Heading towards Downtown Winnipeg and Oseredok across the Disraeli Bridge, which spans the Red River, known to Americans as "the Red River of the North." As the Capital City of the Province of Manitoba, Winnipeg is in the heart of the continent, and before 1970, was also generally considered to have been the "Ukrainian Capital of Canada," shifting later on, towards Toronto and Edmonton.

A VISIT TO OSEREDOK

THE UKRAINIAN MUSEUM AND LIBRARY IN WINNIPEG

Thomas M. Prymak
University of Toronto

In the mid-summer of 2018, I visited the library of the famed Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in western Canada. This institution, which holds one of the oldest collections of Ukrainian books and printed materials in Canada, is generally known as *Oseredok* (the Centre) to its patrons and supporters. Although I have lived, studied, and worked for many years as a scholar at the University of Toronto, Winnipeg is my native city, and for many years I have been acquainted with Oseredok and some of its cultural treasures. From the early 1980s, when I researched my first book on the great Ukrainian historian/statesman, Michael Hrushevsky, and my second on the Ukrainian Canadians in the Second World War, I discovered materials in the Oseredok library, including books, pamphlets, and newspapers, which were of great use to me, and that were simply unobtainable or difficult of access elsewhere. So when I drove up to the Oseredok building at the corner of Main Street and

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The main entrance to Oseredok at 184 Alexander Street, near the corner of Main Street and the Disraeli Freeway in downtown Winnipeg. Oseredok is located at the edge of the Museum and Theatre District of the city, which is also within a very short walking distance to the Winnipeg City Hall and Concert Hall.

the Disraeli Freeway on that warm summer afternoon of 2018, I already knew that there would be much there that would be of interest to me, despite that fact that this trip was more for pleasure and curiosity than for scholarly research.

I was not disappointed. As a known Ukrainian Canadian scholar, I was immediately given free access to the library and politely ushered up to the fourth floor of the Oseredok building, where it was located. It was my intention on this trip to simply re-survey the Oseredok collection and take a few pictures of some of the most interesting titles and cover designs, as well as to meet with colleagues in the Winnipeg area. Among the distinguished scholars and artists, with whom I then met, were the filmmaker, John Paskievich, who was just completing a new movie about the Ukrainian Canadians in World War Two (an enterprise which paralleled my earlier work in the area), the doyen of Ukrainian Canadian historians, Orest Martynowych, whose second fat volume on Ukrainian Canadian history I had just reviewed for the Edmonton based *East/West/Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, Robert Klymasz, the respected elder statesman of Ukrainian Canadian folklore studies, who also had a close interest in music and musicians of all kinds, Peter Sribniak, a local resident who shared Klymasz's interest in music and was known as an excellent raconteur of the older days in Winnipeg, and Sophia Kachor, the long-standing Executive Director of Oseredok, who was on sick leave, but was recovering and probably knew the institution better than any other living person. In earlier times, Director Kachor had been a student and aide to the distinguished founder of the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Manitoba, J. B. Rudnyckyj, and I was looking forward to learning more from conversations with her about that famous but also very controversial philologist. The rest of my time was spent in quickly running through the collections in the Oseredok library and noting some of the more interesting titles that I by chance came across.

This process began in the modest reading-room near the library entrance, where the reference section and the card catalogue were kept. One entire wall in this reading-room was covered with shelves containing various old editions of the works of Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) and Ivan Franko (1855-1916), the two giants of modern Ukrainian literature, who became quite literally "national icons" during the Soviet era, and are universally respected as founders as well as leading lights of the national literature. Their language, their vocabularies, and their turns of phrase became models of the language to be used and imitated by others throughout the next century and a half.

On these shelves, I discovered old little-known and little-used editions of Shevchenko in particular, a few of them in multiple copies. So there were actually three copies of Shevchenko's poetry or *Kobzar* (sometimes translated as *The Blind Minstrel*) in the Winnipeg edition of 1918, perhaps the first to have been printed in North America, certainly the first in Canada. In 1918, a critical edition had yet to be printed in Europe, so in any case, the Winnipeg edition of 1918 is a

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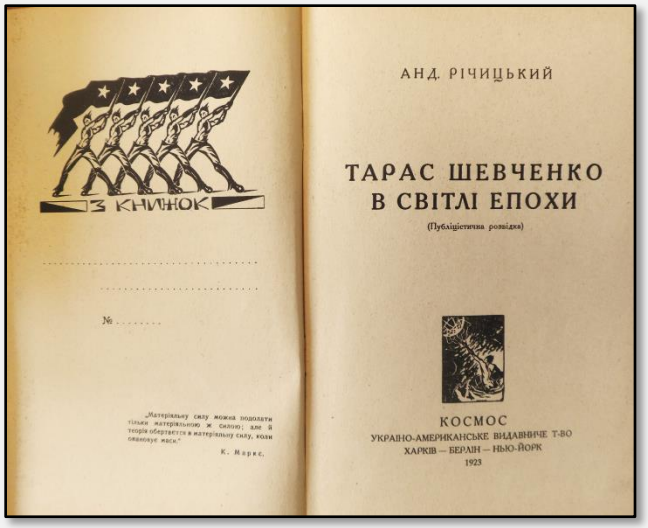
Cover design of Taras Shevchenko, *Tvory*, 3 vols. (Kiev-Leipzig/Kolomyia-Winnipeg: Ukrainska nakladnia, n.d.). The Printing House *Ukrainska nakladnia* was founded in 1903 in Kolomyia, a town in western Ukraine, then under the Austrians. The founder was a Jewish businessman named Yakiv Orenshtain, who in 1919 moved his operation to Germany, which had been more sympathetic to both Ukrainian and Jewish aspirations than had the Russian Empire. With the advent of Hitler in 1933, he again moved, this time to Warsaw, where he founded a bookstore. He disappeared in 1939, after the German invasion of Poland. Orenshtain's publications were mass productions, which were very popular in western Canada throughout the Interwar Period.

true collector's item. Alongside this Winnipeg edition, was shelved a second great and quite old edition of Shevchenko's writings. This one contains much of his prose as well as his letters and poetry. It was published in three attractively bound volumes. The cover design and title pages stated that these had been published in Kiev and Leipzig by the *Ukrainska nakladnia* (Ukrainian Publishers), but also in Kolomyia (a town in western Ukraine), as well as in "Wennipeg!"

Was this a true Canadian edition, or not? No publishing date was given, but it is known that the *Ukrainska nakladnia* was active in Germany from the early 1920s and issued many fine editions of classical Ukrainian literature. Consequently, the undated inclusion of "Wennipeg" on the title page was probably due to the fact that its unknown North American distributor was located in that Manitoba city, so important to the early history of the Ukrainians in Canada, but not so famous as to prevent it from being misspelled on the cover of this book in Cyrillic type printed in Germany.

Other interesting titles that I immediately spotted included an early Communist biography of Shevchenko by Andrii Richytsky, and the 1960 Winnipeg reprint of that same *Kobzar* originally edited by the Ukrainian philologist Vasyl Simovych for the *Ukrainska nakladnia*, and a generation later re-edited by J. B. Rudnyckyj. Both of these are today collector's items, the latter because it was a professional edition that was completely uncensored, and the former because it paved the way for Shevchenko to be later accepted into the Communist pantheon of "Great Heroes" and "Progressives." Ironically, Richytsky himself, who was a "national communist" and defender of Ukrainian rights, was arrested in 1934, blamed for the great famine of the previous years, and shot. His books, including this Shevchenko biography, were then removed from all Soviet libraries.



Title Page of Andrii Richytsky, *Taras Shevchenko and His Times* (Kharkiv-Berlin-N.Y.: Kosmos/Ukrainian American Publication Society, 1923).

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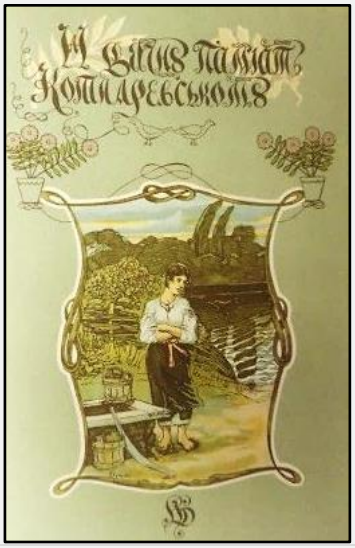
On this first day at Oseredok, I also met with the film maker, John Paskievich. John cuts an impressive figure. He seems to be about in his mid-60s, but exudes an enthusiasm for film, music, art, and politics that is truly young in spirit. With a strikingly bright and ruddy face and blondish white hair and eye-brows, of medium height and with a slight stutter that in no way inhibits his enthusiasm for life and art, he was eager to tell me of his latest project, which concerned that film on the Ukrainian Canadians during the 1939-45 war. His idea was to use still photography and, perhaps, whatever old film clips that he could dig up, add voice-over of direct quotes from veteran interviews, and then also sound effects and music, to produce a moving documentary on this somewhat controversial, but much in demand subject.

Over coffee and hamburgers at a local Salisbury House, a Winnipeg chain that once made the phrase "A Nip and Chips" (A Hamburger and Fries) famous across western Canada and east as far as Kanora, Ontario, we discussed the joys and travails of his cinematic adventure. Among the joys were listening to and editing previously recorded interviews with actual participants in the war; among the travails was the imperative of remaining honest with his conscience and sources, while at the same time satisfying the varied requirements of the environment surrounding him, which, however, had made possible such a film.

My second day at Oseredok was spent much deeper amidst the packed shelving of the Oseredok library. In this part of the library, I quickly discovered a volume that hit the nail right on the head as far as title-pages was concerned. That volume was titled *Knyha i drukarstvo na Ukraini* (The Book and Printing in Ukraine), and it discussed the history of Ukrainian printing with an emphasis on especially attractive and luxurious editions. I immediately photographed the title pages of two especially interesting and extremely rare pre-revolution volumes printed in eastern Ukraine. One of these was a book on the Czech religious reformer, Jan Hus, one of Shevchenko's heroes, who in the early 1400s, had been burned at the stake for his efforts, and the other was a commemorative volume on Ivan Kotliarevsky and his *Eneida*, which was a work in the spoken Ukrainian language (still then considered to be merely a local dialect in the Russian Empire). That work was a humorous take on Virgil's classical poem of the same name by putting Ukrainian Cossacks in the roles of the ancient Romans.



Left: Title Page of *Na Vichni pamiat Kotliarevskomu* (To the Eternal Memory of Kotliarevsky), which features ornamental lettering and a country scene with a Ukrainian maiden in the foreground. Right: Title Page of composer Mykola Lysenko's *Ivan Hus*, showing Hus, a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation, being burned at the stake, with an angel on either side of him. Shevchenko had earlier written an important poem dedicated to Hus.

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Frontispiece and Title Page of Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, Ukrainian translation (Kiev: Molod, 1955). According to the 15th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1974), *Don Quixote* was by then the world's most read book, after the Bible. A spoof on medieval conceptions of chivalry, with deep considerations of philosophy and life, it was considered to be a "progressive" work by the Communists, and the period of "thaw" after Stalin's death, made possible the publication of this sumptuous Ukrainian translation. Oseredok Collection.

The technical term for a work such as Koliarevsky's was a "travesty." The author's contemporaries indeed laughed at it when it was first printed in 1798, but the poem also performed a valuable service in the inauguration of a new literature in the spoken Ukrainian language. Kotliarevsky also wrote a second work titled *Natalka Poltavka* about a Ukrainian girl from the Province of Poltava, which also appeared in Ukrainian. These books formed an initiative that was to be followed by Shevchenko a generation later. Shevchenko's poetry, however, treated life and politics far more seriously than had Kotliarevsky, and possessed a range of feelings and thought that went far beyond humour. Within less than a century, such writings had managed to raise Ukrainian up considerably towards the goal of a literary language on a par with other European languages of that time, although many of those languages had a written history far longer than the colloquial Ukrainian one.

Later that day, I met with the historian, Orest Martynowych, to discuss professional matters and exchange views about the field. Orest told me about the recent closure of Winnipeg's oldest Ukrainian newspaper *Ukrainskyi holos* (The Ukrainian Voice) and the pressure also being exerted to reduce the size of the Oseredok Library and yield more space for museum and other functions. Orest even mentioned the possibility of a fire hazard with regard to old and unbound newspapers. A committee had been struck to help with this, and, most especially, to identity newspapers that might be safely discarded. As to books, which formed the bulk of the collection, I already knew that Oseredok possessed a very large number of them in multiple copies, some quite rare and valuable, but any prospect of "weeding" the collection of other titles immediately alarmed me. Orest did assure me, however, that the much of the newspaper collection (profitably used by me on many occasions) would be preserved, though some of it was also available elsewhere in the province, or on microfilm in Ottawa, and moreover, in more complete runs.

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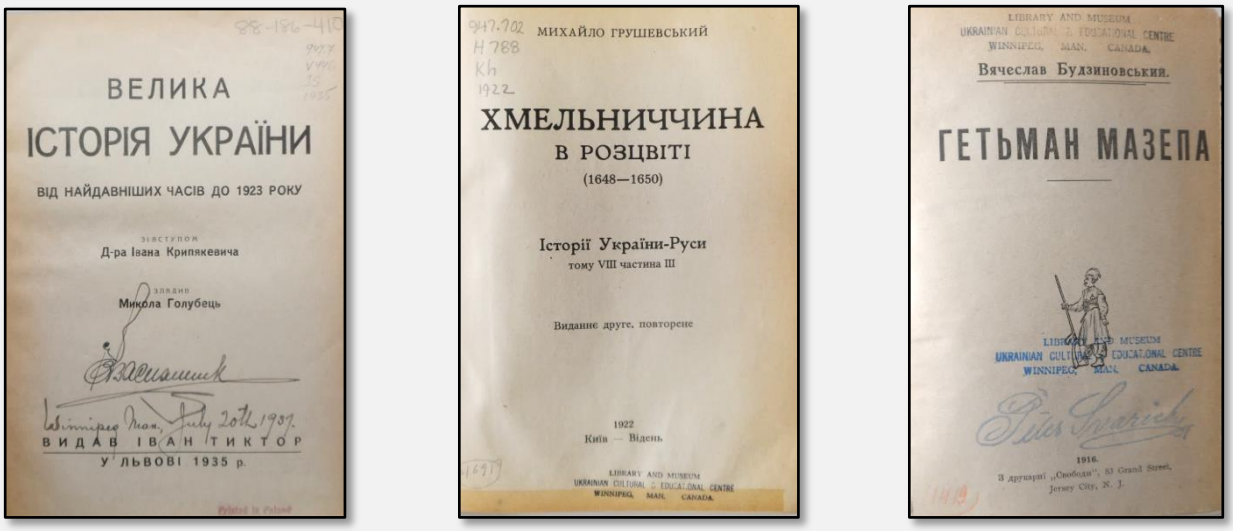
As to books, however, I remain unconvinced of the wisdom of such "weeding." I have no objection to sending duplicates or triplicates elsewhere, but in my opinion, no unique copies of anything should be removed from the Oseredok collection, even though they might on occasion be held by certain other Canadian libraries. This is because it is rare indeed in Canada to find so much varied and interesting *ucrainica* gathered together in one or two large rooms such as existed at Oseredok. Not only could one find history, literature, music, art, folklore, political tracts, newspapers, and pamphlets shelved side by side a few feet from each other, but almost all of this material is very comfortable and easy to use in nicely bound hard copy, and not on microfilm, or microfiche, or lost in a maze of digitalized matter at sites all over the world. One way to yield more library space, I later thought, simply would be to set up in the Oseredok Boutique a few shelves of duplicates from the collection to be sold off to patrons at reduced prices. This would yield both more library space, and a bit of extra income for the institution.



Three titles on Ukrainian Cossack history from the Oseredok Collection: *Velyka istoriia Ukrainy* [Great History of Ukraine], ed. Mykola Holubets (Lviv: Ivan Tyktor, 1935); Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Khmelnychchyna v Roztsviti (1648-1650)* [The Time of Khmelnytsky in Flower, 1648-1650], 2nd edition (Kiev-Vienna: n.p. 1922); and Viacheslav Budzynovsky, *Hetman Mazepa* (Jersey City: Svoboda, 1916). The first title is signed by the Canadian owner at Winnipeg, July 20th, 1937, the second is an offprint of part of volume eight of Hrushevsky's multivolume history of Ukraine, which he in part published in exile in Vienna, and the third title was a popular history of the Cossack Hetman or ruler Ivan Mazepa by Viacheslav Budzynovsky, which was published in the United States just before its entry into the First World War. This last title was signed by its owner, a prominent Prairie Canadian of the pioneer era, Peter Svarich, and bears the stamp of the Oseredok Library. The image of the Cossack with a musket on the page is taken from a sketch by the prominent artist Ilya Repin.

The next day, I returned to the Oseredok Library to look at some new shelves. On these, I stumbled upon a few shelves crowded with books and booklets on Ukrainian history and Ukrainian Cossack history. Sitting there on a shelf were both Michael Hrushevsky's great ten volume history, in both the original pre-Revolution Lviv and post 1945 New York editions, and also a unique and extremely rare copy of Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński's Polish language general history of the Cossacks. Hrushevsky, of course, was probably the greatest modern Ukrainian historian of the Cossacks. But Rawita-Gawroński's history was interesting as a critique of the Ukrainian Cossacks from a very traditional Polish view. (Poles from eastern

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Ukraine, such as he, though not all of them, tended to see the Cossacks as a sort of anarchistic element in Eastern European history.) Along with these titles were several other surveys of Ukrainian history, some of them in English. Among these, I noted a first edition of Ivan Tyktor's *Velyka istoriia Ukrainy* (Great History of Ukraine) published in Lviv in the 1930s. It had been authored by the Galician historian, Ivan Krypiakevych, among others. A vigorous and highly talented printer, Tyktor reprinted this attractive book in Winnipeg after the Second World War, when he found himself an exile in western Canada. Most collectors and libraries in North America hold only that second edition of this book, though it too is an attractive volume.

Frontispiece and Title Page of Oleksandr Ilchenko, *Kozatskomu rodu nema perevodu: Abo zh Mamai i chuzha molodytsia, Ukrainskyi khymernyi roman z narodnykh ust* [The Cossack Race Cannot be Vanquished: Or Mamai and Another Man's Wife, A Whimsical Ukrainian Novel told by the People] (Kiev: Radianskyi pysmennyk, 1958). Like the volume on Cervantes discussed above, this attractive book too was published during the brief cultural "thaw" of the 1950s. The title page states that the songs and verses compiled for this novel were gathered between 1944 and 1957 by the poet Maksym Rylsky. The Cossack Mamai of Ukrainian lore, shown on the Frontispiece, is a set piece with the Cossack tonsure, whiskers, musket, sabre, and stringed musical instrument (probably a *kobza* or a *torban*), sitting beneath a tree with his horse in the background. Mamai is actually a name of Tatar origin. Ilchenko was a popular Soviet Ukrainian journalist, who managed to survive the Stalin purges, and Rylsky was a well-known poet. The Oseredok Library stamp can be seen in blue on the lower right of the title page.

On this same day, I ran into still another interesting Winnipeg personality. Peter Sribniak had grown up in North End Winnipeg surrounded by other Ukrainian Canadians and immigrants, who were recently arrived from Eastern Europe. He knew the Ukrainian community very well indeed. He was in Oseredok working on a project concerning Ukrainian music, but was also well-known locally as a talented story teller. In discussing the community in Winnipeg, he told me two interesting stories about the Cold War and the eventual collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. The first concerned the situation in the late 1970s when a Soviet Ukrainian visitor managed to come to Winnipeg to see his relatives. He was a convinced Communist, in

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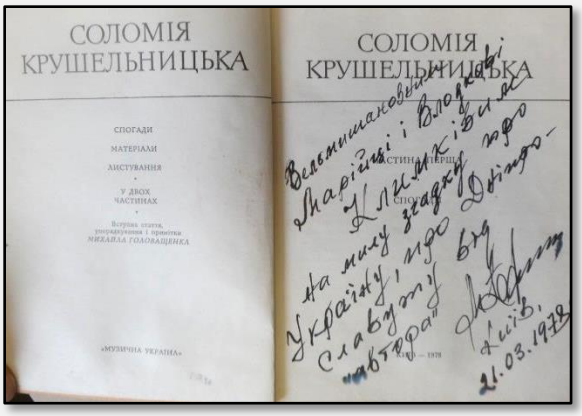
charge of a village in Ukraine, but a rather simple man, who refused to believe anything good about "capitalism" and life in Canada, where, he had been told, the masses were ruthlessly exploited and lived in abject poverty. His brother, who had done relatively well for himself in Canada, told him about "the good life" in Canada, but even then, he remained unconvinced. The Canadian brother then took him to a supermarket to see what Canadians could buy, and how they normally made due. The unfortunate Soviet visitor immediately saw his entire ideological universe smashed by that well stocked, but quite ordinary Canadian grocery store and, according to Sribniak, went out of the supermarket raving mad. He had to be placed in a mental institution for about two weeks before he recovered enough to return home to the USSR, quietly carrying this discomforting new information about the corrupt and impoverished "West."

Peter then told me a second story along the same lines, but more directly connected to himself personally, and dating back not quite so far. During the Gorbachev reform period of the late 1980s, a Sribniak family member also visited Canada to see his "capitalist" western relatives. It took him even less time than his 1970s counterpart to discover the virtues of life in the West. After only a short time with his Canadian family, they all held a formal dinner together, and the Soviet visitor stood up to make a toast: "To the crowning achievement of western civilization!" said the Soviet Ukrainian gentleman, holding up a glass of good Canadian rye whiskey, or some other such drink, and then downed the beverage.

Seeing the puzzled look on the Canadian faces around him, the Soviet citizen looked directly at his glass and explained: "It smells great, looked great, tasted great, and went down great!" This was indeed an interesting footnote to the difference between the fiery Georgian cognac, the Russian vodka, or even the Ukrainian *horilka* (which actually and quite literally can be translated as "firewater"), that the Soviets were used to imbibing with great pleasure, and the much smoother Canadian product that was completely unknown to them.

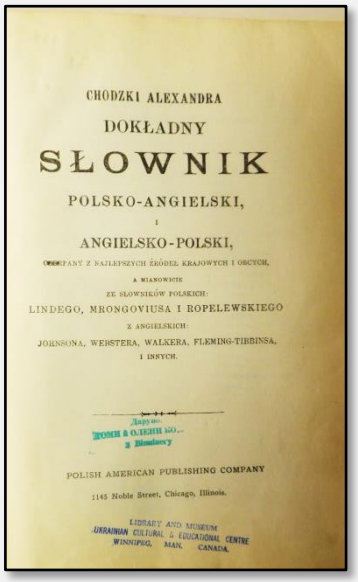
Cover design of the two volumes of *Solomiia Krushelnytska: Spohady, materiialy, lystuvannia*, [Solomiia Krushelnytska: Memoirs, Materials, and Letters], ed. M. Holovashchenko (Kiev: Muzychna Ukraina, 1978-79).

The next day, I turned to yet another wall filled with books in the Oseredok Library and investigated the holdings in drama, art, music, and architecture. Over the years, the institution had enjoyed a close relationship with members of the Koshets Choir, which was based in Winnipeg and had been named after Alexander Koshets, a very prominent Ukrainian choir director, who had died in Winnipeg in 1944. One of his successors, Walter Klymkiw, in his later

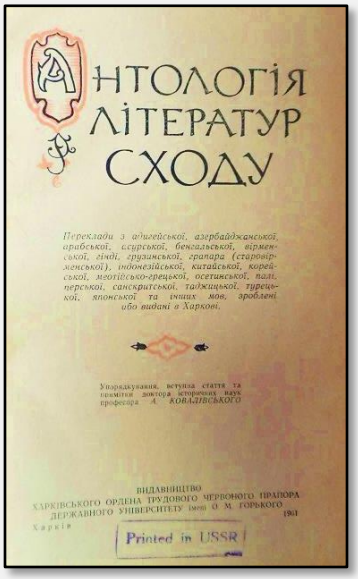


Title Page of Solomiia Krushelnytska's *Spohady* with a dedication by their Soviet Ukrainian host to the Winnipeg Ukrainians, Maria and Walter Klymkiw, dated at Kiev, March 21, 1978.

years, donated some of his personal library to the institution. On one of his rare visits to Soviet Ukraine during the later years of the Cold War, Klymkiw and his wife had been given a magnificent two volume work containing the memoirs of the well-known Ukrainian vocalist, Solomiia Krushelnytska (1872-1952), who prior to 1945, had helped to make Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* an internationally known success. That book, inscribed with a dedication by one of their hosts, now sat on the shelves of Oseredok along with several other donated copies of this important work. A little farther down the same isle was a section on art with luxurious books on the Church of Saint Sophia in Kiev and many weighty tomes on other subjects.



"Two Orientalists and Ukraine:" Left: Title Page of Aleksander Chodźko, *Dokładny słownik Polsko-Angielski i Angielski-Polski* [An Accurate Polish-English and English-Polish Dictionary] (Chicago: Polish American Publishing Company, 1874). Towards the bottom of the page, Chodźko's dictionary bears the Oseredok Library Stamp. Right: *Antolohiia literatur skhodu* [An Anthology of Eastern Literatures], ed. Andrii Kovalivsky (Kharkiv: Kharkivskyi universytet, 1961). Kovalivsky's volume contains translations from many literatures, including Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit. These included a partial translation from Arabic of Paul of Aleppo's travel journal across Ukraine and Muscovy in 1648, the year of the victorious Khmelnytsky Insurrection against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, about which Chodźko had published songs a full century before Kovalivsky's time.



That same day, I also examined the collection of books on language, including dictionaries and reference works of various sorts. Along with the standard fare of Soviet and émigré works in Ukrainian, I found an extremely rare example of Aleksander Chodźko's *Polish-English Dictionary* published in 1874 in the United States. Chodźko, originally from Vilnius in the Polish Eastern Borderlands (today in Lithuania), was an Orientalist by training, a specialist on Iran, and the Persian language, and he had spent about eleven years traveling and surveying that country. He was especially interested in Persian dialects, and looked forward to getting a

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position in France after the Crimean War of the 1850s, in which he had done some linguistic service for the French government. Instead of appointing him to a position in Oriental studies, the French government, which was aware that Chodźko was also a prominent Polish poet, interested in Slavonic affairs, and knew much about the literatures of the Slavonic peoples of Eastern Europe, chose a French citizen for the "Orientalist" job, and instead appointed Chodźko to the Chair of Slavonic Studies that had once been held by the poet Adam Mickiewicz. Chodźko then turned his attention to the history and literatures of the Slavonic peoples of Europe. During that period, he produced that Polish-English dictionary, and many other volumes on the Slavonic literatures, which also included a volume in French on Ukrainian historical songs of the Cossack era, a topic that shortly before had been researched and popularized in the writings of the Ukrainian scholars Volodymyr Antonovych and Mykhailo Drahomanov. Exactly how that dictionary of Chodźko got to Oseredok is not clear, but the story behind its author remains an interesting one for anyone curious about Slavonic, Polish, and Ukrainian scholarship in general.

An ornamental motif from the cover of Kovalivsky's *Anthology*
showing the word "East" printed in Ukrainian
and also in several "oriental" scripts,
including Arabic and Turkish.

A few days later, I visited the Oseredok director, Sophia Kachor, and we went out to lunch together, and, shades of Chodźko, ended up in an Iranian restaurant in south Winnipeg. It was at that time that Sophia told me some interesting stories about the University of Manitoba philologist Jaroslav Rudnyckyj, who especially flourished during the 1950s and 1960s. In particular, Sophia mentioned to me that she believed that Rudnyckyj had dropped the great project of his life, his *Etymological Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language*, which began to come out in English in the early 1960s, because the Soviets had begun a detailed one of their own to pre-empt him.

The reason for this was simply politics: they were plainly embarrassed by the fact that a scholar in Canada was able to start such a multivolume series, and actually publish the first volumes, before any Soviet Ukrainian scholars could do so. With some rare political support from above (as it was then a time of relative "thaw" in Ukraine), those scholars set to work researching and publishing their own etymological dictionary in Ukrainian. Unable to compete with this virtual army of Soviet Ukrainian philologists, the Canadian professor, with a single, though battle-hardened typewriter, could hardly compete, and simply dropped his project. Although the Soviet Ukrainian work took many years, and was completed only after Ukraine had acquired state independence, the *Etymolohichnyi slovnyk ukrainskoi movy* (Etymological

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Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language) eventually came out in six large volumes. I asked Sophia how she could be so certain that Rudnyckyj's effort had inspired the Soviets to initiate this great scholarly venture. She told me that the professor himself was convinced of it, and, of course, the timing was such that it could scarcely have been a coincidence.

Of course, many other Ukrainian scholars in the West believed similar events occurred because of their work. The second great example of this was the *Entsyklopediia ukrainoznavstva* (Encyclopedia of knowledge about Ukraine) edited by Volodymyr Kubiiovych and published in eleven volumes in Paris between the 1940s and the 1980s. Kubiiovych too, said Sophia, who had met him in Paris, firmly believed that his great venture had spurred the Soviets to shortly later publish their own *Ukrainska radianska entsyklopediia* (Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia) in seventeen large volumes. (The two encyclopedias actually had established the pattern to be later followed by the two dictionaries, that of Rudnyckyj and that of the Soviet Ukrainians.) Both of these encyclopedias, in particular, were enormous undertakings and true landmarks in the history of twentieth century Ukrainian scholarship, and they complemented each other quite well. Sophia told me that, like Rudnyckyj, Kubiiovych too was totally convinced of the positive effect that his encyclopedia had had on the Soviets.

On this same journey to Europe, when she had met Kubiiovych, Sophia informed me that she had also run into the Winnipeg based Greek Catholic Metropolitan of all Canada, Maxim Hermaniuk, who invited her to visit some Ukrainian religious institutions in Rome. Sophia took up the offer. In a large room in one of them, there were a number of people standing around watching a middle aged woman, a former Displaced Person from Lviv, on a ladder putting up a tapestry, or something like that, on a wall. Then suddenly, in walked none other than the head of the entire Ukrainian Catholic Church, the redoubtable Cardinal Joseph Slipyj. Slipyj was an iron-willed cleric, who had been through hell under the Soviets, and had only escaped the GULAG through the convergence of good will among Pope John XXIII, U.S. President John Kennedy, and the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev. The latter had been in charge of Ukraine before being sent to Moscow.

Slipyj was a man with a stolid and rather authoritarian character and immediately told the woman on the ladder in his imperious voice: "You are not doing this properly. Do it this way instead!" The woman, however, to Sophia's complete surprise, who knew Joseph Slipyj quite well from back in Lviv before the war, reacted immediately too, and she firmly told him to mind his own business: "You handle church services and confessions, and I will handle tapestries here," she said in an equally commanding tone. Taken by surprise, the iron-willed cardinal backed off.

Oseredok Director, Sophia Kachor, flanked by Mrs Oksana Rozumna (left) and Professor Jaroslav Rozumnyj (right) in the lecture hall of the Oseredok Museum. October, 2012. Rozumnyj (1925-2013) was a soft spoken and mild mannered gentleman, an expert on Ukrainian literature, with whom in the summer of 1974, I had first studied the Ukrainian language at the university level.

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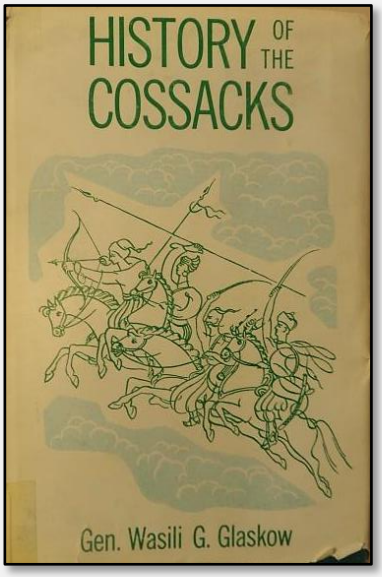
Two popular English-language histories of the Cossacks published on the eve of and during the Cold War, 1946 and 1972 respectively, and held by the Oseredok Library. Both books stressed the similarities between the Ukrainian and the Russian Cossacks. These warriors of the Steppe, however, were only peripheral to Russian history, while they were absolutely central to Ukrainian history.



Towards the end of my trip to Winnipeg, I also met and spoke on the phone with the distinguished Ukrainian Canadian folklorist, Robert Bohdan Klymasz. Like Orest Martynowych and Sophia Kachor, I have known Dr Klymasz for many years, and on each meeting with him learn something new about Ukrainian history and culture in Canada. On this occasion, we discussed the looming crisis in Ukrainian librarianship in Canada, the strained relationship between two of his famous mentors, Rudnyckyj and Paul Yuzyk, and Klymasz's own early career in folklore, museum studies, and Ukrainian Canadian studies. With regard to libraries, we discussed the dangers presently facing the many old collections of Ukrainian books and materials across Canada. He had already done much work surveying the church libraries, the Oseredok Library, and the Labour Temple Library in Winnipeg, all of which were old and very rich. We also discussed the closure of the *Ukrainskyi holos* newspaper and bookstore, which was transpiring as we spoke.

Dr Klymasz told me that the episcopal church libraries were neglected and in very bad shape, and the Winnipeg Labour Temple library not much better. Nevertheless, he concluded, the church libraries held many treasures, and the Labour Temple library, in particular, still held an enormous and extremely rare collection of Soviet translations from many different languages into Ukrainian. This unique collection, like those of the churches, he thought, should most definitely be preserved.

For most of his career, Dr Klymasz was a curator at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, specializing in ethnic groups and materials. This photograph, dating from the 1950s or 1960s, shows him with an assistant examining some artefacts. Photo: Courtesy of the University of Manitoba Archives

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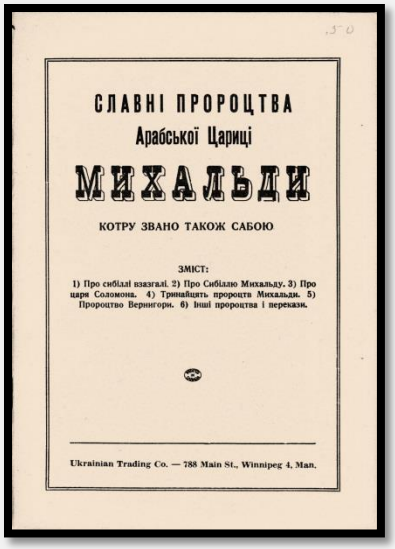
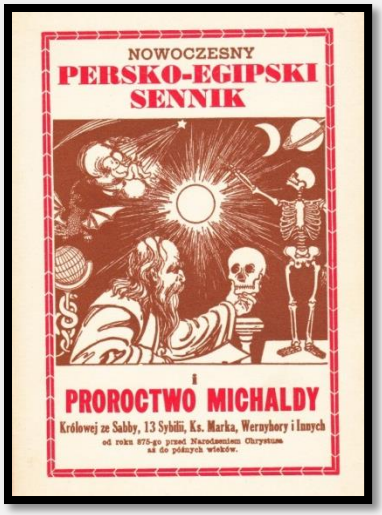
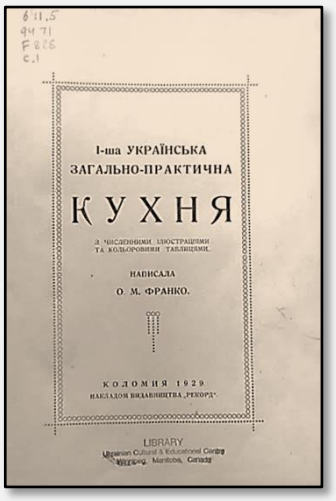




Three titles on Dreams and Prophesies from the Author's Collection, Toronto. The first two titles were printed in Winnipeg, and are undated, but appear to have been published in the 1950s. The third title, also undated, was published in Steven's Point, Wisconsin, but acquired in Winnipeg. As late as the first decade of the twenty-first century, Dr Klymasz told the author of these lines that it was possible to buy such books, specifically about the "Sayings of the Prophetess Mykhailda" at various Ukrainian bookstores on Winnipeg's Main Street. Mykhailda had supposedly been one of the Sibylline Prophets of ancient times, or even the Queen of Sheeba, and her advice was supposedly very good for the interpretation of dreams. Before deciding to marry or make some other important decision, a person might consult one of these books to see what the future might hold. Both the first and the third of the above titles also contained some of the prophecies of the legendary Ukrainian seer, Vernyhora, who was said to have predicted the fall and eventual rebirth of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. That polity disappeared from the map in the 1790s. Such superstitions, though condemned by the churches, remained popular among the pioneer immigrants to western Canada until their passing in the 1960s and 1970s. When I visited Oseredok in the summer of 2018, I noticed that the library held at least one title of this type.

As to Rudnyckyj and Yuzyk, linguist and historian respectively, who later on were both very instrumental in the propagation of the idea of "multiculturalism" in Canada, Klymasz told me that he had worked under both of them. After study at the University of Toronto under the distinguished literary historian, George Luckyj, who had given him straight A's, he went to Manitoba to do his MA. Although he started out under Yuzyk, he quickly transferred to Rudnyckyj, and wrote his thesis on the surviving Ukrainian and Slavonic surnames in Canada. Most of this pioneering work was published in various places shortly afterwards.

With regard to Rudnyckyj and Yuzyk and their famous rivalry, Klymasz told me that at first not only did they share an office at the university, but they even shared a summer cottage at the lake near Riverton, Manitoba. Nevertheless, they soon fell out, Rudnyckyj's limitless self-confidence and ebullience clashing with Yuzyk's more earthy persistence. I got the impression that there was most certainly more than a little East European élitism (Rudnyckyj) versus Prairie



An Early Ukrainian Cookbook from the Oseredok Collection: O. M. Franko, *Persha ukrainska zahalno-praktychna kukhnia z chyslennymy iliustratsiamy ta kolorovymy tablytsiamy* [The First Ukrainian General-Practical Cookbook with Numerous Illustrations and Coloured Tables] (Kolomyia: Rekord, 1929). Traditional Ukrainian dishes, such as *holubtsi* (cabbage rolls) and *kasha* (buckwheat), were always very central to the maintenance of Ukrainian identity in Canada. They typically endure long after the ancestral language is lost, and church-going to Ukrainian parishes, or ethnic political loyalties, disappear. The word *holubtsi* (sing. *holubets*) means "little doves" which they apparently resemble; in Canadian Ukrainian the word is often transformed into *holubchi*. The word *kasha* is possibly derived from the concept of "cut or beaten grain," the root supposedly being the old Slavonic word *kosyty*, meaning "to mow, to scythe, or to cut." A legend exists that the Tatars originally brought *kasha* to Ukraine from the east, that is, from Central Asia, though it is common fare among most of the Slavonic peoples of Europe.

Canadian democratism (Yuzyk) at work behind this clash. In fact, Klymasz told me that, when he first had applied to join the department at Manitoba as a graduate student, Rudnyckyj had favoured a fellow Displaced Person from Europe, and it was only Yuzyk's strong support that had got his fellow Ukrainian Canadian in.

Klymasz also told me an interesting story about his great venture across the Iron Curtain to Czechoslovakia at the height of the Cold War. He had noticed a poster on the Slavics Department wall advertising Slavonic studies in Prague, and encouraged by his professors, applied for the scholarship. He got it, and with no little innocent courage, was off to Europe aboard one of the great ocean liners of the Cunard Company. On that ship, he ran into a large troop of Ukrainian Canadians affiliated with the Labour Temple, who were headed to the World Youth Festival in Moscow. Most of these young people were Ukrainian dancers.

Klymasz had been asked by Rudnyckyj to retrieve from Prague a manuscript by that scholar that he had left under a bed in that city, when he had hurriedly fled before the approach of the Red army in 1945. This manuscript was at the home of a certain Pani Ruzhetska, whose husband was executed shortly afterwards by the Communists. But the manuscript was still there, and the young Ukrainian Canadian was able to retrieve it for Rudnyckyj. At that time, he also looked up many of the professor's old friends and colleagues, who had stayed behind and wound up living under the Communists. These were the remnants of the relatively large Ukrainian community that had been active in Prague during the Interwar period.

Vasyl Svystun, *"Ukrainskyi patriotyzm" v Kanadi na slovakh i na dili* ["Ukrainian Patriotism" in Canada in Words and in Deeds] (Kiev: Radianskyi pysmennyk, 1959). The author of this "propaganda" booklet was one of the most important Ukrainian Canadians of the Pioneer and Interwar eras, and a major figure in Winnipeg. He had been a founder of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, and during the 1939-45 war, briefly, a leader of the right-leaning Ukrainian National Federation of Canada. But upon Khrushchev's denunciation of the crimes of Stalin in 1956, he went to the Soviet Union and had a personal interview with the new Soviet leader. He then returned to Canada proclaiming that Ukrainian Canadians had to preserve some ties to their ancestral land if they wanted to survive as a group in Canada. But he always remained more a kind of unusually well-informed and realistic "fellow traveler," than a Communist, and certainly was never what the KGB scornfully called "a useful idiot."

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On this same European study tour, Klymasz managed to make a short visit to western Ukraine, which, only a few years before, had been annexed to the USSR as part of Soviet Ukraine (UkSSR). At the hotel in Lviv, he ran into those same Labour Temple Ukrainian Canadians that had gone to Moscow. Klymasz had arrived shortly before them, and he noted that the restaurant staff were a surly and unhelpful bunch, who spoke nothing but Russian to their customers. However, the very next day, when those Ukrainian Canadian pro-Communists arrived, the staff was as polite as could be, all decked out in Ukrainian blouses and speaking wonderful Ukrainian. No wonder that upon their return to Canada those pro-Communists were so confident that Ukrainian culture was doing just fine under the Soviets, thank you very much! Potemkin "show villages" indeed!

While in Lviv, Klymasz also met with several other members of the older Ukrainian élite. These included a Ukrainian composer from the famous Barvinsky family, which had stood at the head of the local intelligentsia for several generations. Klymasz's unusual journey behind the Iron Curtain in the very wake of the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and only a few short years after the Soviet occupation of western Ukraine, was not without political implications. That was because some Ukrainian émigrés refused to have anything to do with their now Communist ruled country, while the Labour Temple Ukrainians held a completely contrary view. It is notable, however, that Dr Klymasz thereafter always managed to maintain good relations with Ukrainian institutions on both sides of the great Cold War divide. That division had long left its unsavoury mark on Ukrainian culture in this country.

Left: The author with Linda Lazarowich, who was a volunteer at the *Ukrainskyi holos* newspaper office at the time of its closure. We are examining books to be saved for shipment to the various other libraries, including the Ukrainian Museum of Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Right: The author with Uliana, a worker in the Oseredok Boutique, surrounded by paintings, Ukrainian blouses, and other artefacts.

Finally, during this same trip to Winnipeg, I visited the *Ukrainskyi holos* offices on Main Street to see for myself how the closure of the paper and the dissolution of its library were going. Most of the materials were already packed in large white boxes and were being carried out by a workman as I entered. But the staff was quite polite and welcoming, saddened by the closure, but reconciled with it, since they all knew that declining circulation and the assimilation of the former clientele had already progressed so far that no other options were available. Still, with regard to the library, care had been taken so that librarians from the University of Manitoba, with the help and participation of Winnipeg Ukrainian historian, Orest Martynowych, could come and

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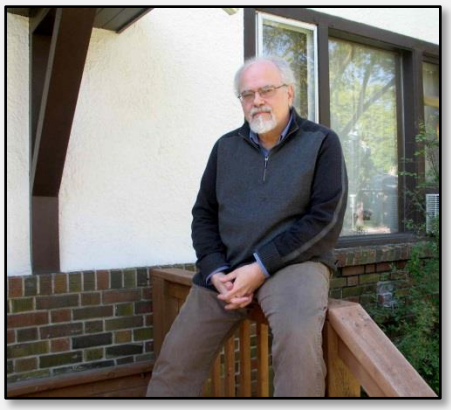

The doyen, and most prolific, of Ukrainian Canadian historians, Orest Martynowych, who from the 1990s, in many ways succeeded his elder, and fellow Winnipeger, Mykhailo Marunchak, as the single most important and most professional scholar in the field.

take what they wanted for the university collection. Other interested individuals had also taken some books for their private libraries.

The staff then asked me to look over what was left to see what else was absolutely necessary to preserve. I immediately spotted a collection of about twenty or thirty books, nicely bound on a lower shelf. The books looked like they might have come from Europe. And indeed they did! The collection turned out to be an extremely rare series on ethnography published by the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Lviv before 1914. Together with a few other interesting titles that I pointed out, this *Etnohrafichnyi zbirnyk* (Ethnographic Collection) was put together in boxes to be shipped to the Ukrainian Museum of Canada in Saskatoon, which was famous for its special interest in ethnography and folklore. Unfortunately, the *Ukrainskyi holos* collection was not the only Ukrainian collection then in process of dissolution. Sophia Kachor also informed me that the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences (UVAN) Library, another venerable old Winnipeg institution, had also decided to "liquidate" itself, and, perhaps, simply send everything off to Ukraine.

Despite this unsettling news about the dissolution of old Ukrainian libraries in Winnipeg, I was quite happy about my trip to the city. Not only was I able to once again go through the Oseredok Library and discover many new titles of interest, but I was also able to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, whom I otherwise would see very seldom. The continued presence of such learned and dedicated scholars and activists may just act as an insurance policy making possible an orderly transition to a newer phase in the history of Ukrainian culture in Canada, a phase, which not only helps to transfer some books and artefacts of national significance to Ukraine, but also faces the future boldly, and helps to preserve a vivid memory of some of the positive things that the organized Ukrainian community, and so many ordinary Ukrainian Canadians, had in the past done for Canadian as well as Ukrainian culture.

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