

**INSIDE:**

- Ukraine's referendum still a subject of controversy — page 4.
- Dumka Chorus of New York marks 50th anniversary — page 5.
- Winter camping, winter sports — centerfold.

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## Government threatens to resign if Rada does not approve economic program

by Roman Woronowycz  
Kyiv Press Bureau

KYIV – With criticism of the Cabinet of Ministers' five-year economic program mounting, its economic chief put the future of the government on the line on March 20 when he stated that if the program is not approved by the Parliament, the government would resign.

The economic development program, which is a general outline of the government's objectives through 2004 with 22 specific economic targets, has been criticized by two influential lawmakers since it was released to the Verkhovna Rada for review and analysis on March 13.

"Let's be realistic here, how can a Cabinet of Ministers work if its program is not accepted?" said Minister of the Economy Serhii Tyhytko.

He explained that Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko had already said as much when the plan was released to the Parliament on March 13 and rejected any notion that such assertions were designed to put pressure on the Parliament to pass the program.

"The prime minister said that if the program is not approved, he would not like to work in such a government, one that is not supported by the parliamentary majority," said Mr. Tyhytko.

Mr. Tyhytko has expressed concern that the economic program could have a difficult time getting approved by the Verkhovna Rada because certain deputies might not find it to their advantage to support it.

Hopes for quick approval of the program by lawmakers suffered a setback when two leading members of the parliamentary majority, First Vice-Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Viktor Medvedchuk and National Deputy Oleksander Volkov, head of the Regional Rebirth faction and a close confidante of President Leonid Kuchma, expressed less than unqualified support for the Cabinet of Ministers' five-year plan in the first days after its release.

Mr. Volkov said he is "categorically opposed" to the program, while Mr. Medvedchuk criticized the government for the way it was undertaking its lobbying effort. Mr. Medvedchuk suggested that the government had acted "improperly" when Prime Minister Yushchenko briefed members of the Kyiv international diplomatic community on the working document prior to turning it over to the Parliament. He called the government's pressure tactics and threats to resign "political blackmail."

"By their scenario, a document of this type should be approved through a mechanical vote and to the sounds of wild applause," said Mr. Medvedchuk.

(Continued on page 9)

## Great Synagogue is rededicated in Kyiv



Efrem Lukatsky

A view of the Great Synagogue of Kyiv on March 22, a few hours before its rededication ceremony. The religious and cultural home to the 100,000-strong Jewish community of Kyiv, the synagogue was built in 1898, closed by the Communist regime in 1926 and turned into a theatre, and then returned to the Jewish community in 1992 by independent Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk.

by Roman Woronowycz  
Kyiv Press Bureau

KYIV – The Jewish community renaissance in Kyiv continued on March 22 when the newly reconstructed Great Synagogue re-opened amid much fanfare and aplomb after a three-year building effort.

As several hundred Kyivans lined the streets before the yellow brick building, which during the Soviet era was home to the Kyiv State Puppet Theater, representatives of the Ukrainian government and President Leonid Kuchma, leaders of the Jewish community and Israeli diplomats hailed the return of a central pillar of the Jewish community in Kyiv. They also acknowledged the spirit of cooperation and acceptance that has developed between Ukrainians and Jews.

"The history of peaceful relations between Ukrainians and Jews has been documented through the ages, but since Ukrainian independence they have truly blossomed," said Yurii Bohutskyi, President Kuchma's cultural advisor.

Vice Prime Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Mykola Zhulynskyi said the role of the Jewish people in Ukraine and Europe "in terms of learning, science and culture, holds first place." He added that what Ukrainians and Jews are practicing is "the art of life, the art of living together."

Also on hand was Vadim Rabinovich, the controversial Israeli businessman who was the chief sponsor of the syna-

gogue reconstruction effort. Mr. Rabinovich was offered the distinction of officially opening the main doors with a ceremonial gold key, but chose to pass the honor to the Mr. Bohutskyi, President Kuchma's representative.

The rededication ceremony also included a standard ribbon-cutting ceremony, as well as the traditional affixing

of the mezuzah, an engraved metal container attached to the main doors that holds parchment inscribed with biblical passages.

Inside the ornate synagogue hundreds of guests first listened to opening remarks by Nathaniel Oreper, the chairman of the Jewish Community of Kyiv,

(Continued on page 4)

## Appeal of the UNA Executive Committee on aid to Krasnodon miners' families

The March 11 coal mine disaster near the city of Krasnodon in the Luhansk region, in which 81 miners lost their lives, became the latest tragedy to strike the Ukrainian people.

News about this disaster has shaken the entire world. The UNA membership received the sad news also with great sorrow and is extending sincere condolences to the families of the victims of this catastrophe.

The unexpected death of a husband, father or son creates a tragic situation in any family. But, under the present economic circumstances in Ukraine, the death of the breadwinner undermines a family's means of survival.

During more than a century of the UNA's existence, our membership has always responded generously to every need of our brothers and sisters in Ukraine in times of their great sorrow. Now is the time to once again help those who are suffering. By making generous donations we will demonstrate to the bereaved that, even if we cannot reverse their tragic loss, we wish to make it easier for the affected families to bear their tragedy.

Checks should be payable to Ukrainian National Foundation Inc. (with the notation "Aid to Ukrainian Miners Fund") and mailed to: Ukrainian National Association Inc., 2200 Route 10, P.O. Box 280, Parsippany, NJ 07054.

Your donations are tax-deductible under IRS Code 501(c)(3).

Ulana M. Diachuk, President

## ANALYSIS

**Polish-Ukrainian Forum holds first session**

by Jan Maksymiuk

*RFE/RL Poland, Belarus and Ukraine Report*

PRAGUE – The Polish-Ukrainian Forum – the association established on an initiative of 16 people, including Poland's Justice Minister Hanna Suchocka, Vice Minister for Internal Affairs Bogdan Borusewicz, and Jerzy Rejt, former chairman of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland – held its inaugural session in the Parliament building in Warsaw on February 19, the PAP news agency reported. The forum is headed by Henryk Wujec, a lawmaker from the Freedom Union.

"The forum's main goal is to translate the strategic partnership of Poland and Ukraine into practical actions in all spheres, from bilateral trade through security and defense issues to scientific and cultural cooperation," Mr. Wujec commented. He noted that a twin organization, the Ukrainian-Polish Forum, has already begun its activities in Ukraine.

Mr. Wujec declared that the forum will be seeking to "neutralize and counteract"

*Jan Maksymiuk is the Belarus, Ukraine and Poland specialist on the staff of RFE/RL Newsline.*

any possible negative consequences for Ukraine following Poland's accession to the European Union.

However, Jerzy Osiatynski, Mr. Wujec's party colleague, noted that there is a great discrepancy between Poland's intended goals in its policy toward Ukraine and Poland's ability to achieve those goals. "We are not able to take Ukraine into our arms and carry her to the EU," Mr. Osiatynski said, adding that a policy of "small steps" is advisable.

According to Marek Ziolkowski, chief of the Eastern Europe Department in the Foreign Ministry, Poland's assistance to Ukraine on its path toward Europe will consist largely of organizing programs to educate the Ukrainian public about the EU and sharing Polish experience in EU negotiations.

The forum also discussed the issue of establishing a Polish-Ukrainian university. The rectors of five institutions of higher education in Lublin, eastern Poland, have declared their willingness to organize such a university in their city. The forum set up an expert team to work out an appropriate project and present it to the government and the Parliament of Poland.

**Baltics prepare for EU membership**

by Breffni O'Rourke

*RFE/RL Newsline*

PRAGUE – The three Baltic states have all set ambitious target dates for joining the European Union. They want to accede to the union within four years.

But the experience of front-runner Estonia may provide a cautionary signal to Latvia and Lithuania, which will open their own substantive negotiations at the end of this month. After two years of detailed talks with Brussels, Estonia has finalized only eight of the 31 required chapters of negotiations.

In the run-up to the start of talks with Lithuania and Latvia, diplomats in Brussels from all three states spoke to RFE/RL.

The head of Estonia's mission to the EU, Ambassador Priit Kolbre, said his country is more than willing to share with its Baltic neighbors the insights gained during two difficult years of negotiations. He said there have been frequent contacts on the subject between the three governments. His personal advice to negotiators is to be "tough," although he admits that "in order to be tough and successful, you should very clearly understand what is behind the EU requirements during the negotiations, and whether they are just positions in principle, or whether there is a substantial interest to maintain."

Lithuanian diplomatic mission Counselor Zigismund Pavilionis said that advice from Estonia is welcome but that his country is also receiving guidance from other countries. Mr. Pavilionis mentioned Poland – which he called Lithuania's "strategic partner" – as well as other advanced Central European candidates and Nordic countries like Finland, that have only recently joined the EU. Mr. Pavilionis said he is optimistic that Lithuania can catch up with Estonia's lead. He predicts that "15 negotiating positions will be ready at the actual start

of the talks, though of course we will submit only those positions suggested by the EU, that should be opened during the Portuguese presidency [until July 1], but in any case we hope that this year we will open more than half of all the negotiating chapters."

Latvian diplomatic mission Second Secretary Aldis Austers says his country would like all three Baltic states to enter the European Union at the same time. He added that Latvia, too, has prepared 15 chapters for the coming negotiations with the EU and hopes to open as many as eight chapters during the term of Portugal's presidency.

Estonia's Ambassador Kolbre, however, doubts the likelihood that all three Baltic republics can be ready for accession at the same time. "In theory, the three countries could join together, but looking from the other side, I personally believe that if the EU allows Estonia to continue without any artificial delays in the negotiations, that other countries could not simply catch up [with] two years of negotiations – it has been very tough work."

Ukraine figures in the Baltic states' considerations. Under the EU's internal single-market rules, Estonia and Lithuania will have to terminate their successful free-trade agreements with Kyiv when they accede to the EU. That means a loss both for the Balts and Ukraine – particularly for Kyiv.

Lithuania's Mr. Pavilionis said Vilnius is in contact with Kyiv and is willing to offer help wherever possible: "As you know, we have historic ties with Ukraine and that's why we would like that country to find some new relations with the EU, because it is so important in our part of Europe."

Mr. Kolbre noted that there are several years to go before the trade accords with Ukraine must be ended. He added that much depends on how quickly businesses in the Baltics and in Ukraine can adjust to the new conditions created by the imposition of EU tariffs. If the adjustment process goes well, he added, not all trade with Ukraine need be lost.

**NEWSBRIEFS****Court postpones ruling on referendum**

KYIV – The Constitutional Court of Ukraine has announced that its verdict on whether the April 16 referendum is in line with the Constitution of Ukraine will be handed down at some later date, Interfax reported on March 20. The court, which was required to make a ruling by March 18, cited protracted open hearings in the case as the reason for the delay. (RFE/RL Newsline)

**Vice-chairman: Rada crisis is over**

KYIV – Vice-Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Stepan Havrysh on March 20 said "the parliamentary reform has practically been concluded" and the country's parliamentary crisis is over, Interfax reported. According to Mr. Havrysh, the parliamentary leftist minority is not contesting the legality of the Parliament's actions. He added that the Parliament "continues to fruitfully discuss draft laws with the participation of representatives from left caucuses." (RFE/RL Newsline)

**Kazakhstan, Ukraine discuss oil**

ASTANA, Kazakhstan – Ukraine's Prime Minister Viktor Yuschenko met in Astana on March 10-11 with his Kazak counterpart, Qasymzhomart Toqayev, and President Nursultan Nazarbaev, Russian agencies reported. Their talks focused on increasing the amount of crude oil Kazakhstan ships to Ukraine for refining, the prospects for exporting Kazakhstan's oil to international markets via Ukraine, and Kazakhstan's desire to privatize the Kherson oil refinery, in which it has a majority stake. On March 11, representatives of the two countries' governments signed a protocol on cooperation in the nuclear fuel industry. (RFE/RL Newsline)

**PM upbeat on IMF loan resumption**

KYIV – Prime Minister Viktor Yuschenko on March 17 said he still hopes for new loans from the International Monetary Fund despite a statement by the fund last week saying that Ukraine had misled the IMF in 1996-1998. "We can look at the resumption of IMF credits for Ukraine with optimism," Mr. Yuschenko told journalists, adding that "we have an answer for renewal of the IMF program," the Associated Press reported. Meanwhile, Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Ministry has said an IMF mission will visit Kyiv in early April to discuss the resumption of loans. Interfax quoted U.S. Ambassador to Kyiv Steven Pifer as saying that Mr. Yuschenko's visit to Washington may take place in April. The visit, planned for this month, was postponed in the wake of the mining disaster near Krasnodon. (RFE/RL Newsline)

**Rada 'negative' toward Cabinet program**

KYIV – The Verkhovna Rada's first reaction to the government's plan of action for 2000-2004 is "negative," the Eastern Economist Daily reported on March 20. Oleksander Volkov, vice-chairman of the Revival of Regions caucus, said the document suggests the "dilettante attitude of schoolchildren toward serious problems" rather than a plan of action. According to the agency, the program is also "traditionally" opposed by all leftist caucuses in the Parliament, while Fatherland is the only caucus supporting it without reservation. According to Social Democratic Party (United) National Deputy Viktor Suslov, Prime Minister Yuschenko has already fulfilled his main task of rescheduling Ukraine's foreign debt repayment and is no longer "useful" to the president. (RFE/RL Newsline)

**Baku, Kyiv sign new agreements**

BAKU – Azerbaijan's President Heidar Aliev and his visiting Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kuchma signed a treaty on friendship, cooperation and partnership in Baku on March 16 that designated the relation between the two states as "a strategic partnership." Also signed were a 10-year economic cooperation agreement and agreements on interbank financial settlements, pensions and education. Presidents Aliev and Kuchma also discussed cooperation within GUUAM group of states, the prospects for exporting Azerbaijan's Caspian oil via the Odesa-Brody pipeline, and the Karabakh conflict. The two presidents pledged to coordinate their efforts towards integration into European structures. Mr. Kuchma promised support for Azerbaijan's aspiration to be accepted into full membership of the Council of Europe. (RFE/RL Newsline)

**Debt rescheduling plan postponed**

KYIV – The Finance Ministry extended until April 7 the deadline for its debt-rescheduling plan, hoping to attract a few remaining creditors to the offer, the Associated Press reported on March 16. Prime Minister Viktor Yuschenko told journalists that 92 percent of creditors had accepted the offer by March 16. The ING Barings bank, which helps Ukraine manage its foreign debt, urged creditors "to take advantage of this final opportunity to participate in the exchange offer, since no further payments will be made on any non-tendered, unstructured debt after the completion of the exchange." ING Barings announced on 15 March that it has convinced 88 percent of Ukraine's foreign creditors to accept the \$2.6 billion debt

(Continued on page 19)

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## INTERVIEW: Belarusian Popular Front leader on developments in Belarus

Following is the text of an interview with Vintsuk Vyachorka, chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF), conducted in Miensk, Belarus, on December 21, 1999, by David R. Marples and Yulia A. Shimko. On August 1, 1999, at the VI Congress of the BPF in Miensk, the party became polarized with almost equal support for the then leader Zyanon Paznyak (currently living in Warsaw, Poland) and Mr. Vyachorka. Ultimately, delegates elected Mr. Vyachorka as the new leader by a vote of 228 to 11.

### CONCLUSION

**One of the problems I have studied most is the problem of national consciousness in Belarus. Why do you think it might be possible to raise national consciousness? My view is that [President Alyaksandr] Lukashenka really benefits from the fact that in the countryside, especially in the eastern**

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**parts of the country, there is very little recognition of the historical roots of the Belarusian past as opposed to the Russian-Soviet model.**

Do you know the recent results of the population census?

**I haven't seen the new census, no.**

The larger percentage of ethnic Belarusians (after the exclusion from our passport of the section in which you have to declare your ethnic origin) – 81 percent of the population – declared themselves to be Belarusians and more than 80 percent among these put Belarusian as their native language. I suppose it is a totally normal situation. To some extent it is a result of the short period of the existence of an independent Belarusian state. The less there is of Homo Sovieticus, the more Homo Europeus emerges. The speculation about Soviet nostalgia, populist or Communist slogans was possible here only because of the weakness of national consciousness.

I think we don't need to raise artificially the degree of national consciousness. It exists. Our people don't identify

themselves with Russia; they know they are not Russians.

I have no figures in front of me, but I know from my everyday contacts that the main motivation for this "reunion" with Russia is not ethnicity, but the nostalgia for Soviet times. This is why Lukashenka was elected, not because of promises to restore Slavic brotherhood, but because he promised that he would return to Soviet times with cheap sausages, etc.

But if the regime destroys the basis of national consciousness, if it attacks the Belarusian language, instruction in Belarusian from kindergarten to universities, if it openly mocks Belarusian language as weak – it was a very interesting statement that he made at the press conference in Homiel that there are only two languages in the world, Russian and English by which one can express high feelings...

### Ultra-chauvinism?

Yes, it is chauvinism. I am sure that after the return to democracy in our country we will not have problems with national consciousness. There were no protests against the use of Belarusian language in schools, except in two or three places where the majority of students came from the families of Russian officers.

In the first half of the 1990s people perceived this as a natural thing. They said: I personally don't speak standard Belarusian very well (they usually spoke in the vernacular), but let my children or grandchildren learn standard Belarusian. The whole system of education started to be gradually changed from kindergartens, it was a quite normal process.

The recent attacks on history, the changes in the strategic perception of our historical science show that Lukashenka and the circles around him pay attention to the questions of historical memory and of historical self-identification of Belarusians. The authorities replaced Academician [Mikhail] Kasciuk at the Institute of History with [Nikolay] Statkievic, a specialist in the history of the Communist Party. This is no accident – it is part of the official strategy. Purposeful changes in the system of writing schoolbooks on history, in the Board

of the National Encyclopedia show that there is no need to construct artificially the consciousness: it is being destroyed by Lukashenka, so it exists.

**In other words, it should be a gradual process. That seems a little different from Mr. [Zyanon] Paznyak's conception because he always seemed to me to want to change everything immediately.**

It is not necessary to do it immediately. People do not oppose the process itself, so we should choose natural means for this, not break the harmony.

**How do you think the Western countries could help the Popular Front? What would be an effective form of assistance? To provide more publicity, for example?**

I prefer to think not about help to the BPF, but to Belarus. What does it mean? I understand the West has to choose between two possible tactics: to contact the regime, waiting when it will be destroyed from within, or to isolate the regime, supporting the democratic alternative. To insist on negotiations at any price means the first variant. The regime is not isolated and, as a result, feels itself confident.

For example, the Czech Republic gives credit to Lukashenka to buy grain. I suppose the grain will be used to produce spirit, to sell it in Russia and to enlarge the "black budget." No isolation means enough resources for the regime to suppress opposition.

On the other hand, support for the democratic alternative strengthens the democratic process in the country and the negotiations really can have real results. At the moment the planned negotiations simply serve as a decoration for the direct way to legitimize the regime after July 20.

Let me make one more digression about the negotiations. According to the "union agreement," elections to a "union parliament" are planned. Usually, Russian elections a priori are regarded as democratic. So, if Lukashenka combines national parliamentary or even presiden-

(Continued on page 12)

## Freedom March attracts 20,000 in opposition to Lukashenka

by Jan Maksymiuk  
RFE/RL Newswire

MIENSK – Freedom March-2, staged by the Belarusian opposition in the Belarusian capital on March 15, attracted an estimated 20,000 protesters and, according to organizers, was a success. Compared with Freedom March-1 on October 17, 1999, the protest ended peacefully. There were no clashes with riot police. Police troops, though heavily present in the city on that day, were not present along the march route.

The marchers, having adopted a resolution calling for political talks between the regime and the opposition, went home peacefully. Youths stayed for an open-air rock concert.

Miensk City Deputy Mayor Viktor Chykin – who is also leader of one of Belarus's two Communist Parties – commented that the march was staged with virtually no breach of the law. According to Mr. Chykin, the march organizers fulfilled all promises made to the city authorities regarding the conduct of the event.

However, in an overtly Orwellian twist of reasoning, Mr. Chykin the next day accused the march organizers of blocking traffic, interfering with public transportation and preventing people from getting home on time. He also announced that the authorities will no longer grant permission to hold marches in the city.

Belarusian Television its March 16 main newscast included opinions of Miensk residents who were unhappy about the march.

According to Belarusian opposition parties, the Miensk authorities imposed a ban on marches under pressure from the presidential administration and President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, who, they argue, was annoyed by the success of the opposition event.

Mr. Lukashenka told Belarusian Television that Freedom March-2 brought together a maximum of 7,500 people. A majority of the protesters, he said, were rich people in "mink coats" who are "offended" by his "unpopular"

economic decisions that have diminished their wealth.

It is hard to say how many Belarusians believed this statement. On the other hand, the regime has remained consistent in presenting Belarus's political opposition as a group of people devoid of broader popular support. Mr. Lukashenka himself has spared no opportunity to portray his political foes as the country's "scum," "dregs" or "drop-outs." Political analysts in Belarusian Television's main newscast readily transmit such designations to the entire country.

It seems that this time, however, the regime has sensed it is in danger of losing control over the opposition's media image. Freedom March-1, which ended in violent clashes between young protesters and riot police, provided a good opportunity for the state-controlled media to portray the opposition as a destructive and demonic force that wants destabilization and bloodshed.

Some commentators also noted that the October march, where protesters burned a draft copy of the Russia-Belarus Union, has offended many in Russia and diminished the readiness of Russian television channels to objectively cover the regime-opposition standoff.

Freedom March-2 has done much to counter the opposition's negative media image, as has the confession by a defector from the Belarusian Internal Affairs Ministry who said that last year's clashes were deliberately provoked by the police.

Some Belarusian commentators say the ban on marches in downtown Miensk is aimed at provoking more clashes during the various protest actions that the Belarusian opposition is planning for this spring. In this way, they argue, the authorities will sustain the popular portrayal of Belarusian oppositionists as trouble-makers and social outcasts. To support this argument, the commentators say there would be no problem for the regime to arrest several dozen protest organizers and do away with the opposition problem for a long time.

The regime, however, will not do this

(Continued on page 15)

## Quotable notes

"The West always assures us that it wants to see a sovereign and independent Belarus. Please, here you have [Lukashenka's] sovereign, independent policy. Why don't you accept it? This is a question that the West has so far not answered."

"Today's demand by the opposition that the authorities should sit at some table, either a round or square one, and negotiate with the opposition is absurd. I have already said that I am not going to create an opposition to myself with my own hands."

– President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus, in a speech to the Chamber of Representatives on March 14, as reported by Belarusian Television and cited by RFE/RL Poland, Belarus and Ukraine Report.

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"Where is the most modern air defense system today – even if it has shortcomings – the best and most widely acclaimed, including the West? In Belarus. Today we monitor the air space from Kyiv to Riga, rendering services to Russia and protecting our and Russian territory. Of course, there are many shortcomings in our army. Yesterday we discussed these problems at a meeting in the presidential residence, but the most modern and mobile army is the Belarusian one. This is the West's view."

"I can quote the man who has nourished neither great hopes nor illusions with regard to Belarus. In general, he hates Belarus – he is Zbigniew Brzezinski. But late last year, while at a seminar in Poland, he stated bluntly that Belarus is a state with no corruption whatsoever."

– Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka to Russian journalists, as quoted by Belarusian Television on March 2 (and excerpted in RFE/RL Poland, Belarus and Ukraine Report).

## Ukraine's April 16 referendum still a subject of controversy

by Roman Woronowycz  
Kyiv Press Bureau

KYIV – The international debate between Ukraine and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that has developed over Kyiv's push for a national referendum continued on March 21 when a Ukrainian member of the organization's expert committee on constitutional law said it would rule the national poll illegal.

National Deputy Serhii Holovatyi said he had read the preliminary findings of the five members of Venetian Commission of the Council of Europe that have been assigned the task of determining the legality of the national referendum slated for April 16 – all of whom have determined that it meets neither international democratic standards nor stipulations in the Constitution of Ukraine and, therefore, should be deemed unconstitutional.

Mr. Holovatyi, a staunch critic of the administration of President Leonid Kuchma, made public the concerns of the five constitutional experts during a press conference, which led the Ukrainian presidential administration to criticize the PACE for circulating the findings.

"All five experts agree in their assessments regarding the Ukrainian referendum. They are of a single mind that there are no constitutional grounds for holding a referendum and that it is difficult to determine the juridical nature of the referendum, whether it is consultative or constitutional," explained Mr. Holovatyi.

He said the Venetian Commission

experts see significant problems with five of the six questions that are to be put to the Ukrainian people on April 16. In the first question – on a vote of no confidence in the Verkhovna Rada and a change in the Constitution that would give the president the right to dismiss the Parliament should such a vote be supported – the experts noted, according to Mr. Holovatyi, that it is actually two questions, and therefore illegally structured. In addition, the first part is unconstitutional in that the ability to render a vote of no confidence by the people is not found in Ukraine's fundamental law. Furthermore, as Mr. Holovatyi explained, the experts determined that the question does not meet international standards.

They criticized the second question – which would give the president the right to dismiss the Verkhovna Rada if it could not form a working majority or could not pass a budget in three months' time from the moment it was presented by the Cabinet of Ministers – also on the basis of international norms. They also found that the phrasing "fails to form a working parliamentary majority" was too vague to be acceptable.

"The experts asked the question, who is to decide how to decide that a working parliamentary majority was formed," explained Mr. Holovatyi.

In the third question – which deals with removing immunity from criminal prosecution held by the national deputies – the commission members agreed that such immunity is an international standard, which guarantees the independence of the

(Continued on page 9)

## Great Synagogue is rededicated...

(Continued from page 1)



Efrem Lukatsky

Ukraine's Chief Rabbi Moshe Reuven Azman displays the Keter Torah (Torah Crown) during the rededication of the Great Synagogue. The Keter Torah is a gift from U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur of Ohio, a co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, in honor of her mother, whose parents emigrated to the United States from Ukraine.

before participating in a short service that was followed by the crowning of the Torahs and their placement in the Aron Kodesh (the Ark of the Law).

One of the crowns was a gift from Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus in the U.S. Congress, whose grandparents emigrated from Ukraine. It was delivered by Rabbi Yaakov Pollak of the Shomrai Emunah Synagogue of Brooklyn, N.Y., and presented to the director of the renovation project, Chief Rabbi of Ukraine Moshe Reuven Azman, several days before the rededication ceremony.

Although no U.S. officials were on hand for the synagogue opening, many sent letters of congratulations, including Sen. Joseph Lieberman (R-Conn.), Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.), Rep. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), the members of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus in the U.S. Congress and New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Originally the rededication ceremony was to have taken place the previous week, on March 14, but in the wake of the Krasnodon coal mine disaster, in which 81 people lost their lives, Jewish community leaders decided to postpone the ceremony and offer a memorial service to the miners instead. Members of several Jewish organizations raised some 100,000 hrv, which was delivered to the miners' families.

The Great Synagogue, also known as the Central Synagogue, the Brodsky Synagogue and the Choral Synagogue, was returned to the Jewish community of Kyiv in 1992 after a March 4 decree by President Leonid Kravchuk. The Jewish religious organization Chabad conducted the first religious service in the returned synagogue during Hanukkah 1992.

The reconstruction of the synagogue began in 1997 as a result of efforts of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress headed by Mr. Rabinovich. No one in the synagogue's press offices was ready to state the amount of Mr. Rabinovich's personal

financial contribution, except to say that it was substantial.

A plaque that honors Mr. Rabinovich's efforts now hangs in the synagogue alongside another one dedicated to Lazar Brodsky, the synagogue's first benefactor.

Brodsky, a late 19th century sugar baron, considered one of Kyiv's wealthiest men, funded the building of the original synagogue in 1898. He chose a site at the center of one of the two Jewish neighborhoods of Kyiv, located in the Lybid section in the city center (the other being in the Podil section). At the time the location was the site of a small Jewish sanctuary built in 1884.

Brodsky commissioned architect Georgi Shleifer, who already had designed the Kyiv National Opera House, the Museum of Ukrainian Arts and the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, to plan the structure for the new Jewish house of worship. Mr. Shleifer decided on a Gothic style for the building's interior, with delicate ornamentation and two rows of supporting pylons, while the exterior was built in the Roman style. However, in his overall design, Mr. Shleifer maintained the specific requirements and character of the Jewish Order.

Until it was shut down by the Soviets in 1926 as the Communist Party began to consolidate its hold on society, the Great Synagogue was the place of worship for many of Kyiv's Jewish elite. Among those who attended services there were Shalom Aleichem, the Jewish Ukrainian writer, and Golda Meir, who would become the prime minister of Israel in the 1960s.

After Kyiv was retaken by the Soviets during World War II, the synagogue housed a variety theater. In 1954 it was turned into a puppet theater. The return of the building to the Jewish community in 1992 marked what in Kyiv is generally considered the beginning of a Jewish cultural and religious renaissance. Today, the Jewish community in Kyiv numbers some 100,000.

## A Ukrainian Summer

Appears May 7 in *The Ukrainian Weekly*

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# The Dumka Chorus: an enduring tradition in New York for 50 years

by Helen Smindak

NEW YORK – Every Friday evening, without fail, they wend their way to Manhattan's East Village from various locations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, from Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey, heading for the Ukrainian Sports Club on Second Avenue near Seventh Street.

They pass through the club's recreation room, walk up a short flight of stairs to the second-floor auditorium and take a designated seat in a precise alignment of chairs. Amiable conversation, laughter, the bustle of briefcases and handbags, the rustle of papers fill the room. But chatter and activity cease and all eyes turn center front when the director strides in, stands before the group and announces briskly, "Let's begin with our exercises."

A chess tournament, you say? A parley of soccer players? This may be a sports club, but the assembled men and women are here for the weekly rehearsal of the highly popular mixed-voice Dumka Chorus – two or more hours (with a brief intermission) of learning new songs and rehearsing old repertoire, of practicing and going over phrases, pitch, tone and breath control until they are as perfect or near-perfect as they can be.

Now, in the final weeks before the choir's much-anticipated 50th anniversary concert at The Cooper Union on April 9, preparations have intensified, rehearsals are being held two or three times a week, costumes are being readied, the program has been dispatched to the printer.

For the 63 members of the Dumka Chorus, their conductor Vasyl Hrechynsky and accompanist/choirmaster Eugenia Paley, the project is immense, but not overwhelming. Though the choir members certainly appreciate their annual summer break, they are quite accustomed to long rehearsals; they're also flexible about spending weekend hours in the rehearsal studio rather than at home with their families or attending to shopping and household chores. It's a way of life that can be understood fully only by those who love music and song as passionately as Ukrainians do.

Singing, for Ukrainians, is a personal joy and a national treasure, and these choristers, representing a wide range of occupations and professions – engineer, doctor, machine-shop worker, photo researcher, artist, editor, bank official – have been indulging themselves while conveying the beauty of Ukrainian songs and music to audiences in the United States and Canada, as well as halfway around the world.

In New York, the chorus has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, Lincoln Center's concert halls, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and at the United Nations; in New Jersey, at the Garden State Arts Performing Center; and in Washington at the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center. They have carried their music north of the border to Montreal and Toronto.

The Dumka tradition of singing Ukrainian Christmas carols in area churches during the holiday season, begun some 13 years ago, brought an invitation from St. Patrick's Cathedral to appear in that famous edifice. Every year several Ukrainian church parishes in New York and New Jersey welcome the chorus and its Christmas offerings into their midst.

In 1985, celebrating Dumka's 35th anniversary, the chorus made a European concert tour and appeared before cheering audiences in England, Austria, Germany and France. A second tour in 1988, honoring the millennium of Ukrainian Christianity, included performances of Ukrainian religious music at the Royal



The Dumka Chorus poses for a group photo with conductor Vasyl Hrechynsky at the Ukrainian National Home in New York.

Albert Hall in London as well as concerts in Karlsruhe and Munich, Germany, and Strasbourg, France. During the choir's first visit to Ukraine, in 1990, when Ukraine was on the verge of declaring its independence, triumphant concerts were given in Kyiv, Lviv and Poltava.

The Ukraine tour is indelibly etched in the memory of Ihor Jadlickyj, a physics professor at Queensborough Community College, whose association with Dumka began in 1969 when he flew up from the ranks of the now-defunct children's chorus Moloda Dumka. "We came at a very opportune time, when Ukraine was breaking away from the Soviet Union, and there was such warmth and exuberance pouring out from Ukrainian citizens – it was a very moving experience."

Olha Hayetska, a Dumka soprano and active board member for 30 years, also recalls Dumka's tour of Ukraine with deep emotion: "After our first concert at the Philharmonic Hall in Lviv, we were surrounded by flowers; there were tears in everyone's eyes. Who can forget our visit

to Kaniv, to sing at Shevchenko's grave, or the striking students in the square in Kyiv?"

A retired lab technologist who authors Ukrainian children's books, she says singing has been her life since age 10, following the trend set by her musical family. Her father was the director of the Boyan Choir in Lviv and her mother and sister were musically gifted.

Laryssa Lawrynenko Zarycky, a graphic designer specializing in book design who joined Dumka 10 years ago, finds that "whenever we create music, it turns into an artistic moment." She credits Mr. Hrechynsky for this phenomenon – "he tries to paint word pictures for us, and sets the scene for the choir pictorially each time we tackle a new work."

A Dumka member for more than 40 years, retired draftsman Myroslav Kulynych vividly remembers the unveiling of the Shevchenko monument in Washington, when the choir participated proudly as marchers and singers. Nor has he forgotten the first long-distance trip (to

the Place des Artes in Montreal) or the sudden snowstorm that trapped three busloads of Dumka singers and family members on the Pennsylvania Turnpike for several hours on the way home from a Detroit appearance.

Dumka President Maria Danchuk-Reshitnyk is among the 12 members of the chorus who came to the United States as part of the Fourth Wave immigration. Three Liteplo brothers, along with cousins Mary Ann Liteplo and Gloria Horbaty, comprise Dumka's largest family grouping. Paul Liteplo, an operations manager for the Selfreliance Credit Union, and Ron, a Bronx dermatologist whose son William sang in the chorus during his student days at Columbia University, have been Dumka members for 25 years. Along with their older brother Merrill, a Massachusetts dermatologist, who sang with the chorus for many years, they have been adding their voices to Dumka's bass section. Other family groups include Bohdan Kekish,

(Continued on page 8)



During a 1990 tour of Ukraine, chorus members gathered at the grave of Taras Shevchenko in Kaniv to honor Ukraine's national bard with a stirring "Zapovit" (Testament) and "Dumy Moyi" (My Thoughts), with Semen Komirnyj conducting.

## THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

### Time to be counted

The United States is now conducting its 22nd Census of Housing and Population. (For the record, the first U.S. decennial Census was conducted in 1790.) While most households will receive the short form of the Census questionnaire, containing six population questions and one housing question, one of out every six will receive the long form, which contains 26 additional population questions and 20 additional housing questions – including significant questions about ethnicity and language.

As noted by Dr. Oleh Wolowyna in our January 9 issue, Census data provide the only information for estimating the number of Ukrainians in the United States, as a survey trying to capture a representative sample of all Ukrainians in the United States would be prohibitively costly. The ancestry question (What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?) allows respondents to identify themselves as being of Ukrainian ancestry or of mixed ancestry. The language question (Does this person speak a language other than English at home? What is that language?) provides a reasonable measure of the degree of language assimilation. In addition, the Census asks respondents where they were born.

These questions have been used in the past to estimate the total number of Ukrainians in this country, and to measure linguistic assimilation and assimilation due to intermarriage. Using a sample of full Census records, Dr. Wolowyna explained, it has been possible to make quantitative analyses of U.S. Ukrainians both for 1980 (when a total of 730,056 persons were determined to be of Ukrainian ancestry, both those listing a single ancestry and those listing mixed ancestry) and 1990 (738,400).

Since the same questions will be asked in the 2000 Census, this will be an opportunity to update information about the status of Ukrainians in the United States – especially crucial now with the influx of the "Fourth Wave" of immigrants from Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union. In addition, the new data will provide an update about the situation of Ukrainians in this country: geographical distribution, assimilation, socio-economic and housing characteristics, etc.

It is important for everyone to fill out the Census questionnaire, regardless of whether it is the long or the short form. The reason: Census data are used for a variety of purposes, including allocation of federal and state funding; planning of schools, hospitals and a community's infrastructure; determination of the number of a state's representatives in Congress and definition of voting districts. An accurate count of potential Ukrainian voters can also be used for political lobbying.

That said, we must underline two points: 1) Census data are confidential; 2) that confidentiality is strictly protected by U.S. law. In accordance with Title 13, United States Code, the Census Bureau cannot share the individual answers it receives with others, including the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Internal Revenue Service. It should also be noted that assistance to those filling out forms is available in more than 40 languages – Ukrainian among them. Special guides are available at local Census Questionnaire Assistance Centers or on the Internet ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).

Thus, there is no reason that Ukrainian Americans and those recently arrived in this country cannot fill out the 2000 Census Questionnaire. It's important for our country, our local communities and our Ukrainian American community.

March  
28  
1999

### Turning the pages back...

It was a year ago that Vyacheslav Chornovil, a Verkhovna Rada national deputy, long-time leader of the national-democratic Rukh Party and a former Soviet political prisoner persecuted for his human and national rights activity, died in a car accident.

News of his tragic death in the early morning hours of March 26, 1999, reached The Weekly as the paper was going to press that morning.

The catastrophe occurred just before midnight near the village of Horodysche, on the Boryspil-Zolotonosha highway close to Boryspil International Airport (located outside of Kyiv), when the Toyota in which the Rukh leader was traveling collided with a Kamaz tractor-trailer truck. Mr. Chornovil and his driver, who was not identified, were killed instantly. Mr. Chornovil's press secretary, Dmytro Ponomarchuk, was hospitalized with serious injuries.

Traveling in a separate vehicle that was following the Chornovil car was former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hennadii Udovenko, whom Mr. Chornovil's Rukh Party was supporting as a presidential candidate in the October elections. The car in which Mr. Udovenko was traveling was not involved in the collision.

Mr. Chornovil, who was born in Cherkasy Oblast in 1937, spent many years in the Soviet gulag for his outspoken views in support of Ukrainian national aspirations. The human and national rights advocate served three terms for "anti-Soviet activity."

His first came after he spoke out about the 1965-1966 secret trials of leading Ukrainian intellectuals and compiled eyewitness documentation of the proceedings. The result was a book, "Lykho z Rozumu," (The Misfortune of Intellect), published in English as "The Chornovil Papers."

In 1972, as the editor of the underground samvydav journal Ukrainian Herald (Ukrainskyi Visnyk), he was imprisoned once again during the wave of arrests that swept Ukraine. He became a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group in 1979. In 1980, while still serving his previous term, he was rearrested and sentenced yet again by Soviet authorities. In 1988 he became a founding member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union.

With the beginning of glasnost, Mr. Chornovil became a key founder of Popular Movement of Ukraine (Rukh), an organization that called for Ukraine's independence, and is considered a primary catalyst in the social upheaval that consumed the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He was elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 1990 and re-elected in 1994 and 1998. In 1991 he was a candidate for president of Ukraine.

On February 12, 1999, Mr. Chornovil was ousted by fellow national deputies as head of

(Continued on page 7)

## FOR THE RECORD

### NBU statement on allegations of abuse of IMF loans

*In view of the campaign of allegations organized by foreign mass media about the abuse of International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans by Ukraine, the press service of the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) is authorized to declare the following. (The statement was released by the Embassy of Ukraine in the United States.)*

The loans received by Ukraine from the International Monetary Fund were used solely for the purposes they had been directed to, namely: to support the balance of payments, to repay external debts of the country and the NBU, and for interventions on the domestic market to stabilize the currency exchange rate.

The balance of the receipts from the International Monetary Fund and the expenditures covering only the external debt repayment is evidence of the fact that during the entire period of cooperation, in 1995-1999, Ukraine repaid \$7.17 billion, having borrowed from the International Monetary Fund \$3.1 billion. In other words, IMF loans covered less than half of Ukraine's expenditures to carry out its external obligations. The difference (\$4.07 billion) was mobilized through currency purchase on the domestic market and external private borrowings.

In particular, in 1997 the IMF granted loans to Ukraine in the amount of \$282 million, while Ukraine paid \$1.18 billion as total external debt service payments. Hence, \$906 million was attracted due to the intervention on the domestic market and placement of external private loans.

Thus, both during the whole period and each year, in particular in December 1997, expenditures to service the external debt of Ukraine exceeded considerably the loans received by Ukraine from the IMF, which is evidence of the stipulated use of these loans by Ukraine.

Moreover, the IMF funds were channeled to Ukraine through the NBU account with the U.S. Federal Reserve System, which also rules out the possibility of abuses and ensures the complete transparency of the flow of money.

Transactions on the management of foreign exchange reserves have been and

are carried out by the National Bank of Ukraine according to the scheme universally accepted in the world and in the operative mode using international specialized banking systems; they were not connected with receipt of any private or political benefits.

In 1997, when, due to the inflow of foreign capital, Ukrainian reserves had considerably increased, some long-term deposits were placed with foreign banks under separate agreements secured by the pledge of the 1995 Foreign Currency Government Bonds. These bonds were not repurchased by Ukraine but were accepted as collateral from non-resident banks in order to secure the return of the deposits. All the transactions were completed in full-scale; the deposits and income thereon were returned to Ukraine, and the bonds to their owners. Such transactions were recorded in books; they were transparent and exposed to international audit.

It is essential to point out that one of the reasons for the misunderstanding was the fact that, up to early 1998, the banking system of Ukraine had been using the accounting standards of the former Soviet Union, which differed considerably from those applied by the International Monetary Fund. Starting from 1998, the NBU implemented international accounting standards and quarterly international audits. Thus, the possibility for the illegal use of funds is absolutely excluded.

In response to the allegations published in some foreign mass media, the National Bank of Ukraine asked PricewaterhouseCoopers, the renowned international auditing company, to check the NBU's transactions with its foreign exchange reserves carried out in December 1997. This audit confirmed that in December 1997 the NBU did not conduct the transactions, which by their volume or nature resembled those mentioned in the publications and therefore the allegations appeared to have no ground.

At the same time, going beyond the transactions of December 1997, the NBU, with the consent of the IMF,

(Continued on page 8)

### U.S. comments on postponed Yuschenko visit

*U.S. Department of State Spokesman James P. Rubin responded on March 16 to press reports that quoted a "senior administration official" regarding the postponed visit of Ukraine's Prime Minister Viktor Yuschenko to Washington. In particular, on March 16 The New York Times reported that Mr. Yuschenko canceled his visit "after the Clinton administration told him he should come only after 'cleaning up' his government." Following is the State Department's response.*

Recent press reports regarding the postponed visit of Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuschenko to Washington require clarification. The visit was not canceled, but postponed.

The U.S. did express concerns to the Ukrainian government that recent allegations regarding the past use of IMF funds might overshadow other important issues that were planned for discussion during the prime minister's visit, including the government's accelerated reform efforts. A series of meetings with Cabinet officers and other officials had been

arranged for his visit and a meeting with President Clinton was being finalized.

While the Ukrainian government was reviewing whether or not to proceed with the visit, the tragic March 11 accident at the Barakova mine occurred, in which 80 Ukrainian miners were killed. Prime Minister Yuschenko was appointed to head the government's commission to investigate this accident.

Prime Minister Yuschenko heads a government that is taking difficult and bold steps to reverse his country's economic decline and advance its transition to a market economy. We are concerned about allegations of past mismanagement and misreporting of Ukraine's reserves and welcome the Ukrainian government's commitment to cooperate fully in the investigation.

We also remain firmly committed to supporting President Kuchma and Prime Minister Yuschenko's efforts to advance the reform agenda in Ukraine, a strategic partner of the United States, and are hopeful that the prime minister's visit can be rescheduled in the near future.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Rectification of facts about Galicia Division

Dear Editor:

The article, "Philatelic vestiges of the Galicia Division" by Ingert Kuzych (March 5) describing one of the diverse facets of the division's past, while being very interesting, contained several inaccuracies that need to be rectified. First of all, the translation of the division's Ukrainian name "Striletska Dyviziiia" as "Sharpshooter Division" was quite awkward. A sizable amount of English language literature about the division exists and an acceptable translation "Riflemen Division" is already being used.

The statement that the division's command corps consisted entirely of German officers is inaccurate. Most of the company commanders, platoon commanders and a few battalion commanders were Ukrainians. Even in the divisional command staff there were Ukrainian officers like Paliiv, Makarushka, Ferkuniak and Tys-Krochaliuk.

After one full year of training, the division was deployed on the eastern front and contrary to statements in the article, was at that time fully trained, and equipment and weapons were adequate and in many cases superior to some German divisions. Unfortunately the deployment happened during the largest Soviet offensive of the war and against the overwhelming superiority of Soviet armor, aviation and manpower. It ended in a disaster.

To learn more about the Galicia Division the reader is referred to the webpage: <http://www.infoukes.com/galiciadivision/>.

**Roman Hawrylak**  
New York

*The letter writer is a member of the executive of the Brotherhood of Veterans of the 1st Division of the Ukrainian National Army.*

### Political viewpoints do not denote morality

Dear Editor:

On occasion, I find the writing of Dr. Myron Kuropas to be interesting; at times, I agree with some of what he says. Unfortunately, his column has recently become offensive. In his March 5, column Dr. Kuropas uses epithets against those who disagree with his world view and calls "alternative lifestyle" a perversion. Possibly, Mr. Kuropas is not aware of the fact that resorting to name-calling and to hate speech is usually indicative of one's inability to convince others through logic and clear argument.

I will not address the many outrageous and inaccurate statements in the column of March 5, nor the many false parallels that Dr. Kuropas draws, such as suggesting that left-wing theory is somehow based on Nietzsche's ultra right-wing fascism. Suffice it to say that I have not read such a hodge-podge of half-truths and baseless accusations in a very long time.

Dr. Kuropas' March 5 column implies

that one can be moral only if one agrees with Dr. Kuropas' right-wing views and considers people such as Thomas Sowell, Clarence Thomas and Alan Keyes to be enlightened.

Surely it is possible to be a moral person, a good Ukrainian, and a good American without subscribing to the politics of George W. Bush, during whose short tenure as governor of Texas over 120 persons were killed by that state. Surely, one can support affirmative action and freedom of speech, can believe that Gen. Augusto Pinochet was not the savior of Chile, can consider programs on the History Channel about the evils of Nazi Germany to be important, can support the rights of gays, can believe that Elian Gonzalez belongs with his father, and can still be a moral person.

Surely a person who holds some or all of the above-mentioned views could, at the same time, consider Stalin to have been an incarnation of evil and could support the efforts to make the world aware of the tragedy of the Great Famine of 1932-1933.

Surely there is no one set of political views that a person must hold to be moral or to be a worthwhile member of the Ukrainian community. And most assuredly, columnists damage our community when they indulge in name-calling.

**Tatiana B. Durbak**  
Albany, N.Y.

### Language is crucial to Ukraine's survival

Dear Editor:

The issue of language is crucial to the future of Ukraine's independence. Although Ukraine is independent, the fight for Ukraine's soul continues in full force. Ultimately the Russophiles in Ukraine want Ukraine to become a "Russian Ukraine," totally eliminating the Ukrainian language and that for which it stands.

The U.S. military has been visiting Ukraine since 1993. Currently over 100 missions per year are planned with Ukraine, dealing from combat arms to medical training. From 1993 to 1997, the Ukrainian military attempted to use Ukrainian in most situations. Since 1997, however, there was a shift to Russian.

Ukrainian interpreters in the U.S. military noted the change, but initially this appeared as confusion or lack of policy implementation.

During 1997, I saw first hand that the shift to Russian was obvious. The reasons for the change varied. The Russians in the Ukrainian military felt that Russian was the "language of diplomacy, while Ukrainian was not." Others in the Ukrainian military assured us that this is a "temporary" phenomenon and that Ukrainian will become the national language.

The assurances given are not in sync with the feelings of patriotic Ukrainians in Ukraine. A former commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army stated that initially most Russians used Ukrainian because they feared repercussions. Once the fear was alleviated by President

Leonid Kuchma's pro-Russian language policies, the Russophiles in the military re-initiated the Russification policies of the Soviet Union.

Since 1997 Ukrainian interpreters in the U.S. military have had to battle Ukrainian versus Russian language use. The use of language has now become an issue of geopolitical strategy.

In my opinion, if Ukraine loses its language it will cease to exist as an independent state. For many this is a difficult concept to grasp – how could the use of a particular language determine independence? For the Russophiles, the Ukrainian language denotes freedom, patriotism and democracy. Russian denotes permanent dependence on Moscow and relegates Ukrainians to the status of second-class citizens. Russia has always seen Ukrainian as a threat to its imperial aspirations.

To chauvinistic Russians, Ukraine and the Ukrainian language must be subordinated and not allowed to flourish.

It is in the United States national interest that Ukraine remain a free, independent state.

When we send Ukrainian interpreters to Ukraine, this sends a strong message to the Russophiles and underlines that the U.S. supports a free and independent Ukraine. However, when we send Russian interpreters to Ukraine, this signifies to the Russophiles that the United States may not be all that committed to Ukraine's continued independence. Ukrainian patriots become demoralized.

The hypocrisy of Russia in demanding "equal rights" for its citizens in Ukraine defies the realities of the past 300 years. Russia, whether tsarist or Communist, demanded and implemented policies for the total elimination of the Ukrainian language. Now Russia is protesting Ukraine's implementation of policies its state language.

Today, Ukraine is under great pressure to implement Russian. To a great degree, Russian is being used in military circles and in the diplomatic arena. How long should a nation wait to make its language a national language?

**Roman G. Golash**  
Palatine, Ill.

**Orysia Tracz**  
Winnipeg

### About 'pyrohy ladies' and Canadian perogies

Dear Editor:

Re "Magazine spotlights 'pyrohy ladies'" (February 13): It's about time another mainstream magazine featured varenyky/pyrohy. In Canada, especially in the Prairies and out to British Columbia, they are a staple, a genuine Canadian food.

But they are not called "pierogies" here by anyone (other than the Poles). They are perogies (pl.), perogy (s.), a "Canadian" term. And they are definitely now a mainstream Canadian food. I was surprised to see "pierogies" on the menu at the Future Bakery deli in Toronto. Surely a Ukrainian restaurant in eastern Canada should know the Canadian spelling of the term.

At least two companies mass produce them and, on the prairies, perogies are found in practically every supermarket in the frozen food section. Personally, I would not buy these, although there seems to be a big market. One company's perogies are passable, the other one's are an embarrassment, sheer cardboard.

In Winnipeg, there are two restaurants, Alycia's and Savela's, which sell tons of fresh ones by the dozens. The latter supplies Costco, and can barely keep up with the demand. Throughout the city you have Ann's Perogy Palace, Perogy House, Karen's Home Cooking ("perogies, cabbage rolls, perishky") and others.

The Ukrainian churches have been built and maintained on varenyky – thousands of dollars fill church coffers from the weekly sale of fresh perogies. St. John Suchavsky Cathedral or, as Winnipeggers know it, the Bukovynska church, is legendary for varenyky with a variety of fillings, including sauerkraut, which usually sell out.

One innovation is the golden, or orangey filling that may surprise Ukrainian Americans visiting western Canada. Rarely will you find the potato/farmer's cheese filling here. The most popular one is the potato/cheddar cheese filling. Yes, indeed, sometimes CheezeWhiz is used! Culinary progress, go figure.

### Turning the pages...

(Continued from page 6)

the Rukh faction in Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada and 16 days later was removed as Rukh Party chairman in what he described as an illegitimate Rukh Congress. A week later, however, a separate regularly scheduled congress of Rukh reasserted Mr. Chornovil's position at the top of the organization (then dubbed Rukh-I) he had led for nearly a decade.

Tens of thousands of people bid a final farewell to Mr. Chornovil on March 29 in an emotional display of respect for the former political dissident and Rukh leader. As Ukraine observed a national day of mourning, people from all over the country traveled to the nation's capital to join with tens of thousands more Kyivans in what many consider the largest funeral this city has ever seen.

Officially, Ukraine was represented by President Leonid Kuchma, who arrived with Prime Minister Valerii Pustovoitenko and Verkhovna Rada Chairman Oleksander Tkachenko to pay his respects. Official delegations from the United States, led by Ambassador Steven Pifer, and Poland, which included members of the Polish Parliament, also paid their respects and offered condolences to the bereaved.

Mr. Chornovil's fellow former dissidents were present in abundance, among them Lev Lukianenko, Ivan Hel, Yurii Badzio, the Horyn brothers and Iryna Kalynets.

The common people lining the streets – some 50,000 turned out – best expressed the love that the Rukh leader evoked in a large portion of the populace. They tossed flowers and sang hymns as the casket proceeded up Volodymyrska Street from the Teacher's Building (once the headquarters of the Central Rada) to St. Volodymyr Sobor, where Patriarch Filaret of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate led the funeral service, and afterwards along the route from the cathedral to Baikove Cemetery, the historic final resting place of many of Ukraine's cultural, religious and political elite.

Then, as the casket was lowered into the ground, the army orchestra struck the first notes of the Ukrainian national anthem and a seven-gun salute went off in honor of the man about whom Mykhailo Horyn had said just moments before: "History will show that without him today's independent Ukraine would not have been possible."

Sources: "Chornovil killed in car accident," by Roman Woronowycz (with Roma Hadzewycz), *The Ukrainian Weekly*, March 28, 1999, Vol. LXVII, No. 13; "Ukraine mourns Chornovil," by Roman Woronowycz, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, April 4, 1999, Vol. LXVII, No. 14.

**The Ukrainian Weekly welcomes letters to the editor and commentaries on a variety of topics of concern to the Ukrainian American and Ukrainian Canadian communities. Opinions expressed by columnists, commentators and letter-writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of either The Weekly editorial staff or its publisher, the Ukrainian National Association.**

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## The Dumka Chorus...

(Continued from page 5)

Selfreliance Credit Union president, and his brother Borys, both of whom have been signing as tenors for over 40 years.

Founded as a male chorus in New York in 1949 with the express purpose of cultivating the rich secular and religious musical heritage of Ukraine, the Dumka Chorus made its first public appearance the following year with a concert of traditional Ukrainian Christmas carols.

In 1959 Dumka became a mixed chorus. The name Dumka (meaning thought or idea) was chosen as a reference to the "duma," a form of epic song about events in the Kozak period of the 16th to 17th centuries, performed by minstrels in recitative to bandura or kobza accompaniment.

The ensemble has nurtured four singers who went on to make a name for themselves outside the Ukrainian community. Bass/baritone Andriy Dobriansky, who toured the United States, Canada and Mexico with the Metropolitan Opera Company for two seasons, joined the Met's permanent roster in 1969 and sang more than 30 roles during his 25-year Met career. Baritone George Bohachevsky, a longtime member of the New York City Opera chorus, was often assigned solo roles in NYCO productions, and lyric soprano Svitlana Vasilaki (Tonkoschur) was a member of the NYCO chorus for three years. Ihor Krawciw, a tenor, has appeared with regional opera companies in the United States.

Dumka has had a number of dedicated and talented musical directors, beginning with Leonty Krushelnytsky. His work was continued by Alexander Mykytiuk, Alexander Bernyk, Ihor Sonevsky, Roman Stepaniak, Ivan Zadorozny and Ihor Zukowsky. Semen Komirnyj, who

directed the chorus for 17 years, was succeeded in 1991 by Mr. Hrechynsky, a former choirmaster at the Lviv Theater of Opera and Ballet and an instructor of conducting at the Lviv Conservatory.

Mr. Hrechynsky, the youngest member of the chorus when he took over as Dumka's artistic director at age 30, has infused a new energy and enthusiasm in the chorus with his intensity and commitment to a high standard of musical performance.

With new works and fine discipline mastered, the Dumka Chorus, assisted by Metropolitan Opera tenor Volodymyr Grishko as soloist, is sure to excel in its program of religious, operatic and folk music and win bravos from The Cooper Union audience on April 9. The concert begins at 2 p.m. in the Great Hall.

## National Bank...

(Continued from page 6)

decided to conduct a more comprehensive audit of transactions with foreign exchange reserves. The first stage of auditing will include the period from July 1997 to January 1998. It is to be completed by the end of March or in early April. Its results will be made public. The second stage will cover a longer interval and will be executed upon the completion of the first stage. In order to ensure a reliable audit, the National Bank of Ukraine has forwarded permission for its 27 bank partners to disclose to auditors any information concerning their relations with the NBU for the period under review.

Therefore, the National Bank of Ukraine confirms its commitment to an open and transparent policy in financial and monetary relations with its creditors.

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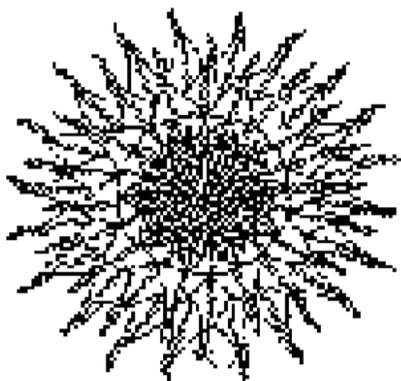
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## Government threatens...

(Continued from page 1)

Although neither Mr. Volkov nor Mr. Medvedchuk has given a specific explanation for his remarks, some political experts believe the criticism of the government and its plan is due to the program's call for an overhaul of Ukraine's energy sector. Firms owned by Mr. Volkov, and particularly Mr. Medvedchuk, are major players in the country's oil and gas markets.

President Kuchma stepped into the fray to state his support for the Yushenko government on March 22 and expressed surprise over the statement by Mr. Tyhypko. He explained that the Constitution of Ukraine does not envisage the resignation of the government should its program not receive Parliament's approval. He said he believed that lawmakers would ultimately approve the package.

Evidence that the economic program was in trouble withered to an extent on March 23 when the Verkhovna Rada passed a resolution approving a memorandum of cooperation between the executive and legislative branches. The government had suggested earlier that the memorandum and the economic program should work together. The economic program is set for floor debate on April 6, with a vote expected the following day.

Cabinet ministers, along with Prime Minister Yushenko, have carried out an intensive lobbying effort in the halls of the Parliament in the last two weeks to assure passage of their program. Mr. Tyhypko said that government ministers had held meetings with most of the factions and 25 committees regarding problems lawmakers foresaw with the working document. He said that substantial changes suggested by the national deputies had already been incorporated.

The Cabinet of Ministers program, titled "Reforms for Prosperity," contains five sections and 22 quantitative targets to be achieved by 2004. Each year the government will submit an economic memorandum along with its annual budget, which will explain how the program is to develop during that fiscal year. If fully carried out, the program envisages an eventual 1.3-1.4-fold rise in real incomes for Ukrainians and an annual average increase of 6.5 percent to the country's gross domestic product beginning in 2002. For the fiscal year 2000, it forecasts a GDP increase of 1 to 2 percent.

Holovatyi of having a personal political agenda, adding that Mr. Holovatyi failed to present all the facts. "Mr. Holovatyi, unfortunately, often says only what supports his convictions," said Mr. Martynenko. "He did not mention that the Venetian Commission also said that only the Constitutional Court is to determine whether there exists a sufficient legal basis for holding the national referendum."

The presidential spokesman criticized the publication of the initial findings of the Venetian Commission and said that using the mass media to put pressure on Ukraine "brings into question the ethics of those efforts." Mr. Martynenko added that, should the Constitutional Court declare the referendum illegal, the president readily would cancel it.

President Kuchma, however, has maintained that if the national referendum is canceled it would lead to the break-up of the recently formed parliamentary majority and further political conflict and instability in the country. Two separate petitions have been filed by Ukrainian lawmakers asking that the Constitutional Court render a judgment on the legality of the national referendum. Ukraine's highest constitutional authority is currently reviewing the various documents and was to have issued its findings by March 18. That date has now been pushed back, with a decision expected in the first week of April. The court cited protracted open hearings in the case as the reason for the delay.

Meanwhile, the Venetian Commission is scheduled to meet on March 31, when it will formally render its decision on the Ukrainian national referendum. Mr. Holovatyi said he believes that the preliminary decisions of the individual members of the expert panel will be supported by the entire commission at that time.

Mr. Kuchma and the PACE have been at loggerheads ever since a monitoring commission from the inter-parliamentary assembly recommended to the larger body to suspend Ukraine's membership should the country hold a referendum. The Ukrainian president has said the only body that is capable and duly authorized to determine the constitutionality of the plebiscite is the Constitutional Court of Ukraine.

## Ukraine's April 16...

(Continued from page 4)

parliamentary body from outside influences, and should not be called into question.

The experts had no problems with the fourth issue presented in the national referendum, on reducing parliamentary seats from 450 to 300, but questioned the need for the fifth, which asks citizens' opinions on a bicameral parliament. According to Mr. Holovatyi, since Ukraine is a unitary state, the Venetian Commission experts did not see the need for a bicameral legislature in a democratic society, especially one in which the second house might be appointed by the president rather than elected.

And on the last question, whether the Constitution of Ukraine should be ratified by the nation, the commission experts decided that it is obviously unconstitutional since that is not prescribed in the Constitution, explained Mr. Holovatyi.

It is highly unlikely that President Kuchma, who signed the executive order scheduling the All-Ukrainian National Referendum, as it is officially called, will take into consideration the preliminary findings of the Venetian Commission, or for that matter its final rendering. He has called the Venetian Commission nothing more than an advisory body.

On March 22 Oleksander Martynenko, the president's spokesman, accused Mr.



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# Winter mountaineering camp held in Lake Placid region

by Dorian Yurchuk

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. – Zymovyi Mandrivnyi Tabir (ZMT) is the name of an annual winter mountaineering excursion initiated by members of Plast's Lisovi Chorty fraternity. The excursion is held annually between Christmas and New Year's Eve in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York.

It all began eight years ago when a group of friends rented a cabin near the village of Lake Placid. Some came for the downhill skiing at Whiteface Mountain, others to try the luge and bobsled (others still for the shopping and nightlife). But the main draw was the state park's backcountry, with its high peaks and picturesque valleys.

During the first few years organizers learned the skills required to access these areas: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and hiking with crampons (steel spikes that attach to one's boots for traction in icy conditions). Later they also delved into winter camping and ice climbing, and began to bring along their younger siblings.

Soon the group of Plast friends realized that this was a wonderful opportunity for skills and leadership training for other young members of Plast. For the last three years the trip has been open to all older "yunatstvo" on a first-come-first-served basis. All ZMT participants receive in-depth instruction on first aid, clothing systems and nutrition as they pertain to the winter environment. A brief geological and cultural history of the Adirondacks is also provided. Finally, ZMT includes instruction in the history, theory and practice of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, ice climbing and winter camping.

This year 14 campers from the United States and Canada took part in the trip, along with an assortment of guest lecturers and fellow enthusiasts.

When ZMT'ers arrived at the southern edge of Adirondack State Park, they were dismayed to find no snow on the ground, even as far north as the town of Keene. However, as they ascended towards the High Peaks Region, conditions improved: there was a six-inch base of snow.

For the first two nights the group stayed at a large cabin not far from the Lake Placid Olympic Authority's ski-jumping facilities. Accommodations included indoor plumbing and electric heat. The evening hours were spent indoors discussing the various topics mentioned above. During the day there were short hikes to Mount Jo, Indian Falls and Wright's Peak. These allowed the campers to familiarize themselves with some of the equipment and techniques of winter travel.



Campers and instructors at the 1999 Zymovyi Mandrivnyi Tabir held near Lake Placid, N.Y.

On the third day the whole camp packed up and set out into the backwoods interior. ZMT'ers carried their personal gear in backpacks; the group's food and other supplies were distributed among the individual packs and also loaded onto a home-made gear sled that campers affectionately named "Tymotei." All took turns pulling the sled along the seven-mile trail to the John's Brook campsite.

The first leg of this trip required some bushwhacking through a frozen swamp. This was a complicated task, especially with a heavy sled. When the group reached the wooded terrain on the other side, the trail became increasingly difficult. Hurricane Floyd had wreaked considerable damage in this park, and hikers had to maneuver their beloved Tymotei over, under and around dozens of fallen trees.

Although there was very little net gain in altitude along the way, there were many small hills, dips, turns and rocks in the trail and our progress was slow. The weather was ideal: 20 degrees F, and no wind. It was cold enough to keep the snow from melting and to keep campers from overheating from carrying their loads, but warm enough to keep them from freezing during frequent breaks.

Hikers arrived at the lodge around 5 p.m., having traveled the last mile by flashlight.

Upon arrival campers quickly lit the propane lanterns and fired up the wood-burning stove. Water was collected at a brook and boiled on the propane stove. This was an Alpine-style hut, where supplies are flown in and waste flown out by helicopter so as to keep the surrounding wilderness area as unpolluted as possible. Dinner was especially appreciated after the long journey, and all slept well in the relatively rustic accommodations.

On the following day the ZMT'ers split up into three groups. One group chose to stay near the lodge and began to construct a small "village" of tents, tarpaulin shelters and quinzee huts. The latter are structures shaped similarly to an igloo, but constructed by hollowing out a large mound of snow from within. Final wall thickness is gauged by tens of short twigs of equal length that are inserted into the outer surface of the snow mound.

The other two groups hiked up to the summit of Upper Wolf Jaw and then to the summit of Mount Armstrong. The view from these peaks was stunning as visibility was exceptional. From one face they could see the forbidding profiles of Mount Marcy and Algonquin Mountain. From another, they saw several other mountain ranges, including the Green Mountains in Vermont and the White Mountains in New

Hampshire. The landscape at this altitude consisted of ice-covered tree branches that sparkled brilliantly in the sunshine. Campers posed for group photographs and descended.

Back at the lodge, preparations were made for nightfall. Almost all the participants spent that night in their winter "village." Unfortunately, a sudden change in the weather caused overnight temperatures to soar to 33° F, creating rather moist conditions by morning.

The campers quit the lodge early that day, splitting up into groups once again. The first group collected ropes, helmets, ice axes and crampons, and set out for ice climbing. The second group was fitted for cross-country skis and hit the trails.

Campers concluded the day (and the short week) with the traditional, albeit indoor, bonfire and went to sleep once again in the comfort of that first, luxurious cabin. The next morning ZMT'ers left the Adirondacks behind and headed in various directions, ready to ring in the new year.

\*\*\*

Similar activities are planned for winter 2000. "Yunatstvo" should consult newspaper announcements and Plast publications for information regarding dates, locations and age requirements for future ZMT trips.



Above, some of the Zymovyi Mandrivnyi Tabir's organizers and instructors. On the right, a group of ZMT hikers atop snow-covered Mount Armstrong in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York, in the Lake Placid region.

## Carpathian Ski Club sponsors annual ski races in upstate New York

WINDHAM, N.Y. – The annual ski races of the Carpathian Ski Club (KLC) were held at Ski Windham on March 11. Fifty-six racers from six different states and one from Ukraine competed on the NASTAR-sanctioned course.

The races were held at Ski Windham in the Catskills in New York, while the awards banquet was held at nearby Hunter Mountain. The events were co-sponsored by the Selfreliance Credit Union of Philadelphia and Slavutych Brewery of Ukraine.

Trophies, funded by the credit union, were awarded for the top three places in the six youth divisions. Medals were awarded for all older age brackets.

In addition to these awards, two special trophies were awarded. The transitional trophy, presented to the best all-around skier posting the best time among all age groups and sexes (skiers cannot win this trophy more than once) this year was awarded to Severin B. Palydowycz, who turned in a time of 30.68 in the men's age 35-49 group. A special trophy was awarded to Dr. Valeriy Hrebeniuk, consul at the Embassy of Ukraine in Washington, who competed in this year's races.



Youths who won trophies and medals at the KLC ski races at Ski Windham.

(Continued on page 16)

## Chernyk sports club holds annual ski trip in Michigan

by Roma Tobianski

DETROIT – The year 2000 marks the 50th anniversary of the Detroit's Ukrainian Sports Club Chernyk. Founded by 35 sports enthusiasts, Chernyk has grown into a viable organization dedicated to sponsoring and promoting the participation of Ukrainian athletic teams in various sports activities. Its members range in age from 4 to 94 and its interests range from soccer and golf to chess and anything in between.

A jubilee committee has been formed with Wolodymyr Kizyma as chairman. The committee has established the year 2000 as a year of celebration, scheduling many activities throughout the community.

The first jubilee affair was the

"Millennium Malanka," co-sponsored with three other Ukrainian youth organizations, Plast, the Ukrainian American Youth Association (SUM) and the Organization of Democratic Ukrainian Youth (ODUM). The Detroit malanka has become an ever increasingly popular affair in the Detroit area, and this year's event attracted over 600 guests.

The winter sports of skiing and hockey are among the most popular in the club. During the weekend of February 4-6, USC Chernyk sponsored its annual ski trip to Boyne Highlands in Michigan's northernmost area of the Lower Peninsula. This yearly outing was first organized in the 1950s and has become an event anticipated by the entire community.

In recent years, the trip has been

organized by Lesia Lawrin, who has put a great deal of effort into making this event a great success. This year's jubilee ski trip had 220 registered participants plus many others who booked rooms privately. Each member was given blue and yellow ribbons to wear for the weekend; as a result, Boyne Highlands became a sea of blue-and-yellow.

Boyne Highlands was more than willing to accommodate the club's needs in preparing a special celebration. A special conference room was set aside for various displays and exhibits, prepared by Roman Maziak, refreshments and friendly conversation. A 50th anniversary banner was hung from the balcony of the lodge for everyone to see.

A highlight of this year's outing was

an outdoor barbecue luncheon, prepared at the Heather Warming Hut. Coordinated by Zenia Prybula and assisted by George Nordstrom, Bernard Tobianski, Daria Hreha and many other volunteers, the luncheon was a big hit among the participants. It gave them an opportunity to meet with friends and eat lunch without having to leave the slopes. Between noon and 2 p.m. skiers and non-skiers alike hurried to the warming hut for knock-wurst, potato salad, drinks, fruit and friendly conversation.

Each year, Chernyk members meet in front of the lodge in the late afternoon on Saturday for a group picture. Once the picture is taken, the entire group heads for the

(Continued on page 16)



Participants of the Chernyk sports club's 50th anniversary ski trip in Michigan's Boyne Highlands.

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## Belarusian Popular Front...

(Continued from page 3)

tial elections with "union elections," the results of all can be internationally recognized, and Lukashenka is legitimized in Western eyes without negotiations. This scenario is only one illustration of how closely questions of independence and democracy are connected in Belarus.

One more remark about Western assistance. We here have no illusions about Russia. There is a real danger that the new Kremlin power camp is built around a bloody KGBist, to be honest. His main victory is ethnocide in the Caucasus. It is very dangerous that all the colors of the Russian political scene now are united under the banner of genocide and imperialism. It shows that this country is very far from returning to the family of civilized nations.

At the same time, Russia is the main factor that ensures the stability of the Lukashenka regime because the regime is strategically important for it. "Integration" and the "Russia-Belarus union" are the pseudonyms for restoration of empire. So, Russia should receive a strong and unambiguous message from the Western side: no assistance is delivered to Russia if support for the puppet regime in Minsk and the imperialistic scenario of "integration" is continued.

Assistance for the BPF? Unfortunately, we were the victim of a propaganda campaign by the Communist regime, the [Viachaslau] Kiebic government, and the Lukashenka regime. We are not nationalists in the sense of Le Pen. Our name "the Belarusian Narodnyi Front" should be properly translated as the Belarusian Popular Front, and we identify ourselves within the spectrum of Western political parties. We see ourselves more or less like the European People's Party, as the faction in the European Parliament is called, or the American Republicans, though the American political scene is not the same as ours.

It is very difficult now to find groups or formulate interest in social democracy or conservatives because the real political scene will only be formed after the return here to democracy and an unchangeable independence. But we are not ethnic nationalists. We are for the independent statehood of Belarus; we have no illusions about Russia, but we are not anti-Russian in the ethnic sense. There are a lot of ethnic Russians in our leadership. For example, [Lyavon] Barcheusky, who for two years carried out the duties of the exiled leader Paznyak, is an ethnic Russian. So the ethnic question is absolutely irrelevant.

It is important for us to change our image in the eyes of the Western political scientists and decision-makers, because we really are the main political force here. We are not so large, but we have the best structure, we have units in every raion with the exception of the Chernobyl regions. We have a lot of responsibility and many activists who are ready to work for democracy and Western values. Thus, we don't want to be excluded from contacts, we want to be perceived in an appropriate way.

It is probably difficult for popular fronts that were prominent 10 years ago. None of them are really in a position of power. Rukh in Ukraine has really dwindled as a political force. But your situation is very different.

Rukh was involved in power. Ukrainian people hoped that democracy would bring them prosperity. They failed. It was not such a model of democracy as in Estonia and Poland - [it was the] oligarchy model. But my opinion is that

(Continued on page 13)

## Belarusian Popular Front...

(Continued from page 12)

Rukh is now obliged to share the responsibility. Unfortunately, even people who on the one side were for independence and on the other for future prosperity tried to find forces and politicians other than Rukh. They believe that when Rukh was in power nothing happened. It was strange to me that nationalists such as Slava Stetsko supported the ex-KGBist [Yevhen] Marchuk.

**It was also odd that western Ukrainians supported [Leonid] Kuchma.**

Yes, but what about us? From the very beginning typologically we were similar to those types of movements in the three Baltic states and in Ukraine. The movement was smaller in Belarus and not so influential because of the comparative weakness of self-identity here, but it was a real force and in 1991 we did not exploit this enough. We could have done everything, as I understand now, but there was insufficient experience, there was not the readiness to go to the nomenclatura and dictate what must be done.

The only thing we achieved was [Stanislau] Shushkevich. Shushkevich was placed in his position [as chairman of the Supreme Soviet] thanks to the BPF, thanks to the people in Independence Square demanding change. But the BPF cannot be accused of sharing power. There was a very good chance in 1992 when we collected half a million signatures in support of new elections, but we did not collect people in Independence Square to demand this referendum. It is history.

Then there were several years of self-sufficiency of our organization and only now are we changing our image to be more open, to be ready to create coalitions. It is senseless to be afraid of coalitions in our situation. We are a strong organization, so for us and others there is a chance to multiply our resources – not merely add to them. And now we avoid the unrealistic scenarios. We want realistic proposals. For example, now we hope that the spring of 2000 should be rather tempestuous because we will try to combine social protest with purely political protest against pro-Moscow dictatorship. And sadly we have ignored the social component of protest. This was our mistake – not strategic, but important.

**I want to ask you about your goals for the year 2000. If there are parliamentary elections, for example – I don't know to which Parliament there would be elections – would the BPF take part in them?**

This is the point. Elections to which body? If the present law remains or the election code elaborated by the upper house remains, we will not take part in the elections. The BPF was the first to ignore the local elections last spring. Several other democratic parties declared that they would participate because it provided an opportunity to visit apartments, to propagandize and so on, but after several decrees that completely restricted the possibility to participate, then they agreed with us. And the international community did not recognize the results of these local elections, so the move was a success. Even those elected – several Communists and LDP members – can do nothing within these bodies. They have no power. And the assembly

has no power either.

And if there is no presidential pressure, but normal power, then it is a matter for debate. What should be the basis: the Constitution of 1994 or the hybrid constitution? Or should there be a new constitutional council that will elaborate step by step the principles of new elections? There can be no elections without common agreement between the government and the opposition. And this agreement can be reached only after preconditions have been fulfilled: the release of all the political prisoners; an end to all the politically motivated criminal cases; and real access to the media. Normal conditions.

I am rather skeptical, but the hot spring will put pressure on the regime to agree to the negotiations. That is our prognosis. And so we will participate in the coalition, together with the United Civil Party and the Social Democrats.

**OK. The last question I have is about the expansion of NATO and the European Union to the border of Belarus. This surely puts a lot of pressure on Belarus to turn in one direction or the other: either toward Russia, or toward Europe, or NATO. My impression at the moment is that Belarusians are in favor of the EU but opposed to NATO. It is difficult to discern, but do you think it is a case of one or the other alternative, will it take some time before Belarus decides which way to go?**

From a historical perspective, we have no choice but to join European structures. We have been neighbors of Russia for a thousand years and we know that it is very dangerous to be a neighbor of such a state. To this moment the BPF has not declared that its aim is to completely join up with Western structures.

But on the other hand, the typical attribute of our marches here is the slogan: Lukashenka to prison! Belarus to NATO! What about the younger generation of Belarusians? It is natural for them to identify themselves with all the Western institutions, including NATO. But we here live in a monopolized information space. We have only one Belarusian TV channel that I hope you have had the experience to watch.

**Oh yes.**

And we have from two to six Russian channels. And the Yugoslav war was shown here only in a propagandized form from one channel to another. There is no pluralism of the media here and this had an impact on the attitudes toward NATO. Thus it will take some time to change public opinion.

What about NATO? The neutrality of our country was an important point of the first program of the BPF. It was the only way to stress that we were separate from the Warsaw Pact, from the Tashkent treaty, and all the other treaties initiated by Moscow. This position of our program was only partially fulfilled in the Constitution of 1994. The striving for neutrality was written in the Constitution – a very interesting formula that allowed pro-Russian forces here to make military agreements with Russia.

I think that the steps should be in several stages: first, real neutrality from Russia; second, dissolving the treaties, and then gradually joining Western structures. But I stress that this is all for the future, it is not our current slogan.

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# CCRF launches new webpage

SHORT HILLS, N.J. – The Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund launched its new webpage on March 13, featuring the latest CCRF activities and updated information on the Chernobyl aftermath. Designed by Mark Ciapka and Michael Baresh of ADS Solutions based in Warren and Short Hills, N.J., the website can be accessed at [www.childrenofchornobyl.org](http://www.childrenofchornobyl.org).

The new site includes financial information, photographs of children who have benefited from CCRF shipments, a map of Ukraine showing the locations of CCRF partner hospitals and orphanages, as well as a detailed outline of the CCRF's track record and ongoing programs.

"We see this not as a static document, but as a dynamic process," said Ksenia Salewycz, who coordinated the development of the website for the CCRF staff. "In the next few weeks, we will be adding new articles, a spring calendar and an exciting new feature that will allow our supporters to make tax-deductible donations by e-mail and credit card. We invite our subscribers to visit the site and to send us their feedback and recommendations as to how the site might be further enhanced."

The website is part of the CCRF's preparation for its 10th anniversary cam-

paign, which will be launched this fall. The fund's first airlift was launched in 1990. Since then, the CCRF has completed 24 air and eight sea shipments, delivering more than 1,200 tons of medical aid and humanitarian assistance valued at more than \$40 million.

Last fall, the fund's partner hospitals in Lutsk, Lviv and Dnipropetrovsk reported significant reductions in infant mortality as a result of technology and training they received from the New Jersey-based organization. The CCRF is planning its next major shipment for this spring, with supplies destined for hospitals in Rivne, Slavutych and Bila Tserkva.

"All of us at CCRF are very grateful to Mark Ciapka and Michael Baresh who donated many hours of their time to design this powerful new resource for our foundation," said Alex Kuzma, the executive director of CCRF. "This website will help us to present a more complete picture of our programs and our plans for the future. It will enable us to reach out to new supporters, to interact with new constituencies and to build grassroots involvement in the CCRF's medical mission."

For more information, contact the CCRF at (973) 376-5140; by e-mail at [info@ccrf-iccf.org](mailto:info@ccrf-iccf.org); or visit the CCRF's new website at [www.childrenofchornobyl.org](http://www.childrenofchornobyl.org).

## Freedom March...

(Continued from page 3)

because it allegedly needs a bugbear to frighten the population and persuade Belarusians that there are people in Belarus more unpredictable and harmful than President Lukashenka.

Whatever the true reason for the ban on marches, it is clear that Mr. Lukashenka is not going to comply with the international community's appeal to sit at the negotiating table with the opposition and resolve Belarus' political standoff in a peaceful way. It seems that permanent and controlled confrontation in Belarus suits the president's authoritarian rule as the country and its people sink deeper and deeper into economic poverty and political isolation.

No one should expect that opposition protests will change the political climate in Belarus any time soon. Indeed, similarly to last year's massive protests in

Serbia, they may not change anything at all. The Belarusian opposition still faces the task of finding how to merge its political demands with some economic proposals that could elicit a broader public response and build a real social force to confront the regime.

For the time being, however, the opposition parties seem to be unable to find any significant sympathy among Belarus' industrial workers or peasants.

At the same time, they have virtually no option but to practice street democracy. "Demonstrations can be avoided when a country guarantees free access to the media, when it holds free and democratic elections. When all this is non-existent, the authorities should allow street demonstrations," opposition leader Mikalay Statkevich commented.

It seems that the Lukashenka regime is bent on denying its opponents even that possibility.

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## Chernyk sports...

(Continued from page 11)

outdoor heated pool, which was reserved for Chernyk participants at 5-6 p.m.

Though it is not easy to walk out into the snow and freezing weather clad only in a bathing suit, the warm water soon made up for the discomfort. Members bring snacks and drinks to share and the pool area became one big Chernyk party.

After dinner, some avid skiers went back out onto the slopes for some night skiing, while others relaxed with friends in the lounge or over a friendly card game. Ice-skating and video games were available for the children.

No matter where you go during the annual ski weekend, there is always a friendly face – someone with whom to ski, eat, play or talk. Many families have resorted to extending the trip by arriving

Thursday and skiing an extra day.

The popularity of the Chernyk ski trip has spread to other Ukrainian communities. Guests from Chicago, New York and other cities attend the trip yearly. This excursion is so successful that facilities to accommodate 200 people have already been reserved for the first weekend of February 2001.

In addition to preparing a 50th anniversary banquet in November, USC Chernyk is preparing for the annual Great Lakes Cup Tournament during Memorial Day weekend at Dibrova Estates in Brighton, Mich. The competitions will include soccer, volleyball, golf and chess. Invitations are being sent out to participating clubs throughout the United States and Canada.

The club will also hold its annual picnic at Dibrova in June and participate in the Ukrainian Diaspora Olympics in Philadelphia July weekend.

## Carpathian Ski Club...

(Continued from page 11)

Trophies were presented by two-time world downhill champion Karl Plattner and KLK's current president, Erko Palydowycz.

Though the ski races are open to all skiers, most of those who competed this year were members of KLK and several were members of KLK in Lviv.

MALES	
<b>12 and under</b>	
1. Severin A. Palydowycz	49.53
2. Paul Hadzewycz	59.01
3. Nicholas Siokalo	65.60
<b>13 to 15</b>	
1. Adrian Rybak	33.18
2. Alex Tkacz	35.40
3. Markian Hadzewycz	35.85
<b>16 to 18</b>	
1. Roman Hankewycz	33.30
2. Darian Fedash	34.10
3. Alex Shandor	43.91
<b>19 to 34</b>	
1. Marco Shmerykowsky	38.16
2. Roman Khmil	38.34
3. Valeriy Hrebenuk	52.38

<b>35 to 49</b>	
1. Andrey Sonevytsky	31.96
2. Yuriy Kucher	33.81
3. Peter Strutynsky	33.86
<b>50 and up</b>	
1. Orest Fedash	35.90
2. Eugene Stakhiv	37.73
3. Andrei Kachala	37.83
<b>FEMALES</b>	
<b>12 and under</b>	
1. Lida Doll	44.01
2. Adrianna Skalchuk	48.76
3. Larisa Kobziar	51.67
<b>13 to 15</b>	
1. Melasia Doll	38.35
2. Roxanna Kobziar	38.88
3. Laryssa Rybak	40.34
<b>16 to 18</b>	
1. Dianna Shmerykowsky	49.09
<b>19 to 34</b>	
1. Talia Fedash	36.28
2. Orysia Loutsevych	43.10
3. Irene Staniv	57.57
<b>35 and up</b>	
1. Roma Hadzewycz	38.19
2. Volodymyra Hankewycz	41.9
3. Zoriana Siokalo	49.13



Valeriy Hrebenuk accepts his special trophy from Erko Palydowycz, KLK president.

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ARMENIA	41	ISRAEL	12
AZERBAIJAN	41	GERMANY	11
BELARUS	35	FRANCE	12
ESTONIA	29	ITALY	13
GEORGIA	41	AUSTRALIA	11
LATVIA	32	SPAIN	19
LITHUANIA	32	YUGOSLAVIA	29
MOLDOVA	35	ROMANIA	29

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# PREVIEW OF EVENTS

Friday, March 24 – Sunday, April 9

**NEW YORK:** La MaMa Experimental Theatre and Yara Arts Group present "Circle," a performance music and dance piece in which spirits of ancient Buryat myths descend upon a modern Siberian nuptial feast. The evening features traditional Buryat music performed by artists from the Buryat Republic in Siberia and Yara actors. Shaman chants mix with post-Soviet reality and the new music of Gogol Bordello, an explosive Ukrainian Gypsy punk band, to create an outrageous picture of contemporary life in Siberia. Shows begin at 8 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays, with an additional performance at 3:30 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets: \$15 for Thursday and Sunday; \$20 for Friday and Saturday. For information call (212) 475-7710. La MaMa ETC is located at 74 E. Fourth St. For information visit the website: <http://www.brama.com/yara>.

presents "The Myth of Antaeus and Ukrainian Literature in Diaspora: How Applicable? A View from Ukraine" with Mykola Soroka, assistant professor of Ukrainian literature, Kyiv Shevchenko National University, and visiting scholar at HURI. The lecture will be held in the HURI Seminar Room, 1583 Massachusetts Ave., at 4-6 p.m., and will be followed by an open discussion. For further information contact Lubomyr Hajda, (617) 495-4053.

Friday, April 7

**NEW YORK:** The Ukrainian Institute of America invites the Ukrainian community to view a film based on the novel "Ogniem i Mieczem" by Nobel Prize-winning Polish author Henryk Sienkiewicz and produced by Zodiak Jerzy Hoffman Film Production. "With Fire and Sword" is a love story that takes place in the 17th century on the Polish-Ukrainian border during the Kozak uprising. Performing the role of Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the leader of the revolution, is the highly acclaimed Ukrainian actor Bohdan Stupka. The program begins at 8 p.m. The institute is located at 2 E. 79th St. For information call (212) 288-8660.

Saturday, April 1

**NEW YORK:** The Shevchenko Scientific Society is sponsoring a lecture, illustrated with slides by Lubomyr S. Onyshkevych, editor of Trident-Visnyk, a publication of the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, on the topic "Miniature Treasures of Art and Culture – Postage Stamps of Contemporary Ukraine." The lecture will be held at the society building, 63 Fourth Ave., at 5 p.m.

Monday, April 3

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass.:** The Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute Seminar Series

Sunday, April 16

**PASSAIC, N.J.:** Ukrainian National Women's League of America Branch 18 is planning an Easter Yarmarok (bazaar) to be held at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church Hall, 106 President St. Among the

(Continued on page 19)

## REMINDER REGARDING REQUIREMENTS:

Effective September 1, there is a **\$10 charge per submission** for listings in Preview of Events. The listing plus payment must be received no later than one week before the desired date of publication. There is also the option of prepayment for a series of listings.

Listings of **no more than 100 words** (written in Preview format) plus payment should be sent to: Preview of Events, The Ukrainian Weekly, 2200 Route 10, P.O. Box 280, Parsippany, NJ 07054. Information sent by fax should include a copy of a check, in the amount of \$10 per listing, made out to The Ukrainian Weekly. The Weekly's fax number is (973) 644-9510.

# WITH FIRE & SWORD

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FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2000 at 8:00 P.M.

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