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“UNION OF UKRAINIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN AMERICA”: PREREQUISITES OF ITS CREATION, STAGES AND DIRECTIONS OF ACTIVITY (1922 – 1940)

Abstract. *The purpose of the article is to analyze the prerequisites for the emergence, stages and directions of “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” activity during the period of 1922 – 1940. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, application of general scientific (generalization, typology) and special scientific research methods, in particular, comparative and historical, historical and systemic, a critical analysis of sources. The Scientific Novelty. On the basis of a comprehensive study of The Svoboda newspaper and available historiographical achievements, for the first time in national historiography, the key links of organization “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” have been comprehensively traced. The Conclusion. Attempts to create a single organization that would direct the activities of all Ukrainian public and political centres on the American continent and represent their interests before the society and the US authorities date back to the time of World War I. Again, the idea of creating such an organization arose against the background of the defeat of the*

Ukrainian revolution and the economic crisis that gripped the Ukrainian territory during the first post-war years. In 1922 – 1940, during its activity, “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” was a socio-political organization of the Ukrainians in America, which aimed to carry out activities for the recognition of the Ukrainian statehood, provide material assistance to the development of the Ukrainian life in their native lands, and unify the Ukrainian emigration. The organization widely informed the public about the Ukrainian issue, collected funds to help the people of Ukraine, published books about Ukraine in English. During its activity, the Union organized 8 congresses of American Ukrainians with participation of hundreds of American Ukrainians representatives and discussed the most pressing issues of the Ukrainian national affairs and the international geopolitical situation.

Key words: *“The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America”, the USA, Ukrainian diaspora, interwar period.*

“ОБ’ЄДНАННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ В АМЕРИЦІ”: ПЕРЕДУМОВИ СТВОРЕННЯ, ЕТАПИ І НАПРЯМИ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ (1922 – 1940)

Анотація. Мета дослідження. Проаналізувати передумови виникнення, етапи та напрями діяльності “Об’єднання українських організацій в Америці” упродовж його існування у 1922 – 1940 рр. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах історизму, застосуванні загальнонаукових (узагальнення, типологізація) та спеціально-наукових методів дослідження, зокрема, порівняльно-історичного, історико-системного, критичного аналізу джерел. **Наукова новизна.** На основі комплексного вивчення газети “Свобода” та наявних історіографічних здобутків уперше у вітчизняній історіографії цілісно прослідковано ключові ланки діяльності організації “Об’єднання українських організацій в Америці”. **Висновки.** Спроби створити єдину організацію, яка би скеровувала діяльність усіх українських громадсько-політичних осередків на американському континенті та представляла їхні інтереси перед суспільством і владою США, беруть початок ще з часу Першої світової війни. Повторно ідея постання такої організації, виникла на тлі поразки Української революції та економічного лихоліття, яке охопили українські терени у перші повоєнні роки. “Об’єднання українських організацій в Америці” упродовж свого існування у 1922 – 1940 рр. була суспільно-політичною організацією українців Америки, яка мала за мету проведення заходів задля визнання української державності, надання матеріальної допомоги розвитку українського життя на рідних землях та об’єднання української еміграції. Організація широко інформувала громадськість про українську справу, збирала кошти для допомоги народу України, видавала книжки про Україну англійською мовою. За час існування нею було організовано вісім конгресів американських українців за участі сотень представників американського українства та з обговоренням найактуальніших питань української національної справи і міжнародної геополітичної ситуації.

Ключові слова: *“Об’єднання українських організацій в Америці”, США, українська діаспора, міжвоєнний час.*

The Problem Statement. At the beginning of the 20th century one of the most urgent problems of the Ukrainian diaspora functioning in the USA was, firstly, its integration into American social and political life, and secondly, the unification of efforts of various Ukrainian centres around the Ukrainian national issue. The mentioned above aspect was important not only from the point of view of formation and functioning of the Ukrainian branches on the American continent, but also the Ukrainian lobby formation in America against the background of tragic events for the Ukrainian people after World War I and during the subsequent interwar period. During the period of 1922 – 1940, in the USA the key public organization, which dealt with the above-mentioned issues, was “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America”.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the prerequisites for the emergence, stages and directions of activity of “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” during its activity in 1922 – 1940.

The Analysis on Recent Research Papers and Publications. Various aspects of the research issue were analyzed by A. Vahnianin (Vakhnianyn, 2021), T. Vrons'ka (Vrons'ka, 2010), O. Homotiuk and I. Nedoshytko (Homotiuk & Nedoshytko, 2021), M. Kuropas' (Kuropas', 1984; Kuropas', 2004), L. Myshuha (Myshuha, 1944), O. Sukhobokova (Sukhobokova, 2012), A. Yatsiv (Yatsiv, 2019) and the others. However, despite the fact that certain historiographical research papers are already available, there is still no comprehensive research on the activities of "The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America".

The Results of the Research. Attempts to create a single organization that would direct the activities of all Ukrainian public and political centres and represent their interests in the society and the US authorities date back to World War I. It was at that time that the Ukrainian community in the USA, seeking to help the Ukrainians in their native lands to gain statehood, held the Ukrainian Congress in 1915, at which there was founded the Federation of the Ukrainians in the USA. Its co-organizers were the most influential Ukrainian public organizations in the States, such as "Ukrainian People's Union" ("UNS"), "Ukrainian Workers' Union", "Union of Ukrainian Catholics "Provydinnia"" and the others. However, already in 1916, UNS and "Provydinnia" left it and established another central organization of the Ukrainian community in the USA – the Ukrainian Council in America. Both organizations acted in the interests of Ukraine, which ensured that President V. Wilson declared April 21, 1917, the Ukrainian Day in the USA in support of the Ukrainian people in World War I (Kuropas', 1984, pp. 38–39).

After the end of the war, the leadership was taken over by the Ukrainian Council, which in 1919 changed its name to "The Ukrainian People's Committee". In a close contact with the Ukrainian diplomatic mission in Washington and individual congressmen, the Committee tried to convince the White House and Congress, as well as the world community, of the need to recognize the independence of Ukraine (Sukhobokova, 2012, p. 47).

Again, the idea of creating an organization that would unite the efforts of all Ukrainian organizations in the USA arose against the background of the defeat of the Ukrainian revolution and the economic crisis that engulfed the Ukrainian territory during the first post-war years.

At the beginning of the 1920s, one of the most active figures of the Ukrainian diaspora in the USA, Fr. Volodymyr Spolitykevych wrote the following: "The land is reaching out to us with its emaciated, bony hands; asks and begs for help and salvation before a terrible, staring death... It is a heart-wrenching pity and desolation... that we, American Ukrainians, are unable to provide adequate assistance to our enslaved brothers in Ukraine" (Tretyj Kongres Ob'iednannia Ukraïns'kykh Organizatsij v Amerytsi, 1924).

At the beginning of the 1920s, for the first time, the forces of the Ukrainians in America were accumulated around the actions of the National Defense Loan and Immediate Assistance by means of collecting money to help Western Ukraine after the defeat of the Ukrainian side in the Polish-Ukrainian war for these territories. According to its results, 140 thousand US dollars were collected. At the same time, it became the first precedent for the unification of the Ukrainian circles in the USA, which led to the idea of its further development.

Congress of American Citizens League of Ukrainian Origin was held in Washington, convened on the initiative of the chairman of the society Theodore Hrytsey, at which the issue of protecting the territory of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic invaded by Poland, whose status on the international arena had not yet been precisely determined, was discussed. At Congress it was planned to organize hearings with Secretary of State Charles Hughes, at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, and the US President Warren Harding.

On June 6, 1922, 96 delegates from various cities arrived in the US capital, including representatives of dioceses, central organizations, and the press, as well as American veterans of the Ukrainian origin, led by Captain Mykhailo Darmohrai. At the meetings of the League, on the initiative of Fr. Lev Levytsky it was decided, that the League should convene a meeting of representatives of all central organizations in America to agree on the creation of a joint organization for a better material and political assistance to the Ukrainian people in Europe. In fact, the beginning of creation of a unifying institution was made even earlier: against the background of the news about the mass famine of 1921 – 1922 in the sub-Soviet part of Ukraine, on May 27, 1922, such organizations as “Ukrainian People’s Union”, “Provydinnia”, “Ukrainian People’s Aid”, “Brotherhood Consent”, “Sich Organization”, “Ukrainian League of American Citizens” and “Ukrainian League of American Veterans” on behalf of “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” (hereinafter – “The Union”) signed appeal on the organization of collecting money to support the starving (Do ukrains’koho zahalu v Amerytsi, 1922).

On June 30, 1922, a meeting of representatives of the mentioned organizations was held in Philadelphia, at which they unanimously decided to create a unifying institution: “Taking into account the great importance of the current moment in the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people and in connection with this the extreme need for consolidation of national forces not only in the region, but also here in immigration, and in view of the ultimate need for general unification for the immediate distribution of a political and material aid – representatives of the Ukrainian organizations in America agreed to establish “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” as a civil representation of the Ukrainian people in America” (Do ukrains’koho zahalu v Amerytsi, 1922).

The key tasks of the future organization were outlined: assistance in obtaining recognition of an independent statehood on the Ukrainian lands; collection and regular transfers of material aid to the Ukrainians on the Ukrainian territory; unification and protection of representatives of the Ukrainian emigrants in America; creation of a single Ukrainian national camp on the American continent (Myshuha, 1944, p. 131). A political ideal of representatives of the Union was the recognition of an independent, democratic Ukrainian state on the Ukrainian territories united within the same borders, a final state structure of which was to be determined at the future national assembly of representatives elected on the basis of universal, equal, secret, direct and proportional voting (Myshuha, 1944, p. 131).

On October 26 – 27, 1922, the first “Union” Congress was held in Philadelphia, at which representatives of seven central organizations and 130 delegates representing 176 societies were present. The leader of the meeting was Omelian Reviuk, and the secretaries were Antin Tsurkovskyi and Mykhailo Stokolos.

The report of the initial stage of the organization’s activities was announced by Semen Yadlovskyi, who in particular noted: “The organizers of this Union are firmly convinced that the entire Ukrainian people in immigration to America want such an organization. Voices have been raised for such an organization for a long time... Whether it was about “agreement between the leaders”, or about “unification of all parties”, or “about one party”, or... “giving up ceaseless quarrels”, or whatever was not said otherwise, all this was an expression of one opinion aspiration. All that was left in our people healthy, alive, willing to work, and not to talk and quarrel, all wanted to put an end to princely feuds, with campaigns of hetmans against hetmans, with bullying of a leader against a leader. This living grain of the people, which was not affected by the rot of private quarrels and narrow ambitions, wanted to reject this rot and unite all that is healthy for life and struggle. It may be that our history is one sad

example of the terrible consequences of such quarrels, but we must admit that it is also a proof that a healthy thought of work, organization, peace, order has never been lost among the Ukrainian people. This thought was not lost among the Ukrainian immigrants in America either..." (Promova d. Semena Yadlovs'koho, 1922).

Luka Myshuha, the representative of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic was also present at the Congress, who, making his speech, emphasized: "The great time that the Ukrainian nation is going through brought us such greatness as the restored Ukrainian State, but also forced us to experience such a tragedy as the renewed complete enslavement of the entire Ukrainian nation... As in all such national catastrophes, in this case as well, one must fear more than ever that for the mass of people, shaken by great sacrifices and defeats, a time of complete dullness, despair, moral decline and decay will come... And during such period..., great political intelligence is needed on the part of those in whose hands there is the leadership of the people, in order to avert the greatest misfortune, i.e. breakdown of their own national core. And we must remember that it is in such moments that fate is accustomed to forge the fate of the people for long, long ages... Putting the principle of self-reliance as the basis of our political orientation, we are building the Ukrainian state on the inexhaustible vitality of the Ukrainian people and on their strong desire to live an independent state life, documented by millions of blood sacrifices. We declare that the future of our country will depend only on the strength of this energy" (Pryvit Ukrain'skomu Kongresovy v Amerytsi, 1922).

Osyp Nazaruk, the representative of ZUNR in Canada, making his speech on the state of the Ukrainian issue cause against the background of international situation at the beginning of the 1920s, noted the following prospects for the Ukrainian national issue and the objectives for the Ukrainian people: "Our path leads to the east, to where the majority of the Ukrainian nation live and where its heart beats, which is called Kyiv... It's time for us to understand that the Ukrainian nation is invincible, and that it once said to itself: "I must have my own state" – will get it for sure. Fulfill one precept, and you will have state independence: Go with one front against the enemy and do not give helpers from your ranks to the enemy and the oppressor. Then there is no such force in the world that could prevent us from achieving an independent Ukrainian state" (Promova deliegata halyts'koho uriadu d-ra Osypa Nazaruka, 1922).

At the Congress, the delegates approved the introduction of "The National Tax", 25 cents per month paid by a member of "The Union", which, as noted at the Congress, should "be a permanent income for the Ukrainian national issue in the United States and in Europe... the basis, on which that work should be based, the annual stable budget" (Myshuha, 1944, p. 133).

At the same time, the Congress supported appeals of "Days of Collecting Money" organization to the Ukrainians in America to help the starving in Ukraine (reported by V. Kuziv), as well as collecting money for the development of "Native School" network in Ukraine during the Christmas and Easter holidays, Flower Day (in June) and Autumn Leaf Day (in November) in the following years. Semyon Demydchuk presented the initiative to establish the Ukrainian National University and called for "Prosvita" Congress to be held in the nearest future (Vakhnianyn, 2021, p. 400). At the same time, in the speeches of abstract, S. Dembytsky and D. Shtohryn there was discussed the functioning of the Ukrainian Bank in America and a possible establishment of the Ukrainian Press Bureau.

According to the results of the Congress, 24 representatives were elected to "The Union" board – three from each of seven central organizations represented by the members at the forum, and three from local organizations that did not belong to the central ones. The executive board of the organization included: Fr. Lev Levytskyi (a head), Teodor Hrytsey,

Dr. S. Hrynevetskyi, V. Hryshko and M. Kotsiuk (deputies), Ivan Borysevych (a treasurer), Dr. Volodymyr Koval and Mykhailo Darmohray (secretaries) (Uspikh Ukrain's'koho Natsional'noho Kongresu, 1922).

In the first appeal of the formed “Union” administration, it was emphasized that “unity, agreement and sacrifice must be the basis of planned work” and that “only by a careful saving of public money and honest stewardship of public funds it will be possible to win the trust of the public”. In addition to the mentioned above members of the Executive, it was signed by I. Ortynskyi, M. Hurianskyi, V. Lotovych, V. Simenovych, Yu. Khyliak, S. Skehar, A. Taras, N. Levytskyi, V. Tytanych, V. Shabatura, M. Khandoha, M. Solovskiy, S. Bryndzei as advisers to “The Union”, and as controllers – V. Spolitatevych, M. Kopachuk and H. Pypiuk (Uspikh Ukrain's'koho Natsional'noho Kongresu, 1922).

In addition, responding to the beginning of the occupation of Galicia by the Polish army, which was a consequence of the Polish-Ukrainian war, at the first Congress “Manifesto to the Ukrainian General in America” was also adopted, in which it was noted that “a terrible judgment was brought by the Poles (liakhy) on our old Motherland-Halychyna, where thousands of Ukrainian people are arrested for not wanting to take part in the elections to the Polish Sejm”. In response, the document suggested that on December 17, 1922, meetings be held in all Ukrainian branches in America, to adopt protest appeals to the American government against “Polish Brigandage in Eastern Galicia”, and to prepare appropriate telegrammes to senators and congressmen (Vrons'ka, 2010).

At the Second Congress, held in Philadelphia on October 25 – 26, 1923, a chief focus was on the situation that was in Western Ukraine under the Polish occupation after the decision of the Council of Ambassadors from March 1923. Volodymyr Spolitatevych was elected as the head of “The Union”. Teodor Hrytsei became the treasurer, who held this position until 1930, when the headquarters of the organization was moved from Philadelphia to New York, and Mykola Danylchenko became a new treasurer (until 1936), and then – Yuliyana Pavchak.

During the Third Congress, which was held on October 21, 1924 in Philadelphia, the discussion on the issue of hetmanate intensified, as well as the possibility of subordinating the organization to “one centre or one person”, however, as a result, it was decided, that “The Union” would continue to build its activities on the democratic ideological principles that it had followed since its foundation. At the Congress, L. Myshuha was elected a secretary, who remained until the end of the institution's existence. At the same time, it was decided to convene “The Union” Congresses every three years.

Accordingly, the next, Fourth Congress was held on October 26, 1927 in Philadelphia, at which the foundations of democracy were widely discussed. At the Congress, Omelian Reviuk was elected the leader of “The Union”, who remained until 1939.

The Fifth Congress was held in New York on October 23, 1930. At that Congress the speeches presented covered various aspects related to the existence of the Ukrainian diaspora in America: “The Ukrainian Immigrant in the Cultural and Political Life of America”; “Old and New Generation of Ukrainian Immigration”; “Organization of Financial Power of Ukrainian Immigration in America”; “Ukrainian Folk Issue in America (Choir Work, Theatre, National Dances)”; “Where are American Young People of a Ukrainian Descent Headed?”.

At the same time, for the first time in the history of the existence of the “The Union”, Neonilia Pelehovych and Volodymyr Semenyna, as representatives of the younger generation of Ukrainian migrants, delivered two speeches in English, in which they outlined the urgent need to create a regional youth organization, which was soon embodied in the appearance

of the Ukrainian Youth League of North America in Chicago in 1933. At the same time, the Congress declared November of 1930 “The Month of National Mourning”, and Sunday, November 16, the Sunday of Prayer for innocent victims of the Polish terror (“pacification”) (Myshuha, 1944).

On November 3, 1933 the Sixth Congress was held in New York against the background of the Holodomor in Ukraine. Announcing the slogan of the Congress as “Save Ukraine from Starvation”, the participants put forward demands for the creation of an American commission to investigate the famine in Ukraine. In addition, the delegates declared November 19, 1933 as the Sunday of National Mourning for those who died during the Holodomor, and in general, November as a month of protest against the artificial famine in Ukraine organized by the Soviet authorities (Homotiuk & Nedoshytko, 2021, pp. 20–22).

In addition, at the Congress, the issues of “Unia and the Ukrainian Worker” and “Colonization as a Reward for Unemployment” were raised, and a teacher Anna Balko made a report on the development of the Ukrainian schools network in America, and Volodymyr Bukata spoke about the American-Ukrainian youth. At the same time, Dmytro Halychyn was elected financial secretary to “The Union” government, who remained in this position until the end of the organization’s existence.

The Seventh Congress of the “The Union” was held in New York on December 20, 1936. The chief focus was on the youth issues, as it can be seen from the topics of reports essays presented at the Congress: “What do Young People Imagine themselves to Be and what are Competing for?”; “Youth about Ukrainian School and the Ukrainian Language in America”; “Impressions of a Young Girl from Visit to Homeland” (reported by Anna Nakonechna); “The Ukrainian Language at Universities”(Sukhobokova, 2012).

The Eighth Congress, held on December 2, 1939, also in New York, focused on the military conflict that began in Europe in September of 1939, as well as on the events in Carpathian Ukraine, in the spring of 1939. Mykola Murashko chaired at the Congress (Vehesh & Horvat, 2019).

At the Eighth Congress, it was decided to convene the All-Ukrainian National Congress for the further creation of the Supreme Representative Body of American Ukrainians. The Supreme Representative Body was supposed to work on the unity and coordination of the activities of Ukrainian public institutions and periodicals in America (Istoriia Ukrain’s’koho konhresovoho komitetu Ameryky).

At the same time, “The Union” adopted a statement of American-Ukrainian citizenship, in which it condemned any occupation of Ukraine, including the Soviet and the Nazi occupations, and there was also emphasized the following: “The time has come when the fate of Ukraine, i. e. the fate of land which we are connected with by blood and spirit, will be decided again. In that important moment, we, who are under the care of the American Star-Spangled Banner, want to give new help to the Ukrainian Trident. We want to help in everything which brings the will and freedom of the Ukrainian people, and we want to help Ukraine have such a social system that would provide each unit with work, protection against extortion, development of its individual strengths, and opportunity to think, speak or write in its own way and organize its personal life” (Kuropas’, 2004, p. 34).

At the same time, the delegates of the Eighth Congress declared that they were speaking “in a demonstration in favour of going to a common issue together with all Ukrainian national organizations, communities and parishes and with all Ukrainians of good will, who are for one common defense front of Ukraine”. For this purpose, the Coordination Committee of the All-Ukrainian National Congress was established.

A financial report was also announced at the Congress, which confirmed that during the entire existence of “The Union” it allocated a total of \$367,753.83 for various humanitarian and people’s needs.

During the organization’s activity, it was also actively involved in publishing. In particular, the book D. Snowyd: “Spirit of Ukraine”, published in 1935, became the first book edition of “The Union”, which sold thousands of copies. This, in particular, was facilitated by “The Ukrainian People’s Union”, which itself purchased 3,000 copies for the youth.

In addition, there should be mentioned the following publications: “Polish Atrocities in Ukraine” (ed. by Emil Revyuk); “Ivan Franko: Moses” (transl. by V. Semenyna); “Famine in Ukraine”; D. Doroshenko “Taras Shevchenko”; S. Shumeiko “Ukrainian National Movement”; L. Myshuha “Ukraine and American Democracy”.

“The Union” also financially helped to publish the book “Ukrainian Question” by Lancelot Lawton in England. “The Union” bought 1,000 copies of the book “Polish Atrocities and West Ukraine” published in Europe, as well as 200 copies of V. Halych’s book “Ukrainians in the United States”.

“The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” actually ceased to exist in 1940 – with the founding of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America at the First Congress of American Ukrainians in Washington on May 24, 1940, which became the successor of the unifying organization and remains till nowadays (Istoriia Ukraïns’koho konhresovoho komitetu Ameryky).

The Conclusion. Thus, during its existence in 1922 – 1940, “The Union of Ukrainian Organizations in America” was a socio-political organization of the Ukrainians in America, which had the goal of conducting activities for the recognition of the Ukrainian statehood, providing material assistance to the development of the Ukrainian life in their native lands and association of the Ukrainian emigration. The organization widely informed the public about the Ukrainian issue, collected funds to help the people of Ukraine, published books about Ukraine in English. During its existence, it organized 8 congresses of American Ukrainians with the participation of hundreds of American Ukrainians representatives and discussed the most pressing issues of the Ukrainian national affairs and the international geopolitical situation.

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