SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF UKRAINIAN DIASPORA AND ITS ACTIONS IN SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE IN NOVEMBER 2013 – MARCH 2014

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Social and Political Life of Ukrainian Diaspora and its actions in support for Ukraine In November 2013 – March 2014

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Résumé: Ce papier étudie les principales étapes de la formation de la diaspora ukrainienne, son nombre et ses activités sociales et politiques dans la période d’après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Une attention particulière est accordée aux actions de la diaspora en soutien de l’Ukraine pendant la Révolution de la Dignité.


Abstract: This paper examines the main stages of the Ukrainian Diaspora formation, its quantity and social and political activities in the postwar period. Special attention is given to actions in support for Ukraine during the Revolution of dignity.

Keywords: Ukrainian Diaspora, Euromaidan, The Central State Archives of Foreign Ukrainica, “The viche”, The Revolution of Dignity.

Резюме: У статті досліджуються основні етапи формування та чисельність української діаспори, її громадсько-політична діяльність у повоєнний період. Особлива увага приділяється акціям на підтримку України під час Революції Гідності.

Ключові слова: Українська Діаспора, Євромайдан, Центральний державний архів зарубіжної україніки, “віче”, Революція Гідності.
Nowadays the Ukrainian Diaspora amounts about 15 million people all over the world, always playing an active role in support for Ukraine. Events at the end of 2013–in 2014 in Ukraine were not an exception of the rule. According to different sources the number of Ukrainian all over the world ranges from 11 to more than 30 million people\(^1\). The number varies due to different approaches to the definition of “Ukrainian”. Some researchers consider all the people with Ukrainian roots in the 1st and 2nd generations of ancestors to be Ukrainians, while others use the official statistics reports or number only those who position themselves as Ukrainians. Also there is a large number of so called “temporary” Diasporians: emigrants who left to study or work, and plan to return to Ukraine. Web-resources also propose us different numbers of foreign Ukrainians. Thus, according to “Wikipedia” Ukrainians amount to about 15 million people\(^2\). According to the official Web-site of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) they count more than 38 million people\(^3\), while the Web-resource “Ukraine-Rus”\(^4\) uses even larger numbers. We are of the opinion that foreign Ukrainians (Ukrainian Diaspora) are those who left Ukraine or have a Ukrainian origin and consider themselves to be Ukrainians trying to keep their identity outside the homeland (it is no more than 15–18 million people). And we have to admit that it is especially difficult now to be Ukrainians and conduct the pro-Ukrainian social work in the Russian Federation as it faces the opposition of the government and society. That is why only 10–20 % of ethnic Ukrainians in Russia identify themselves to be Ukrainians openly. The process of Diaspora formation was initiated by the migration within the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires in the \textit{xviii–xix} centuries. After their collapse Ukrainian communities in Russia, Romania, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, and Italy were formed.

**There are four major waves of Ukrainian emigration**

**First (agricultural) wave (took place in the \textit{xix} century – 1914)\(^5\)**

The development of agriculture in the Americas needed skilled farm workers. Argentina and Brazil even paid the so-called contract agents

and transport companies remuneration for these workers. The Austria-Hungarian law did not limit an emigration, that's why the majority of immigrants moved from Galicia, Volhynia and Bukovina. In 1914, in both Americas the total number of Ukrainians was estimated in between 700 and 750 thousand people.

**Second (military-political and cultural) wave (1914–1920’s)**

Loss of independence of Ukraine and occupation of its territory by the Soviet Russia and Poland were resulted in a large number of government and military leaders, intellectuals and clergymen who had to leave the ethnic Ukrainian lands. They settled in European countries (Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland, France, Belgium, Austria, Romania, Yugoslavia, etc.). During this period Prague became a center of Ukrainian culture and science, along with Kyiv, Lviv and Kharkiv.

**The third (military-political) wave (1940’s)**

After the Second World War escaping from the Soviet regime and DP-camps, many Ukrainians settled in Europe or moved to Canada, the USA, Australia and South America.

**Fourth (labor) wave (since 1991)**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union a lot of skilled and unskilled labor workers moved to Europe, America, and Australia. There were also appeared new directions of emigration, among them Japan, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, Southeast Asia etc. In 2004–2012 largest Ukrainian Diaspora communities (of those who consider themselves to be Ukrainians) were as follows (see the table below)⁶:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian community</td>
<td>2,5–10 million people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. community</td>
<td>1,5–2 million people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian community</td>
<td>1–1,2 million people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil community</td>
<td>400–600 thousand people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova community</td>
<td>455 thousand people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kazakhstan community 313 thousand people
Argentina community 250-300 thousand people
Polish community 300 thousand people
Italian community 300 thousand people
Belarus community 160 thousand people
Czech community 130 thousand people
Spanish community 100 thousand people
Latvian and Portuguese communities about 50 thousand people each
Paraguayan and Austrian communities 40 thousand people each
German, British, Georgian, French communities 30 thousand people each

Active international position of the Ukrainian Diaspora, especially during the events of 1991 and 2004, promoted a great scientific interest in history and culture of foreign Ukrainians. Unfortunately, there was no common center preserving the documentary heritage of foreign Ukrainians. Thus, search of documents, serious scientific papers have to be based on, became a real problem for researchers. Therefore, in 2007 there was created the Central State Archive of Foreign Ucrainica as the only state center for storage of Ukrainian documentary heritage from abroad.7

At the end of 2013, our archives started to collect the documentary evidences which highlighted the Ukrainian Diaspora support of Ukraine’s struggle for European values and territorial cohesion. We have responses of dozens of Euromaïdan activists from all over the world. However, we have just begun to form the Euromaïdan archival collection, and hope that a number of our fonds-creators will keep growing. We call it the Euromaïdan archival collection according to the foreign Ukrainians’ response to the Kyiv events launched in November 2013 as a protest against the turn-down of European integration process. Over time, this process deepened being transformed into “the Revolution of Dignity”, but actions especially those of the Ukrainian Diaspora continued to be called as “Euromaïdans”. These events are a new bright page in political activity of Ukrainian Diaspora. In the postwar period

8 Hereinafter – The TsDAZU Euromaïdan archival collection.
and until now, Diaspora experienced three active periods. The most powerful Ukrainian Diaspora organizations are: the State Center of the Ukrainian People’s Republic in exile, the World Congress of Free Ukrainians, the World Coordination Council of Ideologically Allied Nationalistic Organizations, the Organization for the Rebirth of Ukraine (ODWU) and many others. Support for Ukrainian civil society in the USSR and later in Ukraine has always been one of the main directions of their activity.

The first post-war period of support for Ukrainian society by the Ukrainian Diaspora occurred in 1970s to 1980s when foreign Ukrainians struggled for the rights of the so-called “sixtiers” (M. Vingranovskiy, V. Symonenko, L. Kostenko, M. Kholodnyi, I. Drach, etc.) and “dissidents” (I. Svitlychnyi, Y. Sverstiuk, L. Lukianenko, V. Chornovol, V. Moroz, etc.)⁹. Ukrainian social and political organizations cooperated with international organizations, published articles in the press and made appeals to the international community. There was established the Commission for the Defense of Human Rights at the WCFU, led by Canadian Senator Paul Yuzyk¹⁰.

Another burst of activity of the foreign Ukrainians with their political support of Ukraine’s independence took place at the early 1990s. The leadership of the Ukrainian People’s Republic in exile (a legal successor of the Ukrainian People’s Republic since 1921) ceded its powers to the newly elected Ukrainian government¹¹. The majority of Ukrainian organizations conducted active work aimed at the recognition of Ukraine as an independent state by the international community¹².

The third period of support for Ukrainian society dates back to the period of the Orange Revolution in 2004. Although support for events in Ukraine was very active those days. Unfortunately, documents regarding the revolution are not yet stored in any state archival collections. Euromaidan events have some peculiarities in comparison with the previous periods. The first one is a wide usage of the Internet information capacity (share of news, creation of numerous Euromaidan pages in social networks and on the Internet, use of these pages as a platform to plan and organize events, or gather financial assistance for the Kyiv Euromaidan protesters, etc.). For the first time not only the representatives of the first immigrant waves, but also labor immigrants who left Ukraine after 1991, demonstrated the significant activity.

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⁹ TsDAZU, fond. 36, folder 1, item 41–53.
¹⁰ TsDAZU, fond. 36, folder 1, item 39.
¹¹ TsDAZU, fond. 36, folder 1, item 70.
¹² TsDAZU, fond 35, folder 1, item 22; TsDAZU, fond 35, folder 1, items 10–17.
In previous periods it were Ukrainians in the USA, Canada, Australia, France, England, Germany, or Eastern European countries who demonstrated their active political and social position. But Euromaidan events boosted foreign Ukrainians in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Scandinavian countries and even Japan as well.

**Types of actions**

Meetings and the so-called “viche” (as a traditional old Ukrainian manifestation of direct democracy in a form of popular assembly)\(^\text{13}\).

Picketing – a form of protest near government buildings, embassies or headquarters of international organizations\(^\text{14}\).

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\(^{13}\) A photo of the Madrid viche, *The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.*

\(^{14}\) A picketing at the White House (USA), *The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.*
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Motor rallies with Ukrainian symbols.

The boycott of Russian goods and companies.

Work with the Internet community and the mass media. Efforts of the Diaspora representatives to give accurate information in foreign languages contributed greatly to a dissemination of information and caused widespread support of the international community for the events in Ukraine.

15 Automaidan in California (USA), The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.
16 Boycott of Russian goods at the London supermarkets (UK), The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.
Promotion of Ukraine among the major communities of residence through a variety of activities (exhibitions dedicated to the Euromaidan in London, Berlin, Lublin etc., the ArtMaidan in Paris, master classes of Ukrainian arts, crafts and traditions in Tokyo, marches in traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts).  

Efforts to influence the authorities and decision-makers of countries of residence. The Ukrainians, especially in the U.S., Canada, Australia, traditionally have the influence on the supreme bodies of power and government and have the possibility to affect political decisions. A lot of meetings and protests have been organized near government buildings and international organizations headquarters in support for Ukraine.

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17 A photo from the "Euromaidan" exhibition (London, UK), *The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.*

18 The Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper and members of the Conservative Party of Canada in support for Ukraine, *The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.*
Financial assistance to the Euromaidan activists in Ukraine.

The financial and medical aid collected by Ukrainians all over the world is unprecedented. It also was of great moral value for Euromaidan activists who struggle for the democracy not only of their own country but for the entire world.

Anti-Russian propaganda.

Russia invested heavily in anti-Ukrainian propaganda including that in European information space. One of the main tasks of the Ukrainian Diaspora is a clarification both in mass media and among the wide public about the true events which take place in Ukraine.

International activities of the Ukrainian Diaspora.

Today there are several influential and internationally respected Ukrainian immigrants organizations such as the Ukrainian World Congress, Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, the Ukrainian World Coordinating Council, the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organizations and others. They develop and lobby the Ukrainian issues at the highest international level, along with the state authorities of Ukraine.

Geography of actions19.

Actions in support for Ukraine took place in almost all continents (except Africa, at least we still do not have the information about). In Canada and the U.S. almost all major cities experienced their own Euromaidans. For example, in Chicago and Toronto there were organized more than 50 support actions. In South America, the most active communities were in Brazil and Argentina. Australia proceeded to be very interested in the Ukrainian events – just as it has always been.

Countries with their own experience of what the meaning of Russia’s ‘fraternal embraces’ means, also provided a great support. Many citizens in Poland, Georgia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Czech Republic and other countries joined Ukrainians in their actions. Euromaidans flooded all the European countries, the largest and most active ones took place in France, Switzerland, Portugal, Great Britain, Netherlands and Italy. Not-so-numerous actions were organized in Japan, South Korea, India, United Arab Emirates and others.

19 The TsDAZU Euromaidan archival collection.
The important feature of the above mentioned events is the unprecedented activity of Ukrainians all over the world. In most cases they are highly integrated into societies of their countries of residence. But being American, Canadian or French citizens, they have manifested they remain Ukrainians as well.

Our task as archivists is to preserve as many documents about the activity of the Ukrainian Diaspora as we can. A lot of information, especially of the xx century, has been lost because it was not stored by archival institutions with their proper preservation conditions. That is why we conduct an active work on collection, acquisition, preservation and popularization of the archival Ucrainica documents, including those regarding Euromaïdan activities.

Struggle of native and foreign Ukrainians for freedom and the Ukraine’s pro-European direction are of great interest for many researchers today, and this tendency will only increase in the future. Thus, preservation of documents of this period is a priority task for Ukrainian archivists.

20 The term "archival Ukrainica" was introduced in the early 1990s. According to this concept archival Ukrainica records are the documents of the cultural heritage of Ukraine preserved abroad or the ones of foreign origin relating to the history of Ukraine.