

21 May 1965

Enclosed is a translation of the letter of WOLYNETS Chrystyna of Wiesbaden ,West Germany permanently residing in Cleveland ,Ohio to her aunt HANYTZKY Olga of Riem bei Insbruck,Wiesenhoefe ,Tirol, Austria about her trip to Ukraine from 16 to 27 April 1965.

WOLYNETS Chrystyna, daughter of engineer Bogdan WOLYNETS of 14 37 Orchard Grove, Cleveland 7, Ohio was employed as teacher at one of American schools in Wiesbaden ,West Germany in 1964/65 and made her trip from there. She is approx. 24 years old, single, catholic. According to her father (as told to one of our Sources in Cleveland) she was planning to come for 2 week ~~vacations to the States~~ after her return from Ukraine. She was given a scholarship and in autumn will study for a MA -degree at Honolulu Uni.

While in Lviv , Chrystyna saw her uncle Dr TYMCHYSHYN Mykola of Peremyshlany whose wife Wolodymyra lives in Cleveland together with their daughter Tamara. Dr Tymchyshyn was in contact with STEPANIAK (Lex). Together with her mother, Tamara is planning to make a trip to Poland and then to Ukraine to visit Dr TYMCHYSHYN, in summer 1965.

Early May 1965 (7 and 8 May) Chrystyna was in Munich,Germany and talked 'widely' about her trip to Lviv and Kiev.

Our people in Munich were instructed to arrange with Chrystyna a full debriefing through HANYTSKY Olga, who works at the present in Munich.

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Wiesbaden, 4/28/65

My dears,

... At first I wanted to travel with an organized tour, but since there were none going through L'viv I decided to travel alone. I planned my trip: thus: Wiesbaden, Nurnberg, Prague, Kiev, L'viv, Budapest and then again Wiesbaden. Since I wanted to see not only the two great Ukrainian cities but some of the Ukrainian countryside as well, I decided to travel by train. I began my trip Apr 16th, and I returned on Apr 27th. The total cost of the trip was \$225, which included traveling, hotels and food.

All of the traveling by train was very comfortable. The trains were very clean, and the sleeper wagons had two beds, a bathroom and a table to every compartment. Crossing of the borders from Germany into Czechoslovakia and from Czechoslovakia into Ukraine through the town Chopy went through without the slightest difficulty, except for having to account for all the money I was carrying and allowing the border guards to look over various notes that I had in my handbag. They didn't even look into my suitcases.

Several differences between Ukraine and Hungary and Czechoslovakia could be noticed readily: in Hungary and Czechoslovakia no one paid much attention to me, but ~~at the moment~~ **at the moment** that I crossed the border I was met by a girl from Inturist, She helped me with my exchange of currency and telegraphed ahead to Kiev for someone to meet me there. At every stop along my tour I was met by a guide from Inturist. This proved to be a great a great convenience, because there was always a taxi ready to take me to an assigned hotel. This made traveling much easier. Often I met the Inturist only once again, when it was time to travel on.

I left Chopy in Transkarpatia at about 8am and arrived in Kiev at midnight. All day the train sped across the Ukrainian countryside. First there was level ground, then the Karpatians, here and there capped with snow, again level ground, and then L'viv. After a brief stop (only for 10 minutes) the train sped on toward Striy, Ternopil, and always further east. Silver-domed churches could be seen in the villages scattered here and there. But my imagination painted a finer scene. Whitewalled houses and golden thatched roofs were only in my imagination, because everywhere I saw only "darkened houses", and the thatched roofs that could yet be seen were all a dark grey, the fences around the houses were a somber, black, as were the figures of people dressed in dark rags. Progress could also be seen. I saw new buildings in many places. But why is this progress so slow in coming? The children that were returning home from school at the time stood out in the scene. They were not badly dressed and they all sported the red neckerchiefs of the Pioneers.

Spring was late in coming this year and no signs of work could yet be seen in the fields. The vast space of the Ukrainian lands reminded me with their monotonous levelness of the plains of Canada. But this land had the great wealth of the black earth in it.

The city of Ternopil appeared to me a great industrial center. Many new buildings could be seen in it. My "western eye" was not accustomed to seeing women digging ditches, working at the railroad and at various other manual labor. Here this could be seen everywhere.

Also, on every public building in Ukraine there were patriotic banners such as:

Long live the working Soviet people.

Forever live Leninism and Marxism.

Glory to Communism.

I don't think I passed a single railroad station without some such banner. Portraits of Lenin and Marx were also to be in every public locality. This was different than in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and where I saw hardly any such signs.

I had taken along a radio, and I must say that almost all of the programs fell into such categories:

- 1/ A report from the kolhoz on how much milk Gertie had produced.
- 2/ Communist indoctrination.
- 3/ Anti-American propaganda.
- 4/ Anti-religious propaganda.
- 5/ Good music, but hardly enough of it.

Broadcasts in Kiev were in Ukrainian.

... I don't think it would be far from the truth to say that the average monthly income is about 80-90 rubles. As you probably know, medical and hospital care are free, as are drugs and medicines and such. Apartments are very cheap, because for five rubles you can get a very nice apartment. The problem is to find one. Construction is on everywhere. Buildings are being completed and new ones are going up. Buses, trolleys and taxis are all very cheap. They cost three to four rubles, and their service is good and frequent enough.

Foods-all kinds, butter and meat are very expensive. Fruit is forbiddingly expensive, but you could manage yet, if only the goods were available. The problem is again the fact that many of the goods cannot be bought simply because there aren't any to buy, so that money is of no help.

It seemed that the most expensive commodity here was clothing, because people were generally poorly dressed and their wardrobes were empty. A raincoat, for example, that in Germany can be bought for six dollars is sold here for 65 rubles, that is, 70 dollars. Shoes are priced from 30-to 40 rubles, which is half of a month's pay. And again, its doubtful if you can buy everything even if you have the money, because there are few stores, and a lot of people, and the selection of goods is small.

The language is a strange matter. When I was in Prague I heard Czech spoken, In Budapest I heard Hungarian. In L'viv I heard Ukrainian, Russian and Polish. But when I was in Kiev, I heard people conversing in Ukrainian "as much as twice." In the very capital of Ukraine it is rare to hear Ukrainian spoken. Everyone speaks Russian, "razgavaryvayet na Ruskam yazyke". I emphasize that the radio broadcasts were in Ukrainian, as were the advertisements in Kiev's subways. In the department stores, or the so called "Univermags", everything was in Russian. In Kiev's Taras Shevchenko University 80% of the courses are taught in Russian. The majority of the elementary schools teach in Russian. I found out that in Zaporizha only one out of twenty elementary schools teaches in Ukrainian. Often I was asked "Where have you learned to speak Ukrainian so well. Here am I, a Ukrainian living in Ukraine, and I can't speak Ukrainian", or "I've forgotten my Ukrainian". I often attracted attention by speaking and asking questions aloud in Ukrainian on the street-car, in the streets, and elsewhere.

There is no point for me to go into further descriptions here, because you can learn about these things from books and photographs better than from my description.

L'viv. It cannot be compared with Kiev. I celebrated the Eas-

ter holidays here. The Ukrainian Catholic Church is no more. An orthodox service was held in St. George's Cathedral, and many of our people go there, while many others go to Polish churches. Either way, all the churches are overcrowded. Out on the streets you cannot tell that it is a holiday, because all the stores are open, and in general the holiday mood cannot be felt, except, perhaps, in the private homes. I wanted to see the villages, but I could not get permission.

I feel that I was allowed enough freedom in the Ukraine. For example, in Kiev I did not see my Inturist guides except on the days of arrival and departure. It is true, however, that when I returned to my room late at night I was asked where I had been for so long, and what book am I carrying. Also, I received a few phone calls that made me wonder, but that was all. In L'viv I had to be back in my hotel every night by midnight, but otherwise I was completely free.

Since the change in the regime, that is to say, since Brezhnev and Kosygin have been in the Kremlin, much has changed and there has been a great improvement. In general, prosperity has come about. Last year no bread could be bought (the bread last year was green because it was made from some sort of flour made from peas), but this year there are no such problems. Flour is still sold on rations of about one kilogram per month. But this is paradise!

I describe the city briefly - Prague: A beautiful city, not destroyed much by the war so that many monuments of antiquity are preserved in it. I was there from the evening of good Friday until.

Easter Sunday. On Sunday I heard Mass in the Hrad on Mala Strana. What a beautiful church! The service was very solemn, but few people attended. The ones there were mostly old folks. In the streets you could not tell that it was a holiday. The people of Prague were pleasant and warm. There is a lot to see in Prague, and I would gladly go there again.

Kiev: The city is beautiful. It was heavily damaged during the war and it has since been beautifully rebuilt. I saw much in Kiev. On the first day I was accompanied by an Inturist guide. For the remaining two and a half days I was on my own. I spent them profitably and I got around to seeing much, both in the company of friends and on my own.

In Kiev I went to the theater. Storinka Schodennyka (A Page from a Diary) was playing -- a two-act play by O. Korniychuk. I came out after the first act disappointed. The play lacked feet, arms and head, and it had no purpose -- unless its purpose was to praise someone after every ten words "for being awarded the Lenin prize".

I also went to the Kiev Opera to see the ballet. Here I came out enchanted. The performance was beautiful. The program comprised variations which ended in the Ukrainian hopak. This was my last evening in Kiev. I bade farewell to Volodymyr, who stands overlooking the Dnieper, and I left for L'viv.

There are many Ukrainian artists, writers and actors here. We in the west do not know everything about them. They are not all in the authorities' favor, and many of our prominent people are creative and many write. But their works lie covered with dust

because they are not permitted to be published. In spite of everything, cultural activities here are on a high level. I personally met with some of our artists, who's names I had best not disclose for now. Here not only older people are among the aware, but much of the youth as well. Here, where years of indoctrination have done their work, and are now reflected in matters of religion, communism, but not in matters of Ukrainian national consciousness.

Perhaps this cannot be said of the whole, but I think that there are many such people.

Here are the words of one young Ukrainian poet:

Because of you I sow pearls in my soul
because of you I reason and I speak
Let Americas and Russias be silent
When I speak with you.

People are not satisfied with reality as they now find it. On my first day in Kiev I approached a man (a "comrade") and asked him if there was a place where one could eat nearby, and he answered, "Sure there are places where you can eat, but you must have some-
topay for it."

I: "How nice it would be if only it would rain".

He: "Sure, let it rain, but you also need sun, because if you don't have sun and rain both there will be no crop. And if there is no crop, we will go hungry

I: "Well, then may God give us sun and rain both".

He: "There are not many now that would speak that way. Where are you from?"

I: "From America".

The conversation ended abruptly and the man turned and walked the other way.

On several other occasions conversation ended abruptly when it was learned that I was from America.

Also, I noticed that conversations concerning matters other than the weather and such went best out of doors, in the fresh air and open space. People say that you cannot tell where there are listening devices (bugs), and also the better. Young people - even the hundred-percent supporters of Leninism, Marxism and the Soviet paradise are cautious. One encounter with such a person proved that the young man did not want to be seen in the company of an American. He met with me here and there, but never in the hotel where I was staying. He was overjoyed when I gave him postcards that I had brought from America. American postcards, magazines, chewing gum and etc. were well received everywhere.

I had two questions for people that I met there:

1/ Are you satisfied with Ukraine as it is now?

There was one interesting answer: "The tree is already in bloom, but it is too early yet for it to bear fruit!" There is much that this says.

2/ The second question, which should be important to our emigres, was: "What do you think that we in the diaspora should be doing?"

The answers were such:

a/ First of all, consensus and cooperation among among all Ukrainians, whether they be M or B or even Ukrainian communists.

b/ At all costs attempt to establish contact between Ukrainians in the west and the Ukrainian Soviet government authorities. They do not recognize you and you do not recognize them, but try to find some common language. Support them as the Poles support their own people in Poland. Follow the example of Granowski. Why, they carried him around in their arms when he was their recently.

c/ Become acquainted with our contemporary literature - with Symonenko, Lina Kostenko, Kulichenko* and others. We have many here that write and are creative.

d/ It is important for our people over there to make known our situation here - make known, for example, that only one of twenty schools in Zaporizha teaches in Ukrainian.

e/ Stay close to the Church because it unites you.

Unfortunately I have a poor memory and I am not able to retell everything, but perhaps this will be enough for the beginning.

It is time for me to end. There is yet much that I could write, but I think that since you have the opportunity to go to Europe, then find also the opportunity to visit our Ukraine. I have matured much in one week, and I would like to mature ~~thus~~ yet more.

Best wishes,

Chrystyna Wolynets

* the name is either misspelled or Chrystyna simply confused it for there is no one ~~known~~ by this name.