

## ІСТОРИЯ ДЕРЖАВИ І ПРАВА

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### **WOMEN OF UKRAINE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL OUTLOOK IN THE CONDITIONS OF EMIGRATION: THE EXAMPLE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA**

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Successful development and the formation of a modern legal system in Ukraine should be based on the understanding of the value of human life, the importance of the full and harmonious development of each individual, ensuring human rights, and the necessity of creating conditions for the self-realization of human potential. This is possible only through the provision of gender equality. The study and reconsideration of the idea of gender equality through the example of the activities of Ukrainian women's movements in the conditions of emigration not only analyze the development of this idea in the past but also take into account the achievements of the past in understanding the ways and legal mechanisms for the real provision of gender equality in modern Ukrainian society.

The article examines the role and contribution of Ukrainian women in the process of shaping the national worldview among the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada. The importance of the contribution of Ukrainian women in the diaspora to the formation of cultural and national identity helps to highlight their role in preserving and developing the Ukrainian heritage beyond the homeland and their influence on the activities of women's movements in Ukraine during the studied period.

An integral part of the socio-political life in the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada became the women's movement, which initiated the creation of Ukrainian women's societies. Their task was not only to preserve national self-identification and culture but also the need to assist national institutions in Ukraine.

The article also reveals important aspects of women's activities in public life, education, the cultural sphere, and the struggle for the rights of the Ukrainian community in Canada. It explores the instruments, methods, and strategies used by women to support their national

**identity and contribute to the formation of a Ukrainian national worldview among the immigrant community.**

**Keywords: women's movement; gender equality; emancipation; national idea; diaspora; women's right.**

**Formulation of the problem.** The Ukrainian women's movement reflects all social transformations, dynamically developing and influencing all spheres of Ukrainian life. Gradually shedding established models of behavior from patriarchal society, it has been building a robust infrastructure.

Therefore, the experience of Ukrainian women's organizations in emigration, especially in Canada, is crucial and requires reevaluation and active utilization in Ukraine. Analyzing the state of Ukrainian society in the context of equality over time can be used to rethink the current social policies of our state. This is essential for developing paths towards creating a democratic society of European standards.

**Analysis of the study of the problem.** The issue of the participation of Ukrainian women and their activities in women's organizations in the Ukrainian diaspora in the free world has been explored by I. Knish, N. Kohusko, O. Malanchuk-Rybak, V. Chumera, M. Bohachevska-Khomyak, O. Dashkovska, and I. Andrusiak.

**The article aims to** explore the goals and objectives set by Ukrainian women's organizations in Canada, to highlight the crucial direction of the work of women's centers abroad, which involved advocating for human rights, the right to national self-identification, and the promotion of gender equality.

**Presenting main material.** The thousand-year history of the Ukrainian people is marked not only by triumphant feats but also by tragic trials that it endured on the thorny path to independence. The harsh fate of many Ukrainians scattered them across the planet. The formation of the diaspora is primarily determined by socio-economic and political factors. There are known to be three waves of emigration, although the history of Ukrainian emigration dates back to ancient times.

Each wave of emigration has its own characteristics. Analyzing the nature of the first wave, Ukrainians emigrated with the aim of earning a decent living. As for the reasons for the other two waves, political motives played a significant role. The largest number of arrivals were immigrants at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. However, even in a foreign land, Ukrainian women migrants managed to demonstrate their willpower and adaptability successfully to new conditions.

A distinctive feature of Ukrainian emigration to Canada in the first half of the 20th century was the prevalence of men over women. Before 1910, more than half of Ukrainian emigrants were adult men, with only one-fifth being adult women. Over the next four years, when emigration decreased, adult men constituted 72.8 % of all arrivals [1, p. 39]. This was due to the fact that migrants, due to challenging financial conditions, often did not have the opportunity to bring their families with them from their homeland.

Difficulties in adapting to unfamiliar socio-economic relations, lack of knowledge or poor command of the language, laws, institutions, traditions, and customs of Canada, as well as, especially in the early days, openly hostile attitudes from chauvinistically inclined segments of the local population – all accelerated among immigrants the process of creating centers of Ukrainian national identity. This process intensified particularly after the arrival of immigrants during the second wave on Canadian soil.

The renowned Canadian scholar of Ukrainian origin, I. Herus-Tarnavetska, dedicated one of her studies to the portrayal of women in Ukrainian-Canadian folklore. The researcher noted that it did not take women much time to accept their fate. Abroad, they were able to broaden their horizons and demonstrate that a woman's purpose is not limited to the functions of a guardian woman (*berehyni*). To become successful, Ukrainian women had to exert twice as much effort. Especially to make a mark in public or political activities [1, p. 69]. Ultimately, if the first shoots of the women's movement were already «sprouting» in Galicia, in emigration, everything had to start from scratch.

The activity of Ukrainian women on Canadian soil, their conscious civic position, and dedication to the Ukrainian cause allow us to qualify the activities of these women's civic organizations as a powerful civic movement. It is based on the desire to preserve Ukrainian identity abroad, to remain Ukrainian at least partially. In the conditions of emigration, this is a challenging task that requires conscious effort.

How the Ukrainian women's movement in Canada has its own specificity, ideological foundation, and tangible results can be aptly described using the characterization provided by Marta Bohachevska-Khomyak, a well-known diaspora researcher in Ukrainian history. She noted that Ukrainian community organizations abroad in the first half of the 20th century did not advocate for the emancipation of women as an independent and leading slogan. Their activities evolved within the context of the struggle for the Ukrainian national cause and the survival of Ukrainians in the challenging conditions of emigration. This applies to both the Ukrainian women's movement in Western Europe and on the American continent [2, p. 130].

The process of involving women in the socio-political life of Ukrainian immigrants began immediately. The first centers where women could gather were formed at churches and cultural-educational organizations – Ukrainian National Houses (UND). Through these associations, women could establish connections with the outside world, share information, organize cultural events, thereby opening up Ukraine to the world. At the same time, in addition to educational work, women could engage in charitable activities. Student societies were also created, collaborating with women's associations. All women's formations in emigration maintained connections worldwide. Ukrainian women's organizations, for example, could receive donations from sisters in Canada or America. There was no single, even formal structure that acted as a link for women's organizations in emigration.

Some organizations were renowned for their philanthropic activities, opening schools, dormitories, kitchens – all of which were affordable for everyone, as they were inexpensive. However, they all worked for the same purposes that essentially united them. After all, the Ukrainian community, the Ukrainian state – their prosperity and well-being were the priority of each association.

In 1901, in the province of Edmonton, Canada, the «Society of Working Girls at the Evening School of the Latin Sisters» was founded. Two years later, the women's choir society 'Boyan' emerged. It is worth noting that in 1917, these societies initiated the creation of the Ukrainian National House (UND) in Edmonton, where a women's club operated, later known as the women's society «Zorya» [1, p. 16].

In 1916, an initiative committee was established at the Winnipeg UND. On December 30, 1916, the Ukrainian Women's Society (UWS) was organized on the foundation of this committee, and its statute was approved. M. Boyakivska was elected as the head of the UWS board [3, p. 128–129]. In the beginning, the society had only 24 female members. However, this women's organization managed to endure and operated for a full ten years. In 1926, it changed its name to the Ukrainian Women's Society named after Lesia Ukrainka as a branch of the UND [4, p. 227, 229].

The activities of this society were diverse: they assisted in organizing art exhibitions, concerts, literary evenings (including those dedicated to T. Shevchenko and I. Franko), and helped acquire books for the library of the Ukrainian House. Every year, members of the society organized a charitable Christmas dinner. The society's activists often gave lectures that were open to anyone interested. They were also actively involved in political life; the Ukrainian Women's Association named after Lesia Ukrainka, as a branch of the UND, became the first organization in the history of the Ukrainian women's movement in Canada to participate in municipal council elections [4, p. 228, 231].

Over time, women's associations within the UND began to emerge in other Canadian cities where Ukrainian settlements were concentrated. In 1919, the women's association «Free Ukraine» was formed in Montreal.

In December 1923, thanks to the Winnipeg UND, the first convocation of the Ukrainian Educational and Economic Congress in Canada was initiated. During the congress, many positive resolutions were adopted, aiming to support the further work of women. Among these resolutions, the «Educational Work Among Women» was also adopted. It emphasized the need for weekly meetings within the UND to discuss

important agenda items – from managing household affairs to maintaining hygiene, and more. Scholarships were also planned to be awarded annually for young girls interested in science and with the aim of popularizing it [4, pp. 168–169]. Additionally, for the first time in the history of the women's movement in Canada, discussions began about the creation of a unified Ukrainian women's organization. The prototype for this organization would be the Union of Ukrainian Women in Galicia [4, p. 169]. The proposal received a positive response, resulting in the establishment of the Olha Kobylianska Society in 1923 under the UND in Saskatoon. It was led by H. Konoenko, an activist in the Ukrainian women's movement in Europe who later moved to Canada.

In the spring of 1925, a letter arrived at the head of the organization from Western Ukraine, from the well-known figure in the Ukrainian women's movement, Sofia Rusova. The letter contained a request for Canadian women to financially support the Ukrainian delegation for the International Women's Congress in Washington. Canadian sisters responded, publishing a statement in the «Ukrainsky Holos» newspaper about organizing a fundraising campaign. Together with members of these women's societies, they actively engaged in providing material assistance to the Ukrainian women's delegation from Ukraine [5, p. 25].

During the interwar period, the following main women's organizations existed in Canada: the liberal-oriented organization «Union of Ukrainian Women of Canada (SUW)»; the Organization of Ukrainian Women of Canada named after O. Basarab, affiliated with the nationalist organization «Ukrainian National Association»; Women's sections within the Union of Hetman State Supporters; Women's organizations adhering to communist ideology (established under the cultural and educational society «Ukrainian Workers' and Farmers' Home») [6, p. 162].

Note that participation in the campaign united the women's activists and accelerated the process of creating a unified Ukrainian women's organization in Canada. With this goal in mind, an organizational committee began operating in Saskatoon in the middle of 1926. Soon, the committee of Ukrainian women published an appeal in the «Ukrainsky Holos» newspaper urging Ukrainian women to participate in the women's congress. This women's forum took place from December 26 to 28, 1926, during the proceedings of the People's Congress in Saskatoon, organized by the Institute named after P. Mohyla [7, p. 207]. Almost a hundred women representing seven local women's centers participated in its work. The result of the congress was the formation of the first and only Ukrainian women's organization in Canada, the Union of Ukrainian Women of Canada (SUW), which became part of the Union of Ukrainian Self-Reliance (SUS) as an autonomous organization with its governing bodies [5, p. 30, 39].

As noted in the anniversary edition, SUW traces its origins to the women's society named after O. Kobylianska, which emerged in 1923 at the People's House in Saskatoon [8, p. 5–8]. It was led by Kharyta Konoenko, a Ukrainian public figure and journalist originally from the Poltava region. She obtained higher education in Prague and moved to Canada to pursue postgraduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan. The first leadership of SUW included Olha Svytun (chairwoman until 1927), Savelia Stechyshyn, Hanna Romanchych, Maria Madyuk, Olha Savchuk, Daria Yanda, and Tetiana Kroytor. The central management of the organization was concentrated in several centers: Saskatoon, Edmonton, Winnipeg. Savelia Stechyshyn served as the head of the Union until 1934, followed by Daria Yanda (real name Konashevych Daria, a native of Canada) [8, p. 5–13].

Before the Second World War, the Union of Ukrainian Women of Canada had over 100 branches across Canada. From the beginning of its activities, SUW actively participated in the education of the younger generation in a nationalist spirit, worked in the «Native School» (in towns and on farms), and in Sunday schools affiliated with churches and People's Homes. The organization provided material support to community institutions and maintained a page in the official publication of the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League (USRL) – «Ukrainsky Holos» and later in the calendar «Ukrainsky Holos» [9, pp. 60–62; 47, pp. 57–62]. Maria Adamowska (a public figure, writer, born in Ternopil region, in Canada since 1897) stated in the article «Beginnings in Canada»: «Without 'Ukrainsky Holos,' there would be no us

Ukrainians; there would be a dark, backward mass that would have perished as Rusyns and Galicians, leaving no trace behind» [10, p. 102].

For the first time, a separate page for the Union of Ukrainian Women of Canada (SUW) was included in the 1929 calendar under the title «Branch of the Union of Ukrainian Women in Canada.» In this calendar, the article «Our Path» noted that «women's organizations are necessary for our people... women can do a lot for local organizations, for People's Homes and Churches, and influence public life in general». It also expressed the intention to «always cooperate with other organizations and societies that have the same tasks and goals as we do – the upliftment of the Ukrainian people» [11, p. 159]. It emphasized that Ukrainian women in Canada would play an important role alongside men in various fields [11].

A significant catalyst for the further political participation of women was the passage of a law by the legislative assembly of the province of Manitoba in Canada in 1910, which granted women equal rights with men. In general, most Ukrainian organizations in the diaspora, regardless of their orientation, whether nationalist or pro-communist, were created as sections of Ukrainian parties and organizations where men played a dominant role. At the initial stage of the formation of women's organizations, this had a positive significance as women benefited from the material and press resources of men's organizations. However, such dependence on political associations and parties had negative consequences for organized women outside the homeland.

Some activists in the Ukrainian women's movement in Canada and the USA expressed reservations about the political engagement of the women's movement. They believed that women, if involved in political parties, would be compelled to focus on political affairs, neglecting the resolution of women's issues. This could lead to the diversion of women's activism into political activities at the expense of addressing purely women's issues.

The Ukrainian Women's Committee of Canada, initially named ZH-KUK (Women's Committee of Canadians of Ukrainian Origin), began its work in 1944 with charitable activities to benefit the wounded and those affected by the Second World War, including Ukrainians fleeing Soviet rule. «In Canada, Ukrainian women in the diaspora felt the need to organize. Women's societies were formed initially affiliated with churches», as stated in the book «Twenty-Five Years of Joint Work: The Ukrainian Women's Committee of Canada» (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1971) [12, p. 102].

Before the establishment of the Ukrainian Women's Committee of Canada in 1944, women's Ukrainian societies in Winnipeg were united under the Ukrainian Women's Council. The first chairwoman of this organization was Hanna Mandryka.

Initially, by bringing together all public women's organizations on Canadian soil, the Women's Committee of Ukrainian Women of Canada existed as a branch of the general Ukrainian emigrant civic association – the Committee of Canadians of Ukrainian Origin – and did not declare its separate tasks, except for emphasizing the consolidation of the active part of the Ukrainian diasporic women around the common cause of the Ukrainian national liberation movement for all emigrants of Ukrainian origin.

The Ukrainian women in Canada who actively participated in the work of the Ukrainian Women's Committee of Canada (UWCC) later defined the essence of their organization as follows: «The Ukrainian Women's Committee of Canada is a federation of women's organizations that, regardless of religious and political convictions, unites women who care about the fate of our people».

Longing for Ukraine and the desire to work for its future even abroad led those who cared deeply to join the ranks of the UWCC, consolidating the Ukrainian diaspora.

The tasks and goals set by the Ukrainian Women's Committee of Canada included: the solidarity of efforts of Canadian women of Ukrainian descent around the Ukrainian cause; acquainting fellow citizens with the life and issues of the Ukrainian people, fostering support for the cause of Ukrainian national liberation; coordinating the work of Ukrainian women's organizations in socio-cultural and educational areas; cooperating with the Committee of Canadians of Ukrainian Origin and coordinating joint actions.

The solidarity of Ukrainian women's efforts abroad allows us to assert that they acted as a socially constructive force in the Canadian context, with their efforts directed towards achieving significant goals.

The need for the consolidation of Ukrainians in the diaspora gave rise to various forms of civic associations. «In November 1940, the consolidation of nationally conscious Canadian Ukrainians took the form of the Committee of Canadians of Ukrainian Origin (renamed in 1989 to the Congress of Ukrainians in Canada). This committee became the representative of the majority of Ukrainian civic associations in Canada (excluding communist ones) and asserted its right to speak and be a spokesperson on behalf of all Canadian Ukrainians».

**Conclusions.** Thus, the united women's movement was characterized by a diversity of ideological directions, intentions, ideologies, and tasks. However, they managed to find their purpose in the complex society and worked alongside men for the benefit of the homeland. Through this activity, a positive opinion was formed within the international community regarding the rights of Ukrainians to national freedom and an independent state. The progress of Ukrainian women's organizations in this realm most vividly reflected the ideological and organizational maturity of women, as one of the most important factors in national development.

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### **ЖІНКИ УКРАЇНИ У БОРОТЬБІ ЗА ФОРМУВАННЯ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО СВІТОГЛЯДУ В УМОВАХ ЕМІГРАЦІЇ: НА ПРИКЛАДІ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ЖІНОЧИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ КАНАДИ**

Успішний розвиток та формування сучасної правової системи України повинні ґрунтуватися на усвідомленні цінності людського життя, важливості повноцінного та гармонійного розвитку кожної особистості, забезпеченні прав людини, необхідності створення умов для самореалізації людського потенціалу. Це можливо тільки за умови забезпечення гендерної рівності. Вивчення та переосмислення ідеї гендерної рівності на прикладі діяльності українських жіночих рухів в умовах еміграції не тільки аналізує розвиток цієї ідеї в минулому, а й враховує здобутки минулого в осмисленні шляхів та правових механізмів реального забезпечення гендерної рівності в сучасному українському суспільстві.

У статті розглядається роль та внесок українок у процес формування національного світогляду серед української діаспори в Канаді. Важливість внеску жінок української діаспори у формування культурного і національного ідентитету допомагає висвітлити їхню роль у збереженні та розвитку української спадщини поза межами батьківщини та їхній вплив на діяльність жіночих рухів в Україні досліджуваного періоду.

Складовою частиною суспільно-політичного життя в українській діаспорі Канади став жіночий рух, який ініціював створення українських жіночих товариств, завданням яких було не лише прагнення зберегти національну самоідентифікацію і свою культуру, а й потреба допомагати національним інституціям в Україні.

Також розкрито важливі аспекти діяльності жінок у громадському житті, освіті, культурній сфері та боротьбі за права української спільноти в Канаді. Досліджено, які інструменти, методи та стратегії використовували жінки для підтримки своєї національної ідентичності та сприяння формуванню українського національного світогляду серед іммігрантської громади.

**Ключові слова:** жіночий рух; гендерна рівність; емансипація; національна ідея; діаспора; жіночі права.