

Introduction

This brief monograph tells the little-known story of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, a circle of Ukrainian intellectuals active in Kiev from 1845 to 1847. Although it brings to light no new sources of information, relying instead on those that have already been used in the existing Ukrainian and Russian studies on the subject, it offers a new and wider perspective on this secret society. The title "Young Ukraine," used previously by Zynoviy Hurevych in his *Moloda Ukraina*, underscores the significance of this group in terms of the contemporary "Young Germany" (1830), "Young Italy" (1831), and "Young Ireland" (1840) movements. Romantic nationalism played a dominant part in all of them. While no attempt has been made to compare these Western European movements with that in Ukraine in this monograph, a student of European nationalism will find many interesting parallels with the Ukrainian group. In the nineteenth century there was a vital affinity, if not an actual interplay, between the intellectual currents of a given decade. The Ukrainians came on the stage a little late, but they nevertheless imprinted their ideas and dreams on many generations to come. It was the federalist ideas of the Brotherhood that remained for a long time one of the main themes of Ukrainian intellectual history. Although present in Ukraine prior to the 1840s, this idea was first formally articulated by the brethren. It and the idea of a national cultural revival make up the first modern Ukrainian political platform.

In addition to ideology, this monograph concentrates on the lives and works of the members of the Brotherhood. Not enough documentary material is currently available to re-create a good picture of the milieu in which the brethren lived. Their biographies are, therefore, sparse, but they stretch from before the time of the members' actual involvement in the organization to their exile and post-exile existence. These first Ukrainian dissidents reacted in different ways to their arrests and trials, and they lived out their lives in relative dignity. I have tried to show more of the human drama than merely the doctrinal

divergencies and subtleties, for their story is, on the whole, one of quiet defiance of oppression. The dominant trio in the story—Kostomarov, Shevchenko, and Kulish—possesses a significance in the history of Ukrainian literary and intellectual thought that goes far beyond the individuals' activities in the Brotherhood. Yet this episode, some would argue, does represent the zenith of their youth. The promise shown by these three may never have been fulfilled, but it left a permanent mark on the history of their country. The youthful intensity of those few years meant more, in the end, than the longer, more mature period that followed. Hence, "Young Ukraine" triumphed despite its defeat.

There is another reason why the Cyrilo-Methodians left a permanent mark on the modern history of Ukraine. Their ideas, despite the fact that they represented a product of the pre-industrial era, exercised a profound influence until the revolution of 1917. The vision of a free Ukrainian republic within a Slavic federation beckoned to many Ukrainian cultural and political activists. So did the Cyrilo-Methodians' philosophy of non-violence and their belief in the wisdom of the common people. Many a Ukrainian political group traced its origin to the affectionately named *bratshchyky*: the brethren. The fact that so few of them were able to resist oppression in their own time and successfully spread their influence also inspired the persecuted Ukrainian dissidents of the 1970s. *Vincet amor patriae*.

The Soviet history of scholarly research and publication on the Brotherhood is very disappointing. After Hurevych's book in the 1920s, practically nothing of value has been published on that subject in Soviet Ukraine. The Brotherhood's Christian utopianism and its strong national beliefs were unpalatable to Soviet scholars. Much documentary evidence has remained unpublished, and the brethren have been treated with scorn in scholarly publications. This situation has prevailed up to the time when this book was prepared, as a series of lectures, in 1986. Since then, Gorbachev's *glasnost'* seems to have abolished taboos in many areas that are now referred to as "blank pages." From recent publications in Soviet Ukrainian literary magazines and scholarly journals, it is clear that the virtual ban on writing about the Brotherhood has, at last, been lifted.

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