

The Soviet History of Ukrainian Literature

D. CIZEVSKY

1.

An extensive work entitled, "An Anthology of Ancient Ukrainian Literature," with the sub-title "The period of feudalism," was published in 1949. Despite certain, sometimes quite serious, mistakes in the selection of material, orthographic presentation and comments¹ the book gives the impression that it approaches seriously the problems of the history of Ukrainian literature. On the title page, Kharkov Academician, O. Biletsky, is named as the Editor of the publication and the foreword states that Professor S. Maslov of Kiev and his pupils took part in preparatory discussions on the material to be included in the "Anthology." These names would apparently testify in advance to a certain level of objectivity within the limits which are possible in the Soviet Ukraine. Almost concurrently, a study of the history of Ukrainian literature by O. Biletsky and Y. Kyryluk appeared but it will not be available outside the Soviet Union. The changes in Soviet policy and the intensified struggle against "Ukrainian chauvinism" resulted in the confiscation of this book and possibly of the "Anthology" as well (there is no recent information on the fate of the latter work). In 1954, a new study of the history of Ukrainian literature was issued, entitled "The History of Ukrainian Literature", Volume I, "Pre-October Literature" (Kiev 1954, 732 pages), written by, "The learned members of the Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR." In the editorial, fifteen names are mentioned including those of G. Biletsky, M. Hudziy and Ye. Kyryluk.

However in reading the book one gains the impression that the main part in discussing it was taken, not by the specialists mentioned in the foreword, but by politicians: The whole of this history is in the nature of a political pamphlet, and such great stress is laid upon certain purely political theses that it can hardly be considered a scholarly work. The book begins with a paragraph on the high quality of Ukrainian literature: "The Ukrainian nation . . . created a great, ideologically rich and highly artistic literature which occupies one of the most prominent places among the literatures of the world" (page 7). Unfortunately, the reader is left unconvinced for the entire panorama of Ukrainian literature in the XIX century, according to the authors of this book, is apparently a kind of preparation for the ideas of contemporary Communism.

While reviewing the book, its political digressions which take up at least one hundred pages, will be disregarded as the concept of the "unity" of the

¹ See the authors review in the "Annuals" of the Free Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, New York, No. 1, 1951, pp. 57—62.

eastern Slavic tribes, the struggle of the Ukrainian nation for "reunion" with Moscow during the XVI and XVII centuries and lastly the common struggle against tsardom of the Ukrainian and Russian "revolutionary democracy" led by Lenin are already well-known to western students.

Regrettably this political approach also permeates a large part of the literary and historical sections of the book. It is, however, interesting to see how this approach leads to the complete distortion of literary and historical facts which are presented there. Such distortion is already apparent in the foreword which is mainly devoted to an outline of research made into Ukrainian literature. It begins with a decidedly negative approach toward the "cultural and historical," "comparative" and "philological" methods (pages 14—15).² This attack is restricted as far as the "philological method" is concerned, to the quite unfounded identification of it with "formalism" (page 14); its merits particularly in the editing of texts are not even mentioned. "The cultural and historic" method is reproached for "ignoring the specific features of the literary language" and "the study of the artistic nature of a literary work" (page 14); "the comparative method" is accused of "cosmopolitanism," that is of searching for analogies in literature "of various epochs, nations and classes" (page 14). It must be said that the authors of this new book on Ukrainian literature could equally well be reproached for this, inasmuch as the representatives of the cultural and historical approach, were dealing with literary works as the "illustration of social history" (page 14), and the compilers of this new text-book do precisely the same thing, but with the "Marxist" approach. That is, they perceive in the history of the Ukrainian people exclusively social and political elements. The reproaches made against "comparativism" could be directed even more justifiably against the authors of this book; they instance a large number of analogies with Ukrainian literature, but take them almost exclusively from one and the same literature, namely Russian. This unilateral comparativism is obviously detrimental and no more objective than seeking analogies in literatures of "various epochs, nations and classes." It should be mentioned that the old "comparativists" (only O. Veselovsky is mentioned here) never stated that in all cases where there are eastern or western analogies with Ukrainian literature that such analogies prove their influence on Ukrainian literature. Nevertheless the authors of this new book almost always see in analogies between Ukrainian and Russian literatures, a proof of the influence of Russian literature, even when this seems to be most unlikely chronologically or geographically.

The outline of research into Ukrainian literature is also marked by the suppression of facts which are undesirable from the Soviet view point. Only the history of Ukrainian literature by M. Petrov (1880—1884) and the similar work by O. Ohonovsky (1886—1894) are mentioned and, although these are very valuable sources, they are outdated. Works by S. Yefremov, M. Voznyak und M. Hrushevsky are not even mentioned.

Instead stress is laid on the importance of the "revolutionary democrats," Byelinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov in the history of Ukrainian literature (page 15 onwards). In their bibliography (page 16) the authors do not even give a single article by Byelinsky and the articles of the others above-

² Potenbya's works on folk-lore which are his most valuable scholarly legacy, are given only one sentence. His method is described without foundation as "historico-psychological" (p. 14), and is rejected without material arguments.

mentioned which are listed here deal, almost exclusively, with political problems and not with Ukrainian literature at all.

Among Ukrainian historians the books and articles of Ivan Franko (page 16—17) are listed quite fully, but there is not a word about the methods he employed (it is well-known that Franko used both the comparative and the philological methods). It is merely emphasized that Franko formed his views as a “follower of the work of the great revolutionary democrats—Byelinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Shevchenko” (page 17), that he popularized in the Ukraine the works of the “most eminent representatives of Russian literature” (there follows a list of eleven names), and that he also “wrote a great deal about French, German, Italian, Polish, Czech and other writers” (page 17).

Only the article of P. Hrabovsky and Lesya Ukrainka, some notes, a review and a lecture delivered by M. Kotsyubynsky are mentioned. It is known that Lesya Ukrainka's article on Bukovinian literature was written for Russian readers, and, that the articles by M. Kotsyubynsky and P. Hrabovsky were merely popular in character. There is not a single word about the works of M. Drahomanov, P. Zhytetsky, M. Sumtsov or V. Peretz and his school; their names are just mentioned (page 14—15) and it is pointed out that they presented the history of literature in general “from the view point of bourgeois liberalism.” The foreword also contains pages on Lenin, Stalin, Gorky and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which, it is stressed, is “continuously taking care of the development of literature and literary research in all the Soviet republics, especially in the Ukraine” (page 18—20).

Nevertheless from 1917 to 1954, not a single work has appeared on the history of Ukrainian literature which the authors consider to be worthy of mention in their review.

The foreword ends with a scheme showing the development of the history of Ukrainian literature. The period of this development (there are as many as fourteen and six of them belong to the Soviet period), are exclusively determined by political criteria. It is interesting to note that important occurrences in the development of Ukrainian literature and changes in literary Ukrainian are not mentioned here at all although, as already stated, the authors accuse the representatives of the cultural historic school of neglecting the “specific features of the literary language.”

2.

The part of the book which is devoted to ancient Ukrainian literature during the period of feudalism, that is from the XI to the XVIII centuries, covers only one hundred pages. This is the only part of the book which offers some useful, factual material, although there are the usual ambiguities of detail.

The literature of the Period of Princedom (XI—XIII centuries) is described on pages 25—54. This literature, in accordance with the present Soviet view, is depicted as the “common source” of later Ukrainian, Russian and Belorussian literatures that is the literatures of the “three fraternal nations.” However, the only striking fact is the absence of any mention of the sermons of St. Theodosius, and even more, of the “Lives” (Zitiye) written by Nestor the Chronicler. Though the prominent place of the ancient Ukraine among other European states (page 26) is emphasized and also its “connections” with “Byzantium, Hungary,

Poland, Germany, Bohemia, France, Scandinavia, Transcaucasia and Central Asia," little information is given about the role of these countries vis-à-vis the Ukraine. On the other hand, the remarks about the Gospels and the "Symposium" (*Isborniki*) of 1073 and 1076 are formulated in such a way that the reader has the impression that these are Kievan translations and works, while in fact the Gospels were translated in Moravia and came to Kiev via Bulgaria; it is known that the "Symposium" of 1073 was transcribed from the Bulgarian original and only part of the "Symposium" of 1076 was probably written in Kiev.

Without mentioning Byzantium, the author begins his prelection by indicating that the basis of literature at that time "was to a certain extent oral folklore" (page 27). No analysis is offered of this very doubtful statement and apart from the quotations from Gorky, Marx and Engels, there are only very superficial remarks about the folk-epics (*Byliny*). The descriptions of the literary language of that time are equally vague. However, contrary to the erroneous thesis of P. Obnorsky³ who thinks that the literary language was the same as the common language, the writer says that the literary language of that time was old Slavic (page 30).

Further on, for instance, dealing in detail with the text of the first few pages of the Chronicle, the author completely omits any mention of the legend of the "Convocation of Princes." On the pages devoted to the literature of the XI—XIII centuries, a parallel is drawn between the "Tale of Prince Igor's Regiment" and a later work "The Knight in the Tigers' Skin" by Shota Rustaveli (page 48). The author shows how old Kievan literature was utilized by Ukrainian writers in the XIX century, but hardly alludes at all to its tradition in the XVI—XVII centuries. It is indeed strange that, for example, the author mentions Pushkin's delight at the Kiev-Pechersky *Pateryk*, but does not mention the part the *Pateryk* played in Ukrainian literature of the XVIII century (page 41). Nevertheless despite the inevitable shortcomings in a work of this kind, this chapter should be considered as a relatively unequivocal part of the book.

3.

The next 70 pages are devoted to the XIV—XVIII centuries. This should be sufficient to elucidate the literary phenomena of that period. It is regrettable that the authors devote part of the chapter to political history.

Even the explanations of literary phenomena are permeated with the same tendency to illustrate the great and incontrovertible influence of Muscovite literature and culture on the Ukrainian. It is a great pity that there is absolutely no analysis of the style of the works mentioned. Remarks on the language used by particular authors are partly incorrect; we read of the language of Ivan Vyshensky that he "united the elements of Russian and Polish with colloquial Ukrainian" (page 80). It would be interesting to see the examples of Russian in Vyshensky's works: he was a Galician and had no direct contact with Moscow whatsoever. It is possible that in the Muscovite scripts of his works there are individual Russian words, but they almost certainly derive from the pen of

³ P. Obnorsky, *The Outline of the History of the Russian Literary Language of the Earlier Period*, Moscow, 1946.

the transcriber who changed Ukrainian words into Russian and in addition did not understand the text.

Thus Vyshensky's original Ukrainian text contained such words as:

Musyt (it must),
Tsnoty (virtues),
Prahnul (disired),
Blazenstvakh (buffoonery),
Mnemanye (opinion),
Pylnyuyut (are watching).

These were changed into Russian as:

Muchyt (tortures),
Tsennosti (valuables),
Pravdu (truth),
Blazhenstvakh (beatitude),
Vnimanye (attention),
Imenyuyut (are naming).⁴

Identically, in the "Anthology"⁵ mentioned above, the extracts given from Vyshensky's works are taken from inaccurate editions and are therefore of little use in judging his language. There are a number of remarks on the part played by Polish but practically nothing about the influence of Latin on Ukrainian literature which was used a good deal by the Ukrainian writers at that time. As was said before, the entire book is an example of one-sided comparativism: it compares Ukrainian literature exclusively with its Muscovite counterpart and does it in such a way that the Muscovite emerges as the superior one.

Mentioning the activities of Ukrainians (a list of thirteen names is given), in Great Russia in the XVII and XVIII centuries the authors rightly consider them to have "participated in the creation of Russian culture," but they begin this part of the book with a sentence, "Ukrainian-Russian relations are becoming stronger and stronger and have attained a special significance in the development of Ukrainian culture generally and especially in literature." They end this paragraph by saying, "The books of Russian writers were spread wider and wider across the Ukraine." It is interesting to notice that in the "History of Russian Literature" published by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR,⁶ these same facts are presented in an entirely different light. It is true that the volume in question was published as long ago as 1948, but the reader will find in it such passages as for instance, "At the end of the XVI century, the first echoes were heard of that powerful cultural and educational movement in the Ukraine and Belorussia which originated at the end of the XV century and continued until the beginning of the XVIII century" (page 11). A further three pages are devoted to the influence of the Ukraine on Moscow: in them are mentioned the Ukrainian printer O. Radshevsky who lived in Moscow and Ukrainian translators; there are remarks on the emulation of the Ukrainian literary works by Russian writers and also the fact that Ukrainian writers were persecuted for "unorthodoxy". The author does not leave us in any doubt that this persecution was based, to

⁴ See article by I. Yeremin in the *Works of the Department of Ancient Russian Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR*, Volume IX, 1953, pp. 292—293.

⁵ Quotation at the beginning of the article "Anthology" pp. 100—124.

⁶ I quote further the collectively written "History of Russian Literature" published by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Volume II, part 2, 1948. As far as is known, it is still in use in the USSR.

a great extent, on misunderstandings, the comparatively low level of Muscovite literature, and partly on the wish of the Russians to show that "in problems of theology, Muscovite writers were more authoritative than the Lithuanians" (page 13).

Throughout the whole of book, proof after proof is given of the colossal influence of Ukrainian literature on the Muscovite in the XVII and XVIII centuries. It was through the Ukraine or Belorussia that the tale of *Bora Korolevych* (Prince Bova), the "History of the Seven Sages," Aesop's Fables and so on came to Moscow; the struggle against "the old believers" in Moscow was waged by the Ukrainians because "there was a great lack of even theologically educated men" (page 138); the Russians started going to the Kiev Academy to study only from about 1650.

Although these facts are given in the 'History of Ukrainian Literature' they are dealt with cursorily. We read for instance, "information exists that Lomonosov studied for sometime" [in the Kievan Academy]. The expression, "information exists" gives the impression that there is some doubt about the fact.

However Lomonosov's period of study in Kiev is not subject to any doubt whatever. There are, moreover, indications of the part played by Ukrainian publications in Moscow (page 141—142), especially the grammars by Melety Smotrytsky and P. Berenda's "Lexicon." There is also information about the works which were translated for Moscow by Ukrainians and which were largely brought by them from the Ukraine. If everything to be found in this Russian work concerning the influence of Ukrainian literature and culture on Muscovite literature during the XVII and XVIII centuries was quoted, the quotations would fill almost the same number of pages as are devoted, in the "History of Ukrainian Literature" to the whole of the XVI—XVIII centuries. Soviet scholarly literature written in Russian demonstrates the fact that the Ukrainian and Russian languages in XVII and XVIII centuries were very different and that theological teaching in the Ukraine was incomparably higher than in Moscow.⁷ But the "History of Ukrainian Literature" contains only vague remarks about this. The author has purposely quoted only Soviet, and particularly new Soviet, publications, omitting the testimonies of older works such, for example, as those of A. Sobolevsky, Academician M. Kharlampovych, or authoritative émigré scholars such as the Rev. H. Florovsky and the late Prince N. C. Trubetskoi.⁸

Wishing to prove that Moscow was culturally helping the Ukraine, the authors can refer only to the fact of Ivan Fedorov's work in the Ukraine (page 64—65), but they omit to mention that he was not only forced to leave Moscow but that his printing works there were demolished and that he arrived in the Ukraine as a refugee seeking asylum. The *Cheti-Mynei* of St. Dmitro Rostovsky

⁷ Compare the article by Yeremin quoted in note 4.

⁸ A. Sobolevsky, *Foreign literature in the translation of the Muscovite Rus*, St. Petersburg, 1903, "Review of the Department of Russian Language and Philology of the Academy of Sciences," Volume 74.

By the same author *Foreign literature in translation at the time of Peter*, St. Petersburg, 1908, in the same "Review," Volume 84.

K. Kharlampovych, *The Influence of Little Russia on Great Russian Church Life*, Volume I, Kazan, 1914.

N. S. Trubetskoi, *On the Problem of Russian Self-Knowledge*, Paris, 1927. Even in this book the Russian literary language of the XVIII century is presented, to a large extent, as the work of the Ukrainians.

were apparently based on the *Cheti-Mynei* by Makari sent from Moscow; but the authors do not say why Makari's work did not satisfy Muscovite readers and why the *Mynei* of St. Dmitro acquired such glory and success in Moscow as well as the Ukraine (page 87). The most doubtful statement is that concerning the prestige of Russian literary works in the Ukraine during the XVIII century, especially the influence of the works of M. Lomonosov and particularly those of Novikov and Radishchev. The Songs of *Sumarokov* (page 121) are apparently analogous to the *Songs* of Skovoroda, yet the latter were written in the reformed syllabic verse, therefore they do not reveal any influence of the new Russian metrics: Also as they were largely written in the early 1750's there could not even have been talk about Sumarokov's "Songs" in the Ukraine. There is not even a thematic resemblance between the songs of Sumarokov and those of Skovoroda.

The most doubtful part in the whole section devoted to the XVI—XVIII centuries is that the religious problems, with which at that time Ukrainian literature was greatly occupied, is always pushed into the background or even completely ignored. Such is the case with the Protestant influence (Unitarians), whose part in the development of the national language in religious literature is disregarded.

The polemic literature of the XVI and the beginning of the XVII centuries is only discussed from a national point of view and Vyshensky's activities are presented as having occurred after the middle of the XVII century, and therefore, as Vyshensky died before 1625 and his works which are mentioned in the text, were written prior to 1605, they would be chronologically 25 or even 40 years out of date. In addition to this, he is called "an ardent patriot and social critic" which is, of course, a complete distortion. H. Skovoroda suffers even more; his mysticism and philosophy are completely overlooked, although the author not only quotes from his works, but also from articles by Khidzheu which are certainly forged (page 114 and further) and states quite without foundation that Khidzheu definitely wrote them "according to the memoirs of his contemporaries." As H. Skovoroda died in 1794 and Khidzheu wrote his articles in 1835 it is difficult to believe that "memoirs" written after at least 40 years are even approximately exact. To say that Skovoroda as well as the Russian satirists Kantemir, Fonvizin and Novikov attributed great importance to education (page 115), is a new method of drawing together Ukrainian and Russian literature on the basis of sheer generalizations. Naturally the differences between the pedagogical concepts of Fonvizin and H. Skovoroda obviously do not permit even consideration of such a literary merger.

4.

Much less can be said about the second part of the "History of Ukrainian Literature," which has nothing in common with its title and is simply a political pamphlet. It is so primitive in approach that it will suffice to give a general review of the last six hundred pages to show the level to which scholarship has descended in the Soviet Ukraine.

The authors' main task is to show that Ukrainian literature has always been dependent on the Russian which was, so to speak, infinitely higher. The continuous repeating of this thesis seems adequate to the authors and therefore

does not apparently require them to prove the correctness of their statements to the reader.⁹

The basic, constantly reiterated sentence in this work is, "In Russian literature, there are writers of world importance such as M. Nekrasov, O. Ostrovsky, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin, Ivan Turgenev, M. Chernyshevsky, I. Goncharov and Lev Tolstoy."

In the majority of cases the authors do not even try to show that a given Ukrainian writer was acquainted with this or that Russian work: it is quite sufficient to state that the Russian work referred to, appeared at the same time which then, apparently, proves its influence on Ukrainian literature.

Another characteristic tendency of this book is the division of all authors into "reactionaries" and "progressives." This division, incidentally, is entirely arbitrary and leads to the complete exclusion of a good many eminent writers from this history of literature. For instance, such is the case with A. Metlynsky, Kostomarov and even Kulish; their works are not even mentioned and only their "reactionary behaviour" is remarked upon. In order to prove the progressive nature of those who are admitted to the pages of the "History of Ukrainian Literature," simple methods are employed; as it is quite clear that Chernyshevsky's influence on Shevchenko is *chronologically* impossible¹⁰ in order to associate them, it is stated that Chernyshevsky was heard on some occasion to quote Shevchenko; it is true that the well known passage on "prosperity" in Russia was often repeated at that time and it was quite unnecessary to have read Shevchenko in order to be able to quote it (page 239). Further, "Shevchenko, as well as Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevsky and Ushynsky,¹¹ attached much importance to the education of the people" (page 269). Lastly, "Gorky, Lenin and various anonymous authors wrote with appreciation of Shevchenko in the Bolshevik press" (page 277).

In a review which is attributed without any foundation to Byelinsky, he too, apparently, acknowledged Shevchenko (page 223). This review which is now re-printed as Part of Byelinsky's works,¹² designates Shevchenko's verses as "clumsy." Kulish is not redeemed either by his writing in the Russian press of the 1850's when he was considered to belong to the class of writers such as Lev Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev,¹³ nor by his positive evaluation of Peter the Great or Catherine II in the newspaper of the "revolutionary democrats," *Iskra*, and not even by his diligent research into Gogol and the subsequent biography he wrote on that author. No allusion at all is made to these facts and the reader is left unaware that Kulish helped to bring about the publication of the works of Shevchenko, Marko-Vovchok and others. Peculiar methods are

⁹ This is a method which recalls parodies on the Soviet regime such as George Orwell's "1984", "Animal Farm", or Ye. Zamuatkin's "We".

¹⁰ It should be recalled that in 1939 the relationship of Shevchenko to Chernyshevsky was described in the Soviet Ukraine as follows: "The eminent leaders of Russian revolutionary democracy, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov were listening to his [Shevchenko's] voice" (*Kommunist* of June 20, 1939). This is quoted from I. Borshchak, *Ukraine*, Volume VIII, 1953, p. 647.

¹¹ Ushynsky is also a Ukrainian and this is sometimes mentioned in Soviet publications.

¹² "Works," volume III, 1954, pp. 171—172, see notes, pp. 652—657.

¹³ See V. Petrov: *Kulish in the 1850's*, Kiev, 1928. Publication of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

employed to link this or that author with Lenin and Stalin. So Marko-Vovchok it seems is "close to Nekrasov and Saltykov-Shchedrin" about whom Lenin wrote. The fact that the "reactionary" Kostomarov, was the author of the revolutionary "Books on the History of the Ukrainian Nation," which are dealt with superficially within the framework of Shevchenko's biography and without quotations, undoubtedly created some difficulties for the authors; this is why it is stated that the "sharp words" addressed to tsardom "contained in the 'Books' could not have been written by Kostomarov," and that they have, of course, been added by somebody else.

Having excluded Kostomarov and Kulish from their "History of Ukrainian Literature," the authors include in it such persons as Storozhenko or Afanasyev-Chuzhbynsky. Even Drahomanov is only given a cursory mention and Vynnychenko is not saved by the protection of Gorky who valued him highly, nor is he redeemed by his participation in the publications of the Russian socialists. There is nothing about Oles, Vorony, Krymsky, Chuprynka, the Galician modernists and so on. The real foundation for the evaluation of these or any of the authors included in the book, is not literary or even political, but exclusively national. Only three pages (pages 271—274) out of the 65 devoted to Shevchenko discuss the literary aspect of his works. Out of six pages on L. Hlibov there are only a few lines on the form of his verses. The real political democracy of the writers does not play any role whatever. When A. Metlynsky was reproached for "eulogising the autocratic régime, the relations between landlords and serfs and the idealization of patriarchal antiquity" (page 194), exactly the same could be said of H. Kvitka and Hrebinka, and even more so about Storozhenko, Chuzhbynsky or Hulak-Artemovsly. The main accusation is of course, that A. Metlynsky and Korsun were preaching nationalism (page 194).

True, the love for the homeland of A. Metlynsky and Korsun was "pseudo-patriotic" (page 194), but if the book is carefully examined, it is easy to see that though the authors require patriotism and nationalism from the Ukrainian writers, it has to be Russian in type. All other admonitions toward the reactionaries are of little importance; they are reproached with advocating religious mysticism" and for their "extreme pessimism," although the works of real pessimists such as M. Petrenko and Zabyla (page 192—193) are positively assessed.

A closer look at the methods employed to adapt individual writers to the russophile trend of the book, shows them to be most unscrupulous. The first means of establishing the orientation of the Ukrainian writers toward Russia is to count their Russian acquaintances, and Ukrainians such as Gogol and Shchepkyn are automatically included among them. A Ukrainian writer comes to Moscow or St. Petersburg, naturally he becomes acquainted with Russians. In this way, for example, a chapter about Hrebinka is begun. Among Hrebinka's acquaintances were, "P. Yershov, V. Benediktov, Dal, Pletnev, Pushkin, Koltsov, I. S. Turgenev and Nekrasov." Even the Russian contributors to the publications in which Hrebinka used to print his works are listed although it is most uncertain whether or not he knew them personally. There is a list of contributors to the *Fiziologia Peterburga* which appeared in the last years of Hrebinka's life (he died in 1848), therefore its contributors could not possibly have influenced his earlier activities. It is interesting to note that these associates include a number of writers who, in other Soviet publications, are severely condemned.¹⁴

¹⁴ Compare "The Literary Heritage," Volume 58, 1952. Benediktov is removed even from the issued volumes of the "Poets Little Library."

However, for the benefit of the Ukrainian reader, the largest number of Russian writers have to be provided to prove their influence on this Ukrainian poet.

It is not, of course, surprising to learn that Shevchenko's relations with Russian writers are emphasized. We do not hear about his Ukrainian entourage in St. Petersburg and his associations with the Poles are only superficially alluded to. But we read that in St. Petersburg, Shevchenko "made the acquaintance of Bryulov, Zhukovsky, Venetsyanov and Hrebinka" (page 220); Shevchenko "read Pushkin, Griboyedov, Lermontov, Gogol, Byelinsky, Herzen, Krilov, Koltsov and Davydov" (page 220). Exactly what Shevchenko read of these authors is not known and nothing is said of his acquaintance with Polish literature, particularly Mickiewicz, Bohdan Zaleski and Zeligowski. The following then appears without any supporting quotations: "The social, political and aesthetic views of Byelinsky greatly influenced the formation of Shevchenko's outlook and activities" (page 227). In the first place Byelinsky's views prior to the early 1840's often varied, and the above comments concern the period before 1843; moreover, Byelinsky was a decisive enemy of folk-lore in literature, and Shevchenko certainly didn't adhere to his views in this respect.

How is it possible to prove that Shevchenko took a positive attitude towards the Pereyaslav Treaty? This has supposedly been proved by the authors of the book. As an example, it is said that Shevchenko painted "water colours with loving care" of Subotov (page 235)! Also with the help of the work "The Great Vault" it is attempted to show that Shevchenko's approach toward the Pereyaslav agreement and the activities of Peter the Great was positive. The first part of this "mystery" takes the form of a conversation between the souls of three Ukrainian girls, one of whom greeted Khmelnytsky when he was riding to sign the Pereyslav treaty, another, Peter who was going to war against Mazepa's uprising and the third, Catherine II who was traveling on the Dnieper. All three were unaware of the significance of their actions. For these unconscious expressions of sympathy towards persons who took an active part in events, which were harmful to the Ukrainian nation, the souls of the three girls "are being punished" and they "are not admitted to Heaven." The authors of the "History of Ukrainian Literature" do not make it clear that Shevchenko depicts the girls as the guilty souls who are being punished by Heaven, and present this part of the work in the following manner: "Shevchenko, as it were, in the form of the three souls personifies the Ukrainian nation and... his support of Khmelnytsky's struggle for the union of the Ukraine with Russia... and the struggle of Peter against the foreign usurpers and the traitor Mazepa" (page 235). If the readers of the book will turn to Shevchenko's work itself, they will see that in all three cases there is not the slightest possibility of a conscious connection between the three souls with Khmelnytsky, Peter or Catherine, and moreover that even though their activities were unconscious expressions of sympathy to Khmelnytsky, at a moment when he was about to commit a serious political mistake, and to Peter and Catherine, the souls are being punished. Shevchenko is also accredited with a negative attitude toward Slavophilism and this is on the same page where his dedication of *Ivan Hus* to the leader of the Slavophiles, Shafarik is quoted (page 238). Andruzky is included among Shevchenko's "revolutionary" friends from the Brotherhood of Cyril and Methody, probably because the authors do not know his mystical religious verse, or they are certain that it would remain unknown to the reader.¹⁵

¹⁵ Andruzky's verse in the "Notes of the Shevchenko Scientific Society," Vol. 83, 1908, pp. 181—182.

Another peculiarity of this book is that the humanist I. Kotlarevsky is revealed almost as a revolutionary, simply because in his entourage, for instance in the masonic lodge to which he belonged, were the future *Decembrists* and among them "an ardent republican" M. Novikov who praised Kotlarevsky. "It is quite possible that Novikov acquainted the writer with the statute of the masonic "Union of Contentment" (page 153).

The chapter on Franko is prepared in the same way and the admonition that Austria was reactionary is hilarious. Without denying the fact that Austria at that time was a police state, one can hardly draw a parallel between the police system operating there and the system which now reigns in the Soviet Ukraine. Readers will certainly notice with surprise that Franko's works were published and circulated in Austria—a so-called reactionary state. Franko's "attitude towards decadent western literature was irreconcilable,"¹⁶ but there is no mention at all of the enormous influence which western writers, for example the Swiss K. F. Meier, had on Franko. It appears that he was entirely influenced by Russian literature. All elements of modernism in Franko's works are carefully obliterated.

On the whole, Franko's attitude to modernism was not so consistently negative as is declared by the authors. M. Zerov once rightly said that "the quarrel in verse" between Franko and M. Vorony... is more like a friendly correspondence than a literary polemic between irreconcilable rivals."¹⁷ But there Franko the poet, is only depicted as a primitive "realist."

Among the collection of his verse the least attention is paid to the best of them such as "The Withered Leaves" (page 524—525). The content of the "Prologue" (to Moses), which does not coincide with the general political primitivism of the book, is not of course, given. There are only a few lines about *Moysei* and naturally the symbolic meaning of the separate passages of the poem are left out. Moses is leading his people westwards, but his enemies want to go to the East; this is a symbolic presentation of the Ukraine between Western Europe and the East (ie. Russia).

The statements on the influence of Ostrovsky's "Storm" on Franko's "The Stolen Happiness" (page 555) and Pushkin's "Boris Godunov" on "The Dream of Prince Svyatoslav" (page 557) are incredible. While mentioning Franko's translations from European poetry (page 533—534) the authors completely ignore the question of why Franko was learning from the poets who gave him examples for translations. The authors can only assert that Russian writers alone could have had any influence on Franko. However, if Franko's attitude towards Russian literature of the XIX century was positive, it does not necessarily mean that he would evaluate positively the present Soviet state.

It is interesting that in the chapter on Franko and the short note on Pavlyk (page 560—562), Drahomanov's name is only mentioned. On the other hand the authors state that "the beneficial influence of the ideas of the Russian liberation movement was imprinted on Pavlyk (page 560). Drahomanov is not even mentioned in the chapter on Lesya Ukrainka who corresponded with him continuously and on whose spiritual development he had an enormous influence. Instead, Lesya Ukrainka is connected with Lenin who hardly even knew of the

¹⁶ With reference to the quotations in the "History of Ukrainian Literature," it should be pointed out that with the exception of a few cases, the authors do not give their sources.

¹⁷ M. Zerov, "At the Source," re-print, Cracow-Lvov, 1943, p. 143.

existence of the great Ukrainian poetess: Lesya apparently "unmasked the treacherous activities of the Ukrainian nationalists— V. Antonovych, O. Konysky and M. Hrushevsky" (page 638). But strangely enough, she used to publish her works in "The Literary and Scientific Herald" which, according to the book, belonged to M. Hrushevsky himself. One of the fundamental motives of Lesya Ukrainka's works was to contrast the revolutionary struggles of the dominating (i. e. Russian) and of oppressed nations as illustrated in her "House of Work," "Orgy" and other works, and this is naturally ignored by the Soviets. All Shevchenko's poetry and all the activities of Lesya Ukrainka are presented exclusively as a call to social struggle. Such explanations as that "The House of Work" is "directed against the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism and Zionism" (page 662), or that the dramas based on the history of early Christianity such as "The Advocate Marthian" and "In the Catacombs" can only result in a pointless polemic.

Nevertheless, even the authors of the book could not find Russian examples for Lesya Ukrainka's dramas and thus they limit themselves to the remark that "The Stone Guest" by Pushkin "certainly stimulated" Lesya Ukrainka to write "The Stone Landlord," despite the fact that she "worked out this theme quite originally" (page 667).

On the other hand, "In the Jungle" is quite wrongly interpreted as an attack on contemporary America; it was in fact a polemic against those contemporaries who demanded direct benefit from artistic and particularly poetic, creation (compare page 658).¹⁸ In addition, an absolutely unnecessary assumption is made for the better understanding of this play, by saying that its theme was influenced by Herzen's book "From the Other Coast" (pages 658—659),¹⁹ but it is not known whether Lesya Ukrainka ever read it.

It is interesting that a large share of the book is devoted to a few "realist" writers who have attained a certain popularity. These are Panas Myrny, Kropyvnytsky, Karpenko-Kary, Nechuy-Levytsky, Manzhura, Kotsyubynsky and Stefanyk, the peculiarities of whose impressionist style is completely obscured by the revolutionary phraseology used by the Soviet authors. Strangely enough, this selection of writers leaves the reader with the same one-sided impression as the "History of Ukrainian Literature" by S. Yefremov. The distorted approach of Yefremov's work has been pointed out more than once by later researchers: According to Yefremov, Ukrainian literature is entirely "democratic and popular." According to the new "History of Ukrainian Literature" it is apparently completely "revolutionary and democratic." The unbelievably low level of scholarship demonstrated here, is additional testimony to the fact that different intellectual levels have been established in the USSR for the Russians and the national minorities.

In view of the methodological weaknesses of the book, its false interpretation of literary works, its direct falsification of facts and ignoring of important literary phenomena, it must be said that the publication of this book in the Soviet Ukraine, is a very regrettable fact.

¹⁸ It is also against the requirement of political advantage; quite a good interpretation of "In the Jungle" appeared in the Soviet Ukraine sometimes ago in Volume 9 of Lesya Ukrainka's works (the article was written by P. Fylypovych).

¹⁹ The interpretations of Lesya Ukrainka's works on purely national themes can only be taken as humorous. But the authors do not hesitate to mention even the anti-Muscovite *Boyarynya* again replacing national problematics by social ones, page 670.