

RETROSPECTIVE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

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Periv I.V. Retrospective of Human Rights Activities of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations.

The article provides a retrospective analysis of the human rights activities of the World Federation of Ukrainian Organizations (WFUO), which unites Ukrainian diaspora structures in the struggle for the rights of Ukrainians in the world. The main directions of the Federation's work are disclosed, in particular the protection of human rights, support of political and public initiatives aimed at preserving national identity, the fight against repression and discrimination. Emphasis is placed on the main areas of activity of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUHO), which are aimed at protecting the rights and freedoms of Ukrainian women, strengthening their social status and participation in public and political life. Special attention is paid to the struggle for the rights of women who have suffered from gender discrimination, violence or repression, particularly in the context of military conflicts, migration and other crisis situations. One of the important areas of work of SFUZHO is the preservation of national identity among the Ukrainian diaspora. The organization contributes to the development of Ukrainian culture, language, traditions and the education of future generations in the spirit of respect for the national heritage. This activity includes supporting Ukrainian schools abroad, holding cultural events, publishing literature in the Ukrainian language, and organizing international forums. In addition, SFUZHO actively draws the attention of the world community to human rights violations in Ukraine. The organization acts as an initiator and participant of international conferences, protest actions, publications in international media and advocacy campaigns in leading world institutions. Their activities gained special importance during periods of political crises in Ukraine, such as the Revolution of Dignity and Russia's military aggression. Thus, SFUZHO plays an important role both in the struggle for the rights of Ukrainian women and in maintaining national identity and raising the awareness of the world community about human rights issues in Ukraine.

Key words: women's movement, gender equality, emancipation, national identity, diaspora, women's rights.

Перів І.В. Ретроспектива правозахисної діяльності Світової Федерації Жіночих Українських Організацій.

У статті здійснено ретроспективний аналіз правозахисної діяльності Світової Федерації Українських Організацій (СФУО), яка об'єднує українські діаспорні структури у боротьбі за права українців у світі. Розкрито основні напрями роботи Федерації, зокрема захист прав людини, підтримку політичних і громадських ініціатив, спрямованих на збереження національної ідентичності, боротьбу проти репресій та дискримінації. Закцентовано на основних напрямках діяльності Світової Федерації Українських Жіночих Організацій (СФУЖО), які спрямовані на захист прав і свобод українських жінок, зміцнення їхнього соціального статусу та участі в громадському й політичному житті. Особливу увагу приділено боротьбі за права жінок, які постраждали від гендерної дискримінації, насильства або репресій, зокрема у контексті воєнних конфліктів, міграції та інших кризових ситуацій. Одним із важливих напрямів роботи СФУЖО є збереження

національної ідентичності серед української діаспори. Організація сприяє розвитку української культури, мови, традицій та вихованню наступних поколінь у дусі поваги до національної спадщини. Ця діяльність включає підтримку українських шкіл за кордоном, проведення культурних заходів, видання літератури українською мовою та організацію міжнародних форумів. Крім того, СФУЖО активно привертає увагу світової спільноти до порушень прав людини в Україні. Організація виступає ініціатором і учасником міжнародних конференцій, акцій протесту, публікацій у міжнародних ЗМІ та адвокаційних кампаній у провідних світових інституціях. Особливої ваги набула їхня діяльність у періоди політичних криз в Україні, таких як Революція Гідності та військова агресія росії. Таким чином, СФУЖО відіграє важливу роль як у боротьбі за права українських жінок, так і у підтримці національної ідентичності та підвищенні обізнаності світової спільноти про проблеми прав людини в Україні.

Key words: жіночий рух, гендерна рівність, емансипація, національна ідея, діаспора, права жінок.

Formulation of the problem. Historical retrospectives demonstrate that the Ukrainian women's movement plays a significant role in social life, preserving national identity, and defending women's rights. However, the human rights activities of organizations such as the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO) remain insufficiently studied, complicating analysis of their influence on the representation of the Ukrainian women's movement in the free world and the human rights work of organizations within its management.

Analysis of the study of the problem. The human rights activities of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations from a historical perspective have been studied by M. Bohachevska-Chomiak, M. Kebalo, S. Stechyshyn, O. Sokolyk, and I. Andrusiak.

The article aims to provide a retrospective on the human rights activities of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations.

Presenting main material. After 60 years of women's movement work, the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations was founded at the World Congress of Ukrainian Women in Philadelphia in 1948. Initially, it united ten organizations, including openly pro-nationalist and conservative groups, such as the Olga Basarab Ukrainian Women's Organization and the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada (later joined by the Olena Teliha Women's Society in England and the Association of Ukrainian Orthodox Sisterhoods in America).

Dr. Marta Kebalo noted that the Congress aligned feminist and nationalist slogans to further the Ukrainian women's movement and influence public opinion on Ukraine within international women's organizations, aiming to exert pressure on the communist authorities of the Soviet Union [1].

The WFUWO was led by Olena Kysilevska, a writer, editor of the «Zhinocha Dolia» magazine, and a senator in the Polish Sejm. Primarily, this movement sought to elevate the cultural and economic status of Ukrainian women, secure civil rights for them, and engage them in the nation's liberation efforts. The educational sector, particularly early childhood education, became an area heavily supported by women's organizations. Women of various ages of different faiths, from different parts of Ukraine and different political orientations, were concerned about the fate of political prisoners, took care of children, and brought the Ukrainian name to the world stage [2, p. 4].

Among the initiatives of the WFUWO were internal and external tasks. Internal tasks included: one of the main activities was the unification of national forces. And if we analyze the political or public activities of the board, we can clearly see the focus on uniting national and diaspora women's organizations [2, p. 7].

The next task was to represent women and the activities of the women's movement in society. To accomplish this task, many events and commemorations were organized, as well as publications and periodicals that helped to overcome stereotypes in the public mind about the value and importance of women in public life. For example, in 1952, a radio broadcast in Rome made it possible to speak to Ukraine, and soon afterwards, Ukrainian women received news about the work of Ukrainian women's organizations in the free world through the Voice of America and Canada.

In 1925–1956, the world learned about the deaths of 500 Ukrainian women in Kazakhstan [3]. They died during an uprising against bolshevik tanks. This crime, like thousands of others, could have been concealed by the communist regime, but thanks to the WFUWO, a majestic demonstration began. In February-March 1956, members of the federation disseminated information to all Ukrainian

settlements. This manifestation of protest can also be attributed to the external activities of the WFUWO [2, p. 6].

One of the most real needs at that time was the resettlement of mothers with children. There were quite a few of them in the camps, and their resettlement was difficult. The Ukrainian Women's Union of America responded to the WFUWO initiative and, by creating the Mother and Child Foundation, took over the resettlement. The action of resettlement of widows (about 100 families) [2, p. 7].

External tasks are divided into 2 areas: cooperation with women's organizations and speeches in defense of the Motherland, appeals to the Western world's politicians. Cooperation with women's organizations in the free world was already traditional, and by partnering with the International Women's Union, the central WFUWO set out to establish contacts with the Afro-Asian women's world. Relations with the International Women's Council, the World Mothers' Movement, and the Union of Catholic Women's Organizations have developed [2, p. 8].

The speeches in defense of the Motherland were human rights-based, caused by the facts of terror and enslavement in the USSR. The Federation drew the attention of the free world to the disenfranchisement of Ukrainians and contradictions with Soviet propaganda.

The following can be named:

a) Resolutions against the guidelines of upbringing in the USSR, put forward in our essays, at the congresses of the World Mothers' Movement in Paris (1950) and Brussels (1953).

b) On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the famine in Ukraine, protests were organized and materials for publications were collected.

c) A memorial on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Pereyaslav Agreement was sent to all the central offices of international women's organizations in the world.

d) A protest against the resettlement of Ukrainian youth to virgin lands, prepared for the Congress in Colombo and sent out in a similar way to the above.

e) Critical commentary on the review of the situation of the Soviet woman, published on the occasion of a seminar on public work in Moscow in 1956.

Sent to the same addresses as the above.

f) Overview of Ukrainian women with higher education, prepared for the Congress of Women Universities (Paris, 1957), sent to the above addresses.

g) Essay on a woman prisoner in the USSR, prepared for the Congress of the Union of Catholic Women in Rome [4, p. 38].

Throughout these years, the leadership and all components of the organization have been working intensively. In the 60s and 70s, there was a particular influx of younger members into the organization. The WFUWO develops important international ties. As a member of the United Nations in the charter of the NGO (non-governmental 148 Nations), the WFUWO is the first Ukrainian organization to become a member of the United Nations.

In the international arena, it reveals all the horrors of the Soviet-Moscow Union, defends political prisoners, the Sixties, and condemns the Holodomor. The international conference in 1975 in Mexico City, where our delegates went on hunger strike under the auspices of Dr. Marusya Beck in defense of Ukraine's human rights, was propagandistically successful. Similar conferences were held in Copenhagen (1980) and in Kenya - Nairobi (1985) [5, p. 113-114].

The quarterly «Ukrainian Woman in the World» began publishing in 1963; it contained programmatic and ideological articles that also illustrated the struggle of Ukrainian women in the Soviet Union. Numerous articles and research on the life and work of prominent individuals were published [6].

Among the publications: «On the Public Path» by I. Pavlykovska, «Educator of Generations» by Konstantyna Malyska, monograph «Olena Zalizniak», «Kholmshchyna and Podlasie», bilingual edition of «Ukrainian Folk Clothing», «Hunger through My Eyes», «Black Pain of Chernobyl», «From East to East» and many others. Financial committees in the United States and Canada work to obtain funds.

Archival documents show that for Ukrainian women abroad, the year 1975 was extremely busy with various activities aimed at defending Ukrainian political prisoners. This year was proclaimed by the UN as the International Year of Women, and in this regard, women's organizations abroad conducted a large-scale human rights campaign [7, p. 292].

On the pages of the WFUWO's publication «Ukrainian Woman in the World», part 2 (46) of April 1975, it was announced that in September 1975 the Day of the Political Prisoner of War would be held in order to achieve amnesty for Ukrainian women repressed by the Soviet government. The program of the

event included a demonstration involving members of many women's organizations. It was also planned to collect signatures in defense of women political prisoners and draw up petitions to be submitted to the Human Rights Commission of the Ukrainian World Congress and later to the UN [7, p. 292].

Ukrainian women's organizations in South America also joined human rights activities. For example, the Central State Archives of Ukrainian Studies Abroad has a letter from the Ukrainian Women's Organization «Renaissance» in Argentina, headed by Halyna Zinko, to the UWA dated September 28, 1976 (Buenos Aires). According to the document, the organization held a Women's Heroine Day celebration dedicated to women political prisoners. They sent the amount of \$25 to the Ukrainian Golden Cross [7].

The document of another organization, the Ukrainian Women's Union of America, namely the report on work for December 1974-July 1978, also informs about women's activities in this area. At the World Conference of the International Year of Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, representatives of the UNWLA addressed the world community with statements about Ukrainian political prisoners.

Publicizing the problem of persecution and human rights violations by the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union was an effective tool for Ukrainian women abroad. The UNWLA report identified the dissemination of information about Ukraine's problems as one of the organization's priorities.

The document emphasizes: «In order to spread the truth, one must know it, and in this direction the UNWLA acts through cultural and educational references, through its magazine OUR LIFE, exhibitions, meetings, and contacts. There was a very good opportunity for this - the celebration of the 200th anniversary of America in 1976, in which our organization joined and, through its diverse participation, brought the news of our culture and art to all corners of America» [8, p. 101-102].

It should be noted that members of the Ukrainian Golden Cross represented Ukrainian women at the International Conference of the Women's Decade as part of the WFUWO delegation. Detailed information about the mission of the WFUWO delegation in Denmark is contained in the article «Ukrainian women in Copenhagen» by Natalia Pazuniak, which is stored in the Central State Archives as an appendix to the CSAFAU letter of October 1, 1980, addressed to the President of the Ukrainian World Congress Mykola Plavyuk [9].

The article was supposed to be published in the UWC Bulletin. The document states that in addition to members of the WFUWO, patriotic human rights activists Nina Strokata-Karavanska and Nadiya Svitlychna, who had emigrated to the United States, joined the preparation of participation in the Conference. The former prepared material on the health and hygiene of women political prisoners in the Soviet Union. The second worked on the topic of working conditions for women prisoners [10].

In addition, the article clarifies the issue of WFUWO representation at the Conference. According to the document, the delegation was represented by the following Ukrainian women's organizations: Ukrainian Women's Union of America, Ukrainian Golden Cross, Women's Union for the Defense of the Four Freedoms of Ukraine (USA); Women's Union of the Ukrainian Liberation League (Canada); Association of Ukrainian Women in Germany, Union of Ukrainian Women of France, Organization of Ukrainian Women in the UK, O. Teliga Society in England [7, p. 295]. Such a broad representation allowed Ukrainian delegates to present to the international community «the life of a woman of an enslaved nation.»

The constituent organizations of the WFUWO work in various areas: social, religious, cultural, educational, emigration, and humanitarian. The WFUWO reflects the activities of local Ukrainian communities around the world and represents them in the international arena at the United Nations (UN). In 1990, WFUWO was accredited by the United Nations Department of Public Information (UN-DPI), in 1993, consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC) and in 1997, membership in the Committee on UNICEF (NGO Committee on UNICEF). The main task of the WFUWO is to defend the dignity and human rights of women in Ukraine and in the diaspora based on international principles.

The WFUWO makes every effort to preserve the Ukrainian language, culture, and identity, to strengthen knowledge of Ukrainian history and social tradition, and to support the development of a stable democratic, law-based system in an independent Ukraine.

The main task of the WFUWO is to uphold the dignity and human rights of women in Ukraine and in the diaspora based on international principles. The WFUWO makes every effort to preserve the Ukrainian language, culture, and identity, to strengthen knowledge of Ukrainian history and social tradition, and to support the development of a stable democratic, law-based system in an independent Ukraine.

Today, the main office of the WFUWO is located in Toronto, Canada, where other global NGOs have offices. The WFUWO has spread its wings on five continents of the globe in 25 organizations. Each of them is governed by its own charter, in accordance with the requirements of the country in question. Their goals and attention are primarily focused on the Motherland.

Conclusions. It should be emphasized that Ukrainian women abroad saw one of the important tasks of their activities as protecting the rights of persecuted and political prisoners in Soviet Ukraine. In order to achieve their goal, the Board of the World Federation of Ukrainian Organizations set the following objectives: to inform the world community about the existing resistance movement in Ukraine and the crimes of the Soviet government against Ukrainians; to express solidarity with the activities of dissidents; to provide financial and material assistance to political prisoners and their families.

The realization of these tasks became possible through the participation of Ukrainian women in international conferences, preparation of exhibitions on this topic, organization of demonstrations, and fundraising, which later bought food and daily necessities for political prisoners and their families. It would have been difficult for individual women's organizations to convince the international community and confront the communist regime, so it was only by uniting that the Ukrainian women's movement was able to conduct human rights and representational activities.

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