

Organizational Aspects of DP Literary Activity

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“George Bernard Shaw once remarked that authors are incorrigible individualists, addicted to solitude and generally without any capacity for business or organization. And at first glance, the whole idea of a *society of authors* might seem paradoxical.”¹ Yet writers were the first of the Ukrainian DPs to organize. Only four months and seventeen days after V.E. Day and before UNRRA took official control of the DP camps in partitioned Germany, the Union of Ukrainian Writers (Mystetskyi ukrainskyi rukh, MUR) came into existence.²

The establishment of MUR was not the only organizational activity among Ukrainian writers, yet it is the most substantive and interesting. There were many literary organizations, as yet uncounted, but even a cursory glance at the bibliography³ reveals more than ten literary magazines, most of which were organs of local literary organizations. That bibliography also reveals that most of those journals, magazines, and almanacs had a very brief existence. Many existed only for several issues or even just one.⁴ A contemporary stated that although:

in various camps there existed various literary associations, they were incapable of providing any meaningful manifestation of their existence, and when, for instance, they turned to the publication of journals, they would immediately go beyond the boundaries of their local camp and invite authors from other regions to participate. Such was the case with the journal of the Karlsfeld association, *Ridne slovo*, or with the journal of the Augsburg association, *Zahrava*, both of which had a comparatively longer existence than other more ephemeral publications of the local writers' associations.

In the organization of literature the local camp principle proved beneficial only for the inept and the graphomaniacs.... Somewhat more important were

attempts to organize around political groupings and especially the attempt to organize...MUR.⁵

One may, therefore, forego all other literary organizations and concentrate on MUR. The Chronological Table (pp. 233-4) shows the activities of MUR during its three-year existence (from 23 September 1945 to 2 November 1948). An attempt to transplant⁶ the organization overseas was planned, but despite the efforts of some of the members to revive the organization, it was impossible.⁷ Mere dates and facts, however, hardly reflect its real activity. They must be fleshed out in order to get some idea of how and why the organization came into being, what caused its demise, and the value of its contribution to Ukrainian literature.

The celerity with which Ukrainian writers began to organize is puzzling, given the history and background of the initiators. The organization was apparently created by a six-member group: I. Bahriany, V. Domontovych, Iu. Kosach, I. Kostetsky, I. Maistrenko, and Iu. Sherekh.⁸ The only information on this important event is in a sparse report given by Sherekh at the first MUR congress.⁹ According to that, the six met in Nürnberg on 25 September 1945 and formally launched MUR with the following "declaration":¹⁰

The times have placed and place before Ukrainian art that task to which it has been called: to serve its nation by its highly artistic and superb form and in such a way as to establish for itself a voice and an authority in the art of the world.

Discarding all that is artistically imperfect and ideologically hostile to the Ukrainian nation, Ukrainian artists are uniting in order to strive in friendly cooperation toward the summit of real and serious art. This union of Ukrainian artists in emigration is open to those masters of the word and brush who write on their flag the motto of an art that is superb, ideologically and formally mature, as well as in a state of constant, eternal quest.

The initiatory group of Ukrainian writers who are starting MUR considers as its first concrete tasks the consolidation of artistic resources, such resources which wish to and can unite under the above motto; the preparation of a charter and by-laws of the organization; the establishment of a publishing house; and the development of publishing activity. For the latter this group is taking over, in agreement with the owners, one of the printing houses. Through the publication of collections, newspapers, and books of individual authors the initiatory group is striving to make its idea popular in artistic circles as well as individual literary groupings and to call into being the Ukrainian artistic movement which, by its momentum, would serve the establishment of a new literary era.¹¹

The declaration is rather indicative, in its nationalistic and romantic terminology and ambitious goals, of the heady idealism of its founders. Even the name of the organization—MUR—is a curious phenomenon. Its formation lies in the Soviet tradition of the 1920s of forming such acronyms as MARS and VAPLITE, but what is more interesting is that the acronym has a very specific

meaning—wall. That certainly reflects the longing of the founders for stability and artistic firmness, which the time of great upheaval made even more precious and unattainable. Wall also implies something which will protect, embrace, and unify. At the same time, the individual words stand for Artistic Ukrainian Movement, and “movement” gives quite a different emphasis. It implies dynamism, something akin to the vitality (*vitaizm*) of the twenties. It recalls the *rukh* of Tychyna’s *Soniashni kliarnety*, with its “momentum [which] would serve the establishment of a new literary era.” It is also quite indicative that even though the organizers were all writers, the name refers to “artists” and the movement was to encompass more than literature. This was not incidental. MUR was meant to be an all-embracing, intellectual movement, as opposed to a singular grouping, and, like a wall, was meant to enfold and protect all these creative but displaced persons. Khvylovy’s VAPLITE—the Academy of Ukrainian Literature and Art—was being revived once again. The comparison to VAPLITE is especially relevant, because VAPLITE’s main objective¹² was “to aim at quality, not quantity, and to elevate the *cultural* life of Ukraine...”¹³

The initiatory MUR group compiled a list of thirty-eight authors¹⁴ they thought should belong to the organization as founding members.¹⁵ They also elected a temporary executive consisting of Bahriany, Kostetsky, and Sherekh. These three co-opted Domontovych and started to perform functions that they established as the first priorities of this executive: 1) Find the persons on the founders’ list and ask them to become members of MUR; 2) Work out a constitution (by-laws) for MUR; 3) Explore publication prospects, and, if possible, establish a system for the publication of books; 4) Establish contact with the umbrella organization of the Ukrainian emigration to gain recognition for MUR; 5) Prepare and hold a MUR conference.¹⁶

Despite difficulties in communication and general postwar confusion, the provisional executive managed to accomplish four of those five tasks quickly and amazingly well. According to the report given during the first congress of MUR (only three months after the initiative group was formed), a congress had been prepared and was being held (point 5). All but six of the thirty-eight “founding” members had been contacted (point 1).¹⁷ The constitution (by-laws) had been prepared, read, and approved at the congress (point 2). Contact with the central umbrella organization had been made, and MUR was proclaimed the “leading organization of writers” (point 4).¹⁸

The Aschaffenburg Congress elected Ulas Samchuk head of the organization. His letter-declaration to the Central Representation, addressed to Professor D. Doroshenko, proclaims:

We take this opportunity to announce to you that the organization MUR is the *only* representative unit of such type on the territory of Europe in which our fugitives find themselves. The organization embraces all the foremost [creative] forces of our contemporary literature. Among various clusters of our citizenry in various locations there also exist local unions and organizations, but

all of these serve only local interests and needs...but in the external sphere all matters which relate to the literary activity of our cultural sector are represented and cared for exclusively by the organization MUR.¹⁹

The only item on the priorities list of the temporary executive which proved difficult to accomplish was number three, publications. This most pressing item was an unattainable goal throughout the organization's existence. Although the provisional executive (as well as the elected executive) tried to acquire one of the several presses which operated in the various camps, they failed. The Regensburg attempt is a good example of this failure. Documents indeed suggest that the alacrity with which the initiators threw themselves into the idea of creating MUR was tied to the sudden availability of a Ukrainian printing press. It was in the possession of two writers, L. Poltava and L. Lyman, both in the Regensburg DP camp.²⁰ That printing press, though discovered and seized by Poltava and Lyman, was under the control of a local political organization in Regensburg, the Committee for Stateless Ukrainians (CSU). MUR was forced to negotiate with this committee, which was reluctant to release the press. MUR turned for help to the Central Representation of the Ukrainian Emigration. On 14 October 1945 (almost two weeks before the organization officially existed), a letter from the general secretary of the Central Representation, Roman Ilnytskyj, went to the CSU in Regensburg. Ilnytskyj outlined the need of the Ukrainian community for a central newspaper, the scarcity of printing facilities, and the dangers of needless duplication. Then he proposed:

In the opinion of the Central Representation of the Ukrainian Emigration it would be advisable to begin publishing a Ukrainian newspaper in Regensburg, employing the facilities of the editorial staff of the mimeographed newspaper, *Chas*, published in Fürth. This newspaper would be published under the control of the Central Representation of the Ukrainian Emigration and its literary pages under the control of the literary-artistic organization MUR and would thus become the leading organ of the Ukrainian émigré community.

[Therefore it would be necessary] to hand over to MUR the printing press used by the CSU and Messrs. L. Poltava and L. Lyman in Regensburg.²¹

The discussions and pleas led to an agreement between MUR and the Regensburg CSU, but just before the actual takeover, the CSU decided to establish its own publishing house and thus refused to hand over the press. Similar last-minute failures plagued MUR's other attempts to get its own press and publishing house throughout its existence.²² This had a significant influence on all the publishing activities of MUR, as Sherekh tersely observed:

This episode, by itself insignificant, is important in that from the very beginning it left the union of writers without its own publishing base and predetermined its publication policy. The cornerstone of this policy was to make use of all possible avenues of publication, controlled more and more by various political groupings, and to do this without any outright political co-operation, maintaining, if not a supra- then an inter-party stance.²³

Thus even the few organizational publications of MUR had various publishers: *Almanakh* was published by *Ukrainski visti* in Stuttgart; *Zbirnyk II* and *III* by *Ukrainske slovo* in Regensburg; and *Arka* by *Ukrainska trybuna* in Munich. The unifying feature of all the MUR publications and the mark of “quality control” was the symbol-imprint of the organization, *Zolota Brama*.²⁴

Despite those difficulties the organization did create a small series (*Mala Biblioteka MURu*) and proceeded to publish various well-edited editions of smaller works.²⁵ Moreover, right from the start the organization did everything in its power to plan and control literary output. The provisional executive issued a questionnaire to authors asking about works awaiting publication. The return of the questionnaire, however, was tardy and sporadic, so no publishing schedule for available works could be drawn up. As early as 10 December 1945 the executive also sent a form letter to prospective members, asking for lists of members’ and classical works to be approved for publication in books used for recitations at various public forums. Furthermore, it asked for names of authors who would be willing to travel to various camps to do readings at literary evenings.²⁶ Six months later another form letter was sent out to all the members, warning against uncontrolled and chaotic publication—the proliferation of similar journals—and cautioning against the irreparable harm done to literature when the reader was presented with good, indifferent, and bad literature in the same journal. That appeal was meant to encourage members actively to support the executive’s creation of one representative journal. To this end, they were to “give their best artistic work” to that journal and “refuse to scatter it over the innumerable and often sporadic publications.” It went on:

The executive of MUR asks you: a) To hand over your works first and foremost to the representative organs of MUR and, in conjunction with the development and growth of these organs, to refuse to participate or greatly reduce your participation in other journals; b) not to accept editorial duties from other journals, and if you are already editing some other journal to get it to merge with MUR.²⁷

This appeal had limited success. There are some letters from individual authors, promising not to write for other journals,²⁸ as well as another form letter from the publication sector of MUR informing the members that the Innsbruck-based journal *Zveno* had officially become an organ of MUR.²⁹ In general the executive could not enforce its publication policy either on its members or on the owners of the printing facilities.

They were more successful, however, in organization. Despite the short time for preparation and general confusion, when the first congress opened on 21 December, nineteen authors were present.³⁰ That congress had three segments: theoretical, organizational, and performance. There were five papers presented in the first segment.³¹ They dealt with general literary problems and endeavoured to establish some guidelines for future literary work.³² The second

segment (organizational) was devoted to the most essential business of the newly founded MUR. Sherekh presented his report on the activities of the initiating group and the temporary executive. Domontovych presented the projected by-laws³³ of the organization, which the congress approved and accepted. Membership dues were set at one Reichsmark per month plus one per cent of any honorarium received, either from publications or from public appearances.³⁴ The first congress also prepared a resolution of intent and purpose. Finally, a nominating committee was struck (composed of M. Bazhansky, O. Liaturynska, and M. Svarozhych), which in turn proposed a slate of seven names (I. Bahriany, V. Domontovych, Iu. Kosach, I. Kostetsky, B. Podoliak, U. Samchuk, and Iu. Sherekh) for the executive and three names (V. Barka, I. Maistrenko, and V. Porsky) for the audit commission, with Sofiia Nesych as the candidate to this commission. There was a secret ballot and the slate was elected as proposed.³⁵ Despite the fact that Samchuk did not receive the greatest number of votes, at the first executive meeting he was chosen head of the organization. Sherekh became his associate and head of the membership qualification committee; Kostetsky became secretary-treasurer; Domontovych became head of the editorial-publishing committee; and Kosach was chosen for organizational chairman.³⁶

As part of the third segment at the first congress (performance), there were two literary readings. During the first one, Sherekh led the proceedings. While introducing the various authors who were to read, he gave a concise outline of the development of Ukrainian literature and the role of the participating authors in this development.³⁷ During the second literary evening the stage belonged to the younger poets: Harasevych, Stepanenko, Chorny, Sytnyk, and Hanna Cherin.³⁸ They were introduced by Podoliak. The second half of the evening was devoted to the reading of works by Iu. Kosach. He read the prose and the actress, I. Lavrivska, recited his poetry.

This rather detailed presentation of the events at the first congress set the pattern for the next two congresses. As promised at the first congress, the first conference in Augsburg was basically a repetition of the first Aschaffenburg congress. Yet there were differences both in the composition of those attending (Samchuk, for example, was absent) and in the program. There were some additions, as well as papers which were repeated from the first congress.³⁹ Most of the time, however, was devoted to a discussion of Sherekh's paper on the styles of Ukrainian émigré literature. The literary evenings included works by O. Babii, Sofiia Nesych, L. Lyman, L. Poltava, M. Sytnyk, Iu. Buriakivets, I. Manylo, Hanna Cherin, some young prose writers, and the Belorussian poet M. Sednov.

At the following two congresses the executive underwent some changes. During the second congress in Neu-Ulm on 15-16 March 1947, Samchuk and Sherekh retained their positions, Kosach was re-elected to the executive, and Podoliak became a full member. The other members of the executive were

replaced by Dyvnych and Hordynsky. Derzhavyn and Slavutych became candidates for the executive.⁴⁰ The third and final congress of MUR, 11-12 April 1948 in Zuffenhausen near Stuttgart, again elected Samchuk and Sherekh to the top executive positions. Only Dyvnych remained from the second executive. All the others were replaced by new members: Kravtsiv, Liudmyla Kovalenko, Bazhansky. Slavutych moved from candidate to full member of the executive. Miiakovsky (Porsky) and Korovytsky became candidates for the executive.⁴¹

In September 1947 Samchuk left for Canada and MUR's activity diminished. Neither Samchuk nor Sherekh mentioned any organizational activity after that. Materials in the MUR archives, however, reveal that the executive did meet after Samchuk's departure and that Sherekh was elected co-head of MUR.⁴² Kravtsiv was elected associate head with Sherekh. Yet despite the fact that it was really Sherekh who was the heart and soul of MUR, his stewardship made little difference. The time of MUR was over. Sherekh gave three reasons for the demise of the organization: lack of funds, lack of people due to emigration, and finally, political harassment.⁴³ One cannot argue against those. They were valid reasons for its demise, but there are still some points which must be clarified, and some conclusions to be drawn.

MUR never really solved its publication problems. It failed to gain control of a press and to organize a publication programme, not only for lack of funds but also for lack of co-operation from publishing enterprises and from MUR members themselves. What seemed to annoy MUR most was the fact that unqualified publishers had control over publications—the writers' lifeline. When the Regensburg attempt at securing a printing press failed, MUR wrote a note of complaint to the Central Representation of the Ukrainian Emigration voicing these fears:

The printing press is used by a publishing co-operative formed from persons who have no relation to literature and who base their venture exclusively on private and commercial aims.

In fact the control over literary publications is concentrated in the hands of unqualified people, thus evoking indignation among writers and threatening to create an atmosphere of conflict in which our foremost authors would be isolated from publishers or placed in dependence on commercial factors.⁴⁴

These complaints are very revealing of the basic misconception that motivated the founders and the executive of MUR. Clearly they were thinking in Marxist terms—worker control over the means of production. Therefore they feared that publishing would not be in the hands of the authors themselves, and that commercial considerations would not allow for the best in literary output. From this it followed that the general public was ready neither to judge nor choose its own path in literature. They felt the public was incapable of differentiating between good and bad literature.

In the Western world commercial success serves as one of the deciding operating principles for most publishers. Judging quality literature is left to the reader, with prompting from professional critics and qualified editors, if or when the prompting is sought or heeded. Every author considers himself excellent and worthy of being read and often considers his approach the only right one. However, rarely does a group of authors aspire to manage the cultural development of a society. This is a uniquely Eastern, or more precisely, Russian-Ukrainian, phenomenon, where so much social and political thought entered the consciousness of society through literature. In the case of MUR, the aim of the organization—to marshal, lead, and control the development of Ukrainian culture, to create an all-encompassing cultural movement—was a continuation of the attempts by M. Khvylioviy to create a new Ukrainian proletarian culture.⁴⁵ Khvylioviy's VAPLITE never finished its work. It was suddenly and brutally interrupted. The men and women who were witnesses to that, who understood its importance and who thought in those very specifically Eastern literary terms were the founders of MUR. It was to be an academy, an Olympus. It was to have hegemony and to represent Ukrainian literature to the rest of the world. MUR, unlike its predecessor VAPLITE, did not choose the style of art, but it did insist that it be the arbiter of quality. The first to protest, of course, were some of the authors themselves. Significantly, Osmachka accused MUR of "vaplitanism."⁴⁶ Others, such as Kosach and Derzhavyn, protested and left the organization as soon as the standard of quality did not coincide with their wishes.

Much of MUR's time⁴⁷ was devoted to the resolution of various unpleasantnesses precipitated by members and non-members, owing to personal jealousies, misunderstandings about the nature of the organization, and political differences. Although many of these intrigues were nothing more than idiosyncrasies of the malcontents,⁴⁸ there was a built-in component, the idea of elitism, which was bound to be a destructive element in the organization. Even the methods devised by MUR to insure some quality control often backfired. Writers published on the side and used the MUR mark of quality, not always with the permission of the executive. Others besieged the association with applications for membership, thinking that would give them status as writers.

Sherekh's second reason for the demise of MUR—the lack of people owing to emigration—also requires elaboration. V. Mudry listed 104,024 Ukrainians in the American Zone of Germany in 1946 and only 67,255 in 1948,⁴⁹ a decrease of more than 35 per cent. The same proportion may hold for the members of MUR, yet that is not the whole story. A membership list of 14 September 1946 (in preparation for the Bayreuth conference) has forty-five members and two candidates. More than thirty of those were from Eastern Ukraine. The entire first executive, with the exception of Samchuk, was from Eastern Ukraine. The fact that Samchuk, despite a smaller number of votes, was internally chosen as head of the organization, is also indicative of its contradictory nature. MUR's initiators

and prime movers were mainly Ukrainians from Eastern Ukraine, but the majority of the émigrés came from Western Ukraine. To avoid inherent distrust and even hostility, and to cement the organization, the leader had to be acceptable to both the Eastern émigré minority (but majority of known and established writers) and the Western émigré majority (but minority of authors). The leader also had to be at least nominally acceptable to the strong nationalist political parties, which were growing progressively stronger. The Eastern Ukrainians were on the whole not members of the nationalist parties, suspicious of them and suspected by them. Samchuk, from Volhynia and not Eastern Ukraine, was also one of the few who, though basically apolitical, had sufficient connections with at least one nationalist faction to be above reproach and have sufficient stature to be accepted by both East and West. Naturally, when such a neutral and unifying figure left for Canada, Sherekh found it much more difficult to manage the organization. His “front” was gone and the influence of the parties had grown. The inevitable split—some members quit MUR; Derzhavyn’s group, Svitannia, withdrew—coupled with the exodus of immigrants overseas left only a shadow of the original organization.

The third reason given by Sherekh—that the political parties did everything to monopolize control of literary and even scholarly activity and thus undermine MUR’s efforts—cannot be dismissed lightly. However, MUR was destined to fail because it was a concept alien to the majority of the emigration. They were not accustomed to centralized planning in all spheres of life. Even its terminology and organizational structure must have seemed strange and foreign, because they were based on Soviet models. Its elitism also doomed it to failure, as it had VAPLITE. Even if MUR had managed to establish a publishing house, the eternal strife among the various authors clamouring to be published would have applied constant and disruptive stress to the organization. Sooner or later the commercial values of the West and private enterprise would have come into conflict with this centralized and communal publishing effort.

It was a great attempt to create a synthetic milieu, a society in which reader, writer, critic, and publisher were all provided. It worked at first because of the sudden wealth of talent which the upheaval of World War II had thrown together. The conditions of life in the DP camps also contributed. People had the time, if not always the money, to organize, plan, and create. It is quite obvious why, on crossing over to North America, MUR could not take root. People just did not have the time to meet and plan; and although communication was a problem in postwar Germany, the distances were nothing in comparison to those faced by authors living in North America. Yet, five years after MUR’s quiet death, SLOVO⁵⁰ was born—once again an abortive publishing venture. It seems, Shaw notwithstanding, that Ukrainian writers just cannot exist without an organization.

MUR was driven primarily by the energies of one man, Sherekh. Its highest achievement, *Arka*, is also the achievement of Sherekh, its editor. Yet MUR was a reflection of an intense period of social activity, harnessing all the available creative forces after the destructive interruption of the war. In this it was also akin to the twenties in Soviet Ukraine, when a sudden surge of literary activity followed the cataclysm of the revolution.

Chronological Table

25 Sept. 1945	Initiatory
21-3 Dec. 1945	1st Congress, Aschaffenburg
23 Dec. 1945	1st Exec. meeting, Aschaffenburg
27 Jan. 1946	2nd Exec., Augsburg
28-9 Jan. 1946	1st General meeting, Augsburg
April 1946	MUR <i>Zbirnyk</i> I
26 April 1946	3rd Exec., Ulm
10 May 1946	4th Exec., Füssen (Minutes in Mur Archives; Samchuk gives 14 May, <i>Plianeta</i>)
3 June 1946	5th Exec., Neu-Ulm
Sept. 1946	MUR <i>Zbirnyk</i> II
4-5 Oct. 1946	2nd Conf. on criticism, Bayreuth
End 1946	MUR <i>Almanakh</i> (Minutes in MUR Archives; Samchuk gives 15 Jan., <i>Plianeta</i>)
12 Jan. 1947	6th Exec., Augsburg
Early 1947	MUR <i>Zbirnyk</i> III
15-16 March 1947	2nd Congress, Neu-Ulm
17 March 1947	7th Exec., Neu-Ulm
9 May 1947	8th Exec., Korntal (Minutes in MUR Archives; Samchuk gives 10 May, <i>Plianeta</i> .)

- 12-13 July 1947 MUR joins OM
(Obiednani Mystetstva [The United Arts], an umbrella organization)
- July 1947 *Arka*
(Continued as a monthly until May 1948 (11 issues), Sherekh, "Ukrainian Émigré Literature," 245.)
- 5-6 Nov. 1947 3rd Conf. on drama, Mainz-Kastel
- 25 Jan. 1948 9th Exec., Munich(?)
(Not mentioned by Samchuk; Minutes do not list the place)
- 11-12 April 1948 3rd Congress, Zuffenhausen
- 23 Sept. 1948 Samchuk to Canada
- 2 Nov. 1948 10th Exec.
(Sherekh to Samchuk, 2 Nov. 1948; MUR Archives in UVAN.)

Sources: Ulas Samchuk, *Plianeta Di-Pi* (Winnipeg, 1979); Sherekh, "Ukrainska emihratsiina literatura v Evropi 1945-1949," in *Ne dlia ditei* (Proloh, 1964), 245; MUR Archives in UVAN.

Notes

1. Neil Berry, "Groans from Grub Street," *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 November 1984, 1329. (A review of Richard Findlater, *Author, Author*—emphasis is mine.)
2. Ahor, "Khronika," *MUR, Zbirnyk I* (1946): 98.
 This early date (25 September 1945 in Nürnberg) is even more striking when compared with other organizational events. Thus it was only on 1 November 1945 that the Ukrainian umbrella organization, the Central Representation of the Ukrainian Emigration in Germany [Tsentralne predstavnytstvo ukrainskoi emihratsiï v Nimechchyni] was formed in Aschaffenburg; on 16 November that the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences (UVAN) was re-established in Augsburg; and 30 June 1947 that the Shevchenko Scientific Society (NTSh) was reactivated in Munich. This chronology is based on Y. Boshyk and B. Balan, *Political Refugees and "Displaced Persons," 1945-1954: A Selected Bibliography and Guide to Research with Special Reference to Ukrainians* (Edmonton, 1982), xiv-xxxiii. One clarification, however, must be made immediately. The 25 September date marks the meeting of the initiative committee, while the first congress, held in Aschaffenburg, did not take place until 21-3 December. There a proper executive was elected.
3. Boshyk and Balan, *Political Refugees*, 221-46.
4. *Khors* in Regensburg, although quite impressive in its content and trilingual captions, had but one issue—October 1946.
5. Hr. Shevchuk, "Tabir u literaturi i literatura v tabori," *Siohochasne i mynule*, nos. 1-2 (1949): 55-64. All translations are mine.
6. Sherekh to Hordynsky, 7 May 1948: "In accordance with the new by-laws of MUR, one is advised to establish branches of MUR in all countries where there are five and more members...." MUR Archives in UVAN.
7. Samchuk (in Toronto) to Sherekh, 30 May 1949, referred to the difficulty of this task. The same sentiment is recorded by Hryhorii Kostiuik, *Z litopysu ukrainskoho zhyttia v diiaspori* (Munich, 1971), 7.
8. Ahor, "Khronika," 98; *Dekliaratsiia Obiednannia Ukrainskykh Pysmennykiv ta Myststsviv*, MUR Archives in UVAN.
 In his recollection of the initiatory meeting, Samchuk lists L. Poltava as one of the original six, and not Iu. Kosach. See Ulas Samchuk, *Pliana Di-Pi* (Winnipeg, 1979), 24. Sherekh, however, lists both Kosach and Poltava. See Iu. Sherekh, "Ukrainska emigratsiina literatura v Evropi 1945-1949," in *Ne dlia ditei* (n.p., 1964), 230-1.
9. Reprinted in *Zbirnyk I*, in the "Khronika" section.
10. Both Sherekh, "Ukrainska emigratsiina literatura," 230 and Samchuk, *Pliana Di-Pi*, give the place as Fürth, where both Sherekh and Kostetsky were living; Samchuk does not give a date.
11. *Dekliaratsiia Obiednannia Ukrainskykh Pysmennykiv ta Myststsviv*, MUR Archives in UVAN.

12. It is interesting to compare the manifesto of VAPLITE with the Declaration of MUR in order to note some of the similar concerns, especially the emphasis on quality and cultural development:

The [future] literary organization should unite qualified writers.... The management of the organization should be in the hands of a council elected from the representatives of various schools and tendencies.... The organization should consist of several literary schools, forming one organization with a [common] ideological basis, while retaining wide autonomy as far as their literary work is concerned as well as in purely formal matters of publishing, the recruitment of young literary forces, and the accomplishment of cultural work outside the organization.

The organization must be united, although consisting of separate units and schools which, however, should not have a separate legal existence.

As quoted by George S. N. Luckyj, *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine: 1917-1934* (New York, 1956), 60-1.

13. Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 61.
14. Ahor, "Khronika," 98. Sherekh included among the "founding members" the 7 initiators plus another 25. Later, another 23 were added to this group for a total of 55, plus 6 candidates. Sherekh, "Ukrainska emigratsiina literatura," 233-4.
15. A list of founding members (an addition to the by-laws of the organization) lists 32, including the 6 initiators. An undated list in the archives of "writers invited by the initiating group to join MUR" lists 35, without the initiators. Twelve authors on this list do not appear on the founders' list; and two (apart from the initiators) on the founders' list do not appear on the "to be invited list."
16. Ahor, "Khronika," 98.
17. So says the report in "Khronika." Sherekh divided this process into two stages (see above) and claimed that of all those contacted, only Leonyd Mosendz refused to join. Sherekh, "Ukrainska emigratsiina literatura," 233. The most famous émigré author, V. Vynnychenko, was not asked to join, although there was a connection with France as early as 1946.
18. Ahor, "Khronika," 99.
19. Dated 26 December 1945, Offenbach, it also reports on the proceedings of the congress and the election of the executive. MUR Archives in UVAN.
- Compare the insistence on being the *sole* representative body to the VAPLITE manifesto quoted above. Emphasis is mine.
20. Although officially (in archival documents), L. Poltava was not a member of the initiators, both Samchuk, in his memoirs, and Sherekh, in his article, included him in the list. The reason for this double error lies most probably in the fact that it was Poltava's possession of the press that sparked the idea of organized literary activity and, primarily, organized publication. Supporting this hypothesis of MUR's genesis is the statement in the declaration that the newly formed group "is taking over, in agreement with the owners, one of the printing houses," as well as an archival letter dated four days after the so-called initiatory meeting, namely 29 September 1945. It is from Bahriany, Kostetsky, and Shevelov in Fürth-Nürnberg to L. Poltava and

L. Lyman in Regensburg. The letter tells of the formation of MUR on the twenty-fifth of the month, disposes of the purposes of the organization by including a copy of the declaration, and then proceeds:

As its first task MUR considers the creation of a writers' co-operative publishing house—*Zolota Brama*.

In the belief that the scarce printing means which can be found in the American occupation zone of Germany should be used not for speculative ends nor for the wishes of individual persons but for the development of Ukrainian culture and literature, the initiatory group of MUR turns to you with the proposal to submit the activity of your printing press to the control of the public professional writers' organization.

MUR Archives in UVAN.

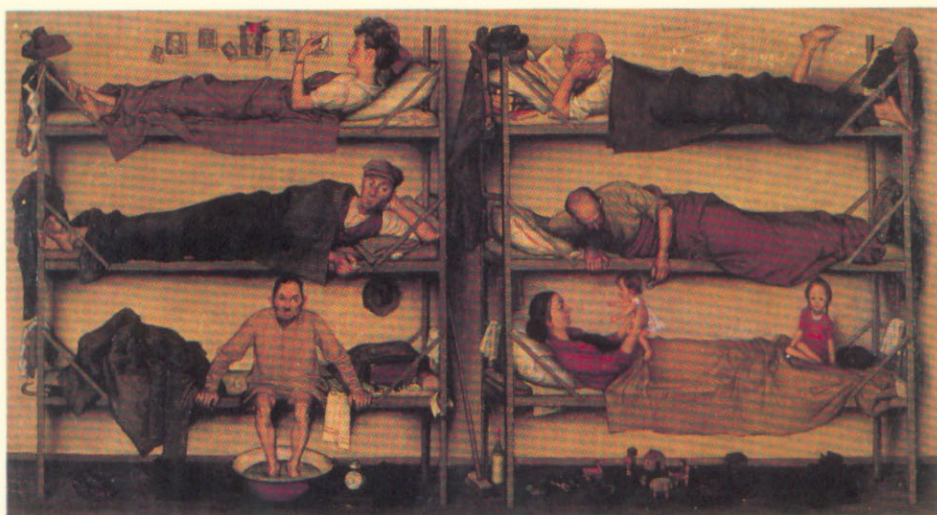
21. MUR Archives in UVAN.
22. The difficulties encountered by MUR because it did not have its own printing facilities are apparent in Sherekh to Samchuk, 26 September 1947. Samchuk, *Plianeta*, 308-9.
23. Sherekh, "Ukrainska emigratsiina literatura," 234-5.
24. For a listing of works with this imprint, see *ibid.*, 246.
25. For a listing see *ibid.*, 235.
26. Form letter from Shevelov, 10 December 1945. MUR Archives in UVAN. Note again the similarity in activity to that of members of VAPLITE, who also made field trips and brought culture to the masses. See notes taken at such a reading in Iurii Lutsky, ed., *Lehkosynia dal: Vaplitianskyi zbirnyk* (New York, 1963), 43-8.
27. Form letter from Samchuk and Domontovych, 17 May 1946, Ulm, MUR Archives in UVAN.
28. L. Korowytzky to the executive of MUR, 7 June 1946, MUR Archives in UVAN.
29. Form letter from publication sector in Munich to members, 23 September 1946, MUR Archives in UVAN.
30. Bahriany, Barka, Bazhansky, Cherin, Chorny, Harasevych, Kosach, Kostetsky, Kostiuk, Liaturynska, Petrov [Domontovych], Poltava, Ryndyk, Samchuk, Shaian, Shevelov, Slavutych, Stepanenko, and Sytnyk. See Samchuk, *Plianeta*, 24. The minutes of the congress, however, give the number as sixteen voting members.
31. They were Samchuk, "Velyka literatura" [A Great Literature]; Sherekh, "Styli suchasnoi ukrainskoi literatury na emihratsii" [The Styles of Contemporary Ukrainian Literature in Emigration]; Bahriany, "Pro zavdannia ukrainskoi poezii" [On the Tasks of Ukrainian Poetry]; Kosach, "Kryza suchasnoi ukrainskoi literatury" [The Crisis of Contemporary Ukrainian Literature], and Kostetsky, "Problema ukrainskoho realizmu XX storichchia" [The Problems of Ukrainian Realism of the Twentieth Century].
32. These presentations provided the participants at the congress with materials for discussion and the publication committee with ready-made content for the organization's *Zbirnyk*. Later the executive also tried to organize conferences around one

major problem or issue. For example, the second general conference in Bayreuth, 4-6 October 1946, concentrated on literary criticism, while the next conference, in Mainz-Kastel on 4-6 November, concentrated on drama. The one on criticism included Podoliak, "Problems of Contemporary Ukrainian Émigré Literary Criticism"; Biletsky, "The Writer and Criticism"; Hrytsai, "Literary Criticism: Its Artistic Aim and Pitfalls"; Kosach, "Historical Belles Lettres and the Position of Criticism"; Kostetsky, "Subjectivism in Literary Criticism"; Chaplenko, "Literature and the Reader"; and Derzhavyn, "Literary Criticism and Literary Genres." For the original titles, see Samchuk, *Plianela*, 155. For the conference on drama see Samchuk, *Plianela*, 256-7; and Sherekh, "Ukrainska emigratsiina literatura," 243.

33. Two versions of the by-laws exist in the MUR Archives in UVAN. The subtle differences between them deserve a separate analysis.
34. Ahor, "Khronika," 99.
35. Of the 18 voting members, 2 abstained. The result of the vote was: 15 votes each for Domontovych, Sherekh, and Kosach; 14 for Samchuk, 13 for Kostetsky. That established the top five members of the executive. The remaining two (Podoliak received 12 and Bahrianyi 10) became candidates to the executive. Minutes of the Aschaffenburg Congress, MUR Archives in UVAN.
This is strikingly similar in pattern to the Soviet political system of presidium and candidates to the presidium.
36. Minutes of the first executive committee meeting, 23 December 1945, MUR Archives in UVAN.
37. The authors reading were Domontovych (a short story), Slavutych (a poem), Kostetsky (a novella), Samchuk (an excerpt from a novelette), Barka (poems), and Bahrianyi (poems and epigrams).
38. What is noteworthy, if only for the resemblance to events which still occur today, is the fact that one of the younger authors caused a small scandal. Hanna Cherin changed her mind and did not read poetry but a short piece of prose. The subject, prostitution in Paris, upset many in the audience. In a report on the event the justification reads: "Hanna Cherin—according to the later explanation of B. Podoliak—was not to have read this short story, and the organizers of the evening did not know this piece in advance. Too bad. The artistic level of the evening was undermined." Ahor, "Khronika," 103. This type of commentary is a depressing witness to the unchanging prudery and censorship of the Ukrainian literary community.
39. The new ones were M. Shlemkevych on "Searches for World Outlooks" and O. Hrytsai on "Small or Great Literature."
40. In the theoretical segment of the congress, Sherekh read his "Roku Bozhoho 1946" [The Year of Our Lord 1946] and Derzhavyn his "Nasha literaturna proza 1946 - pochatku 1947 roku" [Our Literary Prose 1946—beginning of 1947]. Kosach presented a talk on contemporary drama: "Obrii novoi dramy" [Horizons of New Drama].

41. Again in the theoretical section, Sherekh gave his survey "Roku Bozhoho 1947" [The Year of Our Lord 1947]; Kostetsky examined émigré poetry, "Dekilka prykyrykh pytan" [Several Unpleasant Questions]; and Boiko gave a survey of Soviet Ukrainian literature.
42. Sherekh to Samchuk, 2 November 1948, MUR Archives in UVAN. Zenon Kuzelia to Sherekh, 9 November 1948, confirms that Sherekh became head of MUR: "Having learned from the press that you have been elected head of MUR, I hasten on this account to send you my congratulations and to wish you the utmost success in your work." MUR Archives in UVAN.
43. "The monetary reform in Germany undermined the financial basis of the existing publishers. The massive emigration from Germany, along with the fluid state of all émigré centres, made almost all organized cultural activity impossible.... A disillusionment with work came over many authors because of the campaign of baiting, unscrupulous in its methods, instigated by the political parties against all those working in literature whose activity did not coincide with the norms acceptable to the party politicians. It is this circumstance which produced in many writers a desire to work alone, not sharing with anyone the results of their work; a desire to abstain from all activity in any civic or literary groups." Sherekh, "Ukrains'ka emigratsiina literatura," 248-9.
44. MUR to V. Mudry, MUR Archives in UVAN.
45. On the manifesto of VAPLITE see Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 60-1.
46. See Samchuk, *Plianela*, 47.
47. It is evident in numerous letters in the MUR Archives, and in the reprinted letters of Shevelov to Samchuk. See Samchuk, *Plianela*, esp. 54-7, 58-9, 198-200, 225-6, 236-7, 278-80, 289-91, 302-3, 308-9.
48. The problems MUR had with Osmachka and Kosach, for example. See Samchuk, *Plianela*, 47, 161 (Osmachka) and 58-9, 137-8, 271-4, 286-7 (Kosach).
49. Vasyl Mudry, "Nova ukrainska emigratsiia ta orhanizatsiia taborovoho zhyttia," *Siohochasne i mynule*, nos. 1-2 (1949): 9.
50. Ukrainian Writers' Association in Exile.

The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II



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