

MRS MECHNYK

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13 Sept., 1960

( The conversation with Mrs M. was conducted by L.Ort. on 6 Sept., 1960 in Newark, N.J. ) MECHNYK

Mrs M. is approx. 70 years of age, is a graduate of phylosophy at the Lviv University and represents the older generation of the Ukrainian intelligencia in Western Ukraine. She has her own opinion regarding developments and problems in Ukraine. She is very cautious in expressing her opinion.

Mrs M. left Lviv where she lived all her life on 8 May, 1960 and via Mosccw immigrated to the United States where she joint her daughter.

Population of Lviv . According to official statistics the population of Lviv is 400 000, but Mrs.M.,as an old all time resident of that city insists that the present population of Lviv is at least twice as much, as given by the statistics. She thinks that according to her estimates and to the estimates of her friends in Lviv the present ~~of~~ population of the city is approx. 1 million people. She says that a great number of people who do not have the status of "pripisan" live in the city and contribute to the higher numbers of inhabitants.

30 % of the city population are local Ukrainians. The remaining 70% consists of Ukrainians from the East, the Russians and the Jews. These 70% are all newcomers including the Jews, who came mostly from Russia and to a lesser degree from Eastern Ukraine. In addition there are about 20 000 Poles in Lviv.

In recent years the local Ukrainians are assuming positions in the city administration , in the Post Offices and in the city Militia.

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VAZIMAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

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Many local Ukrainians are at the present time militia men and non-com. officers of the militia in Lviv but the commissioned officers are not from the local population.

The case of Orest MAKAR. The return of Orest Makar to the Soviet Union (from America) was interpreted in the circles of the Ukrainian intelligencia in Lviv as follows: the rector of the Lviv Politechnical Institute ~~fnu~~ <sup>\*</sup> Maksymovych, who travelled to the United States sometimes in the 1950s, participated at the Geodesic Congress in this country and met Makar there. He allegedly convinced Makar to come back to the USSR and gave him an assignment to collect some geodesic data from the USA. Makar is still at the Politechnical Institute in Lviv in a position of a lecturer and made no advancement in his career.

The young generation of college students. Mrs M. had contacts with them via ~~her~~ grand children ~~and children~~ of her friends and relatives. She says that this generation is particularly interested in better living and this is their criterion of approach to most problems. From that point of view they are interested in the betterment of relations <sup>with</sup> ~~between~~ the West which gives them opportunities to travel abroad, participate in festivals, internationals fairs et cet. Such travels are infectious to the young people. They return from such travels with new impressions and new observations, they are particularly impressed with American jazz and American cars and would like to have those things for themselves at home. Comparing them with the previous generation of Ukrainian students they are much less interested in political problems. Mrs M. does not pretend to generalize, she only states that she cannot understand the present day young generation. This young generation also faces the problem of over-production of intelligencia and access to colleges and universities is more and more difficult.

Economic situation has improved considerably. There is plenty of food. Even the farmers live better now, they eat much better. In the last months prior to her departure many shoes had been brought to Lviv from Czechoslovakia. They are of a much better quality than Soviet products and cost only 150 rubles a pair as compared with 400 rubles for bad quality Soviet shoes. There is a tendency to increase the pay of engineers in order to exclude such anomaly that sometimes an ordinary worker makes more money than a qualified engineer. Thefts and corruption are predominant in Lviv. A bribe is a magic baton which opens all locks and gives opportunities.

Underground. Mrs M. is critical about the former activities of the underground. In her opinion activities of an underground are impossible at the present time. However she does not exclude the possibility of existence of clandestine groups who wait for opportunities to open. She states that in case of internal upheaval (revolution) Western Ukrainians including great many Eastern Ukrainians would rise against the regime, but she does not believe in such upheaval at the present time.

Controls Mrs. M. insists that no permissions whatsoever are needed for travel in Ukraine and the whole USSR. There are no passport controls in trains. There are no passport and "pripiska" controls in living quarters during the night. During the last three years she did not live through even one night control of her apartment. To this lack of controls Mrs M. attributes the fact that ~~more~~ many thousands of people without "pripiska" live in Lviv. There are no night controls or night arrests. They are conducted during the day. After the ouster of Beria the conduct of the militia toward the population changed radically.

International politics, USA, radio

Ukrainians in Lviv are very much interested in international politics, in such problems as Cuba, Formosa, and the events in Africa and Asia. From the Soviets they receive a onesided picture and therefore they seek a different view and different interpretation from the West. Therefore they listen to the Western radio in great numbers. After Stalins death Mrs. M. either by herself or through others carefully followed the radio broadcasts of Voice of America. She remembers some of the broadcasts. She remembers one about milking cows, one about planting beets et cet. Mrs M. is extremely critical of these broadcasts of the Ukrainian Voice of America. "Instead of giving us political information and countering and correcting the Bolshevik propaganda they are giving us lessons about milking cows", she said. She also listened to Polish broadcasts from the West and insists that the worse are the Ukrainian and also the Russian broadcasts of Voice of America because they are cleansed of any politics in which everyone in the Soviet Union is most interested.

The attitude toward the United States has changed considerably in recent years. They think that the United States could have defeated the Soviet Union in the 1940s. The Soviets have been waiting for an American intervention and at that time they would have collapsed. In recent years the indecision and lack of lucidity on the part of American policy had brought about a conviction among the intelligencia that to await any help from America is futile. Therefore the oriantation on evolutinary development and on policy of coexistence ~~expansive~~ which might bring some relaxation. Mrs M. stated that the U2 incident was received by the general public with dissatisfaction toward America, because it happened at the time when an agreement seemed to be so near and from this the people expected further relaxation within the Soviet Union.

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The attitude of the population toward the capitalist system is generally negative. They want social justice and economic stability and not a return to the system of large land owners and big capitalists.

The sputniks and luniks had a great effect on the population and there is a conviction that the Soviet Union is invincible and will conquer the world.

In spite of this criticism Mrs M. is convinced that even now if something goes wrong and "something starts moving" the overwhelming majority will be against the regime. She says that everyone is waiting for a change, nobody is able to say what kind of a change and where from it should come, but they believe that the present situation cannot last for ever. This is an expression of some kind of fatalism, because she says that any active opposition against the regime is impossible.

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In 1953 Mrs. M. was interrogated by the KGB in the case of Iko Bilynsky. She was asked whether ~~Bilynsky~~ is a Ukrainian or a German. Mrs M. testified that he was a German, that she knew well his mother who was a German and could not even speak Ukrainian. She signed her testimony for the KGB. I. Bilynsky who writes now to Mrs. M. was convinced that she did not testify well for him and said to the NKVD that he was a Ukrainian.

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