba – see the Baba and the Comrade by Elizabeth Wood).

Certain women's names have also become iconic. For example the name *Roksolana* referring to the historical personage of Nastia Lisovska, who was sold into concubinage in the harem of Suleiman I in the 16th century and became his favorite, producing his heir and historians believe, also diverting further attacks from the Ottoman Empire against her home territories. The name Roksolana evokes the positive side-effects of ethnic intermarriage –in the sense of creating an opportunity for cultural ambassadorship for your ethnic group by cultivating a close relationship in marriage with someone, preferably powerful, in another, of course, dominant ethnic group. In the early 1990s, the image of Roksolana, popularized by a Ukrainian produced historical TV serial, seemed to provide support to young women seeking work abroad, as if they would enter into Roksolana-like relationships with persons who would prove to be helpful to their nation or at least to their families. (I can't say just how many Ukrainian women also told me that *Pretty Woman* with Julia Roberts and Richard Gere was their favorite movie—self-explanatory). After 1998, when the sex-trafficking scandal broke, the name Natasha became

the code word in the diaspora and in the West in general for the trafficked young woman from Ukraine.

The work on gender identities in Ukraine has produced a selection of lexical items suggesting new roles for Ukrainian women: the berehynia (related to the *domohospodarka* or housewife), the Barbie, the business woman (*dilova zhinka*). These refer to new roles promoted by the changed circumstances of the market and contacts with the West. But these are not activist identities (including the berehynia). The range of labels currently self-ascribed or applied by others to female social activists in Ukraine include—*aktyvistka, dekabrystka, amazonka, feministka, rukhivka*—and each has its nuance and implied position and style. I detected that the label amazonka is used generally in a pejorative and even mocking sense when women act just a little too aggressively (in the opinion of men who use this term to chastise them). The word aktyvitska itself is not particularly favored in some women's circles (nationalist ones) because it recalls Soviet-era socialist consciousness-raising activities. One woman, in a variation on the theme of being an activist described herself as being *liudyna rukhu*— literally, a "person of movement," but also a clever allusion to the Rukh movement for Ukrainian independence, which has actually inspired its own moniker—*rukhivka*

The concerned activist: *Ne baiduzha aktyvistka*

Nonetheless, the women's quality of being active (*aktyvnist'*) was often cited as an important, and indispensable feature of society. When asked whether specifically women's organizations were really necessary in Ukraine, one woman responded unequivocally:

> Yes, very much so, emphatically so! In the village it is the woman who is the moving force, not the man, and I believe that this is true universally. The woman is the mover.

> She takes the initiative. The women take a lot on their shoulders, in the city and in the village, alike. [interview with Olena Hasko, October 23, 2000]

A common discursive feature of the personal narratives was the Soviet-era stereotype that women are by nature equipped differently than men, being genetically inclined to help others. To communicate their readiness to help in the community, my informants consistently used the terms *ne bajduzha* (concerned, compassionate, literally *not indifferent* to the plight of others) in conjunction with the adjective *aktyvna* (active) or the noun signifying the activist identity, *aktyvistka*. The term activist in Ukrainian exists in both masculine and feminine forms (*aktyvist/aktyvistka*), but in the course of my fieldwork, I never heard the term applied to a man and his community organizing or political work and it seems to be reserved almost exclusively for the woman's voluntary community activity. Many also talked about women in general as being active in contrast to the passivity of the Ukrainian male. They stood firm in their belief that, despite the discrimination they had faced and continue to face in the workforce, that women are natural leaders, pointing to their bent for service to society.[10]

It is interesting, however, that in their interviews, several women proposed a re-framing of this popularly described women's genetic programming. I heard the assertion that not all women are so equally endowed, that some are quite capable of social apathy, while others are born activists. More often than not, this assertion came from one of the women representing the Spilka and the contexts of the women's councils. According to them, the trigger for activism is the quality of empathy and the ability to show concern for others, even those beyond one's closest family circle. Another of my informants, from an activist group (SF 10-18-00) used the

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[10] Peggy Watson (1997b:145) blames Eastern-European anti-feminism on " *fixed ideas of gender difference and the prior naturalization of ideas of gender difference under communism"* as well as the " the politicization of this difference through the implementation of universal rights of citizenship and the creation of liberal civil society."

traditional phrase *moja khata z kraju* (literally my house is to the side) as a way to describe the attitude of the person who does not want to get involved, as well as the apathy of the general populace. She distanced herself from this stance, being pro-active on social issues.

When asked to speculate on what would motivate a woman to join the activism of their specific organization, Martynova, the head of the Chyhyryn district Spilka, proposed a three-part typology of women. The first two types embody the value of compassionate *'nebajduzhist'* and the practice of selfless service to others. (Note the absence of overt references to service to nation here, the object of concern is invariably the local community.[11]) The third type allows for a note of political ambition—as in the case of self-promotion to candidacy for elective office. Martynova explained:

> There are different kinds of women. There are those who simply cannot bear to see misery in those around them. They see someone suffering and they want to help. It is essentially a moral question. It is a responsibility. Women are more sensitive, they help, simply from a moral point of view. This is one reason. Another is that there are very many women who seek to help one another in their troubles. Even if they can't help materially, they can use words to help relieve another person's stress. When one has the opportunity to share one's thoughts and troubles, then it sets one's soul in order.
> But then there are women of yet another type, who see how many legal problems there are still with regard to the woman question. They want to participate in the various government organizations to fix the problems of women—We have many women who would certainly like to be in government [*pry vladi*. literally in power]. We can use their presence in the various regional and local councils, to speak for us so that women will be represented. The woman question is raised in many different ways now. [Interview with H. Martynova, Chyhyryn, August 1998]

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[11] Martynova explained (August 1998) that the older members were mostly former CPU, and retained these sympathies, but that the younger women are not committed to any party politics.

Activism was what was valued as normal in terms of Soviet societal expectations in the past, but the competitive political activism is new:

> I finished school at 17, and I was normal. Well, what do I mean by normal--we were all active then. But my activity was not expressed in politics then. So yes, I was *aktyvna*, I was never the passive sort. [interview with Natalka, September 29, 2000]

Although as servants to the Soviet system of control and compulsory participation, aktyvistky were often ambiguously or negatively viewed, members of various women's organizations used the word *aktyvna* to describe themselves in the past tense, as they were during the Soviet years. This goes in tandem with Komsomol membership, which was an automatic (Bridger 1987) as well as prerequisite step for career advancement through the Soviet *nomenklatura* system of appointments. In the post-Soviet period, it is a questionable credential, but many of my interviewees acknowledge the experience of Komsomol work as being the foundation of their current activist confidence and know-how. They do not shy away from giving it a positive value while linking it to a current context of activism, as a source of continuity in the construction of the personal identity.

> Well, it all started with the fact that I was always very active in life. For example, during my school years, I was a member of the Komsomol. I believed that the Komsomol was an effective action-oriented organization (*dijeva orhanizatsija*). I was a leader in the Komsomol, and then, when I finished my schooling, graduating with a gold medal, I started my studies at the university in Kyiv. There too I was head of the ideological sector. Part of the work we did was outright labor—the Saturday details (*subotnyky*) and the trouble-shooting brigades (*dysanty*) and other various kinds of assistance work. And then the ideological work—I was the right hand of the Komsorg (head of the Komsomol organization). This is the energy that does not allow me to sit in one place in the moral framework of things. I'm compelled to be active in terms of sharing with people (*v plani*

> *spilkuvannia*), in terms of finding out about things around me (*v plani piznaty bil'she shchos'*). Inside of me, there is always this constant force pulling me forward (*potiah vpered*). [Tania, interview, December 12, 2000]

In the case of feminist social activists, the manipulation of the discourses of being *aktyvna* and *ne bajduzha* was shifted slightly to analyze and scrutinize Soviet nurturing of certain modes of female behavior. For example, Tamara Skotarenko, leader of the AELITA Femin-Center of Smila, valued her daughter's inclination to activism, and attributed it partly to the positive aspects of the Soviet educational system:

> Because she is by nature so *active,* so deep feeling, she wants so intensely to help people. Her first impulse is to ask, how can I help? How can I help my peers, how can I help the younger students, too?[12]…In general, the girls are more active. This is traditional for us. When I was in school, it was always the girls who earned the high grades and the girls who were the activists. It was the boys who never took part in anything in community life and did worse in their studies. So in Ukraine, it's not like the feminist movement says that they have to give girls access to education. For us, it's the opposite. In our departments, like my physics department, when I was studying optics, we didn't have a single boy in the group. There were 20 girls. And this is physics, which traditionally is considered to be a male domain. We don't have to fight for women to be leaders—because they are already. And the kolektyvy (professional collectives) are all women anyway. And teachers are all women. Women are only scarce among managers. [interview, October 19, 2000]

In addition, not all women made this activism and the quality of *aktyvnist* the defining aspect of their personality or psychological makeup. Olena Hasko, for example, talked at length about how she learned new things and took risks in being on unfamiliar ground in her work with

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[12] The system of recruiting (actually the class elects) an excellent students to serve as helper and tutor to her (usually it is a girl who is elected) classmates is still practiced in Ukraine. While an honor, the position also means extra work for the "starosta" and is not always a welcome, being one that obliges.

the Slavija organization. Viktoria Kuzmina of the Ya Zhinka Women's Center also, made a point of confiding to the women of the village of Bohuslavets that at a point earlier in her life, she would never have imagined being able to do half the things she has taken on as new challenges. With this, she encouraged them to put aside fears of voicing their needs and trying something new.

One of the incongruous elements of self-presentation of Ukrainian women (including national leaders) is the obligatory discourse (by themselves about themselves and by others about them) on their femininity. Articles about prominent Ukrainian women published in the journal *Zhinka* or any other Ukrainian newspaper or magazine will invariably employ what to the Western reader appears to be gratuitous and inordinate attention to the woman's femininity. The allusions to her beauty, daintiness and charm and especially to the tenderness of her "frail shoulders" that bear the burden of responsibility for the welfare of others are meant to stand in stark contrast to the "manliness" of the job she does. The articles usually end with a coda indulging her professed love of cooking, cultivating flowers, and other domestic talents. Thus, the 'New Soviet Woman'—who combines feminine and masculine traits in one socially malleable person ready to take up the triple burden of work, home, and public activism for the good of Soviet society (Attwood 1985:63)—lives on in the transition period.

Historical Social Narrative of Rural Activism

Social activism in the rural settings makes its own particular set of demands, as the women themselves pointed out in plain terms. The term *dekabrystka* was employed on occasion by women activists who have made careers as village cultural workers. The women who label themselves dekabrystky are making a historical reference to the wives of the Decembrist

Revolutionaries of 1825 (Lissyutkina 1993:282)[13] who followed their husbands into exile with great personal sacrifice and consequences for their children. This is a frame that is accessible and would be used by women of Ukraine's central regions (as opposed to Ukraine's Western regions) where the Ukrainian revolution overlapped with the Russian Bolshevik struggle. It resonates especially with the history of Cherkasy, since the Decembrists, of whom Taras Shevchenko knew, quite probably as personal acquaintances, met in the Cherkasy oblast town of Kamianka (the home of one of the architects of the Decembrist revolt) to plot their overthrow of the czarist government.

I met several women whose lives qualified as Decembrist models—women who literally followed their husbands to the gulag—and city-bred and educated women who moved voluntarily upon marriage or assignment as a village teacher into the rural countryside. In making that life decision, they dedicated themselves to a life of both relative and absolute deprivation, only to be disenfranchised in their later years in the land reform (cultural workers were not officially members of the collective farms). The village intelligentsia today is still very much like the *narodovtsi* of the 19th century. In some of the personal narratives rural activism is described in such a way that betrays a need to make special excuses for such a choice, as if it were somewhat of an embarrassment. The women also made it clear that while they in principle

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[13] Larissa Lissyutkina writes, "The Decembrist women—the wives of the rebellious aristocrats exiled to Siberia for trying in 1825 to overthrow the autocracy—became archetypes of the selflessly devoted woman…The image of the woman-savior continued in the Russian Revolutionary movement, characterized by the active participation of educated women. But..while the Decembrist wives were noted for their moral principles and their sacrifice, the women acting in the name of the People's Will were noted for their acts of violence…The Decembrist model reappears in the dissident movement with its central ideas of nonviolence and human rights: from the second tradition it stretches to the Revolution of 1917 and the totalitarian regime, arising from the idea of revolutionary violence" (1993:282).

and idealism portray themselves as being democratically on equal ground with the villagers, that they still felt superior (and in this was their sacrifice) as educated city-bred persons.

Tania, head of the LILEA women's center of Bohuslavets, for example, was compelled to explain how she made the non-prestigious move to village life. She blamed it all on love. While studying at the University in Kyiv, she married a fellow classmate and agreed to join him in his native village, enticed by his descriptions of "the most beautiful, most ecologically pristine place on earth" (interestingly, Tania made no mention whatsoever of the Chernobyl disaster). *"Ya dekabrystka*!" she exclaimed. "I am a Decembrist!" She went on to explain this as a reference to the popular heroines of the Revolution and the images of peasant women promoted by the poet Oleksander Nekrasov,[14] whose ideal type of woman was the one who could stop a horse in mid-jump, or run into a burning building (*konia na skaku ostnovyt', v horiashchuju uzbu vojdet).*[15] She is the woman who can do everything possible and impossible. Tania, having memorized this phrase 20 years ago, internalized the image of the strong woman, and took it as her own calling.

For several generations, intelligentsia work in the rural areas was considered an enlightenment mission in a hardship post, given the isolation and brutality of Soviet rural life. Tania made a niche for herself in the village as a teacher of history (her mother-in-law also

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[14] Oleksander Nekrasov is the poet loved by the Russian Revolution era activists, known for his positive images of peasant women.

[15] The Zolotonosha press published an interview with Tetiana Moskalenko of the Bohuslavets LILEA group in November 1997 entitled *Realnym u suchasnomu zhytti je lyshe "nekrasivskyj variant zhinochoho kharaketru: konia na skaku zupynyt* (only the Nekrasov type is a realistic model for women in today's conditions). This Nekrasovian model as a popular socialist revolutionary stereotype was also used by the Lviv Women's Circle (in their journal, *Meta* (goal), published as of March 1908 (Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988:124).

became the principal of the school). It wasn't until 1997 that she first became aware of the Cherkasy Women's center and ended up creating the new women's group in the village.

> It was 1997. We were then without salary payments. Almost every single family of the village was in hardship. And for us, the teachers, it was hard on our souls to live through this treatment of us by the state, because we felt there was no respect for the workers in education. And we struggled with these problems, the upkeep of the school and our work. They were not paying us and we were not even able to afford our regular subscriptions to periodicals. The budget was so tight. But we teachers, we always had a sense of self, anyway, and we were organized in the sense that we prepared village holidays to commemorate important events. We were always the ones to show the initiative to do such things for the community [Tania of LILEA, group interview, December 12, 2000]

Tania, in making the contact with the Ya Zhinka Women's Center in the city where she sold her farm produce in the informal outdoor market, became the women's village liaison with the center, to which many of the women had never had a chance to go. The women shared their desire with me to someday be able to go to the city, perhaps even to Kyiv to visit the opera, take part in the culture of the wider world. Tania in the meanwhile participated in one of the Center's sponsored trips to the United States, something the other women could barely even imagine. But she was also the moving force behind their projection of their group identity beyond the boundaries of the village setting. Because of their connection to the Ya Zhinka Women's Center, a center supported by American feminists and which was associated with Winrock whose goal was to partner Ukraine's women's groups with other similar groups internationally, these women were starting to even feel connected within a global community. In many of their actual projects, this LILEA group appeared superficially similar to the women's councils (planning village-wide celebrations and competitions that engaged families against each other in good fun)

as described by Bridger 1987 and Browning 1992. Yet there was a new element in their work. Tania's focus was on cultivating a space for self-expression and addressing the needs of each woman of her village circle for the same.

The Matrix of Social Differences

Another aspect of the personal narratives is their function as a statement of personal positioning in the transition. Within her discourse, a women let on whether or not she was a person of privilege or not, *nomenklatura* or not, Komsomol or not, CPU or not. (An even more sensitive issue was that of being part of the KGB network: the awareness of this was still alive, as a few reported to me that there was always a sense of uncertainty about whom you could really trust.[16]) The narratives also revealed to me whether the families were persecuted during the Soviet period as "enemies of the people" and whether they had connections to the dissident movement or not.

Collins (2000) expanded on the concept of Harding's matrix of domination to explain individual and group location within a society's hierarchy of relative domination: experiencing a particular personal location while at the same time sharing experiences with her category/group along significant dimensions of a specific historical social matrix. The sum of salient experiences shared by (many of) the individuals within the matrix forms the basis for a group standpoint. The personal narratives of the women I spoke to explore some of these positions within the current matrix of domination with women occupying positions of relative privilege or disadvantage vis-à-vis one another. The intersecting planes of the matrix involve socially

[16] Feels like paranoia, but several individuals mentioned that they weren't sure it was really over and that the old KGB networks were still operating and gathering information for some future purpose.

relevant attributes or facets of identity that usually include gender and ethnicity, as well as age, sexuality, marital status, and degrees of privilege that may be described as social class.

Rurality would also apply. [17] The collective farmer—and the elderly rural woman (indeed village conditions are so brutal that even middle-aged women look the part of their moniker *baba* well before their Western counterparts)—has the lowest status in Ukraine. Casual disparaging references to the rural populace still painfully reflect negative attitudes towards the peasantry that have survived several successive regimes. The peasant has been long disparaged: during the Revolutions as politically backwards; during the collectivization as obstinate kulak; during the Soviet era as exploitable collective farm laborer; and now during the transition as hindrance to Western reforms. The voting patterns in rural Cherkasy oblast in 1998—supporting the reforms-resistant political left—were labeled the "malady of the elderly."[18]

The women's interviews repeat generally the phrase that they were better off materially under the Soviet times (and still have hope for a return to prosperity under the new conditions of market reform) but the Ukrainian nationalist women insist that spiritually (*dukhovno)* they were hurting under the Soviet regime. Advancement on any level meant complying with Russian

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[17] For an examination of the factor of rurality under the Soviet system, see Gail Warshofsky Lapidus (1978:161-197) and Susan Bridger (1987).

[18] A report on the Parliamentary elections of 1998 (Spilna Sprava 1998a) entitled "the victory of the left—a malady of the elderly?" charts rural voting patterns (supporting candidates of the PPU, SPU, and CPU) as evidence of the pensioners' resistance to de-collectivization. This reminds me of the work of Elizabeth Wood (1997) which describes the conflicts between the Bolshevik activists (the Comrade) and the "Baba." William Noll's (1999) and Oksana Kis' (2008) ethnographic work suggests that the confrontations of the late 1920s (the women's revolts) were between agents of collectivization and the mature rural women who were the managers of the domestic side of the family farm as supervisors of the storage, consumption, and disposition of foodstuffs. In both cases, the elderly rural woman is framed as being backward.

cultural hegemony and keeping one's Ukrainian ethnic identity private.[19] On its own, Dziuba's analysis of Ukrainian vs Russian Soviet worldview, does not account for the heterogeneity of the real and possible Ukrainian women's positions within the social matrix, but for women aware (with national raised consciousness) of the effects of their shared national/ethnic status, a feminist standpoint that does not take the complementary political identity into account, is also not satisfactory. As Harding stated, commenting on the shortcomings of standpoint theory, "The insistence on fractured identities points to the important differences in women's politics—whatever our commonalities in experience" (1986:164).

For some, however, the Soviet system had truly been good. Liubov Kononenko, the head of the agrofirm Bile Ozero (organized in 1991) of the town of Biloziria outside of Cherkasy, told me about her own life trajectory:

> I think that this life was fated for me from my childhood, because I was born in this village in Bilozirya, in this beautiful Ukrainian village. My parents were peasants, they worked the land, and from my childhood I grew up in this collective enterprise and was in the fields with my mother and with my grandmother when she prepared meals for the tractor brigade. And I grew up without a father here, with just my mother and grandmother. But I was so industrious, they worked and I worked with them, all day. And so, when I went to school, I actually knew all the agricultural technology in practice. While I studied at the middle school, I always wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to teach history and Ukrainian language. But life turned out differently. I finished school, but did not have the financial resources to go to university, so I went to work and studied *zaochno* (a distance learning status allowed by the Soviet system, and still practiced to

[19] To the American Ukrainian tourist this censure of Ukrainian language in particular was truly astounding. John Kolasky (1968, 1970) a Ukrainian-Canadian communist, confirmed Dziuba's allegations and asked himself in his 1970 memoirs of a two years' sojourn in Soviet Ukraine: why should it be that speaking the language of the titutar nationality be so aggressively discouraged in the Ukrainian SSR?

some degree in Ukraine), at first at the institute of light industry in Kyiv, doing three years like that. But then I realized that a career in industry was not what I wanted. I wanted to return to the land. I decided to enter the Uman Institute of Agriculture. I moved there and went to work in the collective farm which was then called the kolhosp of the 22nd Congress (of the CPSU). I took low level work, even though I had almost higher education.

And in this manner I ended up back in my own village, doing agricultural work, as I had chosen. I worked for one and a half years as a records keeper and then I was assigned to lead the agricultural brigade and then I was elected head of the *profspilka* committee (the union) and then promoted to secretary of Communist Party organization. Ours was the largest Communist Party Organization in the region, because our village was very big. And I worked as the secretary of the party organization for 8 years. Then as fate would have it, I ended up being the assistant to the head of the regional division department of agriculture, as an economist, despite the fact that I was an agronomist by training. But economics was always interesting to me, anyway. I liked economics for its definite answers (*resultatyvnist*), let's say, for its concrete application to industry. And so later I was assigned to be the assistant to the head of the regional department of agriculture for economic questions. I worked there for three years, by my own request, even though it was paperwork in an office and not work on the land, before I finally had a chance to return, not to my own village, but to the neighboring village Dubijivka. I went to work there as an economist. I worked there for two years, and suddenly, when there were elections in the Bilozirya's agro-firm, Bile Ozero—I found out that they had chosen me for the head of the agrofirm. I am here already 7 years (since 1991)." ([interview August 12, 1998]

It's evident that the combination of the low peasant and half-orphan status, combined with collective farm participation and Party loyalty, worked for her in terms of Soviet opportunity, and that she is grateful for the upbringing that community afforded her. She was, and still is, in fact, ready to give back to that community. But the perception of a gendered glass ceiling is also evident here, as is her awareness of the self-imposed sacrifice of service that

colors her narrative. The same qualities are evident in the personal narrative of Nadia Krupska[20] of Novosmilianka, another example of the rare case of a woman having the position of collective farm director, in her case, director of both the state-run agricultural research station and collective farm associated with it:

> My father is from the Chyhyryn area, from the village Zamiatets of the Chyhyryn rayon; my mother was born and raised here in this village of Novosmilianka right next to where we are right now, in the village of Kholodnianske. I am of local roots, an aboriginal of these parts, so I didn't arrive here from anywhere else, no one invited me to be here, I just grew up here and as they say 'was born here and made myself useful here'…And so I put down very deep roots and built a house here. All of my family, those who are close to me, my friends are all here. I know the parents, and the children and even the grandchildren of those alongside whom I work. Generally, it is hard to gain authority in a place where they knew you when you could walk under tables upright, especially if your parents were not necessarily highly placed themselves. My mother worked as a *doyarka* (milkmaid) and my father was a *mekhanizator*, working with the farm machinery. But life arranged itself in such a way that I got a middle level specialist's education and higher education later. At first I worked, came here, starting as a bookkeeper, and then I entered the agricultural *instytut* (college) in Bila Tserkva. Then I was to start doing the work for which I was trained, professionally, and I went to work as the leader of an agricultural brigade. Then I worked as an agronomist. I went through the ladder of steps, from the very bottom through all the rungs of the agricultural production career. And I know how to do it all: to milk a cow, and how to harvest beets. I can also empathize with people, because I know what goes into performing so many different jobs….
> Consider my position. I am the only woman director of an agricultural concern in the Smila district. Since you visited Liubov Kononenko (in Bile Ozero) you know already that she is the only woman director in the Cherkasy district. There are 20 such concerns in the Smila district, and I am the only woman director…To be a director, it means

[20] Her mother, a collective farm worker, apparently named her after Nadezhda Krupskaya, 1869-1939, wife of Vladimir Lenin.

> working and being on call 24 hours a day. They might wake you up at 3 am to say that the hay is burning, or at 1 am that the electricity has gone off, or that snow has gotten into the heating system and frozen the water, or they might phone you and say that a cow is having difficulty giving birth and you have to run and find a veterinarian and get there to her side. Or, God forbid, they might call you at 5 am to say that someone has died. All of these problems and the happy and tragic events of people's daily lives concern you. [N Krupska, interview August 1998]

Apparently, as head of the re-organized collective, Krupska is still functioning as a patriarchal head of a community of dependents (some relations have not changed with the re-organization). It is also likely that the reorganized collective farms, being less attractive in lucre and prestige than other post-Soviet business opportunities, are being assigned to competent women. However, even as these women perform within the patriarchal system, they are, as products of their Soviet training and experience, accustomed to executing their public roles in a certain gendered style. Krupska described what directorship entails in this stereotypically gendered way. At the very end of the interview, she begged an opportunity to impress upon me that despite her how-powered position, she has not forfeited the ideals of femininity and its accompanying gender expectations:

> Two more words, please! I just want to say that for me, as a woman-director—the womanly things are not strange to me—I love to sing… I love to organize for people something that is beautiful— 'ne jedynym khlkebom zhyt' choloviek' (--Russ. 'people do not live by bread alone')—and I make sure that we keep the holidays, and that we have some pleasant recreation, and the when it is a holy day, that we have a holiday for the soul, a spiritual one. [interview August 1998]

<u>Personal Narratives: Constructing Continuity in Discontinuous Conditions</u>

The personal narratives are a genre related to the wider concept of oral history.[21] My interviews with activist women were conducted not primarily for their life history content, however, but for the opportunity to witness a narrative of movement involvement as it emerged in the course of the woman's conversational interaction with me (and often others present in the interview context). The bulk of the interviews represent subjective accounts of movement experiences. In their interviews, the women explain what they are doing as well as what they think they are doing. They often reveal how they position their organization in relation to others and how they evaluate what they are accomplishing through their activism. In this respect the narrative is also a performance of group identity, especially as it can be analyzed as discourse or as evidence of discursive ideological processes around gender and ethnicity. Nancy Ries pointed out that "spontaneous conversational discourses are a primary mechanism by which ideologies and cultural stances are shaped and maintained" (1997:3). This is all the more true in the case of talk around overt purposive activism. The discourse of activism is shaped to reflect social action and the social action women engage in also shapes their discourse.[22] Aspects of talking about gender and ethnicity are examined to discern how expectations created by feminist and nationalist ideologies are either reconciled or compartmentalized within one's presentation of activist involvement.[23]

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[21] For an overview of the history of oral history as a discipline of academic study, see Personal Narratives Group (1989). For a discussion of the post-Soviet renaissance of oral history see David Ransel (1988), and Noll (1999) and Kis (2011) for oral history in the post-Soviet Ukrainian context.

[22] Nancy Ries (1997:3) cites Clifford Geertz: "comprising models for life as much as models of it" (1973:9).

[23] As Marc Edelman (1999) contends, some social movement scholars focus on discourse and identity politics at the expense of political economy, missing the "sometimes remote but

For my purposes here, the personal narrative is approached as a performance of the speaker's personal identity as well as a presentation of the speaker's group identity through discourse. As performance of personal identity, the personal narrative usually begins as a statement of the women's individual life circumstances and social position, often involves a moment of epiphany that provides the basis of the ideological direction of her activism and explains the activist identity taken on. These elements are embedded in a description of activist strategies in which the raising of consciousness of certain aspects of personal and community possibilities (involving future vision) is an important feature.

The moment of epiphany, a common structural feature of the collection of personal narratives in my sample, describes a pivotal moment when the woman decided to apply her talents to a particular vein of activism. In these stories there are some surprising turns, which also serve to support Watson's (1997a:22) observations that the transition did not just provide freedom to express a repressed inner identity, but allowed for the reconfiguration of identities. Taking up participation and especially leadership of women's activism takes place within the opportunities and constraints of one's social affiliations. The invention of one's self as an activist requires both a viable transformation and presentation of self that is believable. My field notes often recorded judgments made of individuals, most notably political candidates and community leaders, whose attempts at re-representation in the context of post-Soviet opportunities were considered too transparent. Political figures were particularly vulnerable to scrutiny. This kind of judgment was passed not only on public figures, but in lower level social circles among acquaintances, as per unusually dynamic women who ran the risk of being labeled Amazons. This kind of comment could apply to anyone who sought a public face in some way.

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nonetheless powerful cultural histories of those groups that are today moved to collective action."

The personal narrative can be seen as the performance of the common need to present the self as a coherent continuum in light of societal and personal transformations, including changes of orientation or the reconciliation of some facet of personal identity with conflicting demands of nationalism and feminism. Clearly, these verbal constructions of the personal narrative confirm that it is not so much the new political freedom (of speech, or conscience) that has allowed their pre-existing (suppressed and true) identities to emerge, but that, as Watson (1997) has observed, in the configurations of the historical moment of transition, these supposedly pre-existing identities are largely formed through new practices. Among the historically available legitimate practices are rules about the parameters of manipulating social markers.

Dziuba 1968 as the first (samizdat) manifesto establishing the legitimacy of the Ukrainian Soviet viewpoint on discriminatory Russian Soviet nationality policies that favored ethnic Russians over indigenous Ukrainians in promotion to highest posts of enterprise directorships and CPU administration in Ukraine, and much more. Dziuba's analysis, though not engaged with feminism, influenced the consciousness of both genders and one did not necessarily have to be involved with the dissident movement to understand the conflict he was describing, though many women in central Ukraine pointed to exposure to western Ukrainian culture (absorbed later in the USSR than central and eastern areas) as the factor that opened their eyes, or provided them with the qualifications for doing Ukrainian cultural work.

The personal narrative of Maria Ivanivna who has been a house of culture employee as a worker of the rural social sphere for 30 years serves to illustrate how one person felt empowered by the changes that accompanied Ukraine's independence. Her ethnic identity (as a politically constructed identity), previously interpreted as deviant, now had an avenue of legitimate open expression. She is indignant at the suggestion that those CPU-affiliated activists who had earlier

cooperated with the Soviet regime's official repression of Ukrainian culture in the village now position themselves as legitimate guardians and promoters of Ukraine's newly adopted state heritage. Maria too has an epiphany of sorts around this issue.

> I first came to be a member of Rukh and then got interested in work through the Soiuz Ukrainok… Anyway, for me it started back in the 1970s. When Shcherbytskyj came to power as the first secretary of the CPU, he promised that "in a year under me all of Ukraine will be speaking Russian." That was how he made himself useful to Moscow. He exerted such pressure against the Ukrainian language, that our culture was completely reduced to *sharavarshchyna*.[24] But we continued to do our [cultural] work, quietly. We found a way to work around various CPU directives—I remember how Tania and I organized an evening in the memory of Taras Shevchenko. Oksana Lazirna and Iryna Vasylivna and I, the three of us organized this evening, the centerpiece of which would be a reading of Shevchenko's poem *Topolia* (the poplar), and we prepared a large-format portrait of Shevchenko for our backdrop. And suddenly, a visitor from the Rajkom (regional Communist Party headquarters) arrived to conduct an inspection—we were constantly having these inspections! Here we were getting ready for the evening program, and here was the portrait of Taras Shevchenko and the embroidered cloth! The woman inspector casually takes the embroidered cloth in her hands, and says "this, Maria Ivanivna, is not in fashion." And I retorted, "For you it is not in fashion, but for us it is the height of fashion." And so we held our evening, and they at the rajkom continued to instruct us as to what was fashionable and what was not, and we ignored them. And then, after Ukraine declared its independence, this same woman who earlier had admonished me, started to teach me how to honor Shevchenko –which simply enraged me! They get up on the tribunal, and now they start to teach me how to honor Shevchenko!

Maria Ivanivna reflected on this aspect of her self-identity, the salience of her ethnicity which has apparently been high priority over her adult life.

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[24] This term has at its root the word *sharavary* the wide pants worn by the Cossacks. *Sharavarshchyna* refers to the fact that during the Soviet period Ukrainian culture became equated with, and effectively reduced to, staged performances of such elements as the Cossack dance called the *hopak* performed in sharavary (see also Noll 1999).

> National awareness, from what does it come? My father was a prisoner in the German camps, and there he met western Ukrainians. He came back having learned to sing "*Shche ne vmerla*" now the Ukrainian national anthem. I didn't know what kind of a song it was, but I learned it listening to him. One day I went out skating and started to sing the song in full voice out in the open. And my father ran after me, all out of breath, to silence me! After our independence, when Kyiv first sang the national anthem officially, my father was no longer with us. At the time when I first learned it from him, you could have been sentenced to life in *Solovky* prison[25] for singing even an innocuous Cossack drinking song! My mother's brother, two years older than me, was a student at the University in Kyiv in the 60s and he knew about the Sixties generation of poets, the opposition movement—Vasyl Stus, Alla Horska, Ivan Svitlychnyj, they were cultural dissidents, but they were also political. I finished school in 1966 –I was born in 1948—but my uncle used to visit and he told me all about the dissidents. I started to take notice of how some people began to speak more Russian, how boys returning home from army service had picked up Russian language habits. But I knew about Hrushevskyj[26], I knew our history—and when my Baba Olya said her prayers, and the words to the Our Father came out in Ukrainian, I knew that once a long time ago there must have been a Ukrainian church, that it was not always a Russian church. And when I became a teacher back then, and the Communists instated what they called "Russian Language Day" in the kindergarten, it gave me a shiver. Imagine having the gall to suggest that the villagers had themselves requested such a thing. [Maria Ivanivna, interview, November 2000]

If the activist women of the Spilka women's councils are motivated by duty stoked by empathy, then nationally-conscious women like Maria, appear to be motivated by a strong undercurrent of anger. There is anger over national victimization and pain over historical and personal injustice. In this light, it is not unexpected that some of the women who had earlier careers within the CPU or *nomenklatura* circles and managed the post-Soviet transition without

[25] The Solovky Islands were the location of a particularly infamous prison of the Soviet gulag.

[26] She is referring to Mykhailo Hrushevskyj, nationalist historian of Ukraine, often identified as Ukraine's first President as head of the Ukrainian National Republic in 1917-1919.

loss of leadership status needed to fend off criticism. For example, Irena Holubieva, then deputy assistant to the head of the State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs and head of the National Council of Women (NCW) of Ukraine, gave an interview to the Spilka-published *Zhinka* magazine in 1999, which recounts her posts of communist party activity—from girl pioneer to deputy head of the Kyiv's Moscow borough to head of the Kyiv women's council and deputy head to the Kyiv oblast state administration. She emphasized that it was not a desire for power or fame that made her take these posts. The only real advantage of her career path was the heightened empathy with those in need she acquired as a result of this "great education in the pain of others." Holubieva also claimed solidarity with the masses of unemployed women, by virtue of the fact that when the CPU was disbanded in August 1991, she too was suddenly among their ranks. She credits her current employability to her experience in city management. She bolsters her denial of political ambition with proofs of lack of undue financial benefit, and crafts her brief biography in such a way as to maximize solidarity with the common women whose post-Soviet experience has involved unemployment and disillusionment with what capitalist reform could do for Ukraine. In her interview, though, she makes sure to note her childhood friendship with a noted writer who published in the Ukrainian language, as an indication of her socialization along Ukrrainian lines. Holubieva was in fact in my opinion a very honorable and good person, and it pained me to hear another woman, on one occasion, signal her personal rejection of Holubieva as head of Ukraine's NCW (1999), referring to her as a red communist in vulgar terms (as "that *chervona komuniaka*").

Even the continuous career needs to be justified in changed circumstances. Nadia Krupska, the sole woman director of an agricultural concern in Smila district, manages the state agricultural research station Elita, and the collective that embraces three settlement points: the

central village of Smilianka, Mykolajivka and Novasmilianka where she was born. It is a large operation, with two thousand hectares of arable land and four hundred workers in dairy livestock, pig-raising, and cultivation of seed grain—wheat, rye, barley, millet, buckwheat—for sale on the oblast market.

> Well I worked in agriculture for 20 years. It is now exactly 20 years since I came to work in this agricultural concern. And I have always taken a lead in the work.. I have to say that I am by nature *aktyvna.* I was always at the top ("*zavzhdy bula v peredi*") at school and elsewhere. I never imagined myself as a Party member, planning how to apply the theories of Marx and Lenin. The Party was simply, for me and for my generation—I was born in 1956, I'm 42—the members of the CPU for me were such authorities, such good people, who stood to the fore. I always approached them with respect—they were normal people, but with great moral authority. I always considered that the member of the party stands a level higher than everyone else, he could not do anything wrong. Today there are many parties, but then there was no choice, only one party. And my activism was channeled into that one communist party, which apparently wanted to see me as one of its leaders. For four years I was the secretary of the CPU party organ here in this village. And then again my work was focused not on the writing of reports, and studying the documents of the plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, but rather on the problems of our people working the land—I helped them solve the problems of production and of family, the conflicts and problems of daily life. And when at that certain time, the Party crumbled [she used the word *rukhnula*, like a building in an earthquake] it was not only a disappointment, it's hard to express the feeling…We understood but still could not believe it had happened. Everything was cut off so suddenly. How could our high officials betray the rank and file members of the Party in this way, just simply *betray* them? And I promised myself then, that never again will I be a member of any party. I will never put my trust so completely in any party again. But I will continue to work according to my own ideas and ideals, doing whatever I am able to do under the given circumstances. [Nadia Krupska August 13, 1998]

Epiphanies: Reinvention of Self

The re-invention of self is an art documented in the genre of popular biography, and is accepted as a kind of performance in itself. The personal narratives also connect personal attributes to a description of an event or events in which a change in orientation takes place—an epiphany event. Those women, whose careers have changed course in the transition, need to present that in a framework of understandable continuity, while signaling the importance of the decision made as being right under certain point of view. In this connection, judgments about the Soviet era, as good or bad are embedded in the telling about the woman's moment of truth. Some of my informants began their personal narratives with an experience of dispossession during which they saw the light or were open to a redefinition of their situation.[27]

Reform Activist Epiphanies

I will present the personal narratives of several women local activist leaders, each of whom has expressed an epiphany event that has pushed them into activism along divergent paths. The first two express alienation from the CPU and the Soviet system that they started to feel during perestroika. One was disillusioned along gender lines, the other along treatment of Ukrainian nationality. The third relates an epiphany in her assessment of the social conditions that obtained immediately after independence and saw a commitment to the reinstatement of socialist order as the only saving remedy. The fourth relates a strong antipathy to the Communist soviet order, that culminated in her disenchantment with the politics of the parties of independence, resulting in her allegiance to the post-Soviet Ukrainian left, much to the chagrin

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[27] Caroline Humphrey (2002:21-39) observes that "the narratives of the dispossessed" as the constructed histories of persons who function outside of widely accepted interpretations of reality, are characterized by a profusion of detail, perhaps in order to construct a historical identity that will hopefully be recognized and accepted.

of her former colleagues of the Rukh movement. The rest of the personal narratives involve epiphanies which are related as leading to a feminist definition of personal mission. All of these culminate in a sense of autonomy for the activist: a personal definition of her own radically new position, which she is ready to communicate to others.

Personal narrative of past dispossession, antipathy to Communist Party through an awakening of feminist sensibility, resulting in a civic nationalist career

Tania, a young professional woman, transformed herself into a land-reform activist in her early 30s. She interpreted the problems that plagued her village as simple abuse by those empowered by a patriarchal system of discrimination against women, in particular, made worse by the license to use Stalinist tactics of repression against all proponents of reasonable alternatives within the land reform.

> Me? Yes. I was a very active person. In school I was always the komsorg, or the deputy to the komsorg, and I believed in the system. The ideology was reinforced all around. In school it was all Lenin, "Praise to Lenin", and we did not have "Praise God" then only Praise the CPSU, and Praise Lenin. And I believed, up to a certain time. When I first came to lead the Komsomol in our school, and then was chosen to lead the City Komsomol organization, I started to understand that the higher you go up the ladder of the organization, the more opportunities you have to steal. I noticed in the City Komsomol committee, that these people received land for free, and that they had access to all kinds of organizations and to the factories. They could demand of them whatever services they wanted for themselves. And then there were the political activities, the meetings. My God! What they didn't do during those meetings, it was complete mayhem! The heads of the Komsomol organizations on the city, oblast and higher levels would bring young girls in for the meetings. During the day they would have their political conferences and speak wisely from the podium, and they would talk about how one must be politically active, honorable, and fair. And in the evening it would start, you

> understand? They would take the girls and do whatever they wanted with them. They had incredible banquets, and there was a lot of drinking. When I saw all this, that was when it broke down for me…I changed my position drastically and I…they invited me to join the Party, but I refused. To this day, I never joined the CPSU, and I'm not sorry. [interview with Tania, October 26 2000]

Personal Narrative of Antipathy to the Communist Party with epiphany event around awakening of discrimination along nationality lines. A commitment to activism of the right nationalist bent.

Nadia embedded the story of her parents' dispossession within her own. Born in 1968, she was the child of a late-life marriage to parents who had survived collectivization and the great famine. As a grade-schooler in the 1970s she enjoyed the brief renaissance of Ukrainian culture under Shelest in the form of the abundance of Ukrainian children's books and periodicals that her illiterate parents (themselves deprived of formal education) were able to procure for her. She was an avid reader and delved way beyond required material in the areas of geography, history, literature, philosophy, later to become a teacher. She was also an active and ideologically fervent participant in all the Soviet school activities, going from *zhovteniatko* (little yellow chick) with a yellow pioneer scarf to *pioner* to Komsomol member.

Nadia dated her own disillusionment with the Soviet system—when the "rose-colored film was lifted from my eyes"—to her experience with the job placement process upon her graduation from teacher's college. She explained in great detail how according to the Soviet system, she and the rest of her class were required, upon completion of their studies, to "volunteer" for a three-year assignment in a locale somewhere in the USSR where there were vacancies. The handing out of assignments was done by a process whereby it only looked voluntarily: a month or two before graduation, the director would bring out a map of the Soviet

Union and they called out the locations where there were vacancies and recruited the number needed for each locale. It was considered lucky to get an assignment close to home, since one could be arbitrarily assigned to literally anywhere, "such as Kamchatka, a thousand miles away." Because her parents were both elderly and of pension age, there was a provision by which the family could have hardship benefits. An appeal to the department of education secured the right of their only child to a position in one of the three local kindergartens. She therefore skipped the job distribution session, not realizing the trouble that would cause. This subordination earned her such a chastising that for a while it looked as if she would not be allowed to receive her diploma at all. She did however pass her exams and agreed to take a village teaching assignment in the distant Ukrainian oblast of Dnipropetrovsk. That assignment was a terrible experience from the start, with the village collective farm director (the collective administered the entire social sphere: the school, the daycare, the clinic, and the house of culture) refusing to supply her with even the minimally required living allowance. She served there for only one year.

Her narrative involves suffering one disillusion after another, culminating in the various perestroika-era revelations. In the 1980s, her parents started to probe her gently on what she was learning in school about the collectivization, the repressions of the 1930s, and the great famine. She reports:

> I viewed their questions as something they had fabricated. So terrible was the Soviet ideological machinery, it turned us into such zombies from the very bud (*zazombuvala nas iz pupiatka)*, that we did not even believe our own parents. We believed what was written and we believed the stranger who was our teacher, but we did not believe our own parents."

She confesses that, as a girl of 12 or 13, she argued with her parents about their memories of hunger until she was hoarse: "that it is not true—what famine!? That people were bloated

with hunger and dying while such as the Komsomol carried food out of the village? That people were reduced to eating grass? Where was it written that it was so?" (Nadia, interview, November 2000) It wasn't until she was older, she said, when glasnost allowed the discussion of such things and opened up the historical archives, that she realized that her parents were right.[28] She remembers in retrospect, how during those arguments, her mother did not lose her patience, recounting over and over again, marshalling examples, facts, cases from her own village to drive home the reality she had known in the 1930s. In 1989 Nadia met members of the Rukh organization and this lead to her recruitment into their circles. She understood, then, that politically, "this, this was my place

Personal Narrative of a former Communist who develops antipathy to the CPU after the betrayal of its socialist ideals and becomes an early leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine.

Nina Pokotylo became a leader on a national scale, in the new Socialist Party of Ukraine, and founded the socialist women's organization Women for the Future of the Children of Ukraine in 1993. She was the director of a school at the time when she founded the women's organization, originally the Union of Women Laborers (which probably meant it was one organization for all idealist Communists and Socialists); later the organization dropped the designation of "Laborers" (which was retained only by the Communist women in 1994 in their

[28] An epiphany from the West: One non-Ukrainian North American became a confirmed activist promoting awareness of Ukraine's Holodomor of 1932-33, after his experience as a consultant to Ukraine's agro-industry in the early 1990s. He was shocked to realize in talking to people "on the ground" in Ukraine, that in all of his extensive briefings by both U.S. and Ukrainian government officials on the conditions of agriculture in central Ukraine, no one even mentioned the fact that a devastating famine in the 1930s had killed millions and affected agricultural production. This taboo on mentioning the famine incensed him so deeply that he took up activism for Holodomor awareness and has been one of the major influences of the diasporic campaign for its recognition as a genocidal act of the Soviet regime. (personal communication).

reinstated CPU) and the neo-socialist women appended "for the Future of the Children of Ukraine" which sometimes was abbreviated as "for the Future of Ukraine." I was not able to decipher the sequence of ideological disagreements and moves that these shifts of organizational title imply, but these facts do indicate an ambivalence and reassessment over time of women's positions within the leftist camp(s). Pokotylo told me that she had joined the Socialist Party of Ukraine early on, and became a deputy to the Supreme Parliament through its party lists later. I probed her to expound a little further on all this: "Perhaps you have already answered this question, but why did you feel the need to create your own women's organization*?"*

> The women's organization, you know, it appeared when…in the past we never had such a thing as a kiosk on every corner. They sell cigarettes, wine, liquor, 24 hours a day. Up to 1991, we never had such a thing. We had a perfectly calm society. It was not scary to walk the streets in the evening and at night. We could walk the central streets of the city safely and even the side streets. We lived a normal, beautiful life. But then this '1991'! At the end of 1991, beginning of 1992, all these kiosks appeared. Then we saw who hangs around these kiosks, especially in Kyiv—the children, the adolescents, the youth. Women felt this especially acutely, that there is a tragedy brewing. The first step was when the women of the 'Arsenal' factory (in Kyiv) united[29]
>
> And they prepared a letter. Then for the first time—we sent a letter to the speaker (head) of the Supreme Parliament, Ivan Pliushch—we appealed that it is absolutely necessary to stop the growth of these kiosks, and the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors, that this will lead to no good. And the women…I must say that I was a member of the newly organized Socialist Party of Ukraine from the very beginning in late 1991-

[29] The origins of this women's organization are embedded within a social narrative of the revolution. Soviet historiography took the event of the Bolshevik defense of the Arsenal building in central Kyiv and made it out to be a glorious moment of Bolshevik communist resistance and success. As a point of historical fact, the Bolshevik forces were weak and isolated at the time and the defense of the Arsenal was ineffectual and only after reinforcements arrived in Kyiv, did the Bolsheviks prevail. (This perspective is the narrative frame used by cinematographer Alexander Dovzhenko's for his silent film "Arsenal" relating the events of the Ukrainian Revolution 1917.)

> early 1992—I always openly protested against these terrible –we then called them capitalist—these barbarous transformations, this primitiveness. And the women of the Arsenal—my husband worked at the Arsenal factory—they knew that I was not bajduzha. They turned to me, and said, "Please, Nina Oleksijivna, we have gathered more than a thousand signatures of women to this letter, and we ask you to support us!" So we formed an organizing committee. They elected me head of this *orgkomitet*, and then head of this women's organization. And I then turned to Oleksander Oleksandrovych Moroz and asked that he help get this letter to Pliushch… And he asked one of the women-deputies to the Supreme Parliament, Halyna Vasylivna Vasylieva to read the letter from the Parliamentary tribunal and to deliver this letter to all the deputies of Parliament and to Pliushch. Pliushch listened to the letter and said "The women of the Arsenal would do better to take care of their own work…" Well, now the arsenal is closed down. The women are gone. The factory itself has been turned into several firms. This exactly was what motivated all this—when the women saw that the children are dying. [Pokotylo interview in Kyiv, October 2000]

The message is clear and strong: Women, who suffer because of the ills affecting the children, are being victimized by the present situation. Further on in her narrative, Pokotylo dwells on her personal shame over the fact that the USSR, which was the elite of the socialist world that saw to the development of other societies, has fallen so low. Considering also, that Ukraine has been a member of the UN community since 1945, it is demeaning to be reminded that the treatment of women is a measure of civilization when Ukraine's record is so remiss on this point. Pokotylo then (reflecting Soviet racial prejudices and world ambitions) protested "Ukraine is not Africa or Asia! We don't need the West to rush in and "save us"! We are not barbarians!" It was clear, that despite the fact that Pokotylo was the one member of the SPU Politburo who understood UN-led feminism and gender equality, the basic tenets of a Western feminist analysis of women's discrimination would only at to the wounding of national pride.. But she conceded that women's activism should be based on objective assessments of work to be

done and problem areas to address, therefore, there must also be a frank acknowledgement that Ukraine has problems in its treatment of women, nonetheless. Her rhetoric is ultimately patriarchal, anti-nationalist (note the simultaneous belittling of the Holodomor, the artificial famine of 1932-33 as "the genocide sometime in 1939—whatever!" while applying the word "genocide " to the current situation of economic distress and mass emigration as global labor.

> And then, as they say "the deeper you go into the woods, the more trees there are" which applies to the direction Ukraine has taken, the situation is consistently getting worse the deeper we go. It is so significant that today in Ukraine our right to motherhood has been stolen from us—to become pregnant and have a healthy child has become a matter of politics. There is no work, there is no salary, there is no money for health care, and there is none for education. The further we go, the tragedy unfolds ever more starkly and this is what brings women into the ranks of our organization. Well, I've already said that today we talk about the left and the right. Even now in the meetings of the Supreme Rada the difference between left and right is being erased. At some moments it seems to reemerge, but we know for certain that these policies that Kuchma embodies will bring us to destruction, to total destruction (*krakh).* And not only Ukraine will be affected by it. You know, I am absolutely convinced that once Ukraine sinks into this quagmire, it will drag down with it a great part of the rest of the world, both the "near and far abroad" Ukraine will drag them down with her, because we are a big country. If the world sees how we are thrashing around to keep from drowning, and still allow Kuchma to continue do as he likes, this will be a tragedy of global significance, that's for sure. And the fact that they allow him to speak there at the summits meetings at the United Nations, this will be an embarrassment (pozor) for the very United Nations…We have no democracy. There is only the destruction of the narod, this genocide, like they said happened sometime in 1939, whenever! You know in comparison, I think that it is all lies, that the events of the past were just the bloom that is today bearing fruit. Why do you think they are delaying the census of Ukraine from year to year? Because they know how many of us there are left! They know that there are 42 million of us, that we have lost 10 million taking into

> account those who have died those who have not been born and those who have emigrated. [30] [Pokotylo interview, Kyiv, October 2000]

Personal Narrative of a woman of western Ukrainian origins, a lifelong opponent of the CPU who, disillusioned with the post-Soviet national democratic movement, joined the SPU

In terms of attitudinal stances on the past Soviet period, Kuzio (2000a:201) suggests that individuals of the same cut as Kuchma, who grew up with Russian as their mother tongue and now are among the creators/supporters of the centrist "Parties of Power" will fall into the category of those who are "selectively critical" of the Soviet era; that Ukrainian-speaking individuals involved in Rukh and supportive of Center-Right parties will be negative on the Soviet period. And those who are positive on the Soviet period are primarily members and supporters of the left-wing parties. This personal narrative, following below, breaks the rule:

> I was in the Party of Lev Lukianenko, signed up in 1991, I even still carry my party membership card, I can show you—the Republican Party of Ukraine, the RPU. I believed in Lukianenko. He is an unusually honest person, but he is a romantic. He wanted to do something for Ukraine, but it did not work out. I think it will just not work out actually at this time. I came over to this party (the SPU), exactly a year ago before the elections—why? I never had an easy time accepting Moroz just like I could not accept the Communists, with whom I struggled all my life. I saw what was happening in the communist state, I knew that the communists were basically functionaries, and that they simply hoodwinked the people at the bottom (the *nyzy*) and lived off their labor. I understood all of this. And as many times as I spoke up—and it was not acceptable back

[30] Here Pokotylo is mimicking the line of argument that nationalists used to calculate the Ukrainian demographic losses due to the famine of 1932-33. Holodomor denial is similar to Holocaust denial in gravity. She seems to be saying that she does not know the dates of the famine, as if it were of no consequence, and mockingly confuses its date with 1939 which refers to the Bolshevik annexation of Eastern Galicia (western Ukraine) to the Soviet Union, another traumatic date for nationalist western Ukraine.

> then to speak this way—they would say to me, 'you should join the Party!', and I said, "never, *never* will I join the Party!—You will have trouble with me and I will have trouble with you!" And so I never did become a Party member. And I never went into any party at all until I joined the RPU. And then Lukianenko left to take his post as Ukraine's ambassador to Canada. And I started to see his followers fighting over the purse. And I saw that there were functionaries in the RPU just as there were in the CPU. And I was very disillusioned.

She then related how she became unemployed and did embroidery for cash while listening to the radio, every morning from ten o'clock on. She heard a radio interview with Moroz during which a woman called in to praise Moroz as a family man and as a handyman who never refused to help his neighbors with their plumbing. She was convinced that this man was not a functionary. She listened to the radio-broadcast sessions of the Supreme Parliament when Moroz was speaker of the house and she decided that only he "had the potential to unite east and west and north and south of Ukraine. This was the nationalist hope that connected to her past. I was not surprised when she mentioned that a decade earlier, in 1989, before the Soiuz Ukrainok got organized, she had been a member of the *Zapovit.* She corroborated the narrative I'd heard before about the meetings and literary evening in the museum basement and the unofficial flag raising and how their space was closed down as a fire hazard to keep them from meeting there. She also mentioned that she and one of the other prominent activists, also originally from the western areas of Ukraine, doing all this together got to be good friends. But then she became disillusioned with Rukh and its support for Krawchuk as president, and then for Kuchma.

> I said 'people, look, something is not going in the direction we thought!' And the people were finding that their situation was worsening, and then Rukh split and there were simply misunderstandings all around. I also left all that—I said I couldn't listen to it anymore. And I decided that the only leader that Ukraine needs is Moroz and so I went

to the SPU. After a long while I saw my friend again [at one of the women's organization events]. She says "Oy! It's been so long since I've seen you!' And she embraces and kisses me in greeting. And then I say, "I must tell you that I've gone to the SPU, so don't embrace me so warmly!" And she turns and says to me "Well, everyone must choose their path" –and that was that, and she was cold after that. And I understood that she took me for a traitor. And I thought there is nothing for me here, I better not show up here anymore. But I was thinking was that what I really want is to have a dialogue. I want to talk about all this.

MK: You mean with your former friend, personally?

No, not just with her personally, I mean with the whole Soiuz Ukrainok women's organization, the whole right camp. It's always this problem that the Left Bank Ukraine is in disagreement with the Right Bank, from the days of the Cossacks to now—or it's "the Banderites this, and the Muscovites that." It's only trouble and shame for Ukraine.

MK: On what does it depend, this disagreement?

The sticking point is that the Right considers itself to be *right* (as the opposite of wrong), while the Right considers the Left to be ...Communist! But we are not *red*—we are *not* like the communists. I fought with them *all my life* and I don't want anyone to think of me as being one of them.

Feminist Epiphanies

Activism within the Soviet system and within the transition as well, has fallen into one of the compartments created by "the separation point [of]… who dedicates one's life to being competitive, and who takes care of "other things' (Gapova 2007:234). Gender is made central by the fact that it is women who do the "other things" and this category of other things embraces all that that has always been put under the purview of the women activists working directly for the CPU or as members of the women's councils.[31] This brings into question the issue of women's

[31] Oleksander Malynowsky head of the SPU Cherkasy in his interview with me quoted himself delegating jobs to women when he was head of the Communist Party machinery in Cherkasy: "Masha!, Vera! You're such active women, go and do this and that!")

autonomy, which even within the women's initiatives belonging to the European Union-promoted local self-government movement, must be examined to determine degree and quality of the women's agency in these projects.

In the post-Soviet transition, Ukrainian women have also absorbed the Western value of autonomy as a response to the phrase "just do it!" But autonomy is not just the doing, but also doing it because you want to, and doing it on your own terms for your own betterment (not as a sacrifice, or self-effacement, or in return for praise). The women who talk about their feminist epiphanies frame them differently. Their epiphanies involve an understanding of something lacking within themselves and a moving towards learning to get over it. This did not mean activism as an extension of her eternal personality, but in recognition of needing to learn something new by actually doing it. Tamara Skotarenko of AELITA spoke of her introduction to gender that way.

> I, myself, in fact, heard the term for the first time from my daughter. I have a university education, but when I was a student, we were required to study academic communism, the history of the communist party, the history of religion or rather academic atheism, but we never learned about *gender* despite that fact that this term is a secular, not a religious, term. I was almost 40 years old before I heard the word *gender*!

The personal narrative of Oksana Saneyeva of Khrystynivka reveals the initiative it took to put herself on her feet, and dispels the impression that only Western NGOs supply the training support they need. In the fall of 1998, Oksana was happy to find out that the oblast organization of the Soiuz Ukrainok had a new leader, a very energetic woman, interested in political activism like herself. She had again returned from a training session in Kyiv and was working on an idea for a seminar (which was conducted with great success in January 1999).

> I called the (UNDP) gender bureau in Kyiv and they said they still have some funds and I asked my husband what to do—And we decided to do a seminar on women in politics. And so it happened, that Khrystynivka, a provincial center, managed to get three deputies of the Supreme Parliament visit us: Ivan Zajets, Gennadij Udovenko, Valerij Rubtsov, Les Taniuk and Natalia Shymansky also came..The seminar was on a high level. We even got a write up in the Vse-Ukrajinske Slovo---do you get it in America? [32] Our seminar was called Woman in Politics and the Mass Media. We wanted a lot of journalists to come. We felt that women were not just for cooking soup.

Thus, Oksana describes how she, and her colleagues, having learned about gender, initiated the first political seminar for women in Cherkasy oblast. Then they solicited Western NGO support for their project. I asked her, "Did you already use the term 'gender' then?" "Yes, I did" she answered. "I had already heard it at a seminar in Yaremche, my very first seminar of the Women in Politics program, in the summer of 1997. I learned about 'gender' there—and came back *'z hlazamy horiashchymy'* with fire in my eyes!"

Grounding Personal Autonomy

This last personal narrative is evidence of a melding of feminism and commitment to nation (within the realm of the local city community)—which will be taken up more closely in Chapter 12. Natalia is another 30-something whose personal narrative takes her from feminist consciousness to political involvement and nationalism in the sense that she a writer (in Ukrainian language), a radio journalist, arrives at a commitment to both her local community and to her national community. Her life story is typical of the generation born in the 1970s. She was just coming of age at the end of perestroika, needing to make career choices under the new

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[32] Note the awareness of the common space of the Ukrainian transnational national community.

conditions of the transition. She is not yet a member of any organization. She's looking at Soiuz Ukrainok because of Rukh friends. Her personal narrative is focused on individual autonomy.

> I was normal, aktyvna, never the passive sort, but not involved in politics at all…I met my husband during my studies at the Institute and was happy that he was so talented and smart and that I could rely on him. I was completely ready to take on the role of the housewife, one hundred percent. I was ready to sit at home and take care of children. And I wanted my husband to take care of me, and I would be supportive of him. We agreed from the start, that we would do whatever we could for his career and that I would be in the background. And so it was.

When they had their first child, the couple was assigned to live in the workers' dormitory provided by the factory. This was a very difficult time for her.

> Well, just so you don't misunderstand me, I have nothing against people who are not educated. I am fully democratic, and I treat them as equals. But, you know….the lack of common interests! We shared a kitchen, all 40 of us, but when I would go to that kitchen, I'd say 'I feel bored, lonely, unsatisfied..I'm so unfulfilled.' And all they could say to me was 'take a hectare of land!' And I'd say, 'cultivating a garden does not interest me.' So they'd say, 'then take a pig!' and I'd say 'I don't find it interesting to raise a pig.' So they'd suggest 'well take two pigs then!' 'I don't want to raise two pigs!' 'So take three hectares since you have nothing to do!' And I understood that they just don't understand me. I had no outlet for that *aktyvnist* that I feel, and so I stopped talking like that. I didn't want them to call me a *white raven* or *giraffe*.[33] Really, I just closed in on myself and stopped sharing my thoughts with anyone.

She then conceived again, (and reported thinking that it was a stupid thing to have done) but she reconciled herself to having the baby. But she noticed that her relationship with her husband had changed.

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[33] That is, someone who sticks out and never fits in.

> We had always been equals. In the institute we were equal, got equal grades, equal scholarships. But when I voluntarily went into the shadows in our relationship…I somehow voluntarily allowed him to advance instead of me. And his stance towards me changed. He never was coarse with me, and never tight with money, but still, he would come home from work and it was he, who had the right to rest, because it was he who had come home from work. I didn't have that right, I was with the children. He did not have to take that responsibility because he brought the money home and that was all. I understood that I was not only losing the respect of my husband, but also my own self-respect. That was when I started to write.

She wrote articles about every day things, and wrote poetry too. She managed to get published in various regions of Ukraine.

> This surprised my husband. And he looked at me again from a totally different perspective. It's not that he didn't like the change in me. It was just that he now understood that this life of domestic cares was too narrow for me. He even got me a typewriter, even though it was expensive. I then said, listen, even this is not enough for me. Somehow my home-grown creativity did not give me enough self-confidence—besides, there was no remuneration. I got a few stipends, but that was very little. Stipends were sent by newspapers that would print a story or an article of mine, and also they would send some copies that I could distribute. So there was moral satisfaction, but no material reward, and I wanted the satisfaction of securing myself materially, too.

She and her husband agreed to get involved with friends who were locally influential Rukh party members, the mayor of the town. She wanted a job setting that would take her out among people, and they focused on the fact that the radio station had closed down. There had been a radio program in the past, but it went off the air. So they renewed the work, at great risk and personal effort. They also needed political support:

> So…well I am not a *rukhivka* (Rukh activist), and I am not even a member of the Rukh party officially, but since we are close friends with them, everyone in the city administration considered me a Rukhivka and no one wanted to work with me—they're all Communists. The mayor arranged for me to get one thousand hryvnias as start up money to pay for the official documents, and so far so good.

The Rukh party helped push the vote through the city council for Natalia to get to run the radio program. And then she got involved in the various political leadership training seminars for women and was introduced to the Soiuz Ukrainok.

> And I just continued on doing what I do, but I noticed that in all this, my husband, started to respect me more and completely differently…I didn't actually bring much of a salary in, but his treatment of me had changed. He now does whatever he needs to do, and also expects me to go ahead and do whatever I need to do, and he learned to take care of the children…to tie shoes and cook soup. …I was not only happy about my work, but I was happy about the self-respect and self-realization.

Then she applied for another training program in Kyiv during which she saw a film entitled "Equal Partnership of Women and Men in Politics." She said that for the first time she finally understood deeply what it meant to respect your own self and that it was not necessary to always put the husband first.

> Why not the opposite? There was much good stuff to learn at this seminar, and they didn't treat me as if I were a stupid woman! They opened my eyes to the fact that women can also achieve something if she does not put herself down….and I can do it too, I'm not stupid…And so we came home, I talked to my husband, and he says, 'well, things are not going so well for me at work…the career track is not panning out—so, let's now see how I can support you so that your career takes off.

He joined her in working at the radio station. And in the next year, once the radio program was doing well, she was a candidate in the local city "Woman of the Year" contest, and won first place in the category of "Professional Woman Working in Her Own Profession."

Natalia's personal narrative is illustrative of a working out of gender relations on a personal level, within her marriage, which supported by her husband's (relatively untypical) responses to a combination of her initiative and the changing economic conditions around his employment, lead to a shift in the balance of power between them, towards full parity. This is an example of the kind of relationship—of greater respect and cooperation—that many women desire in Ukraine, not only in their private lives but also in the public, economic, social, and political, arena.

In the next section, Part IV, I will explore first the nationalist and then feminist practices of women's collective organized behavior, and will then explore the effects of the co-existence of nationalist and feminist influences on the parameters of social activism in Ukraine.

Part IV Practices of Women's Collective Activism

Chapter Ten: Nationalism in Practice

Introduction

Part IV will explore the practices of women's organizations of Cherkasy Oblast, taking nationalist (including its socialist manifestations) and feminist practices in turn before examining instances where an inferred intersection of feminist and nationalist practices seems to best apply. In their extreme forms, each of the ideologies being examined here—nationalism (especially in its ethno-nationalist variation); feminism (as radical feminism); and socialism (as Soviet socialism)—engage in essentializing, each positing a different core identity with either ethnicity (nationality), gender, or the status of worker as its queen of identities and prime mover of behaviors and affiliations. Each struggles against the interference of other social boundaries in the propagation of its ideals. Tired as the idea may seem, social activists still engage in winning over minds to an awareness of a prime defining status through the processes of consciousness-raising—in Ukrainian *prosvita* (enlightenment) and *prosvitianska robota* (enlightenment work) both conceptualized as top-down channels—or the facilitation of *feminist consciousness-raising* which in contrast is idealized as a process of mutual enlightenment among equals[1]

Earlier Ukrainian state-seeking nationalism was a sometimes revolutionary, but mainly a populist national enlightenment project. At the moment of independence, nationalism gained new supporters among the ex-CPU while non-CPU pro-independence activists continued to champion the specifically Ukrainian character of the nation-state, putting the "cultural claim" of

[1] In Ukrainian feminist consciousness-raising might be translated as *feministychna prosvita* . In one of the AELITA program documents it is refered to as *pidvyshchennia samosvidomosty zhinok* literally the "the raising of self-awareness of women." To assert feminist awareness, one would have to say *feministychnoji svidomosty* feminist self-awareness.

nationalism at the center of their work (see Tamir 1993:xiii). Ukraine's inability to install an entirely new and non-communist government upon independence set the stage for disagreement about who is rightfully to be the dominant group and whose definition of the political project ahead should reign. Walby points out that evidence exists that citizens differentiated by gender, class, education and residence, etc. may be "differentially enthusiastic about 'the' ostenislbe ethnic/national project, depending upon the extent to which they agree with the priorities of 'their' political 'leaders'" (1997:183).

Those who took the helm of the state in 1991 immediately sent a signal to the organized women (in the women's councils, the special interest associations clustered around them and the nationalist organizations as well) to act as berehyni both in preserving the positive aspects of the recent Soviet past and also in accepting the legitimacy and cooperating with the new government of the nation-state. Women reacted variously, some by complying with pragmatic loyalty and others by avidly reinforcing that nationalizing path of the state, while others objected to the socio-economic and socio-cultural changes brought on by these reforms. Many of the national women's federations did however accept into their statutes mandates to operate and publish in the Ukrainian language, to promulgate Ukrainian holidays, to promote the Ukrainian content of education, and to assist in the general recovery of Ukrainian cultural features that had been abolished, suppressed or "deformed" over the Soviet period.

Generally, the nationalist program is understood to be the pursuit of political power for the nation, This suggests that nationalism can be detected in support of programs that come to the defense of the economic, political and military integrity of the nation-state as state, and the cultural integrity of the nation-state, as nation. Nationalism becomes ethno-nationalism if the cultural integrity of the titular ethnicity is a primary concern. Discursively, nationalism would

emphasize national community and (real or fictitious) genealogical relationships. Therefore, projects of documenting lineages, tracing blood connections between past and present, might signal ethno-nationalism. Amateur ethnographic projects and the propagation of linguistic and cultural habits that are claimed to be *authentic* would also count.

Nationalism as a total social institutional socialization can adhere to almost any activity/practice if either the activity itself or the company in which it is performed promotes national awareness, national identity, and national commitment. One might look to the family as the primary target of projects, since the family is the first line of nationalist socialization. Women, therefore, are often vulnerable to becoming ingrained with nationalist rhetoric, especially women in societies where a biological determinism defines her as the physical and figurative incubator of the next generation.

The quintessential outward signs of a nationalist stance are probably illustrated best by the practices of the Soiuz Ukrainok. In the diaspora, women of the UNWLA and other Ukrainian women's organizations have for decades signaled their ethnicity by the wearing of embroidered blouses (traditional designs decorating the sleeves and placket) with plain skirts or slacks, taking one item of Ukrainian traditional costume out of its historical context and using it as a symbol of ethnicity. The wearing of the embroidered blouse is not limited to the Soiuz Ukrainok membership (neither in Ukraine nor in the diaspora) but it is a general symbol of Ukrainian affiliation donned by patriotic women on public religious and political holidays or other politically significant occasions (political demonstrations, for example) when they choose to identify themselves publicly as Ukrainians. Ukraine's Soiuz Ukrainok makes use of these and other signals of ethnicity. Their choice of organizational name in itself not only refers to the historically feminist nationalist organization supportive of Ukrainian liberation, but also uses the

term Ukrainok (dative form of the lexical item that means *Ukrainian woman* and metonymicially implies Ukrainian ethnicity). On special occasions, the members of the Soiuz Ukrainok wear embroidered blouses and they have also adopted the wearing of an lapel pin in the form of a miniature embroidered traditional cloth to wear on plain clothes as an emblem of organizational membership.

For contrast, the Diya organization, of a civic nationalist orientation, has adopted a trademark article of clothing, a long silk scarf, worn over blouses or dresses, bearing the silk-screened Diya logo on a tinted background in yellow and blue pastel shades, reminiscent of the Ukrainian flag. There is nothing overtly nationalist about their insignia, other than the chosen color scheme, signaling the organization's support of Ukrainian nation-statehood while advancing the successful participation of their members in various aspects of Ukraine's businesses and politics.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the discourse that unifies the (neo-, ethno-, civic-) nationalist field and embraces the socialist (which is not necessarily anti-nationalist) field of contentious politics, and illustrates the range of nationalist practices observed among women's organizations.

The Berehynia as a Unifying Nationalist Discourse

The berehynia is the leading discursive device inspiring and/or harnessing women to the labor of preserving and propagating the nation. The berehynia has received a lot of attention in print, particularly in the work of Marian J. Rubchak (1996, 2000, 2001, 2011). My interpretation of the function of the berehynia differs from hers primarily in my interpretation of the symbol as

one being wielded deliberately as an early element of the neo-nationalist state and my analysis that it set off gender relations adjustments that have already had a long history of nuances.

The berehynia symbol appears to be rooted in traditional folk motifs embroidered on traditional ritual cloths that were and continue to be used in a variety of sacred settings, for example, draped over icons, or holding the Ukrainian round bread in the presentation ceremony of greeting and welcome, or on the cloths associated with wedding rituals. Beyond this connection, there is no evidence confirming that the berehynia figured as an ancient goddess.[2] The concept is an invention of the Ukrainian ethnographer Vasyl' Skurativsky (?-2005) who relates in his 1987 work, *Berehynia*,[3] how his mother, when explaining the magical protective power of the embroidered ritual cloths identified the motifs at the cloths' edges as *oberehy* (from the verb to protect) and started to expound on the berehynia which she described as standing for all the cumulative knowledge and goodness treasured by a community:

> The Berehynia is the settlement. It is everything that is in it, everything that we have worked for here, everything that we have preserved from our fathers and grandfathers,

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[2] There is no ethnographic record of any "berehynia, goddess of the hearth." The only berehyni that belong to the category of supernatural beings are the water sprites that occupy the waters close to the shores (the berih, berehy) of streams, rivers, and lakes, who are imagined to be mischievous and dangerous, and to tickle their captives to death (Borysenko 1997). By 2002, an encyclopedic publication of Ukrainian mythology (*Ukrainska mifolohija* by Valerij Vojtovych, Kyiv: Lybid Press) appeared in which the berehynia gets an entry that makes connections to ancient texts and imagery, and to both water and mountain environments. (2002:25).
The entry for berehynia is also supplemented by a drawing showing a young female berehynia personage dressed in a Ukrainian embroidered blouse, the Ukrainian village at her feet, a sheaf of grain and a candle symbolizing agricultural traditions, the Madonna and child in an enclosed circle at her belly, the ritual embroidered cloth cloaking her protectively, while bird-helpers circle at her head. I call this the "all-purpose" Berehynia (see Vojtovych 2002:26).

[3] Ironically, 1987 is the same year in which Gorbachev published *Perestroika.*

> which enriches us and sanctifies us—our household goods, children, songs, our agreements and discords, our good words and our memories—all our lives lived in this house—that is the Berehynia too. [Skurativsky 1987:6-7, my translation]

In a short time, the berehynia concept attached to a complex of ideas, and its imagery shifted from the motifs at the ritual cloth edges to the image of the *derevo zhyttia* the tree of life motif, typical of the traditional wedding cloths of the central Ukrainian regions. In central Ukrainian embroidery, the tree of life often takes the form of a potted flowering tree, where the tree of life emerges from a decorative construction of the female form, the berehynia. The berehynia is not any one specific image, but the suggestion of a complex of ideas having to do with female reproductive power and centrality in the identification with and preservation of the past. It adhered easily to the idea of a prehistoric matriarchy commonly believed to have existed on Ukrainian territory,[4] and has expanded to embrace images of woman as Mother, the Madonna Oranta, and even Mother Earth or the psychological construct of the Eternal Feminine.[5]

It is so pervasive that it is even difficult to say just how many women's organizations have actively adopted and how many women's sphere activities and discourses simply reflect it without questioning it. [6] No less interesting is the fact that when Skurativsky first introduced the

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[4] This culture is connected with the Trypillian civilization, the matriarchal character of which is archeologically supported but not verifiable. A 1992 novel entitled Berehynia written by the former dissident Vasyl' Ruban is based on this matriarchal myth but the term Berehynia itself had already been in circulation for a few years.

[5] See Olena Lutsenko (1999:17) for a discussion of this trend of ethnopsychologizing about the Ukrainian pre-Christian matriarchal family. Lutsenko is a member of the Odessa Gender Studies Center.

term, he meant it in a generic way, neither male nor female, but Soviet and post-Soviet Ukrainian attitudes have dictated its adherence to the female sphere. My understanding is that after 2000, maybe after 2004 and the Yushchenko era, the berehynia has become even more widely accepted and that to stand in opposition to it would mean deliberate countermeasures.

It is important to trace the evolution of the discourse around the berehynia, which pre-existed the state, and its contemporary manipulation by the state. As a cultural symbol it is ubiquitous—subtle but recognizable in every image where a woman/mother is portrayed within a womb (circle), or rooted in the earth, or sprouting life. It is unmistakable and yet ambivalent in meaning, allowing it to take on different nuances in various contexts (see Merry 2006:41). Thus, it is a particularly effective frame for social action (if not social activism) within the nationalist and neo-nationalist contexts that focus on community. (This same quality makes it useless as a specifically Western feminist movement frame.)

Ironically, Skurativskyj's book was published only because it was championed by a coterie of Ukrainian dissident writers in Kyiv (Vasylchenko 2006:8), and its appearance coincided with the period (1987-89) when the Soviet media, after Gorbachev's references to women's responsibility for Soviet social problems, was pointing to women's neglect of duty as the cause of problems affecting their families (Marsh 1996: 287). The berehynia concept therefore received support through the Writers'Union and the Rukh milieu. It also had the uncritical cooperation of the diaspora, which, perhaps because of its romantic image of itself as the preservers of pre-Soviet Ukrainian culture in the West, became complicit with the spread of

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[6] The logo of OSMU is a Byzantine style Madonna and Child in a circle; the Slavija utilizes a line drawing of a female figure with upraised arms and a small child in her lap. The first organizational use of the word Berehynia may be the case of a folkloric singing ensemble in Polissia in the village of Krupove, to whom Skurativskyj himself suggested the name. The name appealed to the women who immediately agreed, responding in recognition of the symbol of the berehynia as the preserver of treasured traditions.

the berehynia. Sometime between Gorbachev's pronouncements, the disintegration of the USSR, and Ukraine's independence, the berehynia took hold as a nationalist metanarrative[7] and collective action frame. Most significantly the berehynia discourse was adopted by the ex-communist neo-nationalists during the transfer of state power, adding to the frame's discursive repertoire.

One month after Ukraine's December 1, 1991 referendum, and shortly after the banning of the CPU, an article appeared in the January 1992 newly-renamed *Zhinka* magazine (which had been since 1920 the CPU's organ of communication with women) calling upon women to be the *berehyni narodu* (berehynias of the people).[8] While the article was penned by Kateryna Motrych (a contemporary Ukrainian writer), a photo of the newly-elected President Leonid Kravchuk, the CPU's former ideology chief, was inserted just below the title: "To you, the women who stand next to the cradle of the nation, my message" (see Rubchak 1996:319 for full text[9]). The appellation of berehynia has since become common in the discourse of the proclamations and official speeches of the Ukrainian state (Rubchak 2001:151). The label berehynia is used to describe ex-CPU women who are in positions of responsibility, for example, Kononenko, the director of the agro-firm Bile Ozero was celebrated as the berehynia of the Ukrainian village (Spilna Sprava, August 1998 issue).

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[7] It evolved to be not a specifically Ukrainian image either, belonging to the generically post-soviet spaces: the word pops up in various contexts, and there is a *Berehynia* journal published in Russia in Voronezh.

[8] Rubchak (1996:319) provides the full text of the appeal which appeared in the January 1992 issue of *Zhinka*.

[9] Rubchak (1996, 2001) makes it clear that she considers the berehynia a potential symbol of female empowerment which was in the post-Soviet period "transformed into an instrument of subjugation" (see her Abstract in Rubchak 2001:149).

Women are commonly exhorted to act as berehyni of the communal past (sometimes without obvious reference as to the depth of that past, Soviet or pre-Soviet) and to preserve the cherished values in the communal present (in the family, community of residence, country, or nation). Thus, in the first years of independence, the berehynia served as a powerful tool in forging a transition-era coalition between women on opposite sides between the national communists and the democratic opposition. In effect, Ukraine's new president not only asked the berehyni (women, mothers, grandmothers) to support the state through their procreative bodies, but also specifically, by virtue of his appeal appearing in the formerly communist women's magazine, reached out to the women's groups under the SWC Ukrainian Republican office, headed by Maria Orlyk, to work for the stability and security of the new state.

The women of the Spilka rose to the task, as they understood it, of maintaining the "peace" in the face of "rabid nationalism." The growing nationalist movement, on the other hand, had adopted the berehynia during perestroika as a symbol of the preservation of Ukrainian culture (especially rural, low culture). In the years of early independence, nationalist (vs neo-nationalist) nation-building discourse identified the berehynia not only as the guarantor of the Ukrainian character of the family circle, but also with the preservation of the achievements of Ukrainian high culture as well. Being a berehynia thus could apply equally well to the professional woman as to the domestic caretaker.

The berehynia also generated its own discourse of the quintessential Ukrainian woman (Pavlychko 1996:311).[10] Berehynia behaviors as suggested by the discourse would include the preservation of Ukrainian language; traditional practices and artistry (crafts of all sorts);

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[10] "She is the perfect Ukrainian woman, the spirit of the Ukrainian home, the ideal mother, who played an important role in national history, the preserver of language and national identity" (Pavlychko 1996:311).

knowledge of Ukrainian history and ethnography; preservation of historic places and monuments; knowing the history of your own village or town; and preserving the good name of your own family. Berehynia-inspired actions would also mean the protection of some aspect of that which is communally valued against the ravages of change, of modernity, of transition or transformation. The names of women's organizations in Ukraine generally include this element of Women/Ukrainian Woman, images of mother, images of the hearth goddess, Berehynia, flowers, names ending with the feminine suffix "-a" (as if a woman's name), or the mention of children, which are their primary target group as mothers.

The berehynia concept flexibly cooperates with nationalism not only in essentializing women as bearers, preservers, and transmitters of culture; but it also encourages women to take proactive positions in defense of nation. The berehynia as emblem or organizational logo[11] also signifies protection, caring, intercession, even advocacy. It remains an image of feminine strength, if not a strong female image. Pavlychko 1996 emphasized that the berehynia connects with yet another very powerful cultural stereotype, the rural *babusia* who was the face of Ukraine under perestroika in the American press in 1989-1991 when photos of grandmotherly peasants were routinely used to symbolize the country and its early economic transformations under transition. The elderly woman, simultaneously derided and revered, is nonetheless held to be an agent of cultural preservation as the grandmother to whom one's knowledge of Ukrainian language and traditions is often credited and the one to whom so much child care is entrusted in these days of harsh economic conditions and disruption of family life.

In the context of the national women's organizations the berehynia image has the potential of projecting women into positions of preservative power, competent caring, and

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[11] An insurance company named ORANTA also used this image of protection.

securing of the communal good as dynamic figures of cultural significance (the home writ large). Berehynia behavior of this sort would mean civic involvement, working on projects of community significance, responsible organizational membership, knowledge of the women's movement history, appreciation of the women's participation in the liberation struggle, remembrance of celebrated individuals, and operating in the Ukrainian language (the language in which most national women's organizations business is conducted). This is not exactly the same as the interpretation of the berehynia that confines women to the glorified domestic sphere of kin and immediate neighborhood (the home writ small). It is easy to understand how the berehynia in the public sphere interpretation would find itself embraced and supported by the national women's organizations, but women do not readily self-identify as berehyni in demotic discourse.

The double duty of the berehynia concept is to battle the demographic crisis, by producing more children, to battle the cultural crisis, by having stay-at-home Ukrainian mothers teach their children Ukrainian language and customs at home; to battle the economic crisis (in a negative way) by removing a significant segment of the population into the ranks of the temporarily and perhaps permanently unemployed. Difficulties in Ukraine's employment market and the precarious financial position of most households has pushed a very large number of people into work abroad to send remittances back home.

Cinzia Solari (2011) notes that most of the women migrants performing care work in Italy were university educated middle aged women with professional work histories. In their discourse, they openly acknowledge that their embrace of the family-support mission as well as their displacement from Ukraine by it, are two sides of the same berehynia effect. They are indeed doubly displaced, once as older workers who were the first to lose their jobs in the transition, and again as retirees who had expected to perform the traditional grandmotherly

function of helping their daughters launch their own careers (or at least work) by taking care of the grandchildren at home—but here it is now the members of the daughters' generation who are ironically framed as berehynia, the young mother as unemployed housewife, regardless whether this is by choice or by default.

Practicing Neo-nationalism: Women Helping the State

In 1998, Liudmila Taranenko was on a tirade: "I hate all this mucking around in the kitchen and diapers," she snapped. She wasn't actually referring to domesticity and motherhood itself (she was proud of her own status as a mother of four grown children); but rather an impatience with the social welfare and mandatory cultural production—the attending to political holidays, the embroidery, traditional cookery, and neglected or forgotten customs—that continued to define the terrain of women's activism. She as a poet and a writer wanted more personal freedom in her expression of her Ukrainian womanhood and was finding the women's movement of the later 1990s unsatisfying in its social welfare and low culture focus. The cultural aspect, however, is as complex and problematic as the issues of social welfare, because it addresses the issue of what it means to identify as a Ukrainian.

The functioning women's councils that I encountered in Cherkasy oblast attended to the social welfare of their communities and also planned the celebrations according to the calendar of national holidays. Catherine Wanner (1998:141) points out that the state-designed calendar of official holidays, commemorations and celebrations as a fundamental tool used by a state to organize and inculcate the national narrative. In the new era of Ukrainian independence, the last of these duties means helping educate villagers about the new state calendar reflecting a different

set of historical events.[12] This job is also one of the responsibilities of teachers in village schools, who are also often leading members of the communities' women's groups.

When Liubov Kononenko told me about how the women's council handles holidays, she expressed herself discretely, mentioning that the village observe the Orthodox religious holidays, and the state commemorative ones as well, but did not go into the specifics of the state calendar. In the fall of 2000, while visiting another village of the oblast, my presence created a rather delicate (and very funny) situation: The village head (who was a woman) was dealing with me, an American diaspora visitor, on November 7, Great October Revolution Day. All through the Soviet years and for the last post-Soviet decade as well, this day had been observed as a day of Soviet ceremony and a day off from work. In 2000 for the first time in 83 years this was not to be an official day of rest. [13] All morning I felt that I was being led in a curious "dance" until I realized that the village head was doing her best to hide something from me. Apparently, several workers (all men) of the village in a show of communist resistance had taken the village's Soviet heraldic flags out of public storage and were using them to conduct the commemoration of the October Revolution on their own. To the chagrin of the village head—who was at the moment trying to hide this fact from me by detaining me in the house of culture until the coast was

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[12] See Wanner (1998:151 table 3) for "A Comparison of the Official Calendars of the Soviet Union and Ukraine."

[13] On that day, my thoughts often drifted back to Cherkasy, where the CPU was gathering for a demonstration at its customary site, at the foot of the Bohdan Khmelnytsky monument to protest the failure of the state welfare safety net and to demand an end to Kuchma's corrupt regime—I had seen a newspaper announcement about the demonstration, and was anxious to be there, except for my conflicting invitation to be in the village.(I even asked a friend to go and observe the demonstration in my stead but he felt too uncomfortable to do it, this not being something he could do anonymously.)

clear—we were suddenly interrupted by the workers' ceremonious return with the flags, just in time for me to get wind of what they had been up to!

In 1998 meeting with Halyna Martynova, the head of the Spilka in Chyhryn district, told me that the women's groups were important to the community not only for material self-help but also because the people's identity as Ukrainian needs to be revived. Accomplishing this is a task that is given to women:

> We need to support women in this, because it is not on the man's shoulders. It's not an easy thing for us to accomplish, it's fraught with problems. But it is that sense of obligation that unites us. And women are the main mechanism --if we don't help each other, then who will help us? Our problems are not only economic in nature, it is also a matter of the spiritual renewal of the *narod* (the people) [interview, August 1998].

The women's council in the neo-nationalist showcase village of Dubijivka on the other hand, seemed to be working in an atmosphere of post-Soviet cultural negotiations already ripened into village institutions. The women's council was devoting its volunteer hours to ethnographic work, primarily the collection of oral history and documenting the traditions of the village, because according to Tonkonohova, the village head, "we are losing our sense of our roots." She described herself to me as having the personal credentials to do this kind of patriotic cultural work:

> I know how people relate to the national idea, to the ideal of independence for Ukraine. I worked in Western Ukraine for a while, there's no problem with national consciousness there. My Grandparents were 86 and 84 in 1984, when they died within 5 days of one another. They told me much about their lives, they told me everything. They taught me always to have God in my soul, but not to tell anyone because they would have lost their jobs as teachers if I did. I was a member of the Komsomol too: in the 1950s and 1960s you went into the organization out of idealism, but in the 1970s they had to chase us into

> it with a stick!...But even in the Soviet times, we spoke Ukrainian here in the village, it's only in the city that they "say *kak.*"[14] In the 1970s we were asked whether we were not afraid to speak Ukrainian, considering what happened to Shelest… but can you believe that we didn't even know about Chornovil (the Narodnyj Rukh Ukrajiny leader) until the 1990s!." [reconstructed from interview notes (not taperecorded, September 22, 2000]

The pre-Revolutionary era school building (1910) serves 492 students in eleven grades: it seemed that the entire school community, students and faculty, were waiting for me to appear and address them. At the beautifully appointed daycare nursery school I was greeted by small children in traditional embroidered outfits carrying the traditional *korovaj* (ceremonial braided bread) on an exquisitely embroidered cloth. (They were precious, but my field diary reminds me how unhappy and impatient I was with being treated as if I was a visiting dignitary—I made a mental note to always try to appear unannounced.) From there I was whisked away to view a remarkable house that is kept in traditional style as a living museum demonstrating Ukrainian pre-revolutionary village life. In short time I was shuttled to a far corner of the village where another museum told the story of Dubijivka itself, a settlement which dates back to 1622. A native of Dubijivka, Anatolij Ulitov, spent 20 years researching its history and created something of a landmark in homegrown ethnography here. The museum director, Ulitov's own granddaughter, was on hand to let me have a look around. The front room honored Ulitov and the founder of the original village museum, Semen Prykhodko—both male berehynia figures, I thought. Part of the inner room was arranged to recreate the interior of a typical Ukrainian peasant house of the 19th century with each artifact clearly labeled so that children of the village would acquire the words for antique implements no longer in use. My guide paused by an oblong oval woven receptacle lined with white cloth and suspended from the ceiling that was

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[14] The word for *how* is used as a quick diagnostic: *kak*—Rus.versus *yak*—Ukr.

labeled *kolyska* (cradle). She commented on how children don't realize that the word *kolyska* is the root of *kolykhaty* (to rock) and of *nedokolykhane* (not rocked enough)—the latter being an attribute of a fussy child who grows into a juvenile delinquent and an immoral adult because they were insufficiently rocked in the cradle and thus, didn't get enough love and proper supervision from the mother (field notes, September 22, 2000).

This was the spirit of the berehynia, too, though she did not use the term, in the guise of the common belief that it is the woman whose touch heals, soothes and sets things right. And even as she explained the importance of the cradle to me, standing there close to a bust of Lenin on display in the corner of this same exhibit room, she absent-mindedly and very tenderly, caressed the white plaster of his bald head as she spoke.

Nationalism in Practice: Focus on the Disappearing Village

Although there are national organizations that attend to the promulgation of Ukrainian cultural production in terms of its higher expression in the arts, literature, and music, the local promotion of the Ukrainian culture (language, traditional holiday customs, songs, crafts, oral tradition) and values (hospitalilty and more) is entrusted to women. The women's organizations of a nationalist ilk are deeply involved on this level of enlightenment activism as well. In Subotiv near Chyhyryn, the women of the local Zhinocha Hromada group (the only chapter of the Women's Community of Rukh that I encountered in Cherkasy oblast) were establishing a children's museum (focusing on the history of toy-making in Ukraine since Cossack times) on the historic landmark grounds of the former estate of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. They were engaged in teaching children the ethnography of the region, running essay-writing contests (in Ukrainian), and organizing historical field trips. Much of the cultural work was focused on the village.

However, already in the 1970s-80s, a large number of Ukraine's villages were relegated to the category of locations "without prospects,"[15] a fact that fueled nationalist concerns for this traditional site of cultural reproduction. "It is the village that is the carrier, the preserver of the language. If not for the village, we would have long ceased to be Ukrainian," a 20-year old Cherkasy resident told me. The countryside was thus a prime target for socio-economic, political, and educational activism, but this was also recognized by all to be an impossible undertaking. In fact, the rural was simultaneously emblematic of the Ukraine that everyone wanted to escape. For this reason nationalism also maintains the value of staying. Olha Kobets' (of the Olena Teliha Society) urged her fellow citizens to "Stay, love this place, and make it your home!" (*Women's World,* 2000).

In 2000 there was much evidence of people valuing this kind of work among the villages in Cherkasy. People looked to the village culture for authenticity and were still capable of a romantic view of the kind of "returning to the countryside" that was characteristic of the 19th century Hromada and revolutionary cadres of the early 20th century, and politicians though it obviously useful to claim village origins as proof of being legitimately "of the narod (the people)." The selo, the village, had become an icon, as described by one of my interviewees: "In every garden there were a baba (grandmother) and a dido (grandfather) and the young parents with their children, the onuky (grandchildren). Without the village, there would be no Ukraine."

Uman: Cherkasy's Cradle of Rukh and the Original Berehynia Society

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[15]Rukh activist Serhij Plachynda (1989:89) notes that 1973-89 were ruinous for the Ukrainian village experiencing steady depopulation. He sounded an alarm that the processes of depopulation were being felt most acutely in the "most colorful, historical areas— the former Cossack territories of Kirovohrad and Dnipropetrovsk and the oblasts of Chernihiv, Poltava, Sumy, Zhytomir, Vinnytsia and Cherkasy."

The protracted process of the land reform—one of the hottest political debates of 2000—added to the focus on the countryside as a site of experience through which post-Soviet Ukrainian identity was being renegotiated. In the conflict between those intent on the preservation of collective farm arrangements and those desiring a political choice and the opportunity to try their hand at independent farming, the politics came down to the communists versus the activists of Rukh. Many looked to the Rukh Party as the main acknowledged local challenger to the informal but real power of the communists in this part of the country. "Of the two, the communist party is locally the stronger," a woman in Horodyshche told me, "but the communists are [finally] starting to lose some of their ground" (interview October 18, 2000). Still, she maintained, "there are a lot of people who sympathize with the left."

In the small western city of Uman, a place with a rough and tumble frontier-town atmosphere, the political situation is even more strained seemed especially dichotomous in this respect. It seems unlikely at first that Uman would be the original hometown of Rukh in Cherkashchyna. Bohdan and Tetiana Chornomaz complained that of the city's population of 90,000, approximately 13 percent of which is Russian ethnic, there were probably no more than 150-300 individuals that they would call *svidomi ukrajinsti* (nationally conscious Ukrainians). The Uman city government a decade after independence is still not in the least interested in cultivating the Ukrainian character of the city. The Head of the Department of Culture, for example, had briefly flirted with Ukrainian language, but has returned to her old habit of conducting business in Russian.

There were grumblings as well about Chechen migrants and the conduct of the annual Jewish Orthodox pilgrimage during the Jewish New Year. They explained to me that the international pilgrims enter Ukraine's Boryspil gateway airport (since the Cherkasy Airport has

been allowed to die), and are then transported directly from the airport in private busses to Uman, where they take accommodations exclusively within Uman's Jewish community. This means that the tourist traffic completely circumvents local transportation and hospitality services leaving the city budget to cover extra police hours, additional garbage pick-up and various infrastructural costs without an increase in local business. This causes a degree of animosity, which only serves to aggravate historical memory of inter-ethnic violence dating to the days of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. But the generally dour mood is mostly due to economic insecurity and a government that is unresponsive and antagonistic to Ukrainian initiatives. Small wonder, that the tiny nationalist opposition in Uman espoused nationalism in its less savory ethno-nationalist form.

The Chornomaz household is the main node of a network of up to ten dedicated activists and a handful of their organizations faithful to the Rukh movement orientation. Among the organizations they've registered are Uman city chapters of some of the larger federated national women's organizations (non-Spilka) of Ukraine, specifically the Soiuz Ukrainok and the Olena Teliha Society. The membership hardly warranted registering chapters but they did this, I think, to create a nationalist presence in Uman, which the city's NGO roster might otherwise not reflect.

Although legal provisions were made for NGO registration in 1992, this new phenomenon presented a challenge to the local government unfamiliar with its new role; the requirements kept changing and it took about a year to get any organization legally registered (with a statute, a program statement, an elected head and vice-president, and a bank account numberfor the private and business donations that might flow in). Among the organizations created and registered by the Chornomaz group were, other than the Rukh network of chapters

around the oblast, a collection of organizations that included a cultural society, a historical research society, and Uman local chapters of two women's organizations, the Soiuz Ukrainok and the Olena Teliha Society. The latter was described to me as an outgrowth of the restlessness of the OUN in Kyiv, who were seeking to express an *aktyvna zhyttieva pozytsija* (active life position) of their national-patriotism. Bohdan Chornomaz was working for the OUN in Kyiv at that time, so it is not coincidental that the Uman chapter was among the first to appear in a place outside of the capital of Kyiv.[16] Few people then were familiar with Olena Teliha as a historical personage so distributing her biography was one of the first steps required towards recruiting members in Uman. Although the Uman chapter grew to 20 members, it remained a loner in the oblast. Although the group had attracted a few new members, some had also left, or rather, been excluded: one woman was asked to leave because she was reportedly acting in a manner not consonant with the Rukh statute.[17]

The overall impression I had of this Rukh-related network in Uman was that there was a limited number of dedicated activists who spread themselves over a greater number of organizations with overlapping memberships. There appeared to be quite a lot of activity

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[16] Bohdan Chornomaz, the Uman Rukh activist, had just taken a position in Kyiv with the OUN headquarters. On December 16, four women, including Bohdan's wife Tetiana, and the elderly Uman pedagogue and ethnographer Ol'ha Didneko, and Nadia Tulchynska met to create the Uman chapter of the Olena Teliha Society. The Society's membership overlapped with that of two other nationally-oriented organizations in Uman, the Berehynia and Rukh. They planned on a network of chapters and an oblast level office in Cherkasy, but were not successful in this.

[17] I was told that "She stopped coming to our meetings and we thought it better that way, because she had strayed and acted in a way that we considered harmful (to the cause). We expect that those who present themselves as models of the national-patriotic ideal should be of high moral standards and conduct so as not to bring shame upon the organization. They must remember that they are first representatives of the organization, and only secondarily private persons, and that they are under public scrutiny. If they act inappropriately, they hurt the organization and the ideal itself." [November 2000].

(including conferences, cultural exhibits, spontaneous demonstrations, selling of printed materials from a Rukh-managed street kiosk) but really just a few people generating it all. When I asked Tetiana Chornomas about how she evaluates the women's organizations and their work, she answered in a matter of fact way that "when we need them, we create them."

Tetiana personally has no use for feminist ideology, but is as self-motivated and self-propelled as any feminist might be, except that she regards women's organizations purely as adjuncts to the nationalist program. She considers the cultivation of commitment to the national cause to be something that must be approached via every available avenue. She talked about the *vykhovni momenty* (teaching moments), that is, the points in time when the daily routine or cyclical calendar offer an opportunity to drive home a principle or evoke an emotional connection, thus promoting a national consciousness in the next generation. This was the justification for the cultural programs that Tetiana supports regardless of which of their complex of organizations is involved.

In 2000 the Rukh activist group involved in all of these Chornomaz-inspired NGOs was meeting irregularly, gathering in the cramped apartment of the Chornomaz family. Since Tetiana was a correspondent for Radio Liberty and worked from home, the living room, equipped with a phone line and a dinosaur of a Xerox machine was her office as well as Bohdans' informal NGO headquarters.[18]

The Berehynia Cultural Association

Their landmark organization of this Uman activist group was the Berehynia Cultural Association, which was founded by Bohdan Chornomaz in the mid 1990s (finally officially

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[18] In the fall of 2000 they also had a typewriter and a computer, and with 50 dollars that I gave them for room and board, they immediately ran out to buy a modem for internet access.

registered in 1998). When I first heard about the Berehynia Society at the Oral History Conference in Cherkasy in 1998, it intrigued me greatly, because I realized that although I was reasonably sure that I knew my Ukrainian folklore, I was hearing about this Ukrainian goddess of the hearth for the first time. I had never encountered the berehynia in the diaspora, at least this new Ukrainian development had not yet made it into my awareness in the United States. Nadia Tulchynsky, a student of history and a journalist participating in the conference, allowed me to interview her about the Berehynia organization of which she was a member. She explained that central to the group was a well-known archaeologist and ethnographer whose talents Bohdan revered. This legendary woman, Olha Didenko,[19] then 80 years old, was the group's honored berehynia (and I was honored to later interview her). Under her professional guidance a small group of cultural activists staged performances of old traditional peasant customs, replete with song and in authentic costume.

Nadia was involved in the Soiuz Ukrainok and the Olena Teliha Society, as well. The Soiuz Ukrainok group in Uman, registered in the early 1990s, had fallen into inactivity; but perusing the Soiuz Ukrainok records in Cherkasy, I found Nadia listed for 1998 as the contact for this Soiuz Ukrainok chapter, and wondered how many other chapters were similarly inactive? Two years later, however, Nadia was a fairly regular participant in the Cherkasy Soiuz Ukrainok Women in Politics Seminar in the Soiuz Ukrainok connection. She was also listed as the founding member of the Uman's chapter of the Olena Teliha Society (1993)

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[19] Olha Didenko was a colleague of the famed dissident Nadija Sourovtseva who lived out her later years in Uman and died there in 1984??? Sourovtseva's home became a meeting ground for dissidents and a place to share ideas. Dziuba's Internationalism or Russification was nurtured there. Later Didenko headed up a group of samvydav, printing up Dziuba's manuscript. The group was broken up during the mass arrests of 1979—Bohdan Chornomaz and his colleague, though sentenced to the gulag, never betrayed Didenko as the mastermind behind the printing operation.

Nadia herself was a born educator, in or outside of a classroom; and I was very interested to observe her interactions with young people, for which I had a few chance occasions. One day, we met with a group of bright and charming teen-aged girls, who were enrolled in a performing arts school in Khrystynivka. Nadia was urging them to engage in ethnographic fieldtrips to the villages to collect Ukrainian local songs, proverbs, and descriptions of traditions no longer practiced. I saw that the girls were visibly reluctant to listen and resisted being drawn into the conversation too deeply, letting her know, without being overtly rude, that they were not really all that keen on Nadia's idea of appropriate hobbies for their free time. My presence may not have helped much there, since I was actually interested in asking them about how they felt about being young women in Ukraine. The contrast of my mission (and their warm open response) and Nadia's attempts (and their closed hesitation) spoke volumes about the relative value Ukrainian youth generally puts on these things, in fact polarizing these realms of activity as cool/uncool.

As for Nadia, her approach to these proposed fieldtrips stems as much from her extensive work experience at the Uman Museum of Ethnology (as well as her long acquaintance with and admiration for Olha Didenko) as it does from a nationalist stance. She might have drawn the girls in more successfully if she had an official museum-sponsored project with which to entice them, or had the authority to assign such a fieldtrip as a school assignment.

It is a fact that Ukrainian traditional culture suffered materially and morally under the Soviet regime (Borysenko 2000) [20] and currently, Ukrainian ethnography is popularly regarded

[20] Valentyna Borysenko, Chair of the Department of Ethnography at Shevchenko State University in Kyiv, has become an important figure for Soiuz Ukrainok, Olena Teliha Society and Zhinocha Hromada. Her ethnographic work focuses on the Soviet-induced changes to the Ukrainian village traditions and she laments the lack of comprehension of the complex denationalization processes endured by Ukrainians and the rural communities in particular. She fears that cultural models imported in the post-1991 period may come to dominate and impede

as a treasury of authenticity. But Nadia's approach did appear to me to be more than the collecting of shreds of Ukrainian culture into memorial publications or museum exhibits. Nadia's engagement with Ukrainian culture was a search for its vitality and she invited a redefinition of Ukrainian tradition from dry museum piece to something breathing and growing. Nadia's "education and enlightenment" campaign involves her urging young people to learn about Ukrainian cultural elements in order to get them to appreciate these things and integrate them into their lifestyle in order to arrive as a way of *being Ukrainian* in the future.

The ethnonationalist effect

Nadia's interview with me on her work within the Olena Teliha organization shed light on the applied practices of making and reshaping cultural identity while spreading national consciousness. The story she told me clearly connects the politics of ethnic affiliation with the idea of Ukrainian autonomy, but, it just as clearly illustrates how a focus on strengthening one identity leads to the sharpening of ethnic differentiation. In December 1993 when Nadia had been sent to Kyiv to get to know about the Olena Teliha Society, the Kyiv headquarters had just received a shipment of humanitarian aid (usually school supplies, toiletries and warm clothing, such as mittens and scarves) from the Ukrainian Gold Cross (a women's organization in the North American diaspora). Nadia was given a small supply of children's clothing that was part of this aid package and the Uman chapter decided to conduct a charitable event at the Uman pre-school where Nadia worked at the time.

They decided to embed the distribution of aid in a cultural event that would have consciousness-raising merit: "We didn't do it by just lining the kids up and recording who got what in a notebook," she said, alluding to the practices of some other women's groups. Since it

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Ukraine's internal processes of cultural self-renewal whose viable future she envisions as a blending of traditional rural and urban features of Ukrainian lifestyle. (2000:11-12).

was December and the feast day of St Nicholas falls on the 19th according to the Julian calendar they organized a *sviato* (a holy day/holiday) around the traditional visit of the historical Saint Nicholas in bishop's garb. They would supplement the donated children's clothing with small items from the Rukh kiosk (pamphlets, little books) so that each child could get something. Prior to St. Nicholas' appearance, they held a *besida* (political discussion) with the children in small groups to prepare them for something new and different:

> We dressed up one of our teachers as St. Nicholas, using the same outfit we had always used for the school pageant celebrating the Soviet-era Grandfather Frost (*Did Moroz*) except that instead of a hat, we put a crown on his head. Some of the children asked, why did *Did Moroz* come without a hat on his head, when it is so cold outside? We had to spend quite a bit of time explaining to them that this was not *Did Moroz*, but *Sviatyj Mykolaj* (Saint. Nicholas). At first there was some confusion, but later the children accepted this calmly and some of them, if I may make the point rather crudely, started to operate in terms of St Nicholas being Ukrainian, and *Did Moroz*, being well, like some sort of foreigner. [interview, November 19, 2000]

Nadia didn't say it, but what else...a Russian.

Nadia went on to report that the following December they learned from that mistake and organized a truly authentic Ukrainian feast of St. Nicholas. They consciously decided against any style of event that would appear *apolitical*, by which she actually meant denationalized, or watered down. Such "apolitically" constructed cultural programs, in which there were only oblique references to Ukrainian elements within a matrix dominated by Russian and other ethnic songs and dance numbers, were the norm in Cherkasy Oblast in the 1990s. [21] Nadia said that

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[21] And in some pockets continued on. In September 2000 I witnessed such a program during the Cherkasy Days Celebration—the concert in the park seemed to me, a diasporan Ukrainian in Ukraine, exceptionally non-Ukrainian. The line up consisted entirely of Gypsy dances, Jewish

they had decided to launch an all-out Ukrainian event, replete with explanations of the significance of the feast and the biography of St. Nicholas, a description of the traditions of Christmas in old Uman, the singing of *koliady* (Ukrainian Christmas carols) and *shchedrivky* (songs of the cycle associated with the Feast of the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan) and other colorful traditional customs. She did not care if it seemed initially heavy-handed. This kind of reformulation of holidays is nothing new for those under Soviet rule. Lydia Sklevicky (1990) describes how the Anti-Fascist Women's Front of Croatia remade New Year's Day as a socialist holiday creating for it a new set of traditions under the central guidance of higher communist party committee directives. International Women's Day established as a holiday in the young Soviet Union and as a day free from labor in 1965, enjoyed the same kind of official crafting.

Nadia was also clear in her prioritizing political activism over distribution of humanitarian aid within the general thrust of national consciousness-raising. She explained:

> Although [the Olena Teliha Society] statute allows for both humanitarian and political activity, we, of course, put more emphasis on the political because we believe that society needs to be prepared for progress. And even a community organization, a women's organization, must work first and foremost in such a way so that the people will vote in the elections…They have to understand, that no matter how difficult the life is, no matter how morally degrading it might be to live in this country now, their obligation as citizens is to take part in the political processes of this country. If they want a better life, they've got to vote. [interview, November 19, 2000]

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dances, and ballroom dancing, with not a single ethnically, traditionally Ukrainian performance among them, which I personally found very strange, almost jarring to my diasporan sensibilities and personal experience with North American multiculturalism. Here, with independent status, Ukraine's culture was (in the context of this program) treated as the invisible matrix against which the "other" cultures of Ukraine's ethnic mosaic appeared in contrast.

For this reason, the Olena Teliha Society participates in whatever political actions are taken by the national-democratic forces of the Uman region and Cherkasy Oblast.

The overall priority of national consciousness-raising is more an attitude than even a formal direction proscribed by the organizational statute. Nadia, then a correspondent for the *Nova Doba* (new era) oblast newspaper who had frequent opportunity to visit the various educational institutions of Uman, explained that the society members' focus on contact with children and youth stems from their knowing that

> Ukrainian society, after so many years of victimization, from the direction of the north, east, west, and south—from all sides: the Russians, the Poles, the Mongols, the Turks, and Tatars—will have a hard time making a swift transformation into a democratic society. It must first go through a certain period, when people will slowly understand and decide on new priorities. The older generation, for the most part, lives in the past. They've perhaps become used to these old ways, because it's been beaten into their heads so that they just can't accept anything new. Not all, of course—there are many activists in our Rukh circles that are in their 70s. They are our *golden fund.* But the children are the future of the country…and the teachers need help. Our organization has taken it upon itself to see to it that our children are educated in a patriotic spirit, so that the next generation will grow to be such that we will be able to leave Ukraine in their care, without anxiety. [interview, November 19, 2000]

Nadia's work is to see that the members of the next generation are Ukrainian patriots, but as noted by Yuval-Davis (1997), the solidifying of ethnic barriers is to be expected in the deployment of identity politics.

Civic Nationalist Democratic Opposition: the Fate of the OSMU

Svitlana Kassian had no qualms framing the movement of soldiers' mothers in Ukraine as taking a nationalist position. She liked to make a dramatic point of the analogy of Ukraine's situation in

1990-91 to that of the situation in 1918-20 when the Ukrainian National Republic was defeated. One reason historians offer for Ukraine's inability to survive its earlier declaration of sovereignty is that the Ukrainians, being anti-militarist idealists, allowed a socialist-controlled parliament to neglect the crucial state project of creating a Ukrainian armed forces. In 1920, the untrained Ukrainian all-volunteer units were no match for the Red Army. Svitlana described to me how, in 1990, she and her colleagues were exhorted by a Ukrainian Soviet officer (Durdynets') who exclaimed, "Women! Make sure that Ukraine is not left in the same position as it was in 1918, vulnerable and undefended!" She also recalled, in connection with the meeting with Gorbachev in Moscow, how Shapovalov, who was then marshal of the USSR and the last Soviet Minister of Defense, apparently in sympathy with their cause, complimented them, declaring "with women like these, Ukraine will not be lost!"

Julie Elkner (2004) points out that the major contribution of the early activism of the Committees of Soldiers Mothers was breaking the taboo on discussion of *dedovshchyna*, the violence and extreme hazing in army Soviet army barracks that caused so many peacetime deaths that there was widespread avoidance of compliance with Soviet universal military service. The experiences of Ukrainian young men in the Soviet military during the Soviet period were shared by all young Soviet military recruits.

In 1991, Ukraine inherited a military of 750 000 men of ground, air and air defense units, all formerly Soviet forces that needed to be nationalized on the territory of the former Ukrainian SSR (Olynyk 2000:69). Having achieved their goal of a separate Ukrainian military, the OSMU turned its efforts to establishing itself as a civilian oversight organization. In January 1992 the new Ukrainian government created a Committee of Social Welfare for Armed Forces Personnel at the level of the Cabinet of Ministers. The network of existing committees of soldiers' mothers

(in all 24 oblasts) was united under the Committee of Social Welfare for a several years with women from the organization appointed as civil servants and paid by the Ministry of Defense. On December 25, 1996, Oleksander Kuzmuk, who was the Minister of Defense in 2000, liquidated this committee in its function as a government entity. The women re-registered as a community organization independent of the Ministry, which is exactly as it should be, Svitlana Kassian insisted.

What happened in 1999, however, serves to illustrate the ongoing political machinations around women's organizations. High ranking individuals from within the military (especially Colonel Vilen Martysorian) suggested that the Committee of Social Welfare structure be revived and by June 1999 the Ministry of Defense was reviewing the idea of having a civilian assistant for army affairs in each of the oblasts. As Svitlana relates it, the Cherkasy Oblast military commissar rejected her OSMU group members as candidates for this advisory post; but then sent his assistant out to get a copy of the statute which she had submitted in order to register the OSMU in Cherkasy. Three months later another group used an identical copy of her statute to legitimize (the first step towards registration) another organization for the Regional Army Commissariat. The commissariat then, without consulting Kassian, called a convention of all soldiers' mothers from all districts of the oblast, and registered them under a new umbrella organization with a very similar name (the Cherkasy Oblast Union of the Soldiers' Mothers of Cherkashchyna, registered July 7 2000). They appointed another woman to lead this group. Kassian contends that while this other structure is registered in the legal status of a community organization it is, in reality, not independent of the military structure and cannot be impartial.

Kassian therefore continues to conduct her work alongside this parallel structure as an independent observer and advocate for the welfare of Ukraine's army recruits.[22]

In August 2000 the OSMU invited me to travel with a group of activists to the Black Sea port of Sebastopol to observe their conducting a human rights seminar for young navy recruits (see Kolisnyk 2000). Six of us—Svitlana Kassian; Valentyna Artamanova, the national head of the OSMU; Oksana Kolisnyk, a Cherkasy journalist working for Misto newspaper; Liuba Zinchenko, a deputy to the Sosniv borough and a representative of Cherkasy's Ministry of Culture; and one other activist from the ranks of the Cherkasy OSMU and I—travelled by van through Crimea to the harbor where the Russian Black Sea Fleet and the scrappy newly organizing Ukrainian navy share space. Our final destination was the SS Cherkasy, one of three ships bearing the names of cities of the Cherkasy Oblast—(the others are Smila and Zolotonosha). The SS Cherkasy was an old minesweeper in the process of being refurbished but still seaworthy. The ship and its crew of 27 (9 of whom are native to Cherkasy Oblast) had participated in training maneuvers under the Ukraine-NATO Strategic Partnership and had won high praise for their performance.

The OSMU visit to the seamen and their officers (commander Dedrynskyj) was for the purpose of conducting a seminar on the legal rights of conscripts to the Ukrainian armed

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[22] The Cherkasy OSMU ran a project supported by a grant from the EU-US Transatlantic CSI Programme for Ukraine, an initiative promoting civil society in Ukraine. The project was billed as an "adaptational center for psychological and legal support for draftees, soldiers in active duty, and "invalidy" (those discharged as handicapped) of the armed forces of Ukraine. This same project (the "Adaptational" Center) also produced (in Cherkasy, year 2000) a well-edited printed booklet entitled "Know How to Defend Your Rights, Soldier!" The center served to dispense information, run outreach to the various army garrisons in the Oblast, and functioned as a "hot-line" for complaints. The OSMU letterhead makes use of the Byzantine icon image of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, alongside the flags of the US and EU flanking the outline of Ukrainian territorial boundaries with a Ukrainian trident superimposed on it.

services, providing informational materials that would help them demand their rights, if and when necessary. During this visit we all stayed on the boat in the same type of barracks the naval recruits occupied, ate with them, and observed their routine. The OSMU women ran a seminar explaining the personal rights of recruits—reviewing the terms of their contract, emphasizing the importance of their physical and psychological safety and their right to refuse to perform exploitative work at the behest of unscrupulous officers. Afterwards, the women offered an opportunity for psychological counseling or advisement in a confidential setting. This would be one of the very few moments the young men would have to contemplate their options and realize that there is someone to whom they can turn should they have a complaint. This is a very risky proposition, and their safety depends on the authority of the civilian oversight system offered by the OSMU.

While in Sebastopol, a predominately Russian city where the Union of Soviet Officers is a strong political constituency, we visited the home of one of Kassian's contacts, a woman who heads the local chapter of the OSMU. Her own son had died as a recruit during training and she had little success in discovering the particulars of what happened to him. I did not tape the discussion with her, but she talked about what mothers give to the state. They produce children, male and female. The state can take their sons, the product of their bodies and use them, also as human resource for the purposes of the defense of the state. Mothers as loyal citizens sacrifice their biological product to the state, but the state should at least respect their labor and ensure that it is not wasted. It is inexcusable for the state to waste the lives of their children even before they have seen any battlefield as trained soldiers.

The activism of the OSMU is both maternalist and nationalist. Despite the fact that in its second decade the OSMU has been muscled out of its foundational role in the establishment of

the Ukrainian military, it continues to try to inject civilian control into military oversight. And despite the fact that OSMU is in some respects a diminished political force, it has not lost the support of Western aid NGOs—the National Democratic Institute (NDI), TACIS, and the European Union—who seem to appreciate the continued relevance of the OSMU mission to promote awareness of human rights among Ukraine's young recruits as well as their goal of seeing Ukrainian patriots in the future ranks of the Ukrainian military.

Socialist Contentious Politics: Challenging the Post-Soviet Order

In this section I will look at the spectrum of women's activism informed by the left end of the political spectrum. In extreme contrast to the ethno-nationalism of the right, is the unreformed anti-nationalist communist left. The loyal members of the CPU continue to utilize Soviet symbols of every sort: the official insignia, monuments, holidays, the wearing of one's war medals, all easily recognizable and understood forms of personal defiance and resistance. Recently, in 2011, this has come to a head with open conflict and Ukraine's current government's approval of the display of Soviet era emblems and flags.

As a matter of movement practices, after independence, the Rukh field of movement, which had used demonstrative tactics to good effect, called on a cessation of strike activity as destabilizing and put an unspoken moratorium on loud street demonstrations that would be confrontational. The formal women's movement followed suit, favoring small group meetings, contained events, and conferences; they adopted a style that was supportive of Ukraine's

government (rather than destabilize its) and wished to be treated as the building blocks of a Ukrainian society rather than as agents of its disruption.[23]

Contentious politics were certainly not lacking in Ukraine in 2000 though, and there was really no dearth of overt demonstrative protest. In March 2000, 11 members (10 men and one woman, age 19-24) of the rightwing radical group *Samostijna Ukrajina* (independent Ukraine) barricaded themselves in the offices of the Central Committee of the CPU in Kyiv demanding the "decolonization of Ukraine" by means of renewing the ban on the CPU, ousting the Russian Fleet from Sebastopol, and withdrawing from the CIS. The former dissident Ambassador Lev Lukianenko (RPU) called this the first volley against the CPU and against Ukraine's Union of Soviet Officers whom he identified as an anti-government and anti-constitution force pushing for the liquidation of Ukrainian sovereignty.[24]

I saw a smattering of such demonstrations over my stay in 2000. Arriving at Boryspil in June, I saw miners demonstrating with banging pots and pans, first near the airport, and later in the capital, by the Supreme Parliament building. In August in Odessa I found a largish crowd protesting Ukraine's cooperation with NATO. It was on this same day that I spyed the elderly and elegantly old-fashioned woman ask for a "girlie" magazine on display and then proceed to destroy it, gesturing at the protesting man with her parasol that such filth should be confiscated—she turned out to be a member of Vitrenko's (PSPU) women's organization called *Dar Zhyttia*.

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[23] This point was emphasized by the head of the All-Ukraine Olena Teliha Society, Olha Kobets (2000:94-95).

[24]This incident was reported by Svoboda, Vol CVII: no. 14 Friday April 7, 2000. The issue is very much still alive. See http://www.newsforall.org/archives/2336 for a description of events of May 2011—over a decade later—when the Union of Soviet Officers in Sevastopol assembled in dress uniform to dedicate a billboard bearing the image of Stalin as their leader to victory during the Great Patriotic. The billboard is to be guarded by members of the Union round the clock in two hour stretches of sentry duty.

In Cherkasy, too, there was unrest. It was directed not only against budget irregularities and the price of communal services, but also against fraudulent marketing practices[25] and vandalism (mostly for scrap metal). The demonstrators—who tended on various occasions to be the invalids, the veterans, the pensioners, the sick, the families of soldiers—were called "the mayor's rabble" probably because the mayor's financial management of the city was understood to be impoverishing these constituencies, but it was the oblast budget that was required to pay the constitutionally promised benefits to the residents of the city, and the Mayor's rabble ended up protesting at the Oblast administration door.

A woman who headed one neighborhood-based association (of the Sosniv district of Cherkasy) called *Dovira* (trust) organized protests over her building being disconnected from the central heat supply in the fall of 2000. Her apartment block, managed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was under construction. Several families, including hers, had allegedly refused to accept alternative housing for the duration of the repairs (probably in realistic fear of losing their apartments altogether). She blocked traffic for hours on Shevchenko Boulevard one day and even took her protest to Kyiv. She was ridiculed in the press as a hot-head and accused of using her children to create spectacles of protest because reportedly she camped out over night with

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[25] There was rampant fraud and falsification of production that called for serious consumer protection. For example, one time I wanted to buy a bottle of liquor as a present for the birthday dinner of a friend in Cherkasy, and asked his advice—he went pale when I suggested a particular label and begged me to take the larger bottle (1 liter) not the smaller (.75 liter). Realizing that this sounded greedy, he explained that there was good reason behind his urgent request: he knew that the smaller bottle was potentially fake liquor. I was incredulous, but he finally confessed that his own wife, who worked in a bar had been soaking labels off empty bottles in their bathtub, refilling them with low-grade and dangerous hootch, and putting them back into circulation. He was afraid we'd all get poisoned at the party in his honor because of his own wife;s doings.

them in the oblast offices and in the morning, allegedly hit a government official over the head with a souvenir *bulava* (the Hetman's mace, the Cossak symbol of power).

Malinowsky the head of the regional SPU approved of these loud and disruptive protests, saying that "our women, and especially women, must shout loudly to complain about the treachery of the transition." (Interview, Cherkasy October 2000) Therefore, not all women's groups refrained from over loud contentious politics demonstrations in the post 1991 period, but the women's groups that did engage in such protests were as a rule denied funding from foreign donor groups and earned little open respect.[26]

The SPU rejects Stalinism and the mistakes made by the Soviet Union in its application of socialism, Lenin is still revered by an unknown many Ukrainian believers of socialist ideology as inspired by Karl Marx. Socialist ideals promoted activism around ideals that are widely valued in contemporary liberal thought and politics: liberty (personal freedoms); egalitarianism and equality of women; democracy in government; prohibition of slavery and exploitation of working persons; and a general cultivation of fraternity in the brotherhood of all peoples with the goal of regional and global cooperation for the common good of all. It was a Russianized version of Marxist thought that won out in the Russian revolution and in the establishment of the USSR (as pointed out by Alfred Meyer 1985). Soviet communism was not the pure Marxist socialism that the Ukrainian SPU sees as the inspiration for the early Ukrainian socialist activists before the revolution.

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[26] Ukrainian popular discourse, at the same time, denigrates women activists—again one of the non-empirical proofs of movement health (Gerlach and Hine1970:xiii), with special scorn and ridicule reserved for women who indulge in demonstrative protest. Women are made out to be individuals with social and psychological deficits—along the lines of the social disorganization theory of social movements dominant until the 1970s (Doug McAdam 2003:282).

The SPU establishes its legitimacy by tracing its political lineage to the Ukrainian revolutionary socialists of the 19th and 20th centuries who are also associated with the Ukrainian cultural revival and struggle for independence—Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Drahomanov, Lesia Ukrainka, all of whom are invoked as the founders of the current revival of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine or SDPU—not to be confused with the SDPU(o) which is the oligarchic pseudo-party mentioned earlier. The positions taken by the SPU are decidedly anti-capitalist, anti West, and anti-reform, especially on the point of business and land reform, but they present themselves as Ukrainian patriots. Although the SPU is the strongest party of the left end of the political spectrum, it is the uncompromising anti-nationalism of the company they keep in that left terrain—especially the CPU, but also the PSPU and the PPU—that makes the SPU appear so risky a coalition partner to the nationalist right.

The SPU of Cherkasy Oblast, which formed in 1991 in protest over the "illegal prohibition of the CPU," was 3000 members strong in 2000, with 28 city and district committees and 350 local party organizations. Smila figured as the strongest chapter oblast-wide (this was also the seat of Olha Berestianko, the most powerful leftist woman of the oblast). In the last presidential elections, 180 thousand oblast voters cast their ballots for the SPU candidate Moroz, according to Oleksander Malynowskyj, head of the oblast SPU (and as a member of the original initiative group also its local historian). The cusp of 1999-2000 was a setback for the left. Moroz lost the presidential bid in 1999, under conditions of fraud that were confirmed only in the fall of 2000 in the tapes that sparked Kuchmagate. The national leadership of the SPU took stock of its position in summer 2000 when Kuchma signed the program for Ukraine's Integration into the European Union and started the Ukraine-NATO Strategic Partnership exercises on the Black Sea. They started to see that the meetings, the demonstrations are not enough to raise the

consciousness of the people and that they would need intelligent argument and better reporting. They realized that people in their apathy had stopped reading the socialist press and that the party was losing ground (Nikolajenko and Esh 2000:2). What's worse, they concluded, people were still expecting the government to do things for them, Soviet-style.

In 1995 with the standard of living falling rapidly, massive demonstrations burst out on October 25 in Cherkasy , Smila, Kaniv, and Uman—they protested presidential policies and appealed to "renew national industry, return the illegally withdrawn right to work, to adequate living quarters, medical care, education and pension security." All through 1996 the SPU organized demonstrations against the non-payment of salaries, the liquidation of the social welfare sphere, and the growing culture of thievery and corruption.[27]

The SPU women's organization Women for the Future of the Children of Ukraine was part of a women's front not averse to open protest in the early years after independence. Nina Pokotylo, head of this organization, who described the Kuchma presidency as a literally genocidal regime, emphasized the rallies and disturbances they caused as being in the earlier years an important way to protest the situation:

> We were more radical then, we raised mothers meetings, mothers' tribunals, we condemned the state of the country, we appealed to the courts, especially…over the spread of pornography, narcotics and other social problems. We marched on the

[27] In 2000 the pensioners I lived with received 80 hryvnias a month, 60 of which they paid out immediately for communal services (water, heat, gas, housing maintenance, sewer, and street repair –they paid separately for electricity and had a meter in the kitchen for that). During an extremely cold and rainy fall, on October 22, 2000 the Nova Doba noted that the citizens of Cherkasy are 60 million behind in their payments to the heating plant, and suppliers of natural gas would not come through if the bill was not settled. On November 14, 2000 the Narodna Pravda (published since June 1992), the Newspaper of the Cherkasy Oblast Socialist Party of Ukraine, ran an article "We Need to Break the Communal Noose" calling on citizens to take part in a demonstration on 13 December at 1 pm by the Oblast State Administration building to protest the communal services tariffs set by the oil-gas oligarchs.

> administration banging empty pots and pans…the struggle is between those who support this regime and those who do not support this regime, which is acting for the destruction of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people [Pokotylo October 2000 in Kyiv Union of Women for the Future of the Children of Ukraine, SPU]

Pokotylo insisted that women need to make sure that the male criminal state would not be replaced by a female criminal state (if Yulia Tymoshenko, for one, were elected to office). Their rage borders on a feminist battle cry "the women must take over!" in a rhetorical style was not much different from that of Vitrenko (PSPU), whose flamboyantly extremist oratory served to discredit her in the eyes of most moderate-thinking people in Ukraine. Pokotylo was herself well-versed in the UN mission for gender equality, but she seemed to be not able to overcome the overt patriarchy of the SPU which was just not in step with her.

Part IV Practices of Women's Collective Activism

Chapter Eleven: Feminist Practices

Introduction

In this chapter I will explore how feminism has been interjected into women's activism in Cherkasy oblast, through an analysis of the practices of four feminist groups of Cherkasy oblast.

Among the first buds of feminism in Ukraine was the appearance of women's research centers, including several women's information and consultation centers, working in Ukraine's major cities (Smolyar 1999).[1] These organizations generally eschewed the term *feminism* in favor of the terms *genderni tsentry* (gender centers). Since gender studies as an academic discipline did not exist in the USSR, scholars in Ukraine, as in Russia, initiated the necessary research to analyze the effects of the post-Soviet transformation on women in their own societies. A second important aspect of the work of these groups is their academic activism that interacts with nation-building, national creativity, and the cultivation of national identity. Thus, Ukraine has acquired an academic community intent on strenghthening the national community. Domestically-oriented aspects of this work includes the writing histories of the Ukrainian women's movement, providing historical role models for women and girls, translating feminist tracts into Ukrainian or Russian for the general public, and developing gender studies and women's studies curricula for Ukraine's secondary schools and universities. Externally-oriented activities include the production of self-conscious analysis of Ukrainian society addressed to the domestic and Ukrainian transnational community and international audiences so that Ukrainian

[1] Smolyar (1999:203-207) lists as being in the feminist category no fewer than 16 gender research centers that appeared since the mid 1990s not only in Ukraine's major cities (where there are more than one such center) but also Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Simferopil, Kirovograd, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zakarpattia.

feminist scholars can start to produce an indigenous feminist theory that will enhance their participation in arenas of global feminist interaction.

From among the many existing gender (research) centers, [2] in 2000, three were considered to be the main producers of theoretical feminism in Ukraine (Onufriv 2000:2). These are the Kharkov Center for Gender Studies at the Vasyl' Karazin Kharkov State University which describes itself to be a "University network of gender and women's studies for university teachers and researchers in the NIS";[3] the Kyiv Center for Gender Studies[4] associated with the legacy of Solomea Pavlychko (1958-1999[5]) which produces feminist criticism of the Ukrainian literary canon; and the Odessa Scientific Center of Women's Studies whose home base is the History Department at the Odessa State Academy of Food Technology and which specializes in the history of the women's movement in Ukraine.[6] As of 2000, a fourth should be added to this list: Oksana Kis' Women in Society Gender Center in Lviv which is pioneering work in women's oral history (see Zhurzhenko 2010).

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[2] There was Kupryashkina's Center for Women's Studies in Kyiv; O. Suslova's Women's Information Consultative Center (1995); V. Peredyrij's Research Center on the History of the Ukrainian Press; The Kyiv Research and Educational Gender Center and others.

[3] Kharkiv Center for Gender Studies (KCGS) web-site http://www.gender.univer.kharkov.ua

[4] The original Gender Center established in 1992 under the auspices of the Literature Department of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences was renamed the Kyiv Center for Gender Studies in 2002. See its publication at www.vidnokola.kiev.ua.

[5] Solomea Pavlychko (1958-1999) literary scholar, translator, bestselling author, member of the editorial board of Osnovy Publishing House in Kyiv, Professor of the University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, founder of the Gender Studies Center at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, died on December 31, 1999.

[6] Odessa Scientific Center for Women's Studies (OSCWS) was headed by Lyudmyla Smolyar until her death in 2004.

In 2000, there were informal discussions about creating an umbrella network, an Association of Gender Centers of Ukraine [7] which would share resources and information, but this has not yet occurred. Each of these centers has enjoyed substantial support (for technology, publication, contacts, operating costs, grants for running "gender schools") from one or more Western donors (the McArthur Foundation, the UNDP Gender in Development Program, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF) (Hrycak 2006:22-23),[8] This support enabled the translation of feminist texts into Ukrainian, [9] the preparation of gender curricula, and the running of gender summer schools and gender courses. The gender centers often compete with one another for funds and for domestic, transnational (diasporic), and international visibility.

The Western feminist intervention in Ukraine has so far had mixed results. By mid-decade, feminism had been adopted by the academic elite, but the expectation that is would inspire a grassroots women's movement seemed far off. The most influential promoter of feminism in Ukraine is the Kyiv operation of Winrock International, the US-NIS Women's

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[7] Informal discussions towards creating an association of Ukraine's gender centers was initiated by Smoliar and were in progress in 2000 (personal communication, December 6, 2000).

[8] The IRF (part of the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute) was established in Kyiv in April 1990, with branch offices in Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Lviv, Odessa and Simferopil, and inaugurated its Women in Society Program in 1995. See Hrycak (2006:82-83) for a discussion of its specific projects, briefly (1) encouraging women's ngos to lobby for a national gender policy (2) establishing a network of women's hotlines, shelters, counseling centers and (3) launching a gender curriculum project, women's studies materials, translations of feminist tracts and indigenous feminist production.

[9] Rubchak (1996:325) and Pavlychko (1996:310) inform that the journal *Ukraina* published excerpts from Simone de Beauvior's *The Second Sex*. Pavlychko notes that the full text was released by (her) Osnovy Publishers in 1994, followed by a translation of Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* as *Druha Stat'* in 1998.

Consortium (Hrycak 2002); grants were generating professionally staffed feminist-oriented NGOs that are engaged in important advocacy work (Hrycak 2005, 2006). However, in contrast to the down-up dynamic that evolved in the North American feminist movement (and in contrast to many traditional organizations), these feminist groups are largely urban and professionally (often nomenklatura) staffed organizations. Few of them have a relationship to the women in non-academic, non-professional settings in their local, even provincial, communities that may be called *the grassroots* (see also Racioppi and See 1997:12; Popkova 2004; Hemment 2004). Some grassroots efforts, based on Western advocacy models, did however appear in the form of *zhinochi tsentry*[10] (women's centers) where feminist ideals were put into motion. Because they combine ideas from Western feminist activism with home-grown practices, Alexandra Hrycak (2006:70) applies the label *hybrid* to these organizations (see also Merry 2006).[11]

In some places, there was not yet even any formalized center or organizational chapter, simply a group of women banding together to solve a problem. In one of the villages I visited, women had organized to counter local corruption. On two occasions they had dressed up in dark clothing and hid in the ditches at night to apprehend the thieves who were dismantling irrigation pipes in the fields to sell for scrap metal, and stealing fruit off the trees in the orchard. Their success made them start thinking about formalizing this vigilante group of theirs, especially since

[10] *Zhinochi tsentry* (women's centers) such as Cherkasy's Ya Zhinka and the oblast network of Zakhyst centers focus on practical support through (1) psychological and legal consultation services; (2) hotlines for trafficked or battered women and self-help programs or (3) information-technology employment training.

[11] Hrycak describes the hybridity of these groups as the result of "the encounter between the unexamined assumptions of foreign aid projects and the cultural presuppositions, existing networks and organizational strategies of local actors" (2006:70-71). Sally Merry discusses two forms of *vernacularization* i.e. translation of transnational models of organization in global/local contexts: *replication,* whereby a transnational model is supplied with locally distinctive content, and *hybridity* as a merging of organizational forms, symbols, and ideology. In her work, hybrids are seen as adjusting more closely to grassroots conditions and mentalities (2006:48)

they had earned the teasing (and appreciative) moniker of *amazonky* (the amazons) from the men in the village. An acquaintance in Kyiv declared this an example of Ukrainian *stykhijnyj feminizm* (spontaneous feminism) giving it a bit of a derogatory tone in that she used the same term that one would apply to a natural disaster or a car accident (*stykhija*). These women were indeed acting not out of feminist conviction but out of disgust. They simply had had enough and decided to take matters into their own hands, because they decided the corruption behind these misdeeds was hurting all of them.

Stykhijnyj feminizm—is feminism not by the book, but feminism un-contemplated and un-theorized; a "just do it" moment, after all, that might lead to a change of self-evaluation and feminist consciousness. The women started to have meetings in the village administration building. When I met them, they were considering which larger organization they might be able to tap into for resources and support. Some of them were starting to feel "sisterly" within their circle (although there were also dissonant notes). They formalized their group using the available Soviet nomenclature *zhinocha rada* (women's council) but remained independent of any larger structure at the moment. Examples of this kind of group were not exactly commonplace, but appeared here and there (I call these the new activist groups). This is one kind of feminism, not yet systematic or self-conscious, that is present in Ukraine, wherever women are motivated to take on a social problem because it affects them directly.

Feminist Groups in Cherkasy

Among the women's organizations I contacted in Cherkasy, there were only a few that were overtly and self-consciously feminist. Generally, these were organizations that arose in response to the presence of Western donors and opportunities for contacts with the West (Europe and especially North America, particularly the United States). Early manifestations of Western

presence in Cherkasy include the beginnings and development of the Ya Zhinka (I am Woman) Women's Center, a major—and Western style—feminist presence in Cherkasy, a direct result of the Sister City interventions. Other Marshall-plan type programs offering technical assistance were the USIA- funded Community Connections Program (CPP), which in 1999 alone brought 1600 participants from five countries including Ukraine to 39 cities in the U.S. (Post-Soviet Handbook 1999:18). Cherkashchyna residents including Tamara Skotarenko, who founded the feminist organization AELITA (see below), were among those to win the opportunity to travel to through Project Harmony to visit NGOs, businesses, and other institutions in the U.S.

The collection of women who benefited from this early network of contacts for travel and training and later transnational partnership in support of social activism were generally well-connected women of the cities and towns. These women would have been positioned at independence to take advantage of the largesse of either the diaspora or of the government's new foreign aid channels of the early 1990s. Later, foreign aid donors started to fund projects directly through the NGOs themselves, bypassing the government. Some of the women's groups arising from these contacts might be seen as "hybrids."

This chapter will describe some of these hybrid organizations, while also pointing out their overtly and legitimately feminist as well as community aspirations. .I will discuss three organizations (but four groups) which chose to take feminism as their ideological niche of activism: AELITA, an organization operating successfully in the provincial city of Smila; Zakhyst, a larger multi-centered organization which began as a service-client operation and in their words "morphed into a women's organization" with a feminist bent; the Ya Zhinka Women's Center which I consider to be the premier feminist operation in the city of Cherkasy, and its affiliated chapter LILEA in the village of Bohuslavets. The Ya Zhinka Center (1994) has

managed to take Western feminism and adapt it to its Ukrainian context. Both its city and village chapters are examples of how Ukrainian national feminism might look and sound in practice.

AELITA, Femin-Center of Smila

I first heard about the AELITA Femin-Center in Kyiv, from a woman who was on a committee reviewing applications for a project grant from the Women in Society Program run by the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), the Open Society Institute's Ukraine office, founded in 1990. The project theme had to do with the protection of reproductive health in Ukraine. Knowing that I was headed for research in Cherkasy oblast, she mentioned that among the most promising applications was that from the AELITA, an unusually well-spoken new organization that had registered in Smila in March 1998. On October 19, 2000 I had a chance for a long interview with the founder of AELITA, Tamara Skotarenko. The only photo I have of her is from the Nova Doba newspaper, the April 10, 2001 issue, where she stands smiling together with Olena Botsko, the coordinator of grant programs for the National Democratic Institute, as they participate in a feminist meeting in Warsaw sponsored by the European Democratic Institute. The headline reads, "Feminist from Smila Participates in Warsaw Gathering." The meeting was to bring women from Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus together to allow leaders of women's political organizations to talk to them about their experiences in women's leadership. The article summarizes her organization's track record: over the last three years, she has developed 14 educational programs, three of which have won grants from international aid funds. The article also confirms that she won the grant mentioned above, since one of this year's

programs, a training program for those working with youth for the prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases, is being financed by the IRF.

Most of the large structured Ukrainian women's organizations have statutes which imply a catch-all bag of issues, including humanitarian aid, community building, education, and employment assistance, trying to be everything to all women. Tamara's organization was, in contrast, very focused and specific in its mission, perhaps a trait encouraged by the advisors from the Western donor organizations that coached her. When I met with Tamara, I asked her about the name of her organization, since it sounded much like the word *elitist*—is it? She admitted that there is an enlightenment (*prosvitianskyj)* aspect to her work, but the name itself is simply a woman's name that was the title of a novel by Alexei Tolstoy (and of a 1924 Soviet silent film, *AELITA: Queen of Mars*, based on the Tolstoy story about flawed revolution in a science fiction setting). She then demonstrated that it actually is an acronym, standing for the qualities of *Aktyvnist* (activism), *Enerhijnist* (energy), *Liudianist* (humaneness), *Initsijatyvnist* (initiative), *Tvorchist* (creativity) and *Alternatyvnist* (offering choice). The last of these signals a departure from societal norms and is critical to the thrust of her organizations work which is to bring out into the open the suppressed reality of premarital sex, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Tamara spoke about the reception of feminism in the Smila community:

> Our center is deliberately and openly a FEMIN-Center, that is, feminist. But feminism is very alien to people here. They immediately think of radical feminists, and have this stereotype that feminists want to destroy men, or that they are all necessarily lesbians. On the other hand, the word *zhinochyj* (women's) also has its nuances with us:. For the average man in Ukraine, for example, the phrase women's organization connotes something like a union of milkmaids, while feminist organization conjures up the image of a union of lesbians. You see how difficult it is with this term Femin. For me, when you say women's organization it sounds quite neutral and women's problems in general

> are considered neutral. There is another term, though, that is quite popular nowadays—berehynia—it denotes the family, children, and a wife who looks after her husband and totally devotes herself to her home. [interview, October 19, 2000]

In her home office, from which she and one other paid staffer (the accountant) run AELITA, she talked to me about her own feminist epiphany, her coming to feminist consciousness. Tamara came to create this organization through the primary influence of her own daughter who had been to the U.S. and experienced reproductive health work among young Americans as a volunteer. Tamara took her idea for a similar project in Smila to the informational consultative women's center in Kyiv and won a grant. When Tamara started to recruit skilled women to work with her, she first activated her own personal network and then her daughter's but finally started to reach out through the networks of acquaintances by word-of-mouth. She found that women were having difficulty responding to her vision:

> Some said, 'I'd like to, naturally, but my husband will laugh at me.' We understood then that this was a complex problem. We would have to talk more about it, even explain it rudimentarily. Because you see, a woman who is educated, who reads and is progressive and yet says such things, is dependent on the opinion of her husband. It looks as if she does not have her own perspective on things, and perhaps does not even have her own voice in the family. [interview, October 19,2000]

Tamara spoke of herself as a model for how a feminist outlook can change your life and empower a woman. Listening to the interview we taped in October 2000, I connected her "take charge" account to an article my Cherkasy host, Pani Alla, had cut out of the March 1, 2001 periodical Den' to send me. The article was based on an interview with Grace Kennan Warnecke, the regional director of Winrock International in Ukraine (Riabkon 2001). Tamara's "take charge" account of her own life echoed the "Just Do It" theme of the article that framed

Warnecke as an example for educated Ukrainian women whose specialized training had become redundant in the transition economy. Warnecke had shifted career paths at several points in her life, including a return to working after spending time in a mothering and household management phase. Tamara of AELITA echoes this model in her own personal narrative:

> At 37 years of age, I fundamentally changed my life. I was a housewife, I took care of the home, raised the children. I channeled my creative energies into my children. I have a background in physics, and I believe that I gave my children a good foundation academically because I knew how to work with them, how to encourage them. But then at 37, I truly fundamentally changed my style of life, I became a leader of an organization, and in these two years, I have had successes, and it was hard. But perhaps because I did not have any other formal job, I've gotten a lot done—because I work so hard. [interview, October 19, 2000]

By February of 1998 she had found 10 women who could work as trainers. And they submitted a proposal to the informational-consultative women's center in Kyiv and won the grant. They did not yet have a bank account number (to receive funds) so they got their grant money in the form of technology: the computer, printer, fax machine, and modem. Once they had the technology, they could print up their brochures, and then started to write up their plans for youth training sessions.

> We could not really call them lectures, because our medical facilities [in Smila] require that such lectures be given to groups of boys and girls separately. And actually they are more directed towards the girls, because girls are told that they should take the greater responsibility for their sexual behavior. We basically did not agree with that, since we insist that there be gender-equal access to information about sex and its consequences; and there should also be gender-equal responsibility for the [actual consequences of] sexual activity. This is our "ideological moment" to which we try to stay true. We

> implement this in each of our training programs as our "gender approach".[interview, October 19, 2000]

Tamara regretted that there is no indigenous term for gender in Ukrainian. Her own first exposure to the term was from the lips of her daughter (who now having returned from the U.S. was working in Kyiv for NDI). Tamara received her initial training in the "gender approach" that her organization would adopt from a Western informational-consultative center for women's organizations in Kyiv.[12] In the following passage, Tamara reflects on the shift in thinking this approach required:

> This gender approach was a totally new way of thinking for us. For one of our first meetings (of the core group of women who would work on the projects of the AELITA organization in Smila) I prepared a brief introduction of the term *gender* because no one had ever heard it before...So we talked about what gender-equality means. Thus, in the midst of our own organization we were doing *prosvitianska robota* (enlightenment work, consciousness-raising). [interview, October 19, 2000]

Among her connections to other organizations, Tamara acknowledged early cooperation with the Ya Zhinka Women's Center, whose publication was distributed and enjoyed by women in Smila. She mentioned that once they had their initial program ready, they invited Victoria

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[12] Tamara is probably referring to the Women's Informational Consultative Center (WICC) founded in 1997 by Olena Suslova, currently head of the Ukrainian Women's Fund, whose activist resume spans working in mass organanizations from Rukh to Soiuz Ukrainok, to working as a trainer for the Soros IRF. She then founded the WICC, which was one of only ten organizations recognized with a partnership grant from the Global Fund for Women. In 2000 Suslova created the Ukrainian Women's Fund. Today in 2010 Suslova is being considered as an expert for the UN CEDAW process. We met in Kyiv at the UNDP Gender Program and Olena invited me to a training she conducted in Kirovograd in December 2000.

Kuzmina and another trainer from the Women's Consortium to conduct a training session for them. [13]

> They conducted leadership training for our women, because we saw that we have little information and that we did not have access (didn't have the books or Internet access yet). After this training, we lost some people, but only because of their success: three of them have gone on to be business owners. One of them is the head of a guild of producers of macaroni (*vermishel)*—she manages production and that is a serious business. Another is the owner of a store and another is the owner of a department in a store. The leadership training possibly gave them that push to succeed. And then there were the women who helped themselves by talking out their personal problems. Then there were the victims of domestic violence. They made some important decisions, though it was very hard, because they had families. To leave in our situation here, means to go away or divide up the apartment and possessions. One of our women had to leave and go to another city. Her husband stayed in their three-room apartment while she walked the streets homeless with her children. He was an alcoholic. She turned to us for help and we hoped to be able to provide some legal advice or assistance, but we are not ready to handle legal work right now. We can only advise women to seek legal help, but our legal system in Ukraine is not yet geared to having lawyers available to community organizations. [interview, October 19, 2000]

Tamara took pains to present her own organization as separate from the state, and despite the admitted points of dependency—the need for financial support for office space and the expediency of political contacts for securing that material support and cooperation—she actually makes a good case for proving AELITA to be a fairly independent operation, though it exists thanks to grants. Her tone is feminist, but her mission is youth education, and her trainers are women paid by the hour for their contact time. The feminism of this organization rests,

[13] I am unsure whether Victoria was herself at that time a trainer for the Women's Consortium, but she delivered the module with another Consortium trainer, Natalia Kozlova

however, not only in Tamara's own open embracing of the term, but in the way sex education is delivered to teens and in the willingness to explore what women might need to be self-sufficient and act autonomously.

Tamara recognized a kinship with the Ya Zhinka Women's Center but maintained that they are separate operations. She claimed that her tightest contacts were with the 'HURT' Resource Center for NGO Support, which kept her notified as an NGO leader of various upcoming training opportunities. Tamara was going to participate in 2000 in a 5-day workshop on how to run a public relations campaign for HIV-AIDS prevention, which would be taught by a physician from Holland and a professional public relations manager at the HURT Resource Center in Kyiv. She had enjoyed support from the IRF (OSI) in Kyiv and Winrock Internatonal and was a member of the Winrock NIS-US Women's Consortium. As head of a Smila-based NGO, she had been invited to join in 1999 a Smila Coordinating Council of Community Organizations. She was compiling a Smila-wide data base of NGOs to share with other organizations, but as an informational, not a resource center, she insisted, as she has no resources to share. Having lost her support for rent last year, she was running her office from her home while her husband was away on business in Moscow. She admitted to writing several letters in hopes of finding someone to plug up the gaps in her budget: to the city administration, to the mayor of Smila, to two different office services businesses, and to Podobiedov, the Parliamentarian representing her electoral district.

> So far I've been notified that the issue is being considered by Podobiedov and also that the Ministry can offer me space for which I'd have to pay rent, though they promised a three percent break on that. That means' we'd pay about 30 U.S. dollars a month for rent, which is what we've paid in the past…but that times 12 adds up to a lot of money for us….You understand, our ties are with business organizations and with the state

entities, even though they don't much like us because we are a (read: new post-Soviet type) women's organization [October 19, 2000]

The Zakhyst Women's Center in Horodyshche

Horodyshche was a thriving place about 150 years ago during the height of the sugar industry in this part of the Russian empire. Its past elegance can be seen in the now neglected grounds of the old Symyrenko family estate which were turned into a technical training center and innovative orchard after the revolution. Now the entire area seems depressingly rundown and isolated. Tetiana Horidko, the head of the Horodyshche district council and a former teacher of Ukrainian language and literature, and talked about her district in the way the rural intelligentsia often does, somewhat patronizing ("they are simple peasants") but not without deep affection. She sees herself as a progressive thinker who has woefully little time to put her good ideas into motion. As far as the women's movement, she regretted that there was not more going on in terms of that kind of social activism. She knew what they needed –"we should have meetings, with evening programs, and discussion, and trying to defend women's rights through legal channels"—and would do, if not for insurmountable constraints. She did, however, tell me about her own special project, a book on the women's role in the history of the district (but unimaginatively entitled "Horodyshche, my native land!"), with which she hoped to raise the historical awareness and pride of the region.

Alina was living in one of the villages of the Horodyshche district when she was hired to manage a new branch of the Zakhyst[14] organization which had started up a free legal advocacy center in Horodyshche in 1997. I had met Alina first in Cherkasy when she was visiting the

[14] The Independent Public Union *Zakhyst* in Cherkasy, a Ukrainian partner in the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative program, was also funded by the Counterpart Alliance.

Zakhyst headquarters and her boss Petro Sushko, who had funding from Counterpart Alliance for Partnership (CAP) for his project.[15] We sat down together for a cup of coffee, and she told me how she had come to work for this outfit. It sounded very "American." She had answered an ad in the paper announcing openings for people with legal expertise interested in working in the sphere of cost-free legal advice and services to the communities of Cherkasy oblast. Alina had studied law and had work experience in Kyiv, and since she was living in the Horodyshche district, she was hired to manage the Zakhyst center there. Alina explained to me that she had come to live in the area by marriage and that currently she and her husband were in his mother's house, and that they had a small child, now about 6 years old. She talked about the juncture at which she decided to apply for work in this way:

> Three years ago, I was sitting at home with the child, then 3 years old. I was doing nothing. I had arranged a 6-year maternity leave for myself from my job in Kyiv, because it was completely unrealistic for me to commute to work from Horodyshche. But I would still love to return to work in Kyiv. Even recently I was thinking that maybe it would be smart to sit at home for three more years with my child, and then get the family to move to Kyiv. But I just know that I can't count on my husband to cooperate with that plan, he has his own ideas and interests. Besides, he is totally a mama's boy and he won't go anywhere if it means leaving her behind. I knew that when I married him, but I settled

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[15] Counterpart Alliance for Partnership (CAP) operates in Ukraine and Belarus, with a budget of 13,622,900 dollars earmarked for projects from March 1997 to April 2002. In Ukraine, the distribution of funds was mediated by the partner NGO, Counterpart International USA. Counterpart International is the parent organization for Counterpart Creative Center (1996) which functions as an independent non-profit in Ukraine. In 2000, the CCC's director was Liuba Palyvoda; currently (since 2007?) this post is held by Tykhomyrova, whom I interviewed in July 2000 in Kyiv and who invited me to accompany her to Cherkasy for an OSMU-run seminar. Alina was hired by Zakhyst in 1997, early on in the grant period. Working with over 300 NGO partners, the CAP projects were focused on vulnerable populations (children, youth, disabled, elderly, drug and alcohol addicted, HIV/AIDS affected) encouraging reproductive health, environmental and youth leadership initiatives. See www.Counterpart.org

> for that, because I have no parents of my own. I just wanted to have something in this life, and I thought, let me at least have a family, if nothing else! And now, it appears that I will need to sacrifice family after all, for the sake of a career, because I will have no support from him whatsoever. I have to rely solely on myself and my own capability. [interview, October 18, 2000]

By the end of the year, she did, in fact, leave her husband and her child with the grandmother in the village near Horodyshche and came to live in Kyiv and was looking for a job when I last saw her. It surprised me that she saw her way through to doing this, especially leaving her child behind, but she was intent on getting on with what she considered to be closer to her sense of self, as someone trained in the law, and her productive life in the public sphere. For employment, she was planning to approach the community of Western feminist donor organizations first.

Most of the specialist members of Zakhyst (i.e. the staff) are in fact, like Alina, lawyers, or people with legal training, but also doctors, teachers, psychologists. Alina told me that at one point about a year into her managing the Zakhyst Legal Aid Walk-In Center in Horodyshche, they all realized that women are the majority of the employed specialists and women are also the majority of the clients they serve:

> If there is some misfortune or any problem in the family, it's the woman who comes. The men are more passive. The husband won't come talk to the lawyer, he sends his wife. He knows that she will better describe the situation, and will handle everything better than he would. Of course, not every man is like this. But in most of the cases, it's the woman who comes to us when something goes wrong with a child—if there is an accident, a theft, or a crime—it's the mother who comes to get advice on behalf of her child. And women also are quicker to come on their own behalf. So even though we started off as a general legal advisement center, we ended up advising mostly women, and more and more on women's issues. And so we women of Zakhyst decided to set

> ourselves off within Zakhyst as a *women's organization* and we created a women's center within the Zakhyst office.[interview, October 18, 2000]

It was interesting to me that for the manager of the women's center, they hired a young woman who (as described to me) was trained as a teacher of physics and mathematics, speaks English perfectly, and was in the U. S. on one of those programs. I was feeling concerned that the women coming into the women's center might not feel so comfortable with this accomplished woman who would seem to out-class them. Alina told me that since the establishment of the women's center (which she was now calling a Coordinating Center) has been gathering information about women in the district villages, preparing statistics and compiling cases that are representative of women's needs. The main problems were mostly family problems and the economic instability that reflects immediately on the family well-being.

Alina related that during the summer of 2000, they were encouraged to submit a proposal to the IRF in Kyiv for the "Women in Society" program (the same to which AELITA had applied). The proposal, entitled "The Women of Shevchenko's Land Must Be Masters of Their Own Fate" was funded for the grant period September 2000 to September 2001. That grant allowed her to find a better office space in which their computer would be safe and where they would have better phone service. They would move in at the end of October and hold their first presentation open house and first seminar on November 1. They would invite about 30 people to the opening, among them the activists who work with Zakhyst and they would attend the first seminar right after. She would open up the seminar with her motto, a line from Shevchenko that reads, very roughly translated, "I was born into this world to love, to sow God's sacred beauty and to do good unto all." I had seen this phrase, *vsiakomu dobro tvoryt* (to do good unto all) before, on a banner stretched across the main street of Borovytsia a village South of Cherkasy.

Regarding the activists, she described them as being mostly teachers from the district schools, explaining that the teachers are the ones who are best aware of their students' family circumstances. Other activists they work with are state employees of the local state Division of Social Welfare with whom they "conduct raids" (she used the word for raid), i.e. surprise visits that amount to inspections to determine the conditions in which children are being raised. If they find that there is neglect, legal summons are served and sometimes children are taken away to institutions where they will be better cared for. She said that such visits are conducted monthly, to various schools and targeted families. Many people have lost their parental privileges because of the information revealed during such surprise visits. On the other hand, in one case, Alina has helped a local couple file the massive paperwork necessary to adopt a child.

Alina's project grant proposal specified that the money would be used to create a coordinating women's center within the Zakhyst offices in Horodyshche and that this center would serve the entire district. Its mission would be educational (*prosvitnytska*), protection of rights, and informational. They would work to help women in crisis situations, would urge them to take an activist stance in their communities. They would also help support women's business.

> Especially in this agricultural area it is important to advise women of their rights, they do not have any specialized legal education and they don't know to whom to turn for help. You have to pay for legal services. So it would be wonderful for them to have access to a center like we are proposing, where they can find moral support, have a legal consultation and get legal advice, for free. [interview, October 18, 2000]

Alina envisioned that the office would also provide help with the legal registration of business and of new NGOs as well as advising women on their reproductive rights and obligations as mothers to have a healthy lifestyle if they are to bear healthy children. When the

grant is finished they planned to continue the work and envisioned a mobile group of specialists who would travel around the region giving people an opportunity for consultations.

Alina's (unfinished) story itself reads as journey towards feminist awakening and personal autonomy. The women of Zakhyst made a feminist assessment of the common position women suffer in the socio-economic conditions of their community, though it is not yet the feminist analysis of women as a category sharing conditions of social injustice because of their gender and because of gendered patterns of discrimination—what Sperling (1999:54-59) points out as the "transformation of consciousness" that is a necessary step for women on the brink of feminism—but it was hers step towards it.

Regarding the grant, it is impossible to know any group's motivations in full: proposals are obviously written to fit fund specifications. In the example at hand, there was a female majority of clients in need, it was determined that a women's center would serve them, there were funds to be had for women's centers, and a proposal was written and accepted. It did not hurt that the parent organization Zakhyst, had a funding track record from the Counterpart Alliance Program in Ukraine (funded by Counterpart International). That track record makes a second grant from the IRF for a specifically women's sub-program more attractive. The funding kicks off a flurry of activity that means spending money (office space, equipment, salaries?) and a raft of somewhat grandiose plans (mobile legal consultation units?) that are surely not sustainable beyond the year's grant period. Feminist principles also seem to have been lost in the practice, since it sounded like the women's center was drawn into the same work that the women's councils and its satellite of groups are doing all along.

Cherkasy's Ya Zhinka ("I am Woman") Center: Consciousness-Raising

In the January 1997 issue of the Ya Zhinka magazine published by the Women's Center, Liudmila Melnyk, one of the founders of this organization notes that from the very beginning, the magazine and the center were a site of sharing and bonding between women from different worlds—the cities of Santa Rosa California and Cherkasy—which had become "sisters" in more ways than one. On August 7, 2000 I had the pleasure of being invited to share dinner with two members of the Women's Center Board of Directors, Lesia Shevchenko, a medical doctor, specialist of infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and Katia Koval' who were greeting Katherine Held who had just flown in from California. Katherine was one of many American women who had visited, shared expertise and ideas, and made an impression on the women of Cherkasy.[16] She was also, however, one of two women who had reached out in an extraordinary way to this community and had for the last five years been intimately involved in the evolution of the Center.

The Ya Zhinka Women's Center, established in 1994, was among the earliest new women's groups to gel, and though not politically (i.e. in electoral politics trainings) active, it has had an advocacy role for women and it is rooted in practices consonant with feminist consciousness-raising. Over the years, the women's center introduced women of Cherkasy to many new skills (technology training) and experiences, including access to open discussion of their problems and freedom from shame if faced with a need to consult a psychological counselor. It has re-introduced a playful creativity into the lives of many women, as they

[16] A partial list of American women working with the Ya Zhinka center (from the January 1977 issue of Ya Zhinka Magazine): Susan Page, author of If I'm so Wonderful, Why Am I Still Single?; Elizabeth Holmes, American journalist on advertising and women's self-image; Sally Gratch, American president and founder of Project Kesher; Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Ukrainian-American historian of the Ukrainian women's movement; Casey Ptukha, coordinator of the "We Can Do It!" program in Santa Rosa California.

participate in loosening-up exercises or creative displays of skill or join in some of the events the Center has sponsored together with other women's groups of the oblast.

The Women's Center came to exist in a tightly interconnected web of personal relationships cultivated in the contact with the Sister City International program sometime soon after the summer of 1992. At some point, John Masura, the Vice President of Sister Cities Sebastopol, whose great-grandparents were Ukrainian, met Viktorija Kuzmina of Cherkasy, who would become his wife and also embark on a new career with the Women's Center she envisioned and created. The specific history of the Women's Center actually starts with a magazine. In 1992, Victoria Kuzmina, then a correspondent fot the Cherkas'kyj Kraj oblast newspaper, together with four other women began to put out a feminist journal, Ya Zhinka, As more women started to attend evening talks sponsored by the Ya Zhinka community, the vision of Ya Zhinka as a women's center started to take shape. Valentyna, one of the regularly attending members of the Women's Center, recalls that she first became aware of the center in 1995 when she was employed by the Cherkasy Art Museum. She noticed that women were gathering once weekly in the offices of the Vechirni Cherkasy newspaper adjacent to the museum and found out that on Tuesday evenings the group brought in a psychologist to facilitate group discussion of women' s problems, family problems, and "problems of self-actualization." Valentyna recalled that she was grateful for the opportunity to attend such meetings herself, as she was feeling discontented in her own dull routine of "work, home and back to work again." In fact, Valentyna recalled a whole line-up of interesting guests that she heard speak and had an opportunity to interact with—a woman from England who married a local Ukrainian poet; a woman whose experience with her own son's drug addiction inspired her to help other similarly-afflicated youths; a researcher from America who was interested in the women's press in

Ukraine. Her favorite memory was of a psychologist-trainer who worked through the Cherkasy Business Institute and ran a training session with them one day. The trainer had put various random items into a box and asked each woman in the group to pull one out. "She told us to imagine ourselves as that object," Valentyna explained, clearly relishing the novelty of the exercise, "and I imagined myself to be a bar of soap!" (interview August 7, 2000). Then, in 1995, as she recalled, "the American women started to visit us."

A group of women from Santa Rosa met the Ya Zhinka group, recognized their potential, shared the vision and decided to act on it. In 1995 Ellen Masland Salyer[17] (whose husband Phil Salyer of Sebastopol, California was active in the Sister Cities Program) and her friend Catherine Held, together founded the "Ukrainian and American Women Action Project." The project assisted the Cherkasy Women's Center in its efforts to establish women's leadership development and violence prevention programs in the oblast.[18] In fact, in the fall of 1995, Salyer and Held bought an apartment at 258 Hohol Street and rented it to the Center so that the women would have their own meeting place.

From its publications and multi-faceted program, the Ya Zhinka Women's Center is clearly Western feminist in orientation, centered on consciousness-raising practices and self-actualization exercises, encouraging sharing and open discussion in solving problems (among

[17] Ellen Masland Salyer, 51, was one of the 88 victims of the January 31 2000 crash near Los Angeles of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 enroute from Mexico to San Francisco. She was the creator of the Ya Zhinka 'rehabilitation center' in Cherkasy and was also active in organizing exchanges and programs related to the city sistership between Sebastopol and Chyhyryn. The Ya Zhinka Center created a scholarship in her name.

[18] After Salyer's untimely death, the YWCA of Sonoma County and the "Ukrainian and American Women Action Project" (UAWAP) merged in 2001 after several years of collaboration. The Santa Rosa-based YWCA continues to work with the Sister Cities International Program to organize exchange programs.

staff and clientele) through women's peer support[19] and contacts between women's organizations across ethnic and ideological lines. Its founder Viktoria Kuzmina was employed for a while as an in-house trainer for the NIS-US Women's Consortium and her center has been a member of the Consortium since its inception. In general the center participates in the same network of foreign donor organizations and foreign exchange programs as does the AELITA. They are both participants in programs hosted by the Cherkasy Business Center, which has become an NGO hub for the city administration, with connections to both the Sister Cities International as well as to the US-Ukraine Foundation. The Women's Center and the Chyhyryn NGO community (which flourished between 1998-1999 thanks to the Eurasia Foundation[20]), seem to all have been in very tight cooperation for several years, even as they position themselves as separate operations for the purposes of grants applications. The Ya Zhinka Women's Center has co-organized events with a wide array of women's organizations in Cherkasy, including Diya, Kesher Jewish Women's Organization, and others, including the Soiuz Ukrainok. The relationship with the last had cooled a little in 2000. Reportedly the Soiuz Ukrainok women had confronted Viktoria on why she calls her center Ya Zhinka (I am *Woman)* and not Ya Ukrajinka (I am a *Ukrainian* Woman).

As the name of the center suggests, the Women's Center chooses to accentuate the feminist over the nationalist sensibilities, but it projects itself as a distinctly Ukrainian version of

[19] Interestingly, in Ellen Salyer's obituary (2000), the Ya Zhinka Women's Center is identified as a "rehabilitation center," a term not reflected anywhere else in any Ya Zhinka literature. This may be indicative of Western attitudes framing the position of Ukraine's women.

[20] Liudmila Batura, editor of the Chyhyryn newspaper, told me that a Eurasia Foundation grant for NGO development (1998-99) was so successful that "you could actually watch them multiply!" Liudmila Birko of the Chyhyryn Sebastopol Sister Cities World Friends organization, claimed that Chyhyryn won the Eurasia Foundation grant on the strength of the Birkos' World Friends activities –because the reports of their work published in the Chyhyryn newspaper made such good public relations for the city.

the principles of North American feminism (an example of hybridity as defined by Merry 2006:48). It emphasizes personal self-awareness and affirmation within contemporary Ukrainian culture. It draws on Ukrainian (not Soviet era) national images (and those of the nation-state) as well as on the ethnographic cultural heritage, choosing from among these features, not the berehynia images of motherhood, but those of girlhood, creative maidenhood.

It is difficult to pinpoint what type of feminism is being promoted here other than it is the Western feminism criticized by Chandra Mohanty for its lack of social justice content. The center promotes women's technical training for employment and encourages ambitions for political office, but does not criticize the Western economic or political reforms for their contemporary effects on women (i.e. it is not modern socialist feminism). The mission of the center was to create a bridge for Cherkasy women to America, to partner with feminist women in the United States, to organize youth encounters so that American and Ukrainian girls would have an opportunity for mutual understanding and support. The Center attracts younger women than the Soiuz Ukrainok does typically; its clients are teenagers, university students, or young professionals through their 30s to early 40s.

In the course of the explorations conducted by the Center, the women have been introduced to an eclectic variety of experiences in feminism apparently in the hopes that they will find something interesting and/or helpful. The Center is an attraction for foreigners with experiential programs to share: on one occasion a French feminist conducted a candle ritual with the Ukrainian women to symbolically purge the guilt imposed on them by society. On another occasion the Ukrainian women met with an academic who had done substantial research into the idea of the Goddess in history and found that it resonates with Ukraine's own matriarchy myth.[21]

Viktoria steers clear of overt political nationalism as isolationism. In her magazine, which Viktoria herself edits, she answers those who would challenge her on why she arranges for young women of Cherkasy to gain American exposure and organizes trips for them to experience life in the United States. She holds her own, pointing out that the young need to know many things and need to know how to discriminate intelligently about what is good and worthwhile in the world.

Women's Empowerment Without Leaving the Village: LILEA

One of the few groups affiliated with the Ya Zhinka Women's Center is across the Dnipro River from Cherkasy near the district center of Zolotonosha in the Left Bank village of Bohuslavets. The LILEA women's group, organized by Tania Moskalenko in 1997, is an outpost of the Women's Center, but in no way a subordinate satellite of it. It is a women's organization in its own right, with its own "face" and "even a presence on the internet."[22] The group was started by a group of village teachers, whom Tania identifies as the village intelligentsia, the "spiritual foundation of the village" because it is the women and teachers who best understand the problems of the village communal and domestic life and who run most of the community events. In some respects, the group is reminiscent of the old women's council, except for the voluntary nature of its existence and the egalitarian sharing that goes on within it. The teachers said that

[21] The participants of the "We Can Do It!" program and the trip to the U.S. visited Dr.Eleanor Haddon professor of University of California San Francisco who for past 30 years was doing research on the goddess (see Christine Downing 1981 *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine* and Edward C. Whitmont 1997 *Return of the Goddess.*)

[22] I've never been able to find their (web)page if they have one. Perhaps they meant that they have gotten exposure *through the pages* of the Ya Zhinka magazine.

they first felt the value of their new group to lie in the fact that they could talk things out with one another (because they have no access to a psychologist or priest, as Tania pointed out.

I met with Tania Moskalenko first on the evening of December 7 2000 at the Women's Center. She told me the story of finding out about the Women's Center. She discovered it in 1997, a difficult year for teachers, whose paychecks were withheld for seven to nine months:

> Just imagine the financial stress and psychological stress!—Pick a topic any topic from a list of social ills and you'll find that women, children and adolescents are particularly strongly affected by it—and we work with adolescents. We as teachers have to explain to our students why this situation exists in our country. And for me a teacher of history—how difficult that is! Everything that was white yesterday is black today and vice-versa. And where was I to find teaching materials? All of the textbooks are old and the supply of new ones is stingy—one per class or one per school. We are not able to subscribe to the newspapers for lack of money (no paychecks). We crave information and we cannot get any—the television and radio are all we have left. We cannot subscribe to almanacs, or journals, or newspapers, or professional publications. We used to have everything, access to everything—it has all died out. The village has simply, in these political, social and economic circumstances, found itself in isolation. And it is this isolation that prods us to try to find new roads out. *How do we get out of this situation?* [interview, December 7, 2000]

Tania's husband was then an unemployed agronomist, twice having had his job made obsolete by the dismantling of a collective farm. For some, getting out of the situation might have meant attempting to emigrate abroad to look for work. Tania did not mention this, however, as one of his or her options. Together, they spent her days off from school, selling their garden produce, potatoes, oil, cabbage, and beets, in the market in Cherkasy. "And I, a teacher!" she lamented, "I put on work clothes like a laborer, and in my jacket and boots, stand there peddling my wares." One day someone offered her an issue of the Ya Zhinka magazine

and her eyes were opened to the possibilities offered by imagining herself as a legitimate member of women's community in her region. It is evident in her telling of that initial reaction, just how great was the felt class difference between rural residents and those who lived and worked in the city and had access to all of its cultural and physical amenities. Of course, Tania, as a teacher and a member of the rural intelligentsia was in a position to urge the native villagers on, but first she shared the information with her fellow teachers:

> In the morning I took it to school with me to show the teachers. And I said to them—Read this! Just look how women can live! There is a Women's Center in Cherkasy and I'm going to go take a look at it! I'll tell my husband, and have him drive me over there. I'll see what they are doing there. We too want to live like normal people and know about all these things! We're no worse than those Cherkasy women! [interview December 7, 2000]"

The next time she was packing for the market, she packed a pretty pink jacket to wear when she went to the Women's Center. There she met Victoria (in October 1997) and explained to her how isolated the women felt in the village. "How are we to survive? We want to be part of civilization too! We don't' want our souls to grow moldy—we're already like a frozen potato inside–we see nothing and hear nothing. How are we to be?" Viktoria promised that they too could have what the Women's Center could offer but also told her to have the women "think about yourselves, not as just teachers because you have so much more to offer—think about what you can do so that people will know about you too and seek you out." Tania and the director of the school (her mother in law) gathered up the women teachers (on a ruse of a compulsory teachers' meeting) and introduced the idea of a women's group to them. They were intrigued, she said, but because none of them had had any experience with community organizations,

neither in Soviet times, nor after independence. They decided to invite Viktoria to come and explain how NGOs work:

> We had no source from which to get information—We decided to invite Viktoria to describe to us what we should do and how an NGO will help us live better…Viktoria explained that a woman is not just a worker (*zhinka-robitnytsia*), not just a mother (*zhinka-Matir*), not just a homemaker (*zhinka-hospodarka*) but also a dynamic active person, and that she should foremost find and take her place in society. This is simply not yet in the Ukrainian tradition. I can't say the 100% of the women were convinced that night. We understood who and what we are as if through a fog. But there was one thing—there was the desire that we should form an organization. [interview, December 7, 2000]

Tania described their first actions, including inviting the gynecologist from the regional hospital polyclinic in Zolotonosha to speak to the women about taking care of themselves and to answer questions. Tania was anxious about asking the prestigious doctor to visit their humble Bohuslavets, but she claimed that the fact that they had LILEA as an official organization behind them empowered her to request the doctor to be their first guest speaker. The doctor complied. Tania used the word *emancipation* in relating how they felt about acting on their own initiative

> We are learning to open up. Because as Soviet women, and although we were teachers, we never learned how to speak our minds openly and normally. We had no idea what training was. When in Soviet times did we ever have training? Other visits followed: a therapist, another doctor, a narcotics expert, then visitors from America and England as well. We started keeping a scrap book with photographs of our meetings. Also we had trainings, on various topics that Viktoria arranged for us. So we began to participate in the kind of life that a woman and wife should have. [interview December 2000]

Of particular benefit to the women of Bohuslavets was the opportunity to indulge legitimately in discussion of sexual matters that concerned them as women, and their adolescent

and young adult children. The silence on sex during the Soviet period did extreme damage. The women pointed out to me the value of light novels that are produced now, because they serve as an entry into discussion, between individuals as well as between teachers and students in the classroom, about matters that were always hushed up. The greatest benefit of the LILEA is that it draws programs to the village, because transportation to the city is so problematic in their conditions. LILEA has also sponsored some village-wide events, like the community celebration of the March 8 International Women's Day celebration, which has not been removed from Ukraine's post-Soviet national calendar. LILEA also organized community participatory entertainment, like competitions bearing titles like "Father, Mother and Me." These are superficially similar to the activities described by Browning (1985; 1987; 1992) as being characteristic of women's council work during the Soviet era; but the group described the village event as one that increased the feeling of solidarity in the village community and encouraged residents to present themselves in public in a positive or humorous light. The major benefit of the group is for the free-flowing open sharing it fosters within what has been a more official organizational space—they are reintroducing an internally motivated (rather than state-mandated) public participation arena in the village.(cf Noll 1999).

LILEA has also had contact with the diaspora women's organizations from New York City (I recognized the name of one of their contacts) and with women from other parts of the world. They feel connected globally, no longer so isolated. As Tania put it, "the two camps of capitalism versus socialism no longer exist. The Iron Curtain is gone. And we, our small village and our little organization, are participating in this integration! We are learning about the world and the world is learning about us."

Tania was an articulate interviewee, explaining how they as women were learning to care for themselves, body and soul. But she said that if I really wanted to understand what their *we* was all about, it would be necessary for me to visit them on the Left Bank of the Dnipro. And so, on December 12, 2000 I visited the women of Bohuslavets, travelling out to the village with Vikoria Kuzmina. We met in the school house in a very small room around a table that filled the room. There were 11 of us altogether, including me and Victoria. They asked me to say something about myself, and I went into a fairly long explanation of myself and my presence in Ukraine. I then realized that they held to a custom of going around the table and letting each woman say something about herself and what brought her to the meeting. So I then heard from each and every one, including Victoria who said about her own feelings:

> I will speak very briefly, because I've spoken much with you in the past. The women's center, simply absolutely changed my life. I am doing things that I never imagined myself doing before. I never even thought that I would be capable of some of the things I have taken up. It was a whole revolution in my personal life. I am overall very grateful that I became acquainted with Tania and that I know you and have a chance to share with you. It gives me so much, and when I come out to visit you in the village, I feel at home. Whenever I drive to Kyiv (from Cherkasy) I always wave to you and say "Hello, Bohuslavets!" It is so nice to feel your presence there, to know you are there, and to feel that we are really not strangers, and that we are together. Together we are able to accomplish something. Thank you! [V Kuzmina, December 12, 2000]

All together there are 15 members, 9 of them were present at the meeting. One of those who couldn't come was the head of the village, Kateryna Musejo—("we elected her after she became a member of our LILEA group, this was a big accomplishment for the women of the village!" they said). Also missing were the women whose job it was to milk the cows and their work schedule limited their availability for participation. Each woman Tania, Halyna, Maria,

Liuda, another Liuda, Olha, Vera, Kateryna, and another Halyna, talked about herself, and then we had a lengthy all-round discussion on all kinds of topics, reacting to one another's thoughts. It was as open a conversation as I have ever been a party to, emotionally honest and funny, one of my favorite memories of my fieldwork. There was no particular structure or agenda to keep to, and yet it was productive as an encounter. I felt I had gotten to know them and that I had shared myself with them in a way that was unique to the moment. I can really only speak for myself, but I thought it was a positive sign that I felt confirmed and accepted for who and what I am. This was feminism in the best tradition of the 1960s—feminism is meeting women in the place where they are and helping them see for themselves what they need to do in order to be safe, and healthy and fulfilled.

They explained to me that LILEA was an acronym: *Liubyma* (loved), *Intelihentna* (intelligent), *Lahidna* (gentle), *Emantsypovana* (emancipated) ---*Ya*!(me!). Tania had described herself to me before as a Nekrasov heroine, a *dekabrystka* type of activist. She had been a city girl who ventured to take up the challenges and discomforts of rural life for love and idealism, and had sacrificed her chances for a life of opportunities by doing so—at least so it had seemed. She suggested that in some ways, all of the LILEA members have now gotten beyond the mode of the Decembrist wives who followed their revolutionary husbands into the villages. She felt they were moving into a more autonomous and emancipated position within their mutual circle of support.

The LILEA women's club was in my mind unique in Ukraine, in that they resembled most closely of everything I had seen the groups that Joan A. Cassell (1977) had described as feminist consciousness raising groups within the Women's Liberation Movement. Under Victoria Kuzmina's apparent guidance, they had adopted the non-hierarchical and egalitarian

practices of sitting in a circle and taking turns sharing their thoughts around that circle, their discussion of mutual problems and arriving at a plan of action---and were experiencing the *communitas*[23] of sisterhood. Their group seemed to be focused more on a personal development and self-help agenda than some of the village groups I encountered. They also did not, strictly speaking, engage in a political vision that encompassed community beyond their own despite the real connection they had discovered to the outside world.

Tania as the group's leader was the one perhaps most obviously empowered by the experience. Because she regularly visited Cherkasy to sell in the market, she was able to also take advantage of some of the opportunities of the Women's Center, and was chosen in 1998 as of one seven professional women participating in a trip to Santa Rosa, California. [24] The program entitled "We Can Do It!" coordinated by Kathy Ptukha in Santa Rosa, introduced the Ukrainian women to some of Santa Rosa's influential women, including the Mayor Sharon Wright, and Mary Ruthsdotter, co-founder of the (United States) National Women's History Project (1980), who talked about her work as an example of how a group can evolve "from a grassroots organization into a national institution" (Ya Zhinka January 1999).

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[23] Joan Cassell (1977) uses the Victor Turner's (1969:96) concept of *communitas* to relate the sense of the "communion of mutually supportive women" that underlies and organizes women's liberation values, and is the strength of the sisterhood of believers against the unbelievers, women against men, revolutionary feminists against masculine power.

[24] The coordinator of the program was Casey Ptukha of Santa Rosa. The participants were Tania Moskalenko (teacher, Bohuslavets LILEA); Kateryna Taran (television journalist, CherkasyStateTelevisionStation Ros'); Liubov Zrazhevska (teacher of English, Cherkasy Institute of Business Administration); Olena Khomenko (school psychologist); Oleksandra Shevchenko (physician, infectious diseases specialist); Iryna Ivashyna (physician, coordinator for Project Kesher); Maria Ushkova (psychotherapist Cherkasy Narcotics Dispensary). The participants of the Ukrainian-American program "We Can Do It!" met with the mayor of the city, Sharon Wright, on March 3, 1998 (see http://ci.santarosa.ca.us/).

These contacts with women from outside Ukraine (either as visitors to Cherkasy or as in the case above, encountered during these trips abroad) occasioned a deliberate decision as to how to represent themselves as Ukrainians. When they traveled to California, the women brought with them copies of a special series of booklets (in Ukrainian) published in 1994 by the Ya Zhinka press under the heading of "Women of Cherkashchyna" as evidence of their own women's history project. [25] The Ya Zhinka publications and the practices of the center were in fact Ukrainian in their perspective and tone without intolerance for either Russian language use or of expressions of self that incorporated elements from other cultures. They openly promoted American sensibilities of multiculturalism, as well as the learning of English as a second or third language, but the Ya Zhinka magazine was produced exclusively in the Ukrainian language (however with a summary in English, for the American subscribers in Santa Rosa). The Women of Cherkashchyna series was an early (1994) vehicle for the promotion of women's awareness of and pride in their own historical past—including its diasporan aspects. Several of the women featured in the Women of Cherkashchyna book were members of the diaspora at the end of their lives.[26]

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[25] The first booklet of the series, *Zolote pole* (golden field) 1994, includes the biography of Olha Maksymovych, a member of one of Olena Dobrohajeva's circles in Kyiv, after whom Tania Moskalenko's school in Bohuslavets (the home base for the LILEA group) was named.

[26] The women whose biographies are included in the small book *Zolote pole*: Biographical sketches from the series "Woman of Cherkashchyna",edited by Valentyna Chudnovets was a special publication of the Journal *Ya Zhinka* 1999. (Women of Chyhyryn at the time of Bohdan Khmelnytsky: Hanna Somko, Motryna Chaplynska, Hanna Zolotarneko) Sofia Pototska (who inspired the Sofia Park1802 in Uman) Oleksandra Davydovan (in whose Kamianka estate the composer Tchaikovsky stayed)Tetiana Symyrenko (of the sugar family in Mlijiv near Horodyshche) Olha Maksymovych (of Bohuslavets, daughter of Shevchenko's colleague 19th century ethnographer Mykhailo Maksymovych) Halyna Netocheyeva (1877-1914) physician-epidemiologis; Olha Bilokopytova ; Nadia Sourovtseva 1895-198, literary and political dissident in Uman; the poet Natalia Livytska-Kholodna (1902-), the writer Dokia Humenna (1904-1996) and the actress Olha Kusenko, these last three living in the diaspora at the end of their lives.

The center sponsored a trip to the U.S. for high-school age girls, who experienced the same empowerment of sharing their own Ukrainian identity with their American host through the symbols of their country (the Ukrainian flag and national heraldry) and examples of the specificity of Ukrainian history, culture and contributions to civilization The young women learned to carry this self-presentation as young Ukrainian women, which was a novel concept, int that such self-representation was discouraged under the Soviet system, except in a very narrowly defined expression of peasant culture or as strict formula of performance art.

The Center strove to give Ukrainian women the moral support of national pride, while also allowing acknowledgement of personal difficulties reframed as gender discrimination. At the center there was no shame in the systemic gendered problems of unemployment, rape, divorce, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. The center refrained from blaming socialism for these problems, but significantly, also stopped short of blaming capitalist transformations either, suggesting that patriarchal attitudes that Ukraine and the United States, after all, have in common were the central problem as well as an experience that provides a bridge of understanding between American and Ukrainian women.

The Center has served as host to many American and other foreign women who came to Ukraine to do ethnographic fieldwork or specialty trainings. To signal their acceptance in their midst, the center created a novel Ukrainian-motifed ritual to share with the non-Ukrainian women (I was not present for nor invited to participate in this ritual). As described, the ritual involved sitting in a circle and passing the *vinok*, a beribboned wreath of flowers—part of the traditional Kyivan maiden's headdress, exchanged for a simple cap after the marriage

ceremony—which each woman in the circle dons temporarily and hands to her neighbor in the circle until the wreath reaches the newcomer, symbolizing her incorporation into the group.[27]

Maidenhood, as that time in a young woman's life, when she is most free of societal obligations symbolizes not only freedom but also creativity.[28] To wear the vinok, the wreath of maidenhood, signifies a return to a free and creative time of life, and to share a renewal of this status in the company of women peers. The front and back cover of the January 1999 issue of Ya Zhinka magazine showed a symbolic butterfly emerging from its crysalsis, one wing decorated in the theme of the American flag and other half-blue half-yellow as the Ukrainian flag, symbolizing the bridging of two cultures within the activities of the Center. On the back cover was the beribonned maiden wreath of flowers, as discussed above. The cover of a special publication of the Ya Zhinka, a collection of essays about historically significant women of Cherkashchyna, has a cover design which cameos the faces of three women surrounded by the yellow petals of the sunflower, which may as well be the Ukrainian national flower, but is in addition also valued also as a special food crop (for the oil of its seeds) of Cherkashchyna.

The women of LILEA shared their motto for the New Year "We wish to live in the present and not in the past; to remember the past, but to live for the future. No one will give us another life after this that we have. We hope that we will have a renewed country and we look

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[27] The first report of the wreath ritual came out of a visit by Louise Pere who had accompanied Casey Ptucha, the organizer of the We Can Do It! Trip, to Cherkasy. Louise Pere, a goddess-feminist, conducted a ritual involving the burning of candles to symbolically burn off the feelings of guilt society imposes on women. Back in California, she put together an exhibit for International Women's Day displaying Ukrainian handiwork (embroidered ritual cloths, pysanky Easter eggs) and publications.

[28] Christine Downing (2007, Chapter 2) explores Carl Kerenyi's Jungian interpretation of the relationship between the mythical maiden Persephone and her mother Demeter. In their dyad, he finds the cyclical unity of motherhood and maidenhood and as two phases of female life (see Kerenyi's *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, Princeton University Press, 1974: 284-285).

forward to global integration—but we are Ukrainian women and we are of Ukraine, and even if we left our country, we would still be attached to our Ukraine." The work and discourse of the Women's Center and LILEA, is I believe an example of a national feminism—finding an expression of Ukrainian civic patriotism through feminist practice and finding a way of expressing feminist goals in one's own community in Ukraine. Although the work of the Women's Center is inspired and guided by Western thought and principles of feminism, this is nonetheless, a truly indigenous, well-integrated Ukrainian feminist operation.

Part IV Practices of Women's Collective Activism

Chapter Twelve: Feminism and Nationalism Together

In the preceding chapters I examined different manifestations of nationalist and feminist practices. In this chapter I will explore the interaction of nationalism and feminism in the collective practices of Ukraine's women—be this understood as a symbiotic agreement where each complements the other or mutual definition where each sets conditions for cooperation with the other—i.e.issues taken up or silenced, approaches opened or blocked, viewpoints cultivated or discouraged. Later in this chapter, I will also explore examples of women's collective action in which a feminist sensibility emerges in projects that address women's needs and rights within their immediate local communities.

New Activist Groups

The examples of grassroots activist groups that I will discuss in this chapter are somewhat ambiguous. If I may paraphrase Patricia Hill Collins (2000) I came to understand that "to look for [Ukrainian] feminism by searching for women who self-identify as [Ukrainian] feminists misses the complexity of how [Ukrainian] feminist practice actually operates."[1] My observations about feminist practices among those openly identifying with feminism provides a foundation for an argument that certain grassroots groups that I call *new activist groups* (i.e. groups that are formed voluntarily without a preset idea of which organization they wish to

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[1] Collins (1993a, 2000) work on Black feminism is highly relevant for the Ukrainian context and offers Ukrainian women a platform for greater self and mutual understanding and cooperation. Community-oriented Ukrainian feminist activism is potentially similar to Black feminist activism which evolved within Black nationalist community development projects (2000:30). As a theorist of Black feminism, Collins builds on the connection between experience and consciousness in shaping people's everyday lives, allowing personal experience center stage in expressing a valid view point, which is the quintessential feminist theoretical strategy.

belong to, if at all) exhibit feminist sensibility with a strong sense of the national context of place, that is, their specific location as women living in Ukraine.

I am tempted to think of these new activist groups in terms of *gender activism*. Margot Badran coined the phrase *gender activism* to refer to "a response by women deciding for themselves how to conduct their lives in society" (1994:202). She distinguishes gender activism from within the broader category of women's activism as a kind of collective women's behavior that transcends rather than merges the agendas of incompatible ideologies. Badran suggests that this concept allows her to recognize the common feminist ground of activist women whose larger movement affiliations are understood to be quite separate, in her case Islamism and feminism in Egypt. She also distinguishes between publicly self-identified feminists and those who are pro-feminist in attitude but reject the label.

The term feminist nationalism, as applied to feminist participation in Third World liberation movements (West 1997:152-153) may apply in Ukraine to those feminists whose frame of reference is the defense of Ukraine's post-Soviet sovereignty against the incursions of Russian nationalist neo-colonialism. Pnina Webner (1999:236) also allows that women may use any of their relational positions (as mothers, wives, sisters, etc) and may draw on multiple identities (as women, ethnic group members, nationalists, socialists, heirs to a cultural tradition, etc.) to cultivate solidarity with other women and develop a shared discourse that legitimates their activist position in a feminist-nationalist context. But before embarking on deciding whether Ukraine;s women are feminist-nationalist, I will first discuss how I see feminism and nationalism co-existing in Ukraine. Then I will explore a few of the grassroots activist settings where I discern the interplay between feminism and nationalism and only then go into some theoretical excursions.

The Co-existence of Feminism and Nationalism in Ukraine

In the Discourse of the National Women's Organizations

Tatiana Zhurzhenko (2011) describes the Ukrainian national feminism being developed in certain gender centers as taking nation-building priorities and conjoining them with feminism by reintegrating the historical feminist nationalist Ukrainian women's movement (in the liberation struggle periods) into the new national narrative. In this alliance, feminism and nationalism work synergistically against Soviet understandings of women's and ethno-national history.

Because of their long Soviet underdog status, however, nationalists are by conviction protective of the positive image and valuation of traditional Ukrainian culture. Yuval-Davis 1997 explains how ethnic politics within nationalist movements involves the marshalling of selected culture features for the political definition of national identity. [2] One of the features of the contemporary constructed identity is related to the issue of women's status within Ukrainian traditional culture. The adage that "a culture's treatment of women is the measure of its level of civilization" is often repeated in Ukraine, manipulated by the warring ideological camps.

One level of manipulation has to do with Ukrainian nationalist efforts to create an ethnic identity- boundary between Ukrainian and Russian culture. Ukrainian tradition has never included such customs as the Russian domostroi, the seclusion of women, and early ethnographers of Ukrainian culture[3] commented on the relative freedoms enjoyed by women in the Cossack territories and the Ukrainian territories of the Russian empire. The work of Oksana

[2] Identity narratives are used by ethnic projects. Ethnicity is the politics of collective boundaries and it uses identity narratives to divide the world into us and them. The contest of identity politics is in the vying for access to state and civil society powers (Yuval-Davis 1994b).

[3] One of the earliest ethnographic descriptions comes from the western cartographer Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan (1600-1675) who made several maps of the Cossack territories now within Cherkasy (see Magocsi 1996:180).

Kis (2008), head of the Lviv Women in Society Gender Center, deals openly with the patriarchal aspects of Ukrainian traditional culture as revealed by rural ethnographic materials, an example of the challenge to blind nationalism put up by the Ukrainian feminist academic community.

Current Ukrainian conditions are also objectively less than ideal for women. One often hears the plaintive lament that Ukraine should not degenerate into "Africa" (the ultimate icon of social and economic backwardness). The feminist assertion that women are discriminated by virtually all traditional cultures conflicts with nationalists' desire to reassert contemporaray elements of Ukrainian culture that have been framed as "traditional" by Soviet politics (language, religion, seasonal/religious customs) as well as elements of Ukrainian culture that are intimately tied to the socio-economic conditions of its past (such as the solidarity of the village community, and the essentially patriarchal family with its respect for elders and cooperation between the generations and genders). While nationalists focus on Ukrainian language, political unity, national identity, cultural hegemony, neglected or forgotten traditions, or traditions surviving in a condition "deformed" by Soviet policies, feminism asserts that gender relations were in all honesty not ideal in the past, and moreover, Ukraine's treatment of women in the present day is even more jarring.

Clearly, the defensive nationalist attitude is fundamentally at odds with a feminist analysis of patriarchy and the feminist program of uncovering discriminating practices of which both men and women should become aware if there is to be any social change for the better. The US-NIS Consortium (of Winrock International, one of the main proponents of feminist activity in Ukraine) has trained many Ukrainian women to run feminist training programs in which the women are encouraged to find the self-understanding and initiative to make changes in their personal lives and by extension their communal lives with others. A US-NIS Women's

Consortium publication (1999) called Uspishni Istoriji (success stories) reported on these trainings. The booklet includes many testimonials from training participants to illustrate how women were finding these to be eye-opening experiences, bringing them around to a new-found self-respect. Some of the testimonials are phrased in such a way that does not let traditional Ukrainian culture off the hook. The following personal testimony from a participant in one of the feminist trainings would, for example, irk the sensibility of a Ukrainian nationalist:

> The training of the consortium is a unique method of work. I grew up in a family where women were respected and loved, *but I never heard about women's rights before this training. The topic of my [doctoral] dissertation was the Problem of the Evolution and Establishment of Women's Image in the Past Ukrainian Culture*. So it applies to what we are discussing here. Our trainer showed us that we carry the burdens of production, reproduction and community obligations. But it is not necessary to make these [exclusively] women's labor. [Uspishni istoriji 1999: 11, my translation and emphasis]

Patriarchy exists in all Ukrainian cultural institutions at both levels of production and reproduction of culture. Nationalists do not specifically bar women from any given highly-placed position, but do not necessarily insist on women's entry into these. During the Soviet period it was considered a gender-aberration and women in high places were framed to be masculine or desexualized figures. In the post-Soviet period, the discourse around women in high positions is replete with claims for their femininity in terms of beauty, temperament and domestic talents. Women are openly enjoined as having a critical role in the reproduction of Ukrainian culture through its transmission to subsequent generations through parenting and women's employment as teachers and preservers of all aspects of cultural production.

The dynamic of nation and gender that makes women signifiers of national boundaries/cultural (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989) also makes it uncomfortable for nationalism to openly address the myriad of contemporary post-Soviet social problems increasingly affecting women—narcotics and alcohol addiction, the spread of HIV/AIDs in heterosexual encounters, the rising teenage and pre-teen sexual activity and pregnancy, the prevalence of domestic violence. It is to the credit of both the feminist West, including the diaspora women's organizations, and the Ukrainian government that they are able to cooperate in an open admission of the scourge of trafficking in persons, particularly the traffick in sexual services. It is also true, however, that the international, external aspects, of the trafficking problem, have been much easier for the government to acknowledge than its internal aspects, and certainly easier to deal with than topics such as domestic violence and blatant job discrimination. All in all, nationalists in particular tread on these problems lightly, and focus more on issues of cultural and political integrity.

Exploring nationalism's effects along the axis of biological reproduction it is not surprising to find that nationalism leads to pronatalism in a general way, though in Ukraine, with its continued support of legal abortion, and relentlessly bad economy, it is a cautious pronatalism. Issues around family size, fertility, abortion, and birth control are treaded upon lightly. The feminist organizations in Cherkasy were among the few to openly acknowledge and discuss teenage sex, pregnancy and the need for sex education. But even here reproduction issues were approached mostly from the viewpoint of providing information to encourage healthy and responsible relations. Freedom of choice (abortion) is one of the informed, but not encouraged, options. The nationalist organizations do not promote abortion, but are not all (outside of the Ukrainian Catholic Church) uniformly in public condemnation of it as a moral

evil. There is also little direct discussion about reproduction outside of the family or sexual behavior outside of heterosexual norms.

More to the point is Tatiana Zhurzhenko's (2004) analysis of Ukraine's "neo-familialist" turn with the neo-liberal capitalist transition, in which the government is framing the family as a self-supporting (less state-dependent) foundational unit of society. This new family model[4] depends on a gender regime in which women are confined to the private sphere in their reproductive years. The new gender regime also steers women who are beyond their reproductive phase to find community engagement in the semi-public sphere of the NGOs tending to the provision of social welfare.

Circulation of Discourses and their Circumvention

In the fall of 2000 I attended a number of conferences in Kyiv sponsored by the national women's federations, during which I had opportunity to observe how feminist and nationalist discourses circulated. The social context of the seminar or conference is both a prominent feature and critical strategy of the women's movement sphere: it gathers wome from various parts of the country in order to effect the socialization of the potential activist community. These conferences are usually Western donor-supported and often cover travel expenses and modest room and board for the conference participants, who generally would never be able to pay for themselves. The main benefit of this strategy is the cultivation of consensus over the women's movement's mission as well as common understandings of gendered national identity. One such conference, entitled "The Women's Movement in Nation-Building Processes," sponsored by the major members of Ukraine's National Council of Women and held at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy in September 2000.

[4] Arguably it is not really new, as it was encoded in the Soviet Family Law of 1968 and accepted in the USSR even earlier, during the post-revolutionary 1930s.

The conference consisted of a full program of presented papers on various aspects of women's issues and women's movement history. The observation that I would like to explore here arises out of an off-program moment, between sessions, when a women's group representative got up to make an informal announcement to share information. The moment is telling as an example of how nationalism limits the parameters of permissible feminist discourse.

Among the things that at least a subset of women in Ukraine would like to change about the hegemonic culture is Ukrainian society's intolerance of homosexuality. Although homosexual behavior between consenting adults is legal in Ukraine, the gay/lesbian lifestyle (and even particularly the lesbian lifestyle) [5] is not generally accepted and is the target of public censure and non-comprehension, even from government officials who are sworn to uphold the laws of the land. Despite the challenges to heterosexual patriarchy mounted by the creative production of the Kyiv gender school (generating national feminism) the topic is seriously taboo even within communication sponsored by the national Ukrainian women's organizations. Nationalism does not easily accept homosexuality and its social ramifications, since, in the nationalist view, the lifestyle jeopardizes the family as the foundational unit of the nation-state.

Laima Geidar,[6] the Head of the Coordinating Council of the Informational and Education Center called "Women's Network" made a extra-programmatic appeal for support for her

[5] Tamara Hundorova, feminist literary scholar, points out that while male comraderie was part of the Russian imperial culture female comraderie was seen as dangerous, possibly lesbian, and thus dangerous for the stability of the patriarchal system. Pavlychko's 1999 best-seller (*Dyskurs modernizmu*) transgressed a taboo by suggesting the possible lesbianism of feminist socialist nationalist Lesia Ukrainka and western Ukrainian feminist writer Olha Kobylianska. The reactionary response neutralized any progress made in opening up the closed silent space around homosexuality, especially lesbianism.

[6] Well-known feminist activist, Laima Geidar is mentioned in the opening pages of Sperling's *Organizing Women* (1999) in Russia as a member of the Russian feminist "Amazons" staging a

research on homosexuality in Ukraine and for the internet web-project. I did not realize at the time (maybe the other women knew) that she represented a lesbian organization conducting a survey on lesbian experience in Ukraine that summer. Here I will quote my fieldnotes:

> I read about Laima Geidar (Layma Geydar) as a member of the Russian feminist "Amazons" who were demonstrating in Moscow on International Women's Day in Valerie Sperling's book (1999:1) —and now here she was in Kyiv!! She had come to promote a website for the feminist women's movement. It was near the end of the day of a long series of lectures in Ukrainian language. Laima came up front to make an announcement. She started off by saying loudly, in Russian, that she will allow herself to speak in 'the language of common understanding' (as Russian was referred to) because she feels more comfortable in that language.
>
> She launched into her presentation. There was a ripple of resistance in the audience, an almost palpable shudder. After finishing in Russian, Laima was coaxed by her audience to repeat the entire message in Ukrainian. Despite Laima's disclaimers as to her inadequate Ukrainian language proficiency, I thought her command of it to be perfectly acceptable when she re-delivered her message in Ukrainian. And her audience was appreciative, making several audible supportive comments her way—"See! You could do it!"
>
> What struck me as horribly frustrating was that the audience focused entirely on her Ukrainian language usage while completely ignoring her intended message. I did not understand whether this was due to language, or due to Laima's reputation (which may have preceded her) as a lesbian rights activist, or an "internationalist feminist" whose territory of activity was the entire CIS and included Moscow as one of her stomping grounds. Or was it simply due to her overtly more militant feminism? In any case, her message got little public discussion. [field notes September 1-2, 2000].

Moscow protest on International Women's Day. She appeared in Kyiv to promote a website for the feminist/women's movement.

This closing off and obfuscation of an important issue is a significant tactic for blocking the occasion for discussion where "there can be no discussion." The effort to discuss a resistance to and imagine the transformation of this aspect of the hegemonic culture was at least in this setting, circumvented.[7]

Nationalism and Feminism in Activist Circles (Kaniv)

It is not only in the academic circles of Ukraine's Gender Centers or even exclusively at the national level discussions that nationalism and feminism are being entertained as openly acknowledged ideological partners. In Kaniv, a city just north of Cherkasy, I met with Aza Frolova and Tamara Strypko, both members of the Kaniv Soiuz Ukrainok. Aza is the wife of Kaniv's Rukh-associated mayor, the former director of Kaniv's Mahnit factory, and Tamara is the mayor's assistant, council woman and also a doctoral candidate.

Situated picturesquely on the bluffs along the Dnipro River, Kaniv is the site Taras Shevchenko chose for his final resting place, a wish he made clear in his poem *Zapovit* (testament). Kaniv's downtown in dominated by the former Communist Party headquarters, a large building of classic architectural style with an imposing balustrade; it is currently devoted to secondary education as the new Ivan Franko Gymnasium. The school's principal, Larisa Hnied, greeted me and led me to the school's museum where a 9th grader professionally guided me through the exhibits and then I was invited down the hallways to a small teachers' lounge where Tamara and Aza who is also a teacher here, were waiting for me. Aza told me that she is a decades- long resident of Kaniv with western Ukrainian roots. She met her husband when they were both students in the Lviv Polytechnic and she followed his career to Cherkasy Oblast.

[7] IEC Women's Network, Kyiv 2002 addresses the problems of "Being Lesbian in Ukraine' Homosexuality is protected by law in Ukraine, but homophobia is high.

As in Cherkasy, the Soiuz Ukrainok organization took root in Kaniv through exposure to influences from western Ukraine (not the diaspora). Aza explained that after independence, Kaniv became a popular pilgrimage destination for western Ukrainians caught up in the romance of the new patriotic atmosphere. Women of Lviv oblast who were already members of the growing Soiuz Ukrainok brought news of the organization and Aza decided to establish a chapter in Kaniv, finally founded in 1998. As a woman leader interested in creating a vehicle for collective action, Aza emphasized that she made a deliberate choice against "re-inventing the wheel" and adopted the Soiuz Ukrainok model rather than taking an innovative route. She mentioned that as a teacher, she was comfortable with the national consciousness raising (enlightenment) aspects of the Soiuz Ukrainiok mandate and was ready to work with both parents and students along the lines of national awareness issues. I asked her whether most of the early members in Kaniv, were, as in Cherkasy, women who suffered Soviet repression, she explained that this would not be true as a rule, though she admitted that "almost every family represented in our organization did not get through the 1930s without its victims. Many people were not able to get normal jobs in the 1970s because of these reasons." But she continued to explain in a vein that revealed her acute appreciation of the potential ethno-nationalist pitfalls of ethnonationalism

> What is most important is this: Our organization is not a form of protest against, let's put it this way, the "past" [the Soviet era]. We do not have this here, this is not one of our traits, in contrast to the sentiment in western Ukraine, this is simply not a characteristic of our [central Ukrainian Cherkasy] region. I've lived in both western and central Ukraine and it is true that in western Ukraine this nationalism is felt much more strongly. Here in central Ukraine, it emerges episodically, or is detected in those people whose origins are in the western Ukrainian oblasts. But everywhere, even when I visit rural western Ukraine, I can tell that people are starting to understand that this Ukrainian ethno-

> nationalism does not give pretty results. People are coming to the realization that we have to act as one united Ukraine. But it takes a long time to heal these wounds. [Aza Frolova, interview December 2000]

When asked about the feminist or nationalist ideological context of the work of the Soiuz Ukrainok in Kaniv she explained:

> Obviously here it is a matter of co-operation of the ideologies here. Really, I insist that a *de-nationalized organization is worthless in our political situation*—this we agreed upon a priori and set ourselves off from other models. It is clear that [Soviet style] cosmopolitanism is useless to us in our situation; it is obfuscation. This is a Ukraine-specific characteristic—perhaps you've already noticed this. And I am not ambivalent about this, but it is not an aggressive stance. Progressive people should understand that this is our nation-state (*derzhava)* and in this nation-state we have our symbols that belong to the nation. And that we should be proud of our nation and be ready to do something for it, even be generous in self-dedication, for its Good. [Frolova, interview, December 2000]

Aza asserts feminism is crucial, but not in its internationalist version, but rather in a guise that is in tune with a local and national focus while Ukraine is establishing itself in nation-statehood. She also touched on what good citizenship entails, couching it in terms of service and sacrifice for the nation, rather than expectation of the rights and benefits from the state. Later in our discussion she acknowledged that women had clearly benefited from Soviet era guarantees of education and employment as components of equality, but asserted that Soviet treatment of the Ukrainian male had altered the relations between the sexes for the worse. She described the stereotype of the de-masculinized Soviet Ukrainian male, weak and dependent and inclined to dump everything on the women's shoulders. It was worrying that in the post-independence era women were even more terribly burdened by the burgeoning problems in the social sphere. But

the biggest problem in her opinion was not this burden itself, but the Soviet-bred attitude against volunteerism affecting both genders. Although she understood the problem as one of inadequate socialization robbing a generation of individuals—male and female—of their public initiative, it is clear that her specific comments focus on the women and their community obligations:

> If a woman does not want to participate in the women's organizations, then you can't force her to do it. But we should be raising our children in such a way that should understand the value of community organizations. Here people are not yet socialized in this way, in general. For decades, we were socialized into this consumerism, living for ourselves and our stomachs. If the central office of the Party called us to come out and clean the street then we went to clean the street but no one would do it on their own initiative. And this is what is crucial—the awakening of this sense of personal initiative to do something in the public sphere. It is really a very hard thing to promote this. If we only had among us 15-20 really motivated active people, we would be able to do so much! So far, people mostly listen, and understand, but this deep awareness, the comprehension of what it means to take up a great activism, this comes very, very slowly. (Aza Frolova Nov 14, 2000 Kaniv)

For Aza in Kaniv, the important elements are a feminist sense of women's self-worth and initiative alongside the nationalist commitment to the public good and the socialization of the next generation into caring for that national good. This kind of initiative was exhibited in several relatively new face-to-face voluntary groups I encountered in Cherkashchyna where women had banded in solidarity around a common project in the midst of a local power struggle. Some were already affiliated with one All-Ukraine women's organization or another, but some of the groups were just starting to gel, or were in the process of considering which organization they may benefit from most in terms of contacts, information and possibly funds. I tried to accept every invitation to a location where such groups were forming. My impression was that these groups were arising where the former Soviet women's council was non-existent, inactive or ineffective;

or where the women's council was strong but perceived as heavy-handed in its control of networks of aid, and thus, was being challenged by a new composition of women advocating an alternative local politics.

Gender Activism—Transcending Feminism and Nationalism in Place

In 1987 Susan Bridger wrote about the budding feminist movement that was starting in Russia, and noted that there was no evidence several years in, that this movement was reaching the countryside in any way whatsoever. Here in Ukraine's most challenging places, I was finding recognizable signs of social activist groups in various stages of organization and formality which seemed to be a reflection of a melding of women's and national community work. These women did not necessarily use feminist terminology but seemed to embody the spirit of the enterprise and in a way that was in tune with their lives as they needed to live them. In North America, the dichotomy between feminism engaged in as a personal journey (through consciousness raising group membership) and feminism as political activism (Ferree and Hess 1985:41-42; Taylor 1989:479; Cassell 1977:122) created tensions between the ideal of feminist egalitarianism and the need for effective leadership in political advocacy and social change. The local activist groups I encountered were akin to social change oriented groups, but their members were also supporting one another in their quests for personal (and even community) "empowerment." There is no word for *empowerment* in Ukrainian, so what I mean is that they agreed upon a local project for social change and access to their rights within their communities. The projects were various—land reform, garbage removal, repair of infrastructure, theft and corruption issues, provision of social welfare—but the practices were similar: face to face meetings where women shared their lives and ambitions and consensual, cooperative action with little formal exercise of authority, but without anxiety over leadership. In these groups, I heard

respect for local tradition, a national pride, and sensitivity to women's differences so that no one would be excluded, or patronized.

In terms of their nationalism, these women are less focused on the national identity or traditional culture aspects than are the discussions on the national level. They are following their most pressing interests along the lines of their self-positioning within the economic and political community, rather than looking to make a statement in crafts that involve extensive female labor (baking, embroidery, etc-) which are not critical to their lives right now. They as nationalists are defending womens' right to be self-directed in exercising their legal privileges to vote, hold office, work, be educated, work professionally, and own property including businesses and land as citizens of Ukraine.

I will examine several examples of new activist group work suggesting a feminist-nationalist approach in that the women are insisting on their right to equal participation or equal access, while resisting lingering Soviet-era arrangements as anti-national. In Khudiaky, the long-time women workers of the village cultural sphere were insisting on their right to land and taking on the general responsibilities traditionally assigned to the women's councils; in the village of Tereshky, a group of women banded to struggle against corruption concerning the disposition of CAE land that had been (improperly) incorporated as a closed (vs. open) agricultural joint stock company under a despotic village head attempting to consolidate the land of the former collective farm under himself;.[8] and in the city of Khrystynivka, a district center, women were forming a new political platform in direct challenge to the "business as usual"

[8] The two legal forms of cooperatives were open and closed associations of shareholders. Where closed association were registered (later discouraged by the government) problems arose. Closed arrangements were typically pushed through by former collective farm directors without the informed consent of the former members of the collective, raising criticism for deceptive practices and for creating obstacles to privatization,since the closed from of ownership does not allow member shareholders to leave the cooperative with their shares in hand.

conducted by the Spilka's district-level women's council, and were supporting women's empowerment through personal creativity in a multitude of directions and projects. The struggles are related to quite material resources—land and benefits—to which women as citizens are entitled and the disposition of which is not always transparently dispatched.

The Soiuz Ukrainok in the village of Khudiaky

The village of Khudiaky, south of Cherkasy, is one of the villages that were relocated when the reservoir was created on the Dnipro. As of December 1, 1999, the village officially has a chapter of the Soiuz Ukrainok working out of its house of culture where close to 200 children are served by special programs. The other major structure in the village is the Ukrainian Othodox (Moscow Patriarchate) church in the village—they told me that they feel closer really to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox church, but that this is the only parish in the village. When I approached the house of culture one early November evening for a group meeting of the Soiuz Ukrainok, it was so dark, there being no electric lighting in the public areas of the village center, that I have no idea what the surroundings or even the exterior of the building looked like, except that I had to climb a staircase to the front door.

The women gathered for the meeting had prepared a delicious array of canapés and salads—I tried to avoid creating occasion for such outlays, but in this case, when I was coming in for a particular meeting and from a distance, it was unavoidable. We sat around the big desk in the main office of the house of culture. The women, all aged 28 to 52 were all among the original members and had worked together all year, except for one (the 28 year old) who admitted this was her very first meeting. They were all Ukrainian speaking, and many of them had been born in this village. Maria, the founder of the group, and the eldest of them all, born in

1948, had come to the village as an adult, however. A member of Rukh, she had learned about the Soiuz Ukrainok through that organization and credited Alla (the oblast head in Cherkasy) for encouraging them and inviting them to participate in the Women in Politics seminar she was planning (December 1999-December 2000). The women had actually known each other for a long time and traced their connections with each other for me: they were either neighbors, or relatives by blood or *kumy* godparenthood. To some degree they were also brought together through their interest in the political potential of the Rukh Party. They said they are not looking to recruit outside of their circle: "this is not the Komsomol. We want quality, not quantity." But they also agreed that their group revolves around the cultural/educational activist of the village, i.e. Maria, the acknowledged anchor of the group and who has had a 30-year career working in this house of culture where they held their meetings.

Maria talked about the Shcherbitsky years and Shelest's ousting, and how the Russification of Ukraine intensified after 1972. She explained how she, a worker in the social sphere *(sotsialna sfera*), which included the teachers, librarians and house of culture workers in the villages, was one of those who always tried to operate as a local agent of resistance to the regime. Maria's personal narrative provides the reasons for her activist stance revolve around her own Ukrainian identity cultivated in resistance to Soviet directives. The other members of her group, being younger, listened with interest—Maria had a particularly good grasp of the quality of changes that had happened over the decades. It occurred to me that perhaps she was using this open interview as a teaching moment to enlighten her younger colleagues. But when it came time to talk about the here and now, they all participated in filling me in on what they were doing and talked about what value they found in being a member of this group of theirs.

Mostly, they took pride in their accomplishments as a group. They compared themselves to those "women councils that exist only on paper and who go to the city to celebrate Women's Day on March 8 and then do absolutely nothing in the village." They have an internal sense of us/them as in, their group/women's council. They created a group insignia, an embroidered badge of sorts, to set themselves off in the village. They admitted that since they have been acting as the village women's council, their own personal social welfare and that of their children is more secure: they have access for their children to sanatorium visits and children's camps now. But primarily, they realized that they can conceive a project and carry it out. They can be of help to others in the village because the village has come to see them as a group of women that gets things done. Some of the projects they have taken on involved sanitary conditions in the village, finding care for children who are neglected, and such. They take pride in the fact that because of their activism others are taking note of their village. They take a positive proactive role in making their village a desirable place to live. Through the programs of the village house of culture (the lending library, the after school cultural programs for children, activities for teenagers) they help keep a good atmosphere in the village and guide teens at least a little bit away from the dangers of alcohol and drugs and sex. They are introducing new elements to the village communal life, reviving some old traditions and introducing new ones, for example, the new Mothers' Day celebration, and their personal favorite, the revival the feast day of Saint Katherine (Kateryna) on December 7, which was a day on which women traditionally refused to do any work. They said that as long as culture was still alive in the village, then the nation will not die (they never once mentioned the word berehynia!)

Most important of all, however, they said that you know that *Ty ne odna*, you are not alone. They admitted to providing a psychological service for each other (again, they mentioned,

lack of access to psychological counseling). The group meetings reduce their stress and provide moral support. They claimed to feel more secure or empowered knowing that when they have a problem, there will be a larger organization backing them up. That organization (Soiuz Ukrainok) and its resources—invitations to conferences, news from abroad and elsewhere in Ukraine, perhaps even a portion of funds or humanitarian aid—will be there for them.

Thus the women I encountered in Khudiaky were obvious nationalists, with an ethno-nationalist bent. They were engaged not only in local cultural work but also spoke in terms of raising national consciousness. They framed the motivating back-force for their activism in terms of the Ukrainian experience of political repression. In her fieldwork in Russia, Valerie Sperling had observed (1999:48) that "Whereas in Moscow, there were multiple social networks through which women were mobilized into activism…in the provinces there tended to be only one: the local Communist Party, or its affiliated organizations, such as the Komsomol (Communist Youth League)." In Ukraine, the situation is different. The submerged networks of resistance to the Soviet communist regime, often represented in the village by the cultural worker or the teacher of Ukrainian language, are producing new potential leadership among women who are committed to making life better now in their provincial communities. In the Ukrainian villages, where the CPU has a particularly strong foothold there are other choices as well—here the Rukh network for alternative politics shows itself as a resource for women's organizing.

Though these women present their work in a nationalist frame, they are also notably moving from a women's perspective. As a women's group, they were proud to be supplanting the authority of the (apparently non- or poorly functioning) women's council and were becoming recognized as trustworthy and efficient. They provided moral support to one another, and found personal empowerment in trying out their own problem-solving abilities. They told me that even

the village administration is starting to call on them for assistance rather than referring problems to the other women's council. They were thinking of taking on quite serious issues, in the context of the land reform—they talked about how they refuse to accept the view of their village head that women should not be given land in the distribution. They were fighting against the definition that the workers of the cultural sphere—almost all women—would be left out of the loop on certificates because they were not officially members of the collective farm. Historically and traditionally, Ukrainian women had been recognized land and property owners. Now in the post-Soviet transition, they were being framed as ill-prepared for such responsibility. " It is natural for us Ukrainian women to own land and to be masters of our own property. We have to reclaim our rights to autonomy, our pride and equality in partnership with our husbands, and engagement in the community," one of them told me. Tentatively, through their group's activism, they were working out their national and local patriotic Ukrainian positions of civic participation, and in the process they were working through their nationalism into common women's territory with a feminist potential.

Future Soiuz Ukrainok in the Village of Tereshky in the Shpola Region

By April 2000 over six million Ukrainians had participated in the second step of the land reform, and had received certificates of ownership for specific land shares. The third phase of the land reform would be the most complicated of the process, because it would finally require the reorganization of the division of labor and change the legal and economic relationships that have persisted to this point in the CAE.[9] The land reform though its progress was slow caused a great deal of legal confusion and in some places, open conflict. This depended largely on the

[9] This concern was expressed in the UNDP Handbook for Women Farmers (2000), a publication of the joint UNDP and Japanese government-financed project called "sustaining women farmers in Ukraine" which started in July 1999.

village personnel, how the village administration and the leadership of the former collective farms worked together, and depended on the personalities and honesty of the individuals involved. In many places, not only the national economic woes had trickled down, but also corruption on a local level had wreaked havoc in community life.

Judith Sedaitis and Jim Butterfield (1991) discussing the likelihood of a peasant movement in what was still the USSR, noted that changes in the Soviet villages of 1988-1990 had broken down the social cohesion of the collective farm communities: resentments arose between those peasants chosen for new land-leasing arrangements as a new farm elite and ordinary peasants who were insecure in the face of possible collapse of collective arrangements. While individual farms and collectively owned cooperatives were starting to appear, they still faced resistance from those who controlled the land resources and general censure as unethical speculators. (1991:46-47) In conclusion, Sedaitis and Butterfield conjectured that only by wresting control of resources away from Soviet farm managers and directors, and by striving to ensure a livelihood for all peasants, both those able to farm privately and those who due to age of infirmity were dependent on a communal structure, would a politicized peasants' movement succeed "How the kolkhoz and sovkhoz peasants will eventually organize themselves,--whether as solidarist, corporatist bloc amenable to manipulation by rural elites, as interest groups within broader reformist and anti-reformist coalitions, or as independent peasants' political parties—will have direct bearing on the outcome of the battle for the future of the Soviet Union." (1991:64)

It would seem that there would be slim hope of having a grassroots women's movement rise up out of the villages of Cherkashchyna which were in such dire straits. The villagers are vulnerable, exposed to global and national economic trends not in their control nor fully

comprehended, and all the while painfully cut off from the flow of information and from contacts, and at the mercy of those more in the know. As I traveled around Cherkasy oblast in 2000 I saw a few villages where living conditions seemed relatively adequate, but I also saw a great many where the poverty was obvious and the residents lived in plain deprivation of even the most minimal requirements of space, sanitation, food, and healthcare. I saw villages that must be among those listed as doomed to extinction—with so many villages depopulated to the point of disappearance, only a third (10,281) of Ukraine's villages are listed as being viable in terms of local self-government (UNDP 2008: 28)[10]

One Saturday at the Women in Politics seminar in Cherkasy, a young curly-haired woman stood up to speak and started to explain, at length and in a particularly articulate manner, how the people of her village were being cheated out of their land and out of their legitimate right to privatize their farming operations. What's more they were being hoodwinked and bullied and terrorized by their former collective farm director who had excluded them from the village community, even as they remained its official residents. The exchange got heated, names were named and crimes described in lurid detail. The special guest, a Parliamentarian, put her off as emotional, suggesting that she needed to calm down and go about her advocacy in a manner strictly within the available legal processes.

Tetiana is an activist in the land reform and privatization movement. She is an example of "woman in movement" except that really she is the main motor of the movement! There are no men around her leading the action and she is the one who is calling the shots as an advocate

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[10] The UNDP (2008) reports that there is no legal agreement about the number of rural areas of settlement actually exist in Ukraine, because the legal definition of area of settlement and the designation of settlement boundaries is still fuzzy. Many of these settlements are too small to be able to practice local self-government in terms of provision of local social services

for a group of would-be private farmers. She has drawn other women around herself, in a manner reminiscent of the women's revolts (*babskyj bunt*) against collectivization—possibly because this business is much too dangerous for men. For women it is not safe either, and Tetiana was aware that she was in danger herself, but as in other revolutionary settings, women assume that they can more easily get away with aggression than the men could. Tetiana's social reform agenda is based on the right to exercise one's freedom of economic choice. At one point in her speech, she became impassioned and burst out that Ukraine will never be a normal country if things like what is happening in her village keep going on with impunity.

I first met Tetiana (nicknamed Tania) on September 20 in the Soiuz Ukrainok offices in Cherkasy. Alla had told me about Tetiana's group a little earlier. September 2000 was unseasonably cold and raining so heavily that I was soaked to the skin before I arrived to help Alla look over some forms for a grant opportunity being advertized through Counterpart Alliance in Kyiv. There had been a fire a few months earlier and the roof was leaking through the damaged spots. Irena Bozhko, elegant despite the weather loudly criticized the men of Rukh, appealing to their chivalry if not their custodianship, since they occupied the adjacent office, for not at least rolling up their sleeves to patch the roof. Tetiana appeared in the doorway wearing a trench coat, her curly brown hair in a heavy fullness from the damp. She positioned herself between the buckets set to catch the worst drips and surveyed the sheets of plastic stretched out over the already battered furniture, while she explained briefly what was happening in her part of the oblast.

The village of Tereshky, no more than 10 kilometers north of the district center of Shpola, in the middle of the oblast territory, is a forsaken place lacking proper electrification and natural gas service as well. The fact that Tereshky is the native village of Oleksander Tkachenko

of the infamous Land and People affair of 1992 gives the residents reason to talk bitterly about their Parliamentarian representative. Later in October, when Tetiana walked me through this literal ruin, I saw for myself how even the daycare and school were overgrown and crumbling in this village once famed as the most beautiful in all of Cherkashchyna. The former kolhosp director of 25 years, M. Honcharenko, who hung onto his village position as director of the new CAE, is known to have received a large sum of money for village renovation.[11] Several years back when ground was broken for a new promised sports field, the old village clubhouse and the library were demolished in preparation for the new construction that never materialized. The villagers, already without a church or house of culture, were left literally without a single public space in which they could meet for recreation or meetings or communal events. The one paved road was routed in such a way that all traffic was forced to enter and leave past the windows of Honcharenko who kept the villagers under strict surveillance. Tetiana claimed that he was deliberately running the village into the ground with neglect and had openly threatened to wipe it off the map in order to turn the expanse of land into his own personal fief.

Honcharenko had apparently registed the CAE as a closed stock company, and was currently actively persecuting (using Stalinist techniques, claimed Tania) a group of would-be private farmers, a group of more than 50 individuals out of approximately 1000 residents. (He was, reportedly, a charming personality—Tetiana claimed his authoritarian style has developed into somewhat of a cult. "He alone punishes and pardons, he will not suffer contradiction. His word is law.") The children of the dissenting families have been denied regular benefits at

[11] Zvi Lerman, Karen Brooks and Csaba Csaki (1994) note that in the early 1990s little had changed in the way social services were provided in the rural areas. The new CAEs were allowed to transfer responsibility for social services provisioin to the village council, and the village council couldtake ownership of the assets of the social sphere, ie the clubs and sports facilities, but that this had not happened in most villages.

school and even medical care; the families are ostracized in every village sphere, barred access to the village bakery, ignored at the village store, and forbidden to pasture their cows on village property.[12]

Tetiana is an unusually determined and focused young woman. She had left the village for an education and career and returned because of unemployment and family obligations, particularly because her parents had taken seriously ill and could no longer manage running the village household alone. Tetiana and her 6 year old son moved in with the parents and a younger brother in the old village house, not far from her older brother and sister and their families, five minutes walking distance up the road. Her sister-in-law is one of the school teachers and is barely managing to keep her job in the conflict. When Tetiana returned to Tereshky and understood what was happening, she travelled to Cherkasy and to Kyiv on her own initiative in search of support and information. She found the Rukh office in Cherkasy to be the most helpful and this influenced her to gather her female co-activists together into a village chapter of the Soiuz Ukrainok.

Tetiana took an enormous task upon herself, but she was a master organizer. She had the ability and authority to call community meetings, and hold clandestine strategy meetings under cover of darkness. She organized press conferences and persuaded journalists to write articles. This was no small feat for someone with no home phone line, no car of her own, and miles away from a copy machine and the public telephone office in Shpola, not to mention being under violent intimidation. Her ferocious courage was remarkable. (I must admit, there was a brief

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[12] There had even been one alleged murder. In August, a young man was discovered drowned, having floated up to the surface when the rope anchoring his body to a rock at the bottom of the pond loosened. His death was not yet proven to be directly related to the conflict.

moment when I felt concerned for my own safety there, but in reality, I as a foreign national had very little to fear, unlike the Tania and the others working with her.) In short, Tetiana managed, over time to insert herself as an effective thorn in Honcharenko's side: As she told it, and newspaper articles confirmed, she had complained to the Governor Danylenko (1994-1998), who transferred Honcharenko to the top position of the Shpola district administration ("kicked him upstairs") while Honcharenko's son took over as the head of the village council. Tetiana then managed to get Honcharenko senior reprimanded for his mishandling of the land certificates in Tereshky and got him fired from his Shpola position; but that just brought him back to the village (as his son's assistant now) where he and Tetiana continued to lock horns.

In 1998 seven persons from Tereshky successfully made the transition to become private farmers and have survived on their own 4.3 hectare shares of land. There are now 20 families who would like to leave the association but were still trying to get possession of actual land shares. And once they did, they were told by the village head, they would become internal outsiders, without access to the village store, the bakery, the school, medical services and more. Since the state is the primary provider of health care and schooling costs, the village head has no right to withhold these benefits of residency to them, though the village store and bakery may be a different story: in any case, those who worked in those establishments were already denying them the right to buy anything there, out of fear of the Honcharenkos.[13] Tatiana told the story thus:

[13] Employees of the collective were entitled to 16 enumerated benefits to be provided by the CAE: subsidized vacation facilities, heating fuel, club, sports facility, staff housing, assistance in cultivation of household plots, daycare, home maintenance, transportation, communications, child allowances, food at subsidized prices, cultural events, recreational events and subsidy from the CAE for health care and education (not listed all in one place, see Lerman et al., 1994:16-17, 97)

> Eight of us boldest certificate holders managed to demand our lands last year. We had to fight for our land up to the level of the Cherkasy court. They gave us the worst possible land, land that is not even in our village, but in the neighboring village of Khovkivtsi. So be it. But the majority of people never even received their certificates. The kolhosp administration deceived them, collecting their signatures under false pretenses, having them unwittingly sign a document indicating that they were in receipt of their certificates but that they had voluntarily handed them over to the director of the kolhosp. The director then created a closed-type shareholding association. When they held the meeting to create the ZAT, they had a list of who was allowed in. Only those invited –no undesirables, no pensioners. No one in the village understands how one enters this association, how one leaves the association. They have not seen the statute. Many able-bodied people were automatically barred from membership. Those who had some ambition were terrorized and humiliated. Many young people are forced to look for work outside of the village. We have been trying to organize a meeting for two months now, so that we can get some answers. We went to the oblast state administration and we went to the Presidential administration, but we get no answers to our complaints or our petitions. During the last meeting when there was a representative from the Oblast division of agrarian politics present and they would not let us in. [Tetiana, interview November 2000]

The exchange between Tetiana and the Parliamentarian on September 29 at the Women in Politics Seminar pinned her against Oleksij Marchenko, a member of the Agrarian Committee under Kateryna Vashchuk, head of the Committee on Questions of Agrarian Politics and Land Relations. The confrontation ended up with him pleading patience and Tetiana's getting hot under the collar. If she were to wait patiently while these wrongs were being perpetrated, she contended, they would all wake up empty-handed. And if they let things just go the way they are unfolding without intervening---"Ukraine will cease to exist!" she yelled, "Ukrajiny *ne bude*!" Marchenko replied that "It is good that in your village such people as yourself are ready to

protect their rights and the rights of others. And until such time that there are more like you, you are right, there will be no Ukraine!"

Despite his recognition that she was up against a serious problem and doing extremely sensitive community work, he turned on her in a patronizing tone, suggesting that people elect officials and they can vote them out. He used her gender against her in effect, making it appear that she and her group would not get a fair hearing, no matter how serious and right their complaint, until they learn to approach the political contest through the established male channels. He pointed out that "This seminar has brought you together here for you to learn the ways and content of activism—so that you will acquire the habit of getting your points across not emotionally but within the framework of the law, the right way." There is no way that Tetiana missed the patriarchal assumptions behind his stance, and neither did anyone else listening, according to the comments afterwards. Her direct challenge to him was that he was telling women to be unemotional while they are being cheated, and then pretends that nothing is happening. She was disillusioned that parliament deputies do not know or care what is going on and will not listen when it is inconvenient to do so and discredit what women are reporting from the ground where they live and are trying to get justice. As she saw it the male machinery was in cahoots and working against her and the people for their own personal gain.

By the time I left Ukraine, Tetiana's group, which included her sister in law, best friend, a neighbor and a few of the other activists, was well under way to registering as a chapter of the national Soiuz Ukrainok organization. The issue of land reform is very complicated and there are no clear answers to Ukraine's problems. However, these women were standing up for their rights in the face of a resistant patriarchal regime and under personal threat. Their most important point was that people have the right to exercise their legal choices, and as an important

side issue, this includes women, who are after all landowners, too, and can fight just as well as the men.

The New Soiuz Ukrainok Chapter in Khrystynivka

Three women came to the Women in Politics Seminar of September 29 2000 from the city of Khrystynivka, a neighbor of Uman in the far west end of the Oblast. During the lunch break, when we ate cafeteria style, we started to talk and they invited me to visit them in the evening at the October Hotel where the program was putting them up for the weekend. They were all sharing one room, and the atmosphere was much like an evening after a day's conference—some were tired, others wanted to go out on the town and see the sights of the big city, Cherkasy. The women from Khrystynivka and I sat on the beds and pulled up a small table we set out with snacks and started to talk about the Soiuz Ukrainok, how they had come to be involved, why they were here at this seminar. And they let me turn on the tape-recorder, producing what I called my Khrystynivka focus group discussion that night. Later that fall, when I had a chance to visit them in their home town and in their homes, I became very fond of them and of their spirit. They were a tight group of women mostly in their 30s, dynamic, creative, fun-loving, ambitious—a delight. They were putting a new face on things, altogether.

Oksana Saneyeva was the wife of the mayor of Khrystynivka who was a Rukh party member. Oksana was a young businesswoman intent on winning a seat on the city council because she wanted to clean up the environmental mess caused by the unchecked garbage dumping from the bazaars. Her secondary mission was tracking Rukh Party success against the CPU in her area of the Oblast, which she described as a communist sympathizing region. As the wife of the mayor, Oksana took the initiative to encourage women to establish a Soiuz Ukrainok

chapter in Khrystynivka. She explained that there are only three women's organizations in her city: the old women's council (*zhinocha rada)* that is now affiliated with the Spilka, a union (also using the term *spilka)* of women entrepreneurs who had started small businesses over the last few years; and this new chapter of the Soiuz Ukrainok formed by a few core women from the entrepreneurs' group. They interpreted the Soiuz Ukrainok as an oppositional alternative to the national structure of the women's council under Spilka, and as a vehicle for breaking into electoral politics from outside the former CPU circles. The three women had united to expand the reformist agenda in their city and run for office themselves on the Rukh ticket, which was why they were interested in the Women in Politics political leadership training. This was not their first training program, either, and they knew the IRI trainer Liuba Majboroda as a politican and council deputy, and it was precisely because of her involvement as a seasoned campaigner that these women travelled the long distance of 6 hours drive from Khrystynivka to Cherkasy for the seminar.

The women of Khrystynivka were keeping close watch on other places in the oblast where Rukh reformers were starting gain ground: the city of Kaniv, the town of Irkliev and the village of Chervona Sloboda, where the Lenin statue had recently been torn down by the local Orthodox (Kyiv Patriarchate) priest. This was part of the new alignment of political parties in Cherkasy oblast, gearing up for the elections of 2002 and 2004. The Rukh contingent, that had been a strong presence in Cherkashchyna since the late 1980s, were the source of support for "Nasha Ukraina" the Our Ukraine Bloc of Yushchenko. This bloc ultimately united several centrist democratic parties with the two wings of Rukh (Kostenko's and Udovenko's). In 2000, during the Women in Politics Seminar, the women recognized in Yushchenko, then Prime

Minister, a non-CPU careerist alternative to Ukrainian leadership.[14] Yulia Tymoshenko's *Batkivshchyna* that was soon to become the cornerstone of her "Front for National Security" was just being introduced to the region in the fall of 2000 by women in Uman. The consolidation of the "For a United Ukraine Bloc" in support of Kuchma—with the National Democratic Party, the Agrarian Party, the Party of the Regions, and Labor Ukraine prominent in this alliance—as well as the infiltration of the SDPU(o) were well underway.

Another member of this group was Natalia, a radio station operator and announcer who also writes short stories. Natalia talked about starting her writing career and founding the radio program in Khrystynivka and coming to a feminist consciousness within her understanding of what she needs to do for her community and country as well.

> It's like the joke about the wife preparing dinner, while the husband reading the newspaper and dozing off in front of the TV. She rouses him with a litany of domestic problems that need taking care of and he retorts "lay off with your daily troubles, I'm taking care of global issues here! As a reporter, I observe that in the regional or city council, it's the same thing. It's mostly men, boasting that they're taking care of the global issues. They're not interested in the local social issues, the daily cares—during those discussions they are always falling asleep in the council chambers. They just want the prestige; they don't really do anything there. And they get paid well for that! I see all this but I'm not a deputy in the council and I have no voice. This is why I decided that women should be in a majority in the council, even in the Verkhovna Rada—at all levels so that they can settle the problems of daily life for the pensioners, the children, the unemployed, and the youth. We should have more women. We're working towards the election in two years in 2002."

Another one of Oksana's colleagues is Svitlana, a mother of two small children. In the fall of 2000 Svitlana had been with the Soiuz Ukrainok group for 3-4 months, and was 18

[14] See Wilson (2005a:13-15) for a biographical sketch of Viktor Yushchenko.

months into running her own school of art, a tremendously fulfilling personal undertaking for which she says she got the courage after attending one of the women in politics trainings.

> At the seminar women talked about certain problems and constructed their own election campaign platforms. And we put together our campaign program also. We had a lively discussion. And I understood that truly with our own hands we can build our own fates. Really, the fate of our country is in the hands of such as us! And though we may be working alone at first, we will not long be lonely…In a group, all together! We must not be neutral to all of this. We cannot just say "my house is to the side of all this ("Moja khata zkraju") because the house at the edge of town is the first to burn down, because no one sees you there! But if people work together they will help one another [group interview September 29]

Svitlana's joining Natalia and Oksana in their social activism started with her realization that she needed to do something with her talents that would contribute to the community:

> Times are very hard. I realized that I cannot sit to the side and just look on. It took a lot of effort to get our school up and running. I understand that is it a hard time and I think that our children especially in such a time, need spirituality, need art, for their development, for beautiful values. I tried, and now I think that we need to emphasize more in speaking to other women, that we cannot just let our hands down and sit not doing anything. We have to help open people eyes. My husband and I are both teachers. He is a teacher of music, and I of mathematics [the art was a hobby]. And to find a position these days is just impossible. Having two teachers in one family—disaster! So if you feel that you must do something that will make you some money, you go and start to work. For half a year, we saw no income. But now, this school of art that we got up and running with two of us working (and we each have our own students)—is starting to attract people! We have realized ourselves morally and materially and we are happy.

Oksana spoke then about her political activity already focused on the elections two years away in 2002. She had been attending a political leadership seminar in Kyiv. She told the

following humorous story (*anekdot*) in which a joke is embedded, which speaks to the fact that people by nature are equipped to be free and the earlier Soviet system and its current remnants are holding them back from that freedom to responsibility:

> Let me tell you an *anekdot*, no, actually not a joke, this was a real situation…we were in Kyiv at a seminar and my friend Sasha (Oleksander) picked me up for the long drive back home. I don't understand, he says, you could be sitting at home through the cold winter, what do you need this for? And then he says, you know the story about the little camel that asks its mother "Mama, why do we have such thick hooves?" And the mother camel says, "Remember, we are made to walk through hot sand" "And "Mama, why do we have such thick skin?" "Because in the winter when it's cold it warms us and in the summer it protects us" "And Mama, why do we have such thick hard lips?" "So that we can eat thorny plants in the desert where there is no tender grass." And the little camel says "Ok, I understand, Mama, but what I don't understand is why we need all that if we live in a zoo!" And so it's the same with us. Why do you need all this?
>
> And I said, "Sasha, that's just it! I don't want to live in a ZOO [any longer]! I think we can change things!" {Oksana, interview, November 2000]

In a group interview, three close colleagues laughed and prompted Oksana "Tell her about the Ukrainian ladies who embroider and sing!" Oksana began to relate how the head of the Cherkasy Narodnyj Rukh party and she and her husband, the mayor of Khrystynivka, were not only political colleagues but friends. It was the spring of 1998 and she had just become acquainted with the *Soiuz Ukrainok* organization in Cherkasy. What she found at their meeting was a group of somewhat older women, several of them with gulag experiences, whose activism style was less than what her younger set was interested in.

> They were mostly pre-occupied with 'enlightenment' in the sense of cultural work. They embroidered and sang. Of course, we need that too, the Ukrainian songs are beautiful and it is important that they be preserved. But times have changed a bit. We needed not

> so much to sing songs, as *we need to act!*…I thought to myself, this embroidery, the songs, the *pysanky* Easter eggs, this is very distant for me—I love politics better! . And so I thought 'what am I doing here? I'm not going to sing, or make *pysanky* or embroider. What am I thinking, being here? I need some other activity.

But Oksana decided that she liked the goals of the Soiuz Ukrainok nonetheless, and that she would drum up interest for a Soiuz Ukrainok chapter in Khrystynivka that would pursue it own definition of what is appropriate women's activism. Oksana identified the production of Ukrainian traditional crafts as an element of what Collins 2000 would call a "controlling image" a top-down gendering label or concept, like the berehynia, which she would feel constrained in accepting. The women in the preceding examples struggled against controlling images. Tania in Bohuslavets struggled against the low status of being rural—and let other know that the village women "don't want to be frozen clods [of earth]!" They want to be part of the life and opportunity of the city, and are prepared to take care of themselves with new knowledge and dignity, and to be noticed and appreciated for the work they do. Tania of Tereshky, the single mother who returned to the village to help her parents and ended up a land reform advocate, is struggling against the patriarchy of the former collective structure which patronizes the peasantry and cheats them of their rights: "Don't hold people back from private farming if they want to exercise that initiative!" she declares. Svitlana in Khrystynivka, in opening her own school of art, is innovating cultural leadership. She does not reject traditional arts, but does not limit her students to it. Svitlana, mother, teacher, feminist, who had just picked up sky-diving to challenge herself, is a wonderful role model for them, a woman who is balancing both individual and social autonomy.

Oksana, who leads the women of Khrystynivka, was supportive when the women I group-interviewed there reported the kinds of cultural evenings they envision organizing for the

region's populace. Oksana supports their project ideas, not because this is the kind of activism that they as women are obliged to engage in, but because they want to do it. In the past they had experienced this kind of evening as a pleasurable and morale-building kind of activity and wanted to do it more. It is an activity that builds on their vision of the future for the communities.

Collins (2000:31) asserts that Black women's path to feminist consciousness often occurs within the context of anti-racist social justice projects. It is similar in Ukraine. The Ukrainian civic nationalist spectrum of activists agrees on the local national community work as essential. Among the women's organizations within this political spectrum I found both feminism and nationalism to be powerful framing ideologies, and found political power or representation, the struggle for the state, a strong motivation for activism. Moreover, in Ukraine's post-Soviet nation-building context, the concerns for community are couched in national terms, not in terms of the socialist proletariat or specifically women's solidarity, but in terms of national solidarity.

In their family lives, none of these women were seeking to out-do their husbands, or any man, but rather to forge productive partnerships. These women did not self-identify as feminists and yet they certainly are recognizably feminist in their social contexts. The feminism of these women is not the gender feminism of the second wave, nor victim feminism, but rather they are grounded in equality feminism still with a definite bent towards power feminism. They were convinced that every woman should have equal rights simply because she is a human being (Oakley and Mitchell 1997:29-55). The feminism of these women originated in conflicts with male expectations in their personal or community lives and through their leadership in activism they are coming to a formulation of self that expresses the complexity of their gendered and national positions in an integrated way.

Conclusions

This dissertation has attempted to comprehend the diversity of women's social activism in Ukraine by focusing on its emergence and evolution in one of Ukraine's most rural oblasts. It is an institutionalist account made from a feminist perspective of the emergence of a gendered social niche and its chances for nurturing women's individual and collective empowerment. Working from the mutual implications of gender and nation in the work of Yuval-Davis 1997 Vickers 2004 suggested that the cusp of nation-statehood may be a foundational and formative moment for the establishment of gender relations within the state, but also entertains the idea that the relationship may not necessarily always be detrimental to women. Post-Soviet nation-building contexts, however, may hold particular traps and pitfalls for women, given the Soviet-era gender baggage coupled with the socio-economic conditions of neoliberal economic adjustments to the global market. Looking at the Ukrainian transition to nation-state, women were not taken into account, remaining outside of structures of power, and women themselves appear to have been complicit in accepting a position of a gendered differential citizenship.

Since well before perestroika Soviet women were objectified as the subject (i.e. topic) of discourse of public sphere participation and this continues into the post-Soviet transition, consistently talked about in prescriptive terms (a top-down gendering mechanism) regarding their public-sphere activation in support of the state and the nation's common good. The women's groups active in 2000 in Cherkasy oblast appeared in response to post-Soviet conditions, but in many settings, familiar Soviet activist practices—as habits and historically accessible and understood ways of doing things—were among the first resources for collective action. Earlier in the transition, Browning (1992) noted the importance of understanding the nature of the Soviet women's councils as statutory bodies of the Soviet system with regard to the

potential for women's movements in the FSU. They did not bring about that anticipated movement over the next two decades, but they are nonetheless foundational to the continuation into the post-Soviet period of women's social activism as a response to new opportunities and problems introduced by political reform, increased exposure to global processes, and changes in the logic of the economy. (as Valentyna Ivashchenko of Cherkasy told me "You can't write the history of the women's movement without us!"). Moreover, the family-centered activism of the Soviet women's councils continues to figure as common denominator across the spectrum of ideologically-diverse women's groups well into the post-Soviet period of deep social and economic disruption.

In 2000, the women's organizations were dominated by older women, many of whom confessed not only biographical availability for activism, but also biographical continuity, many of them appearing to have been, earlier in their lives, among the younger women activists of the Soviet era. My focus on one province and the traditional sphere of activism brought me in touch with an important arena of competition among the national-level women's organizations for influence in the countryside and the rural electorate. This niche was the product of several factors, but it is clear that when women joined its work, their former affiliations and webs of personal relationships came to bear on their decisions as to the activist company they could and would keep. Each available ideological channel—nationalism, socialism, and feminism—offered a stream within which they could assert themselves in leadership, but each had its implications for self-presentation.and inter-group dynamics regarding the coalitions they could readily forge. Their personal narratives reflect the communities they represent by using broader social narratives as part explanation and description of their activist identities.

Nanivska (2001) had noted that participation levels in voluntary organizations had seemed to stagnate over 1994-2000, but did allow that the statistics did not reflect new groups that were not yet registered and counted, but which may be the harbingers of the future. In 2000 some of the groups I observed, even some applying the nomenclature of women's councils (*zhinocha rada/zhinocha spilka*) to themselves, appeared to be operating in novel ways, under the influence of new ideas and in some cases, younger membership. Browning (1992) who assessed the women's councils as inadequate vehicles for autonomous women's/feminist activism, might have been moved to ask, ten years later, when is a women's council no longer a women's council? And when and how might it start to work as a vehicle for feminist awareness? One answer may be, when it is a council in name only and represents a voluntary and purposeful women's collective project to help themselves as women, conceived and conducted autonomously independent of external state or political agents' explicit direction. In my conclusions, I will address the mutual interaction of the effects of nationalist and neo-nationalist community expectations of women with feminism which urges women to identify their social barriers and change them for their own fuller societal participation.

Women's Movement in Ukraine and the FSU

Among the salient characteristics of the FSU region's movements is that they operate in increasingly diverse, yet fundamentally cleaved political arenas. In contrast with the countries of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Baltics, Ukraine as one of the former Soviet Republics needs to be appreciated as emerging from a political relationship significantly more intrusive than that experienced in the countries of the less immediate Soviet sphere of influence. Ukraine's process of political differentiation bears the marks of the first bifurcation of a reactive

concern for preservation of Soviet-era status and privilege against the pro-active support for processes attending the establishment of the nation-state. Steven Fish (1995) noted that after the tumult of perestroika, the FSU field of social movement was not unexpectedly quiet. The arena of the women's movement, too, avoided de-stabilization of the state (even if critical of it) and concentrated on establishing themselves as a "community" (as a gendered constituency vis-à-vis the state) and as formally registered and state-recognized entities, a status not easily won during perestroika and even—as the narratives of my interviewees reveal—well into the post-Soviet 1990s, despite laws that allowed such groups to register and operate.

The current activity of Ukraine's major women's organizations—national-level conferences, seminars and round-table discussions—signals the organizations' official pro-state stance as well as their desire to cultivate consensus in a politically disparate atmosphere. These meetings may potentially generate dialogue, may promote opportunities for cooperation and coordination, but they also offer control in uncertain political times over participants and public statements emanating from such events. Outside of these national gatherings, the women activists operate in places that suffer from corruption, opacity, and low levels of trust. In rural and small town locations, particularly, the pattern was that members of women's activist groups knew each other well, as family, friends, good neighbors, or trusted colleagues. The new activist groups were face-to-face groups, not internet-generated networks. They were not looking to recruit widely and indiscriminately, tending to be careful about who is let into the group.

Another common FSU feature, the absence of political solidarity based on women's identity—whereby a woman's political views are deemed more important than her gender—is a also related to the post-Soviet climate of social differentiation. One side effect of this is the weak vocalizing of women's common demands which might lead to a quickening of feminist

identity. In addition, as noted by Hrycak 2002, the organizations of the Ukraine's women's movement were in the 1990s completely unprepared for effective activism or advocacy work, given not only the paucity of resources but their lack of experience and/or contact with international women's organizations over the Soviet period.

The immediate post-Soviet context in Ukraine was characterized by a conflict between the conservative Soviet socialist left and the national democratic right seeking post-socialist reforms. The international democratization aid community of the West first cooperated with the neo-nationalist ex-CPU government of post-Soviet Ukraine, and then in the mid 1990s, started to promote a program of women's civil society participation directly to the "grassroots" under the banner of gender awareness, treading lightly in a terrain that stigmatized revolutionary feminism. Thus the version of Western feminism –a new one in the typology of feminisms—was an apolitical one (Fraser 1997:2; Mohanty 2003:6) which rejected both the neo-socialist conservatism of post-Soviet maternalist activism as well as the premises of women's activism focused on the reconstruction of Ukrainian community, feminism being long-framed as irreconcilable with nationalism.

The (neo-) nationalist traditional women's organizations, being either semi-hierarchical territorially-based chaptered structured (like the Spilka and Soiuz Ukrainok) also did not conform to the decentralized movement model favored by Western feminists. In time, Ukrainian feminists were suggesting that the future of the women's movement in Ukraine lies solely in vitality of the grassroots without actually addressing the question of how in fact the promotion of a horizontal, non-centralized structure of women's groups would necessarily lead the movement closer to embracing feminism. Cassells (1977) notes the contradictory needs of women's movements: leadership and organization for effective political activism is just as important as

consciousness-raising among individuals for personal transformation. In the North American context of the feminist movement, these functions were segregated in different organizational settings (Ferree and Hess 1985:41-42; Taylor 1989: 479), but it has been since recognized that this is a false dichotomy and that consciousness-raising might happen in small groups regardless of whether or not they are embedded in federated structures or not, so long as groups act relatively independently and not in a chain of command.

The Reception of Feminism in Ukraine

It was a bad sign that in 1998, when Western feminism was starting to be more vigorously promoted in Ukraine, the then Minister for Family and Youth Affairs (a body which has gone through a series of renaming and ministerial demotions, embedded in the Ministry of Youth and Sports) Valentyna Dovzhenko, made a speech (commented by Irina Zherebkina 2006) the presented Ukraine's women with a choice to either support "parity democracy or feminism." Gender and feminism, understood to be at least overlapping in terrain were framed as being diametrically opposed, with the additional assertion that extreme feminism "is not part of the Ukrainian nature." As the holder of the new country's highest women's advocacy position, Dovzhenko, a career Soviet CPU now ex-CPU official, failed from the start to adopt any semblance of a feminist position, rejected "conflict feminism" but not even entertaining a variation of a "relational feminism" which might have been a segue into the psyches of Ukraine's women. (Zherebkina Who is Afraid of Feminism in Ukraine 2006). All of this complicates feminism's reception but does not mean that there are no glimmers of feminism in Ukraine.

The general non-mobilization of feminism in the FSU has been explained by various seriously inhibiting factors. These include the revival of traditional gender roles, the continued demand for mother-benefits, masculinization of the institutions of democracy, differences between East and West conceptions of feminism, and a pre-occupation with institution building in the transition period (Lang 1997:101-102)—all of which apply to Ukraine. The neo-traditional berehynia discourse, the dominance of maternalist demands in the realm of defined women's issues (which entrenches the definition of women as mothers and perpetuates their perceived responsibility for all aspects of family life), the continued and intensified domination of Ukraine's governing and major economic and cultural institutions by men (as their chosen specialization within the state), the struggle between individualist ("egotistical") and relational (couple-cooperative) definitions of feminism, and the transitional politics in which formal community social infrastructure was perceived to be all-important, all serve to inhibit women's freedom of creative self-definition.

Feminism had a rocky start in Ukraine in the early 1990s, when Ukrainian men publicly–in journalism and literary output—lashed out against the indigenous Ukrainian scholars and writers who were the early proponents of feminism in Ukraine. But a polemical exchange in 2001 on the pages of the Kyivan literary journal *Krytyka* reflects some of the fundamental issues being hashed out in Ukraine regarding feminism. Apparently, the success enjoyed by the Kyiv women's gender centers in winning grants and enhancing their domestic and international prestige had not gone unnoticed. A series of essays commenting on, among other things, the sources of feminism in Ukraine, the legitimacy of its voice, the validity of its analysis of Ukraine's troubles, and the vein of feminism to which most women's activism in Ukraine belongs, were published on the pages of Krytyka from September to December 2001. One of the

participants (Shkorba 2001) accused the Kyivan Ukrainian feminists of brandishing revolutionary rhetoric but actually following a path closer to liberal than radical feminism and of being essentially a resuscitated enlightenment project (I assume he meant, as a top-down exercise).

He also hinted, that perhaps the source of the patriarchy they are struggling against, is not so much an indigenous Ukrainian one as it is an imperial [Russian] or even a global capitalist one [the West].: "It would be pointless to condemn the energetic [grantsmanship] of our [feminist] sisters…However, there is something about their pragmatism that gives me pause: could it be that the referent of all this "masculinity" in our [allegedly patriarchal] culture is not the empirically real Ukrainian male after all?" (Shkorba 2001: 23, my translation). As he would have it, the source and embodiment of the new aggressive masculinity, then, is to be found, not in the Ukrainian male, but in the transition-period presence in Ukraine of Russian and Western influences, deflecting attention from the matters that Ukraine's men and women now need to work out domestically in term of establishing truly equal relations.

Interestingly, the Kyiv Gender Center community read Shkorba's essay as a full-frontal attack not only on the integrity of their feminism but also on their talents as scholars and on their supposed exploitation of grant funds availability. Most significantly, however, in her response, Vira Ahajeva (2001)[1] defended feminism itself but most tellingly and unfortunately adamantly divorced herself from feminism as a *movement.* She asked defensively, "Why is it that the extremism of the feminist movement as a struggle for women's rights (and there is no lack of such extremism) is automatically ascribed to gender research as a discipline of knowledge?"

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[1] Vira Ahajeva was the director of the Gender Summer School I observed in July 2000 in Pushcha Vodytsia outside of Kyiv.

(Ahajeva 2001: 28). It is clear (sadly) that the gender researchers see their activities as objective analysis, as an intellectual exercise, rather than a platform of activism, particularly demonstrative contentious activism. This supports Joan Scott's and others' assessments that gender had become a simplistic study of difference along the lines of sex and that this has become a way of avoiding taking a stand on feminism.

From the Ukrainian perspective, the meaning of independence for Ukraine was a reversal of the relationship of Ukrainian nationality to Russian nationality in the new post-Soviet order. Under the Soviet arrangements, both women and men who identified with Ukrainian nationality understood Soviet power to be connected to Russian cultural hegemony, but the genders were relatively (or formally) equally disadvantaged in this respect. With independence, a bolstered Ukrainian masculine order asserts itself (as assembling the machinery of the state) while women were subjected to expectations of heightened femininity—not only in superficial appearances, but also in substantive relinquishing of their privileges and constitutional right to full participation in their society. Through the berehynia discourse, women are subjected to a deceptive dual standard whereby they are encouraged to think of themselves as being empowered through motherhood and the sphere of cultural reproduction, even as they are simultaneously openly oppressed by new social patterns revealed in a litany of negative indicators (unemployment, representation in decision making positions, business management, and others).

In addition, the global feminist debate over which women's movements qualify as feminist ones was a thorny and potentially exclusionary one. Controlling images from the West perpetuate a pervasive hesitation to recognize any manifestation of feminism in Ukraine, despite the presence of an engaged domestic dialogue and self-professed activists. Zhurzhenko 2011

proposes the appropriateness of viewing the production of the Kyiv Gender School which challenges Ukrainian traditional patriarchy while moving into a feminist analysis as the beginnings of a uniquely Ukrainian *national feminism* (re-introducing a term coined by Amy Hackett back in the 1970s). She also detects a distinctly anti-nationalist feminism in Irena Zherebkina's Kharkiv Gender School; which stands in opposition to the Kyiv school in both philosophy and language practices, choosing Russian over Ukrainian and publishing for a CIS/international audience arguably more so than for its Ukrainian national one. Zherebkina's production, pointedly critical of Ukraine's nation-building efforts, is more readily consumed and supported by the West, but its impact on Ukraine is somewhat limited by its inability to reach out to the mass of Ukrainian women who need to understand the parameters of their own subjugation while still living within their society's circumstances and dealing with its immediate problems.

The one criterion that has been agreed upon by the global community for distinguishing feminist from general women's activism is the collective resistance to recognized manifestations of patriarchy. The new activist groups I encountered identified patriarchal structures—either in terms of Soviet era practices, or in terms of contemporary corruption allowed by global processes, or in the attitudes of the men in their personal lives—and worked separately and together to counteract these hindrances. But it is still hard to know and decipher what is happening on the ground, but there may more feminist-fueled activity than one thinks, even in places like Ukraine. Jane Slaughter wrote, "While we currently may be witnessing another 'wave' of feminism, it is so varied as to defy simple definition" (2007:239).

<u>Feminist Consciousness in the Age of Maternalism, Nationalism, and the Berehynia.</u>

How are Ukraine's women affected by the co-incidence of nationalism, neo-socialist maternalism, and feminist ideas in their social environment? Understanding gendered positions, voicing demands and cultivating coalitions are important advocacy steps that are obviously hindered by the acute political differences and reticence of women to risk political compromise, but may the reasons for the reluctance to feminism may be even more involved. What is actually inhibiting the expression of feminism in Ukraine? How do Ukraine's women understand patriarchy and how to they define their own oppression? Ukraine's women do not appear in general to be oblivious to their discrimination, just as they were not completely oblivious to the ways in which the Soviet system did not serve their interests. However, they were and appear to still be reluctant to voice it publicly and do something about it. It is harder to fight for oneself, and easier to ask for help on someone else's behalf—especially if that someone was family or the children.

Mother activism—as a major global trend, cross-cutting political differences while addressing environmental justice, anti-militarism, social welfare, and nationalism—straddles both left and rightist views, some aligned with the government and some contentiously at odds with it (Orleck 1997:5-6). In the FSU, mother activism as the most influential overarching motivation for women's Third Sector involvement across ideological differences (see Phillips and Hrycak 2002), is rooted in the Soviet view of women, not only as working mothers but as worker-mothers, i. e. the producers (or even prolific shock-worker producer) of the state's human raw material, that colors women's relationship to the state (Caiazza 2002). This positions maternalist activism as situationally variable, at times standing in defiance of the state (as in the positions of the OSMU), and at time in cooperation and in dependence on the state.

Overall, nationalism melds very easily with many aspects of this maternalist niche, finding value in the social activism of the former Soviet women's councils[2] and exploiting that activist niche to create the justification and foundations for women's assumption of responsibility for general social welfare through their voluntary labor in the new Third Sector. It accomplishes this with the assistance of the berehynia as a frame for social engagement that preserves the cherished communal values (of an ambiguously defined pre-Soviet or more recent Soviet past) in the communal present of the family, community of residence, country, and/or nation. Being an essentially nostalgic symbol, however, it is a construct of preservation rather than a dynamic identity that would empower women to use its creative potential to re-invent *themselves*. For this reason, Ukrainian feminists (diasporan and indigenous) fear that the berehynia construct—it manipulation by the state and media, and the uncritical acceptance of it by women themselves—is hindering feminist consciousness (Rubchak 1996:317).[3] It is the berehynia symbol that takes the current post-Soviet mother activism and neutralizes its potential, robbing women of their license to break rules and accomplish risky advocacies, and holding them up as saviors of the nation.

Women do not automatically accept the categories of identity that are promoted by the state or by social movement agents (Gal and Kligman 2000:116-117). Indeed, in 2000, I did not

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[2] For example, even the nationalist Aza Frolova, the wife of the Rukh affiliated mayor of Kaniv, evaluated the work of the Women's councils positively, praising them with only an oblique criticism of the Soviet period: "The councils actually had their positive points: specifically, they helped in the preservation of the family and also supported a sense of morality in society. That was one of their special assignments. It is considered a good thing that they could bring community influence to bear on situations within the families, through the women's councils. Of course, this council could not represent the needs of women, because the needs of women were not even much understood or talked about at the time" [interview, November 14, 2000]

[3] Andrea Dworkin (1983:218) also makes an argument that suggests to me that the Ukrainian tradition of the 'strong woman' would make it more difficult for Ukrainian women to admit to being victimized.

encounter women who labeled themselves berehyni. It seemed that is was men who labeled women berehynia.[4] It also seemed to me that when women did call other women berehynia, it was meant as a term of real honor. It is not common practice, however, for a woman to apply the term to herself. The women I spoke to used other proactive (even if self-sacrificing terms) to describe themselves: aktyvistka, dekabrytska, rukhivka. The berehynia model adheres to women differently depending on their age and status in life. During the course of this project, I thought of the berehynia more in its public sphere application, as it applied to the older women middle aged and older, who made up the bulk of the women's organizations membership, only recently realizing the degree to which it is affected young women, who expected to marry in their early 20s, are becoming unemployed housewives either by choice or by default, while their unemployable pension-aged mothers are often among the economic migrants abroad (Solari 2011). The post-Soviet neo-familialist discourses of the Ukrainian state continues the Soviet concern with family as the basic social unit, but puts the burden of financing childcare and education on the family, framing these new social arrangements in a way that distance the new national ethos from that of the Soviet communist past (Zhurzhenko 2004). These circumstances make it hard for young women to engage in feminist activization, both physically and intellectually. The work of Solari (2011), Hrycak (2011), Phillips (2008) and others points clearly to the fact that gender underpins the nationalizing project, the emigration patters, and social welfare provision in Ukraine, completely.

Ukraine's Gender Regime: Sites of Contradiction and Contention

Relational Feminism or Inhibited Feminist Expression?

[4] As Frigga Haug (1991:41) notes, there is patriarchy in "the unwelcome glorification of heroines that always turns up when something is going wrong"

The negotiation of gender relations by Ukrainian women and men was the topic of a puppet theatre presentation at the Zirochka daycare in Chyhyryn one evening in early December 2000—in which unhappy gender relations were ironed out through an agreement for mutual cooperation and respect—within the frame of the family (even extended family) and couple-oriented mutual understanding. Chyhyryn is a severely depressed city especially evident in the micro-region built for the erection (housing for 5000 construction workers and their families) and future deployment of the Chyhyryn nuclear reactor. The expected economic boon turned to bust when the plans for the reactor were suspended and abandoned. None of my interviewees alluded to regrets, but the men are looking for odd jobs and the women engaged in the shuttle trade, or doing primitive gardening with a hand hoe, just to have something to eat, maybe to sell. And many children have been left without caring supervision—if they're lucky, they've been dropped in the laps of their grandparents (conversation with L Batura September 19 2000). On December 8, invited to the Chyhyryn Zirochka daycare center, I was immediately impressed with how beautifully equipped and well-staffed the facility was, complete with a psychologist and art therapist who guided me through an exhibit of the children's work in crayon and watercolor before inviting me to join the other guests for a special program. There were several rows of folding chairs holding a sizeable adult audience –all grandparents of the school's young clientele—who were to be treated to a puppet show written and performed by the *Zirochka* staff. The children, in this case, were all at home. Natalia, one of my contacts in Chyhyryn, who was the coordinator of one of the six new women's centers being funded for the district by Alliance Counterpart (and to be administered by Zakhyst, a legal aid organization) welcomed everyone to this first gathering devoted to the organization of a Club of the Family Elders (*kliub stariyshyn rodu)* who would serve the school as moral support, since most of the children enrolled at the

daycare were from financially vulnerable families, who have lost either father or mother (*piv-syroty* half-orphans).

The puppet show was partly a humorous exploration of the problems of corruption, self-interest and self-aggrandizement as a male-gendered complex, but also a comment on the need for male and female Ukrainian counterparts to love and respect and cooperate with each other. The first scene opened with an old man puppet walking around until he meets a turtle who invites him to drink from a flask filled with a miraculous fluid called "Viagra." "Drink this" the turtle says, "and your stamina will return!" And once he drank he was transformed into a goat ('*koze*l' in Russian is a pejorative term, for "failure"). When he called for his wife bleeting, "*Babusiu, Melanko, Me-e-e-e-e*-!" his own wife did not recognize him. So he drank some more from the flask, and turned into a wolf. In this guise, he started to hit on a young rabbit maiden who beat him up. Again he called for his wife, who again did not recognize him, mistaking him for a dog. He drinks again and turns into a porcupine that no one wants to be near. Finally he says, "Enough of these transformations (*peretvoren*')!" and turns into a clown. The wife, meanwhile, has slowly changed into a snow-*baba*. The clown approaches her, "come to me, I have a new image ('*imidj*')! But she is coldly unresponsive. The *baba* suggests that "we need something of our own (*nashoho*) to reverse these transformations—maybe some *salo* (pork fat) will do the trick!" And the antidote worked: "How nice it is to be back together with you, *babusen'ko*!" he exclaimed, and she agreed but "you, my dear, don't drink Viagra any more—just love me better!"

The reasons for Ukrainian cultural inclinations for a relational analysis of the social territory to which feminism speaks are rooted both in Ukrainian tradition but especially in the contemporary socio-economic conditions created both by global processes and policies of the

state. However, upon examination, the construction of this puppet show suggests that it is the men who have been most negatively affected by the vagaries of the transition and Western interventions, with women playing into the analysis of the de-masculinized powerless Ukrainian male. All the *babusia* asks in the end, to thaw her out of her frigidity, is that they live in community defined by something *nashe* (ours), i.e. Ukrainian, and that there be better understanding and love between them. It reels the male back into the female's life with the promise of cooperation, but falls short of making a feminist analysis of what women need and what needs to be done.

Gendered Sites of Contradiction and Contention

It seems that many of Ukraine's women understand that gender relations are affected by politics and perhaps even that gender is in itself political. As part of the FSU formerly identified as the Second World, Ukraine's social movement field of feminist, nationalist, and socialist channels creates various "sites of contradiction"—a phrase used by Phillips (2008:16) to describe the ambivalent treatment of large families by the post-Soviet Ukrainian state. There are also other contradictions born out of the interaction of the gender regime with national processes. Since 1991, the government has passed reform legislation on various issues publicly discussed as arenas of crisis—the crisis of national identity, the demographic crisis, the crisis of Ukrainian cultural replication, the crisis of social welfare provision within definitions of public/private citizenship. Each of these crises has a flashpoint drawing attention in public debate. A major site of contradiction within the crisis of the survival/revival of traditional culture is the Ukrainian village which is threatened with extinction through its absorption into large agricultural enterprises that may be the logical end-result of privatization of land. . Another site of contradiction is the women's collectivities (NGOs) themselves in the context of the crisis of

employment and citizenship, since they are allowed to flourish on one hand, but are maneuvered into powerlessness and manipulated/exploited by political agents. Women's organizations are paradoxically both officially voluntary but also mandated by the program of civil society development, even state-mandated in some instances. Women's organizations are known to also be open to political manipulation, sometimes created expressly for the purpose of the exploitation of their access to grassroots community voters.

One of the thorniest issues for feminism to work out is that of how women are to bridge the public/private dichotomy, which exists in some sense and in different configurations in every society. Under the Soviet system, communism strove to expand public space into spheres formerly understood as private (childcare, aspect of housework etc) and made women's participation in state paid labor mandatory. Women came under a system of state-lead public patriarchy (Walby 1990) Nationalism, especially in the context of capitalism and continued state patriarchy, tends to push women back into the private space of the domestic arena (though not completely back into private patriarchy). Historically, the state has responded to times of social crisis by making provisions for or even encouraging or mandating private voluntary engagement by women in the social welfare arenas of the public sphere. In this manner women have historically applied their domestically-honed talents for teaching, healing, and general home resource management to the sphere of public social welfare. By virtue of the informal (and low-valued, unpaid) nature of this labor, the state expands the definition of private sphere into the territory formerly claimed as public. Women are drawn out of their homes to work in community under the definition of extended home and to act as mothers of the nation—not only to be mothers of the nation through physical and domestic practices supporting cultural reproduction, but primarily through care for the communal good—and to do so without (or

mostly without) compensation because a mother sacrifices and gives of herself without asking for anything in return. One of the greatest challenges thus is society-wide: the age-old problem that has preoccupied socialist feminists of the division of public and private spheres of labor that arises out of the social imperative for biological and cultural (in terms of socialization) reproduction.

To take a first step, Ukrainian law might make a concerted effort to unhook the maternalist language from the benefits for social reproductive needs. Child benefits should not be couched as maternal benefits and could accrue to either parent as parental benefits coming in the name of the child. For this to work towards a better gender balance, men need to be drawn into work in the sphere of social reproduction and women need to be drawn purposefully, by quotas if necessary, into participation in the political, economic, and science and technology spheres. Some of Ukraine's academics may be avoiding confrontation with feminism by employing gender. But for the non-academic social activist in Ukraine, making an acquaintance with the concept of gender is reported as the first step to feminist consciousness, regardless of whether the label feminism is ever used. If women can understand the gender stereotypes that are personally holding them back, they can start to make the feminist analysis of the patriarchal social structures that are holding them collectively down. Then they will be able to move to the feminist stance of refusing to tolerate the status quo and find a way to demand their equality. A couple-oriented relational feminism seems to be the best segue into women's consciousness.

Effects of Nationalism and of the Diaspora

Pavlychko wrote in 1992 (2002:53) that "As a feminist from a country in the throes of struggle for its national independence [I believe that] one of the greatest tasks feminism faces in this

decade is to understand its relationship to nationalism." (2002:53). Over the 1990s the Ukrainian women's movement history (Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Smolyar, others) has been promoted to raise the public's awareness and feminist nationalist consciousness. The strong presence of nationalist concern in Ukraine makes it hard to any internationalist ideology to share the field comfortably, however. Not only Ukraine's women but diasporic Ukrainian women too need to answer for themselves Pavlychko's question regarding their relationship to nationalism as potential carriers of feminism.

The pre-1990 diaspora may be somewhat out of step with the homeland because of its history of mostly Galician emigration, its long period of isolation (1950-1999) and because Ukraine is not homogeneously Ukrainophone (Wilson 2000:116-117). The Western diaspora is often accused of impose its own image onto Ukrainian realities. In the context of Russian homeland nationalism (Brubaker 1996:107-109) [5] the diaspora, understanding (with reason) that the threat of Russian imperialism has not ended with Ukraine's independence, is goaded into exercising a kind of long-distance diasporan homeland nationalism, of which there are many examples.[6] Thus, the activity of the diaspora within the transnational national community

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[5] Brubaker (1996: 107-109) attempts to describe the actions of Russia in its nationalist defense of Russians in Ukraine to get at this kind of interest from afar, calling it homeland nationalism. He is frustrated in this: because there is "no accepted analytical vocabulary for discussing or even identifying what I have called "homeland nationalism."—Perhaps this is also because many Russians consider Ukraine their space anyway.

[6] Some examples of the dynamic cultural influence of the diaspora, is the establishment of new (or resurrected) places of learning, such as the Kyiv Mohyla Academy University and the Ostroh Academy University, and support for the development of Programs of Diaspora Studies at institutions of higher learning (Kraliuk 2006:15 and Balan 2006:14). As part of a major youth initiative, the Ukrainian Scouting organization PLAST, formerly banned in interwar Galicia but popular in the diaspora, is currently flourishing in Ukraine, successfully competing with Ukraine's current representative to the World Organization of Scout Movements (WOSM, based in Geneva, Switzerland) a Yalta-based organization called the Pioneer Organizations Association

framework can be legitimately said to be promoting a counterbalancing campaign amounting to the promotion of ethnic nationalism in Ukraine.

The transnational practices of the diaspora have their implications and synergies (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). The traditional organizations are (potentially and sometimes actually) fertile grounds for ethno-nationalism, due to the diaspora's historical agency and its recent support for the ethno-cultural Ukrainianization programs. Diaspora women's organizations continue to support all aspects of the indigenous Ukrainian academic research and publications, sharing archival resources, granting financial backing for conferences, and providing humanitarian aid. The diaspora particularly supports families of former Soviet political prisoners and Ukrainian liberation struggle veterans; recipients of diaspora-granted scholarships are required to prove Ukrainian language fluency or the desire to learn the language. Thus, the diaspora women's organizations are implicated in the ethno-nationalist definition of Ukrainian and its practices may ultimately serve to encourage such a worldview in Ukraine.

The allure of the versatile berehynia symbol did not escape the diaspora and the diaspora did not escape it, either. The berehynia made its way into the discourse of the diaspora sometime in the latter half of the 1990s.[7] Despite the (admittedly anemic) warning in 2000 from Valentyna Borysenko, Kyevan ethnographer-advisor to the women's movement of Ukraine, to avoid the term (Borysenko 1997) as counter to women's interests, the Soiuz Ukrainok, Zhinocha Hromada, Olena Teliha Society and others, did not decidedly disavow the symbol. The berehynia has put

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of Kyiv (SPOK) which is based on the Soviet-era Pioneers; and the campaign for recognition of the Holodomor as genocide.

[7] For example, a 2002 WFUWO publication bore the title Neskorena Berehynia (the unconquered berehynia) about the victims of the muscovite-communist terror of the 20th century.

down strong roots. In 1998, the berehynia even made an appearance on a T-shirt distributed at a girls' (PLAST Inc. Scouting Organization) summer camp, albeit with a deliberate feminist twist

The motto chosen for the three week wilderness session by the camp counselors who were all university age or young professional diaspora women was *Berehyni Vohniu* (the guardians of the flame). The T-shirt showed Rosie the Riveter sketched recognizably from the image in J. Howard Miller's 1942 "We Can Do It" poster. She is wearing a scarf printed with red poppies (another Ukrainian national flower) and an embroidered blouse exposing her bicep with the Ukrainian national symbol, the tryzub (trident), tattooed on it. In a speech bubble overhead is the motto *Syla, Volia, Slovo*! (strength, freedom, word!). (*Slovo* here has two possible meanings: one is that is may refer to the Ukrainian language itself, but the other is that it refers to a promise as in giving having given one's word.) This spontaneous feminist nationalist combination of Rosie in Ukrainian garb obviously points to the fact that younger generations of Ukrainian diasporic women are also eagaer to express their power feminism along with their national pride.

The problems adhering to the forging of a contemporary Ukrainian national identity and the issues of identity faced by the Ukrainian women's movement mirror each other. Ukraine's "diverse persuasions and values" (Zhurzhenko 2001:38) can be framed (a la Yuval-Davis 1997) as materials from which to construct a new identity. Unfortunately the democratization processes of the transition (which did not make gender inequalities transparent) were not at all conducive to women finding a way to protest and politically represent themselves. Neither Western feminist agents nor the Ukrainian feminist-nationalist diaspora provided material for effective activism. The fact that the Ukrainian diaspora abandoned its own socialist and

specifically feminist historical roots also means that it failed to prepare a path for feminism's acceptance as an unquestioned element of Ukrainian culture in post-Soviet Ukraine.

Diaspora women have, however, also infused a measure of feminism into flows of communication within the Ukrainian transnational national community; and they have to a degree also reasserted themselves in a feminist mode in their own diasporic communities.[8] An interesting quirk of diaspora's access to transnational channels of connection, such as those offered by the NGOs working within the United Nations sphere of activity, is that through them Ukrainian women's organizations, regardless of whether they or their members choose to identify as feminist, can participate in recognizably feminist activism. Within these transnational activities, the Ukrainian diaspora women are able to participate in the (albeit apolitical) feminism of the international aid donors and still maintain their nationalist concerns for Ukraine. The WFUWO as an NGO participating at the UN hopes to cooperate through partnership with Ukraine's Permanent Mission to the UN in NYC to further women's interests in Ukraine specifically and globally.[9]

The nationalism of the diaspora is also, however, necessarily different than that of Ukrainian citizens, being almost completely focused on identity and culture politics.. However to focus on pre-Soviet traditions as a definition of one's ethnic identity in a bid for defining one's legitimacy and authenticity (Yuval-Davis 1994:420) leads to "recreating who we no longer are"

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[8]See Pnina Werbner (1999) for a description of parallel efforts by Pakistani diasporic women in Manchester, England in the 1990s.

[9] Ukraine, represented by Ambassador Yurij Sergeev, is on the board of the new UN agency UNWOMEN and his assistant Olha Kavun is one of its vice presidents. Ukraine in the meanwhile under President Yanukovych (2009-) has seen the Ministry under which there was a Department for Women Affairs dismantled and currently there is no office, commission or person appointed to an advisory position to the presidential administration for women's issues.

(Bourne 1987:21) rather than recognizing that identities should be not an end but a means toward "struggling more effectively for our future as women and for the future of all women."[10] Ethno-nationalism too continues to create significant contradictions for feminism within Ukrainian women's organizations, in the homeland and in the diaspora. Ukrainian feminism needs to develop a more self-conscious reflection upon itself, an elaboration of its own historical specificity and a more open assessment of the collective relational position of Ukrainian women. Otherwise the Ukrainian transnational relations suffer from the homogenizing tendencies that nationalist ideology promotes. The common difficulty is the need to respect difference and recognize a state of hybridity as being normal, so that these processes are approached from specific experiences and not from idealized ones.

As it is, nationalism continues to surface sometimes in novel ways in Ukraine, which the diaspora watches with great interest. In these recent years, a group of young university age women, who call themselves FEMEN, have started to stage public protests in which they use their own nudity to provoke and shame Ukraine's government. These young women are using the most basic of their personal resources to shock and draw attention to themselves—scantily clad or bare-breasted, and wearing the beribboned Ukrainian wreath of the maiden on their heads, they carried placards declaring "Ukraine is not a bordello" and "teach our President" [to value women]. On another occasion they staged a crucifixion of the Ukrainian female body. These young women are making essentially nationalist demands (for national stability), a feminist demand (freedom from exploitation, particularly sexual) and a demand for social welfare aligned with socialist concerns. They do not claim to be feminists, but in their gendered

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[10]Dena Attar (1985) "Why I am not a Jewish feminist" in Shifra No.2. May 1985, cited by Jenny Bourne (1987:22).

activism they are making demands from a specifically women's perspective (see Klokun 2010:8).[11] The diaspora will surely support this.

Towards the Future: Gender Activism

In 2000 in Cherkasy Oblast, there were two national federated women's organizations that appeared to me to be the most strongly poised to reach the grassroots.—the Soiuz Ukrainok with its pre-Soviet tradition of populism and experience with organizing peasant women (not to mention diaspora support), and the Diya by way of the state's and oligarchic support. There was also a cluster of women's groups, supported by Western aid an operating through the gender concept, that were starting to create havens for women's potential feminist consciousness-raising. The focus of most activism however, was less directly on the issue of women's equality per se as it was on the women's status within their local or national community.

My fieldwork in 2000 uncovered decidedly feminist moments and directions in the work of what I dubbed "new activist groups" whose projects I regard as examples of gender activism, in that they not only merge feminism with nationalism but seem to transcend them in a collective effort of figuring out how to live under new conditions. The former women's councils served as the template re-defined to allow for new forms of gender activism in the new activist groups I discussed in Chapter 12. Their superficial form was that of the earlier councils, but their internal group dynamics and practices introduce a new style of community involvement.

[11] I am only surprised that their mothers—who protested the way the state abuses the bodies of their sons in the military's function of repelling aggressors on the state—are not more vocally protesting the state's passive exploitation of their daughters' bodies to essentially appease the agressers on the economy of the nation-state. Every time a government official—and even Yushchenko was guilty of this—makes reference to Ukrainian women as the most beautiful in the world and invites foreign men for a viewing, they are far from paying compliments; they are putting young Ukrainian women in harm's way

Most significantly they are not looking to the current umbrella for women's councils (the Spilka) for membership; rather they are seeking alliances with the other independent women's federations (like the Soiuz Ukrainok) in Cherkasy Oblast. Whereas Western feminist were promoting, through Winrock, a horizontal contact and coalition between grassroots women's groups, not only in-country but also transnationally as partners with other international women's groups (in the United States and elsewhere), these women's groups were choosing to align themselves vertically within Ukraine, allowing the national headquarters to create more formal coalitions for cooperation on the national level in Kyiv, while they worked together on the local level. Whether a group is a chapter of a hierarchical or confederated association of groups, the internal dynamics of the group can be supportive of feminist consciousness-raising if there is respect for each member's individual equality and value within the group.

From the Standpoint of Women

From the interviews with various women activists, certain women's perspectives emerged. Women expressed an analysis that men had taken over the opportunity of governing, making room for their networks within the new ministerial structures of the new country's highest state levels. Some women also saw male bias as keeping them from participating fully in a privatization of property and access to business opportunity in general. They also understood that this state of affairs was leading to rampant corruption, which they understood as keeping Ukraine poor and that this disproportionately affects women. Money stolen and deposited into off-shore accounts does not employ anyone, or improve the infrastructure, or go towards providing a social welfare safety net. Women understand corruption as a largely male-gendered

phenomenon. Ukraine's women refrain however from asserting that women would invariably be better behaved in these higher positions of power.

In terms of political representation, they expressed the idea that they needed different women, with different (non-communist) political viewpoints to get into Parliament and the oblast councils and other positions of influence. This actually went beyond the issue of whether Ukraine accepts Western reforms or chooses to continue in a socialist economic framework. It also has to do with women's legislation as a framework for equality. Because so many of the earlier Soviet-era female functionaries continued to dominate the national state bodies, there is no one (indigenous to Ukraine) speaking from a position relatively free of traditional Soviet gender attitudes. What is needed is a clearly determined and self-authorized voice to push women's issue in a matter-of-fact yet compelling way, to assert what it is that women need from and in their society.

A Thwarted Feminist Standpoint

On the domestic front, women feel responsible for taking care of family members who are hurting. Children are born and need to be nurtured, commitments are made to partners to stay with them through sickness or health, the elderly need assistance and end of life care. The judgement from the West that Ukraine's women are anti-feminist comes amid Western dismay and a degree of superiority. It seemed that women who could not accept the rightness of the feminist analysis simply did not have enough self respect—or were too much embedded in their circumstances to discern what to do about it.

Ukraine's women, accepting Western feminism as individualist (egotistical and confrontational) are wary of pushing it as a model because it seems to encourage further family

and child abandonment, more abortion and divorce. Abortion and divorce are not feminist solutions; making sure that women have the right to choose and have access to such solutions if and when they deem them necessary, is however crucial to feminism. Nationalists fear feminism on this count, but also fear that women will turn away from their cultural reproduction function within their ethnic communities, since these cultural embellishments require extra learning, extra time and effort in their reproduction, and a family-or –ethnic community based lifestyle to perform them (cf Jayawardena 1986).

The nationalism of the women's organizations of the democratic opposition, to whatever degree they are nationalist, is deliberate, not necessarily by ignorance or default. They cling to nationalism for its positive points of promoting a sense of community, and see themselves as promoting liberal values through the cultivation of cultural community (Tamir 1993; Linz and Stepan 1996; Miller 1995).

Feminism, politics of identity and community empowerment

Collins (2000:30-31) described Black nationalism as a context that enabled the development of Black women's consciousness and offered a platform for greater self and mutual understanding and cooperation through nationalist activism. Because the situation is so pregnant with possibility in Ukraine, we should anticipate a scenario in which Ukrainian women and female citizens of Ukraine would assert themselves in ways still to be seen and deciphered. It seems minimally reasonable to find the beginnings of feminism in the Ukrainian grassroots wherever women create a space for women to meet and share, when they create a mechanism for women to voice their immediate and long-term needs, when women create for women a bridge to a structure that can put their ideas into practical effect. Once they are fully autonomous and in

command of their full rights, they will be able to reach out from the boundaries of their nationally/culturally defined groups.

While ethnicity is not an altogether voluntary identity being instilled in early socialization (Smith 1998:205) women can and do choose either to support their ethnic community in vying for titular ethnic nation-statehood (national unity) or can and do choose to support an alternative national scenario which acknowledges the legitimacy of a polyethnic hierarchy of multiple identities compete for privilege within the state. The former is in the territory of ethno-nationalism, the latter (the version originally supported by the Rukh movement and the Women's Hromada) is in the territory of a civic nationalism that is gaining ground in Ukraine. The path to feminism fully integrated with national positions (and all other personal locations) will come by way of expressing a woman's perspective and finding the standpoint of women (Smith 1987:90). Nancy Hartsock (1987:159) explained that a standpoint is not simply an interested position (interpreted as bias), but that " As an engaged vision, the understanding of the oppressed, the adoption of a standpoint exposes the real relations among human beings as inhuman, points beyond the present, and carries a historically liberatory role." She clarifies that she uses the word feminist as opposed to feminine in relation to standpoint, in order to convey the sense of the possibility of change (Hartsock 1987:162).

Feminism and Nationalism Together

I agree with Zhurzhenko, that in some quarters, nationalism as the dominant discourse in post-Soviet Ukraine, has co-opted feminism in its support; while socialism, discredited in its association with the former Soviet regime, is relegated to the undertow of opposition (see

Zhurzhenko 2011:176).[12] Nationalism has absorbed feminism as being in its service, for example, during the historic struggles for Ukrainian independence. While it is true that the historical Ukrainian women's movement was decidedly supportive of the liberation struggle, it should not be enshrined as fully in cooperation with Ukrainian nationalism at all times. It does a disservice to gloss over or downplay the moments of discord that existed between feminist activists and nationalist leaders. These moments of tension should be highlighted and used to promote a further dialogue between proponents of either ideology.

Currently, the historical women's movement is promoted as proof of Ukraine's natural commitment to fundamental equal rights feminism. It should use this position to protest all contemporary instances of maltreatment of women within the Ukrainian state. In some Ukrainian academic quarters, feminism is explored for its potential in cooperating with nationalism to articulate the legacy of Ukraine's colonial status under the Russian Empire and the Russian-led USSR, which is a legitimate angle to pursue. This should not however mean that Ukraine's feminism be blocked from taking social justice perspectives of its old ally socialism, which would encourage a feminist (women as a discriminated category) understanding of the specific social problems of the post-Soviet period. There is a need to cultivate a willingness to "rock the boat" of gender relations.

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[12] Tetiana Zhurzhenko wrote that "It is an irony of history, that socialism, with its emancipator potential, its historical ties to both women's movements and nationalism, became marginal to feminism in Ukraine, as in the whole of Eastern Europe. Currently, socialism is still associated with the repressive policy of the Soviet regime that, from today's perspective, was directed against feminism and democratic nationalism alike." (2011:176)

Whereas in 2001, Tatiana Zhurzhenko was hard pressed to find evidence of feminist resistance in Ukraine (2001:47),[13] by 2011, she asserts that it is no longer necessary to debate its presence, which is evident in Ukraine's variety of feminist discourses and academic gender projects; the more interesting question for her now is how feminist discourses are being marshaled in an overwhelmingly nationalist context (2011:173). The most important contribution of the Kyiv center's national feminism nation is the development of feminist arguments and theoretical positions in the Ukrainian language. The reception of ideas is as much influenced by the choice of language (the medium) as it is on the particular phrasing of the message. Whereas the Russian-language production of Irena Zherebkina's Kharkiv gender center may be accessible to the largely bilingual Ukrainian public, her ideas will also be unpalatable to much of that public since the controversial message is delivered in the "imperialist" language. Controversial and painful topics have a much better chance of being digested in Ukrainian. The production of the Kyiv group, however, also has a language problem. Being academically high-brow, it is inaccessible to those whose Ukrainian language skills are weak. This is a problem not only for the domestic Russophone Ukrainian public; the diaspora would also benefit from accessibly-written editorials on what today constitutes *Ukrainian*.

A Future Nationalist Feminism?

What is missing in Ukraine, however, is a socialist feminism in terms of a social justice approach. Socialist feminism with its dual grounds of an analysis of patriarchy based on male domination and capitalist exploitation of women's labor is having the least success in post-Soviet Ukraine. It seems, however, that advocacy for renewed state benefits for women, as a kind of

[13] At the time, Zhurzhenko wrote "Women's resistance identity based on the visible or hidden rejection of traditional gender roles (which in the West became the basis for various forms of women's and feminist movements) is virtually absent in contemporary Ukrainian society" (2001:47).

post-Soviet Ukrainian social-welfare feminism (Brenner 1996: 54-55)[14] would be able to find fertile ground. Of greatest concern, however, is the arena of Ukraine's politics. Fueled by the confrontation between Ukrainian and Soviet nationalism and the neo-socialist reaction to loss of social safety nets, it constitutes the backdrop against which feminism needs to maneuver and find a path into women's social awareness.

Ukraine's political system as it currently exists holds little promise for change, except for the fact that grassroots organizations and civic movements—to the extent that they are independent and self-motivated—should be able to exert pressure on political parties for critical reforms (Zawada 2011:16).[15] Today Ukraine is contending with new challenges that require a re-negotiation and protection of the rights of all national groupings. "Women's organizations operate at a crucial border between civil society and the state and create new hope that citizenship can be expanded and that a political consensus for greater social justice can be negotiated" (Jacquette 1991:233). The traditional women's organizations, while they may not appear to be specifically feminist, do touch the lives of people in the provinces where many crucial issues are being fought out and where the voters live. These organizations are an important presence on the local levels and significant contestants on the national level. As politicizers of women's awareness they are important for the future of the women's movement.

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[14] Johanna Brenner (1996:54-55) describes the shift from socialist feminism to social-welfare feminism in the United States as a shift in emphasis from the self-organization of women to the advocacy for state benefits for women.

[15] Zenon Zawada, regular reporter for the Ukrainian Weekly stationed since 2005 at the Ukrainian National Association-funded Kyiv Press Bureau wrote a "reporter's notebook" column for the February 6, 2011 issue entitled "Our Hopes for Ukraine."

Herr 2003 describes a (Third World post-revolutionary) nationalist feminism—nationalist in its defense of nation-state against neo-colonial manipulations of its economy and culture, and feminist in its monitoring of nationalist leaders' commitment to promises made to women as citizens of a newly independent nation-state. Nationalist feminists would address problems of women's under/unemployment or exploitation within neoliberal capitalist economies, emigration patterns and exploitation in the global job market. They would try to intervene on the national level for the global standing of their nation-state and its women. Although Herr's analysis seems to assume the prior existence of a strong feminist movement before the post-independence interventions of a nationalist feminism, the thought still remains that a nationalist focus of feminist efforts is a plausible variant and uniquely unhooks feminism from obligatory internationalism.

For Ukraine's future, it seems to me that feminists could push for the reintroduction of women's quotas to achieve parity in the higher councils, including the Supreme Parliament (this would be with the UN's support as CEDAW has recommended this before). Ukraine will need also to start taking local self-government seriously, so that women's parity on these levels would obtain political significance. Ukraine's women's grassroots groups should continue to integrate feminist goals with national positions. It is also important that Ukraine's national feminism go beyond the analysis of gendered images in Ukraine's past and contemporary culture, the berehynia concept included. This sort of analysis serves only to perpetuate the images, when what is needed is an analysis of how they influence women's lives, how they are enforced, how and why women compromise to accept them and how women can circumvent the social relations that encourage patriarchal patterns and keep women under their control.

The path to feminism fully integrated with national positions (and all other personal locations) will come by way of expressing a woman's perspective and ultimately finding the feminist perspective which has a liberatory effect (Hartsock 1987: 162). Theoretically, then it may be possible to engage int the kind of coalition-forging model proposed by Yuval-Davis (1994a, 1997) to bring across ideologically diverse women's groups and other constituencies into a negotiation that she calls "transversal politics" (1994:422). Within this framework every standpoint is granted equal weight, and projects that establish conditions of social justice for all are developed. In Ukraine, where common ground is ever-narrowing and positions are solidifying, the problems apparently need to be approached from an angle similar to this. Herr 2003:138 also offers a view to how Third World feminists have learned to cooperate across different communities to create coalitions (also called "transnational solidarities" or "affiliations") in which the important thing is not so much the actual identity of the participants as much as the cooperation in a joint practice of resistance (to an identified patriarchal structure).

Vickers' (20004) suggested that gender relations within nation need to be unhooked from those under the state and points to the creation of nation-state as a critical juncture. The berehynia as the prime top-down gendering identity promoted by the state, is one that operated within the nation (nationality) before independent statehood within the context of a cultural (nationalist) resistance project that invovled both men and women. Co-opted by a neo-nationalist state, it was applied, in an extension of Soviet era attitudes, into a purely feminine gendered citizenship identity. It now sits at the crux of the problems Ukraine's women have with their internal gender regime independent Ukraine. The demographic crisis and the socio-economic disaster of transition both serve to encourage women to apply strategies for physical and economic survival. This discourages them from alienating potential partners in coping with

economic insecurity, thus promoting couple-cooperation and making relational feminism more palatable than an autonomous feminism which may lead to relational antagonism.

The Ukrainian diaspora, whose women have often moved from the position of a feminist nationalism, has developed habits of ethnic non-assimilation and now presses expectations of cultural renovation in Ukraine, burdening Ukraine's women with an added dimension of cultural reproduction. Ukraine's women suffer primarily from public patriarchy (Walby 1996: 243) through all six structures identified by Walby (1990)—the spheres of the household, paid employment, male violence, sexuality, cultural institutions, and the state—combinations of which serve to maintain culture-specific gender regimes (Walby 1997:6). Within the pre-independence national community (in the Ukrainian SSR and in the diaspora) the ethnic community's gender regime was operative mainly within the spheres of domestic and sexual relations, as well as the community's defining cultural institutions. The focus of the women's rights and feminist inclinations in this universe is on status within the ethnic/national community. At the moment of nation-statehood, these relations expand into public economic, political and national media spheres, where indicators of gender inequality start to more starkly reflect the traditionally underlying oppressions.

Against a backdrop of nationalist-socialist conflict, feminism as a third platform could help to unite men as a feminized gender category to the women in a feminist front to redefine the Ukrainian position against corruption and new structures of exploitation. At a time when nationalist women feel uncomfortable taking on feminism, an understanding of feminism as specifically nationalist in focus (vs national in cultural character) may help. A move from feminist nationalism to a specifically nationalist feminism may potentially and not unrealistically

open up a common platform for both Ukraine's men and women to lead them out of the morass of political disunity in the future.

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