

Yury Victorovich Neduzhko

The Ukrainian Diaspora and the Helsinki Process (Late 1980s – Early 1990s)

Historia i Polityka nr 12 (19), 83-95

2014

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Yury Victorovich NEDUZHKO

Volyn Institute for Postgraduate Education, Lutsk, Ukraine

The Ukrainian Diaspora and the Helsinki Process (Late 1980s – Early 1990s)

Abstract: This article shows the struggle of the Ukrainian diaspora for the human rights in Ukraine. It analyses international and informational activity of the Ukrainian society in Western countries, which has the aim to guarantee freedom and democracy in Ukraine.

Keywords: freedom, democracy, human rights, Ukrainian diaspora, Western countries, Ukraine

Events of the Euro Revolution in Ukraine, following the invasion of Russian troops in the Crimea and adequate international response to these processes, in many ways determine the immediate future of Europe. Will Ukraine be an independent state or will it be occupied by Russia? Today, the Ukrainian diaspora in more than 60 countries supported the territorial integrity of an independent and democratic Ukraine. 25 years ago during the International Conference of the CSCE it defended the principles of freedom and democracy in Ukraine. The Ukrainian diaspora fought for the restoration of an independent and democratic Ukraine. This article is dedicated to this event.

Currently, over 20 million Ukrainians live outside Ukraine. They are one of the most politically, economically and culturally active diasporas in the world. Unfortunately, the history of the Ukrainian diaspora, especially in the post-war period, is extremely weak and fragmented. Human rights and state activities of the Ukrainian diaspora, despite the importance of the problem, in general are a “white spot” on the map of Ukrainian historiography. Among the works in which one can find information about the struggle of the Ukrainian diaspora for human rights and democracy in Ukraine, it is necessary to note the works of John Bazarcko and Ignatius Bilynsky, Michael Boyar, Oleksy Kalynyk Leonid Poltava, and Eugene Skotsko detailing the political situation among the Ukrainian emigrants

in the US¹. Much attention to Ukrainian communities in the West was dedicated by famous scientists such as A. Atamanenko, M. Lendvel, Yu. Makar, V. Makar, A. Utkin, K. Chernova, and others². Interconnection of government agencies and public circles of the Ukrainian community in Canada in the years 1940–1980 was studied by P. Tronko, academician of NAS of Ukraine, and O. Bazhan and Yu Danylyuk, scientists from the Institute of History of Ukraine, who prepared a collection of documents and materials “on the tablets of history”³. The monograph of Ukrainian scientists V. Troshchinsky and A. Shevchenko contained a lot of information material about the life and work of Ukrainian emigrants⁴.

A number of publications were devoted to the struggle of the Ukrainian diaspora for democracy and independence of Ukraine and the author of the term⁵.

¹ I. Bazarko, I. Bilinsky, *The Establishment and Activities of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America*, New York 1991, pp. 23–71; M.H. Boyar, *The Ukrainian Hetman Movement in America*, New York 1991, pp. 447–453; O. Kalynyk, *Society for Ukraine's Liberation*, New York 1991, pp. 476–480; L. Poltava, *Organization for the Defense of Four Freedoms for Ukraine*, New York 1991, pp. 469–475; E. Skotzko, *Ukrainian Revolutionary Movement and ODWU, its American Auxiliary*, New York 1991, pp. 454–467.

² А. Атаманенко, *Українська діаспора: проблеми і напрями дослідження*, Наукові записки Національного університету “Острозька академія”: Історичні науки.-Вип. 5: Матеріали Першої міжнародної наукової конференції “Українська діаспора: Проблеми дослідження”, Відп. редактори: І. Пасічник, А. Винар, ред. А. Атаманенко, Острог, Торонто, Нью-Йорк: Національний університет “Острозька академія”, Світова Наукова Рада Світового Конгресу Українців, Українське Історичне Товариство, 2005, pp. 5–20; М. Олександрівна Лендвел, *Політична взаємодія української етнічної групи та державної влади США в 1945–1991 рр*, Дис. канд. іст. наук. 00.07.02, Ужгород, держ. ун-т, Ужгород 1998; Ю. Макар, *Український Історик та Українське Історичне Товариство як фактор розвитку взаємодії українських вчених з України і діаспори*, Наукові записки Національного університету “Острозька академія”: Історичні науки.-Вип.5: Матеріали Першої міжнародної наукової конференції “Українська діаспора: Проблеми дослідження”, Відп. редактори: І. Пасічник, А. Винар, ред. А. Атаманенко, Острог, Торонто, Нью-Йорк: Національний університет “Острозька академія”, Світова Наукова Рада Світового Конгресу Українців, Українське Історичне Товариство, 2005, pp. 87–107; В. Макар, *Представники української етнічної групи в політичній еліті канадського суспільства*, Збірник доповідей Першої Міжнародної Наукової Конференції “Діаспора як чинник утвердження держави Україна у міжнародній спільноті” 8–10 березня 2006 року, Львів 2006, pp. 208–212; А. Іванович Уткін, *Информационная деятельность политических, общественных и религиозных объединений украинской диаспоры в странах Запада (1945–1991 гг.)*, Дис. д-р ист. наук: 07.00.01, Киев 1993; К. Олексіївна Чернова, *Співробітництво України з діаспорою США і Канади: витоки, еволюція і перспективи*, Дис. канд. іст. наук. 07.00.03, Київ 1994.

³ *На скрижалях історії: З історії взаємозв'язків урядових структур і громадських кіл України з українсько-канадською громадою в другій половині 1940–1980-ті роки. Зб. док. та матеріалів*, Кн.1, Упоряд: О.Г. Бажан, Ю.З. Данилюк, П.Т. Тронько, 2003.

⁴ В.П. Трошинський, А.А. Шевченко, *Українці в світі*, Київ 1999.

⁵ Ю.В. Недужко, *Європейські політичні процеси та перспективи відродження незалежної демократичної України в працях Президента УНР в екзилі Миколи Лівіцького*, Луцьк 2004;

However, they only briefly touch upon this problem. Many years of research and coverage of immigrants' fight for democracy and independence of Ukraine will cause substantial interest of professional scientists, representatives of political parties and the public at large and will bring benefits under the current difficult conditions of transition in the Ukrainian state. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the struggle of the Ukrainian diaspora in the West for human rights, democracy and national independence of Ukraine. Among the objectives of the article are international visibility and outreach activities of the Ukrainian diaspora in the context of the study of the problem.

The first of the discussed conferences was held in Paris from 30 May to 23 June 1989. It was called "Conference on the Human Dimension". The delegation of the Ukrainian diaspora consisted of President of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians (WCFU) Yuri Shimko from Ottawa, Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission WCFU (HRC WCFU) Christina Isajiw from Toronto, representatives of the Americans in Defense of Human Rights in Ukraine (ADHRU) – Vira Eliyashevsky and Natasha Pryatky of Chicago, Mary Zarytsky from Detroit, Odarka Polyana and Nadia Ratycz from New Jersey, and a representative of "Visa" Daniel Gorodysky from California. As part of the government delegation present were Paula Dobriansky, representative of the US Department of State, and Orestes Deychakiwsky, member of the Helsinki Commission of the US Congress⁶. Prior to the start of the Paris conference, the Ukrainian diaspora provided all foreign ministers and heads of delegations with documents on human rights violation as well as political and religious persecution in the Soviet Union. Members of the Ukrainian foreign delegation that have received accreditation as journalists actively participated in press conferences of all official delegations. They distributed among the delegates and correspondents of international news agencies documentation on the rights of NGOs in Ukraine, banning the free functioning of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) in the USSR, the existence of political prisoners in psychiatric hospitals, and new repressive laws in the USSR⁷. 1–2 June 1989 in front of the centre of international conferences in Paris a prayer was held by the HRC WCFU and ADHRU – fasting in solidarity with the Ukrain-

Idem, *Державний Центр Української Народної Республіки в екзилі (друга половина 40-х – 50-ті роки ХХ ст.)*, Луцьк 2007; Idem, *Українська діаспора в процесі відновлення державної незалежності України (середина 40-х – початок 90-х років ХХ століття)*, Луцьк 2009.

⁶ Report by Christina Isajiw of the Conference on Human Rights in Paris, Current Archive of the Ukrainian World Congress (CA UWC) (Canada), F. 1, Ark. 1.

⁷ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 2.

ian bishops, clergy and faithful of the UGCC, which at the same time conducted a similar hunger strike in Moscow, seeking legalization of the UGCC in the USSR. Fasting and prayer took place against a background of blue and yellow flag, large carved cross and two icons. Representatives of the Ukrainian foreign delegation held banners with the names of priests of the “underground” Church in the Ukrainian SSR: Paul Wasylyk, Sophron Dmyterko, Philemon Kurchaba, Nicholas Simkaylo, Ivan Synkova, and Vladimir Viytyshyn. The action was supported by the Ukrainian community in Paris, over 30 of whom took part in it. Ukrainians singing religious songs, answered questions of foreign correspondents, who were also provided with informational materials about the persecution of believers and requirements for religious freedom and legalization of the UGCC and UAOC in the USSR. The campaign was supported by representatives of American, Canadian, British, French, Swiss, Bulgarian and Baltic delegations. Among those who joined the Ukrainians and spoke in support of their demands was the Chairman of the delegation of Great Britain, Lord Anthony Williams and his wife Lady Edwin Williams, the Chairman of the Keston College and a member of the British delegation Michael Burda, members of the delegation John Evans, Annie Benkoff, Katie Kosman, Paula Dobriansky, Orest Deychakiwsky, the delegation of Norway Michael Spendou and Christopher Hoherod. The fasting and prayer organized by the Ukrainian diaspora had a different purpose. The USSR delegation scheduled a big press conference for foreign journalists for 1 June. It took place near the Ukrainian protest and therefore caused a great stir among the foreign delegations and international media and it became an occasion to raise the question of Soviet violations of human rights, freedom of religion and the legalization of the UGCC and UAOC in the USSR. Christina Isajiw and Odarka Polyanska asked the Chairman of the Soviet delegation Yuri Kashlev about the issue of non-admission of non-governmental organizations and individuals from the USSR to the conference. French non-governmental groups in the delegation of France at the same time released a list of 15 people who were invited but did not receive a permission to leave from the government of the Soviet Union. Among them was Vyacheslav Chornovil, invited by the Canadian government and arrested for 15 days in the USSR in order not to give him the opportunity to attend the Paris Conference⁸. On 3 June 1989 the Ukrainian foreign delegates raised the issue of abuse in psychiatric institutions, prohibition of emigration, the presence of political prisoners, and restrictions of the UGCC and the UAOC, and the

⁸ *Ibidem*, F. 1, Ark. 3–4.

destruction of Ukrainian national values in the USSR during press conferences held by the delegation of the USSR.

On 5 June 1989 President of WCFU Yuri Shimko met with the Chairman of the delegation of the USSR Yuri Kashlev during an interview in which he raised the issue of religious freedom in the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR separate representation at conferences of the Helsinki process. Soviet Ambassador stressed that all matters relating to human rights and religious freedom in the Soviet Ukraine belong to the former USSR, and so he has no reservations about the presence of a separate delegation of USSR and Ukraine at the Paris Conference.

The Chairman of the USSR delegation was certainly cunning. He had no authority to decide upon such questions. Indeed, after President of WCFU Yuri Shimko discussed this issue with the heads of delegations of France and Canada, they said that if the Soviet Union puts the appropriate questions during the conference, they will support it, but the delegation of the USSR did not. It refused to include a long-time prisoner of the Soviet camps Levko Lukyanenko who came from Ukraine among its members⁹. His trip to the Paris conference was organized by the Ukrainian foreign delegation and was one of their “trump Aces.” Three Groups of Amnesty International in Belgium, France and Germany appealed for support to ensure his arrival in Belgium during the Paris Conference to French President François Mitterrand, the King of Belgium Baudouin IV, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Chairman of the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church of John Paul II. On 8 June 1989 Levko Lukyanenko arrived in Belgium. The members of the Ukrainian delegation headed by Christine Isajiw immediately went to Brussels to prepare the Ukrainian opposition politician and public figure to speak at the Paris Conference. On 15 June 1989 the Ukrainian delegation from the West, Christine Isajiw and Natalie Pryatka, organized the press conference of Levko Lukyanenko at the Great Hall of the press centre in Paris. Its sponsors were HRC WCFU, Amnesty International, and the official delegation of Belgium at the Paris Conference. Levko Lukyanenko caused quite a “splash” in view of his recent release and leading role in the Ukrainian Helsinki Union. During the press conference present were over 60 delegates, accredited journalists and members of NGOs delegations¹⁰.

Levko Lukyanenko at the beginning of the press conference read a statement of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union of the Paris conference, which depicted the

⁹ Communique of the Presidium of the Secretariat WCFU. President WCFU Yuri Shimko in Paris, CA UWC (Canada), F. 1, Ark. 1.

¹⁰ Report by Christina Isajiw of the Conference on Human Rights in Paris, CA UWC (Canada), F. 1, Ark. 5.

strengthening of administrative terror in Ukraine through the adoption of “new repressive laws on social activities.” He pointed out the declarative “perestroika”, the lack of political pluralism in the political and union activities, and the need for adequate protection of human rights, religious freedom and national rights of the peoples of the Soviet Union¹¹. It should be noted that during the conference the foreign Ukrainian delegation engaged in hard work on the international plane to provide information aimed at protecting national and human rights in Ukraine.

HRC WCFU and ADHRU delegations and held numerous meetings with the Chairman of the French delegation – Ambassador Javier de la Dyufrenes Shevalere, the Chairman of Belgian delegation Ambassador Jacques Laurent and Ambassador Werner Bauens, the Chairman of Canadian delegation – Ambassador William Bauer and First Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada Zhyl Poir’ye, the Chairman of US delegation – Ambassador Morris Abram, the Chairman of Amnesty International – Albert Nebo, French Cardinal Jean Michel Lustizhe. The latter expressed full support for the Ukrainian demands in the area of human rights, religious freedom and national rights of the Ukrainian people.

On 2 June 1989 the Chairman of UK Delegation Ambassador Anthony Williams said: “I want to draw attention to the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which has more than 4 million believers and perhaps more and is therefore the largest prohibited religious organization in the world. I would like to ask the current Soviet government whether it is also believed that the elimination of the old Stalinist law was justified?”¹². The Chairman of the Canadian delegation William Bauer on 5 June 1989 criticized the Soviet law on public gatherings and meetings and said: “With respect to Ukraine, we keep hearing notifications of political prisoners and the abuse of asylums, as well as other various forms of persecution of persons and organizations fighting for human rights, such as the Ukrainian Helsinki Union. I would like to believe that it will stop. I also join my British and other colleagues in the faith that ultimately the Ukrainian Uniate Church will be legalized”. On 19 June he called the Russian Orthodox Church to get involved in the process of legalization of the UGCC and UAOC in the USSR.

On 12 June 1989 US Ambassador Morris Abram, speaking on the topic of religious freedom, stated that some governments do not show tolerance to religious denominations even though they signed the final document of the Vienna agreement “On the rights and religious freedom” and demanded it to be used in practice. He was referring to the Soviet Union. US Ambassador Abram during the

¹¹ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 6.

¹² Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 2.

Paris conference raised the issue of the discriminatory disposition of the USSR authorities to the registration of religious communities. Continuing this theme, he literally said: “Why is religion denied the official recognition that was declared in the final Vienna agreement? For example, the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are still not recognized by the Soviet government. The Ukrainian Catholic Church was forcibly incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church in 1946 and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was banned in 1930 in the Stalinist era”¹³. On 16 June 1989 a member of the US delegation Paula Dobriansky emphasized the repressive policy of the USSR towards the new democratic movement, particularly in Ukraine: “In Ukraine, we were able to see the activities of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union and the Movement, the People’s Movement for Perestroika. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union and similar groups were punished to 15 days prison for trying to spread pluralism and democratization”¹⁴. During a press conference on 7 June 1989, a delegation of the Ukrainian diaspora attached to the Canadian official delegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada raised questions about the Ukrainian political prisoners in the USSR, the religious freedom violation of national rights of the Ukrainian people by the USSR, and the negative attitude of the Soviet government to participation of NGOs from Ukraine in the Paris Conference¹⁵. One of the main results achieved by the Ukrainian diaspora during the Paris conference was the resolution of its members with the demand to legalize the UGCC and the UAOC in the USSR¹⁶.

The second international conference verifying the member countries of the Helsinki Process was held in Copenhagen on 5–29 June 1990. The Ukrainian delegation included representatives of the HRC WCFU Andrew Witer and Christina Isajiw, correspondent of the “Voice of Ukraine” Les Shimko, Vladimir Malynovych from France, Member of Parliament of Ukraine (MP) Oles Shevchenko, and Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Association Repressed Eugene Pronyuk.

Among the tasks of the Ukrainian delegation were:

1. Bringing to the attention of governments participating in the conference the contemporary situation in the Ukraine, where human rights violations were still present and making recommendations for their elimination.
2. Raising interest in the foreign media and, in particular, organizing a press

¹³ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 2.

¹⁴ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 2.

¹⁵ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 4–5.

¹⁶ Communiqué of the Presidium of the Secretariat WCFU. President WCFU Yuri Shimko in Paris, CA UWC (Canada), F. 1, Ark. 1.

conference. Informing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union about the Ukrainian diaspora and national Ukrainian human rights in the countries of the socialist camp and of course holding the conference via BBC International, RL / RFE, Voice of America, and CBC International.

3. Establishing cooperation with other governmental offices and mutually reinforcing their positions¹⁷.

Before the start of the Copenhagen Conference all Western embassies were given a memorandum in which outlined were Ukrainian rights violations in the Soviet Union and which raised a number of requirements. In particular, the Ukrainian diaspora emphasized that about 20–30 Ukrainian political prisoners continue to remain imprisoned in a psychiatric hospital contrary to the 7th principle of the Final Act of the Vienna conference. Among them were Bogdan Klymchak, Nicholas Berdnikov, and Alexander Fuhnikov. Representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora emphasized that the Soviet government has not yet officially recognized the UAOC and the UGCC as legal institutions and they did not return the confiscated property.

A separate section of the memorandum concerned free elections in the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian diaspora condemned evident violations of democratic procedures in the Soviet electoral system, which were made in favour of the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This applies, in particular, to the aspects of the registration of public organizations and their candidates, access to mass media and advertising, the use of personnel of military units during voting in favour of the Communist Party, the practice of using the means of intimidation, slander, blackmail, and fraud by the authorities, and ban on entry to Ukraine of official observers of the electoral process from the Senate of Canada and the US Congress¹⁸. Representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora condemned the Soviet government for the use of troops and special forces against the civilian population in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in order to suppress the national-democratic movements. The Ukrainian foreign delegation urged participants to confirm the right of peoples to political independence as enshrined in the 8th principle of the Helsinki Final Act. They demanded the government guarantees, in particular, in case of human rights in the Soviet Union, the existence of an independent court which would be based “on the force of law,

¹⁷ Report of the Committee of the Helsinki Conference in Copenhagen, CA UWC (Canada), F. 1, Ark. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, F. 1, Ark. 3.

not on the right of force". According to the Ukrainian diaspora, it would provide protection against human rights violation by the government¹⁹. The Ukrainian delegation participated in all official events during the conference, focusing on the press conference organized by the Soviet delegation. The Ukrainian diaspora on each of them raised the Ukrainian perspective and actively cooperated with the Jewish and Lithuanian unofficial delegations.

The involvement of deputies from Ukraine is equally important. Eugene Pronyuk and Oles Shevchenko held a series of talks with the heads and members of government delegations, foreign correspondents and international media. Oles Shevchenko took part in a meeting with the delegation from the Norwegian Amnesty International, which has invited Ukrainian delegation coordinator Christine Isajiw. Norwegians specially arrived at Copenhagen in order to support Ukrainian demands during meetings with the head of the government delegation of Norway and other delegations from Scandinavian countries.

Ukrainians in talks with government delegations raised the need of full legalization of the UGCC and the UAOC, the release of all political prisoners, including Bogdan Klymchaka, granting Ukraine the status of an official participant-observer at the conference of the Helsinki process, and abolition of the USSR Law on demonstrations, rallies and gatherings. During the press conference arranged by Ukrainians a number of demands were made: holding free elections in Ukraine with the presence of international observers, banning the use of the KGB special units to disperse demonstrations and peaceful assemblies of citizens, and not sending dissidents and opposition members to psychiatric hospitals. Furthermore, political and socio-economic situation in Ukraine was covered in detail as well as the desire of its people for national independence²⁰.

The European press and television made a detailed coverage of the activities of the Ukrainian delegation at the Copenhagen conference. The aim of this conference was to harmonize the final document, which included, among other things, 12 rules of free elections with mandatory regulation on the presence of international observers. Conference in Copenhagen was followed by an extraordinary final conference of the CSCE in Paris in autumn 1990. It should be noted that on the eve of the Paris Conference of the CSCE, executive director of the HRC WCFU Isajiw Christina took part in the Conference of Foreign Ministers, which took place in New York on 1–3 October 1990. She held talks with representatives of the US, Canada, UK and other European countries about the possibility

¹⁹ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 2.

²⁰ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 4–5.

of independent Ukraine's participation in the Helsinki process. Joint Ukrainian delegation participated in the Paris CSCE conference, which included representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora as well as the Ukrainian SSR. They included, in particular, the Executive Director of the HRC WCFU Christine Isajiw, Chairman of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Dmytro Pavlichko, MP Ivan Drach and MP Bohdan Horyn. Ukrainian participants have raised questions about the resolution of the problem of human rights violation in the USSR and state sovereignty of Ukraine²¹.

Thanks to the active assistance and members of the HRC WCFU version of the "Ukrainian word", delegation of Ukraine was able to give an interview to numerous international media on the political situation in Ukraine and the strife for independence of the Ukrainian people. In cooperation with the Armenian delegation a press conference was held for the European media. Christina Isajiw as HRC WCFU representative participated in the official conference sessions. She visited a number of Western delegations and passed the requirements of the delegates-members of the Ukrainian parliament in protest that the Soviet government was not allowed to take an independent part in the conference. During the conference the CSCE Charter of Paris for a New Europe, based on the Helsinki principles, was adopted and the following permanent bodies were established: the CSCE Secretariat in Prague, the Office for Free Elections in Warsaw and the Centre for Conflict prevention in Vienna. They also agreed to hold regular political consultations.

The delegation of the Ukrainian diaspora was present at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe "Culture and Heritage" which took place in Krakow from 28 May to 7 June 1991. The delegation of the HRC WCFU to the conference consisted of Andrew Witer, Christine Isajiw, Ivanka Yatsiv, and Miroslava Oleksyuk-Baker. From Ukraine arrived MP of Ukraine Dmytro Boot and Cultural Adviser to the Commission at the Supreme Soviet Alexander Kirichenko. However, they had no authority to represent the Ministry of Culture of the USSR. This complicated the activity of the Ukrainian delegation in terms of features performances during the conference and the presentation of claims to other Ukrainian delegations. However, despite this, the Ukrainian met with delegations from 21 countries, informing them of the destruction of material and spiritual culture in Ukraine by the Communist system, emphasizing the importance of the exchange of cultural and scientific advancement for the preservation and revival of the national cultural heritage. Christina Isajiw and Miroslava Oleksyuk-Baker participated in numerous press conferences during which they raised issues related

²¹ Report of the Human Rights Commission for 1991, CA UWC (Canada), F. 1, Ark. 2.

to the subject of Ukraine. The final document of the Krakow conference was handed to representatives of the HRC WCFU Ukraine to inform the Ukrainian parliament and civil society organizations on the progress of the conference, the importance of the Helsinki process and the participation of Ukraine in it²².

On 8–9 September 1991 at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada the representatives HRC WCFU: Andrew Witer, Christine Isajiw, and Mirosława Oleksyuk-Baker took part in the official opening of the Canadian Consulate in Kiev. They met with the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, Foreign Minister of Ukraine Anatoly Zlenko, representatives of the Ukrainian government, parliament and the national-democratic forces. The Ukrainian diaspora put a lot of effort and energy to convince the members of the Government of Ukraine to take part in the official CSCE International Conference “Human Dimension” in Moscow²³. A number of Ukrainian emigrants, activists from human rights organizations and former political prisoners also made an appearance. This was done to better prepare for the CSCE Moscow Conference. Western countries were sent documentation that depicted the political situation in Ukraine after the declaration of independence on 24 August 1991. Andrew Witer met with the Canadian consul Nestor Hayovsky and expressed wishes of foreign Ukrainian community in relation to the independence of Ukraine.

From 10 September to 4 October 1991 Ukrainian delegation participated in the Moscow Conference of the CSCE. It included: Chairman of the Commission of Human Rights at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Alexander Yemets, Ambassador of Ukraine in Russia Vladimir Kryzhanivsky, First Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine Andrei Veselovskii, representatives of the Ukrainian society and repressed group “Helsinki-90” Natalia Belitser, the Chairman of the “Green Light” in Ukraine, and Natalia Preobrazhenska, Chairman of the HRC WCFU Andrew Witer, Executive Director of the HRC WCFU Christina Isajiw, Chairman of the ADHRU Bożena Olshaniwska, and members of the HRC WCFU Mirosława Oleksyuk-Baker and Olga Zaverukha. For three and a half weeks of the conference, the Ukrainian delegation held numerous meetings with delegations from Western countries, informing and persuading them that the act of independence of Ukraine was completely full and leads to the adoption of the new Constitution of Ukraine and a number of different agreements that will lead to complete separation of Ukraine from the USSR. Representatives of foreign delegations discussed in detail full participation of independent Ukraine in CSCE, Ukraine

²² Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 2–3.

²³ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 3–4.

attitude towards neighbouring states and republics of the USSR, the inviolability of borders of Ukraine, the presence of nuclear weapons on its territory, the government's attitude to Ukrainian military and economic alliances, and national minorities living in Ukraine²⁴. These topics were discussed at a press conference held by the Ukrainian delegation on 13 September 1991. The Ukrainian delegation emphasized the fact that in the final phase of the struggle for national independence of Ukraine national democratic forces avoided violence, bloodshed and military conflicts that have characterized most parts of the former Soviet Union.

Interest in Ukrainian issues was shown by a number of global media correspondents, who visited the Ukrainian press conference. Over 60 of them were present, i.e. twice the usual number and three times more than the number attending the meeting with the famous Russian human rights activist Elena Boehner, who also came in order to express support for the Ukrainian delegation²⁵. The CSCE Moscow Conference adopted a number of amendments to the Final Document of the Copenhagen conference on principles relating to the activities of the human rights movement. Emphasis was placed on the mechanisms that were supposed to ensure the inevitability of democratic progress and maintain a legal system that relied on principles of justice. In addition, the importance of NGO work such as HRC WCFU was stressed and they were given more opportunities for activity during the Helsinki Process. In general, as emphasized by representatives of HRC WCFU, the presence of the Ukrainian delegation at the CSCE Moscow Conference was very helpful in establishing international relations, promoting democracy and for the further development of the Ukrainian statehood²⁶.

Summarizing all the above, it should be noted that:

1. The Ukrainian diaspora in the West engaged in an active struggle for human rights and the rights of the Ukrainian nation in the USSR. It was treated as a modified form of the struggle for the revival of the state independence of Ukraine;
2. Ukrainian human rights organizations in the West have exerted significant pressure on governments, the public and the media in the US, Canada and Western Europe at the time of the Helsinki process in order to gain their support and to raise human rights issues in Ukraine during the negotiations with the Soviet Union in the late 1980 – early 1990s;

²⁴ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 4.

²⁵ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 5.

²⁶ Ibidem, F. 1, Ark. 5.

3. Actions of the Ukrainian diaspora were successful, as evidenced by the reaction of the international community and its pressure on the Soviet authorities to positively address issues raised by the Ukrainian delegation during the CSCE conferences. The real results were the legislative changes in the Soviet Union to stop the violation of human rights and religious freedom in the USSR, the release of a number of Ukrainian prisoners, and initiating participation of Ukraine as an independent state in the Helsinki process in the early 1990s.