

THE THIRD WORLD CONGRESS OF FREE UKRAINIANS AS A COMPONENT OF STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE UKRAINIAN NATION

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Summary

The article examines the preparation and proceedings of the Third World Congress of Free Ukrainians (WCFU). The author highlights the key challenges faced by the organizers of this event, including a lack of funds and a decline in interest. Furthermore, the article analyzes the influence of international factors on the activities of the WCFU, particularly the processes of decolonization and the increased focus on human rights and freedoms in the 1970s. As a result of these developments, representatives of the Ukrainian, Belarusian, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian World Congresses jointly drafted a “Memorandum on Decolonization of the USSR” and submitted it for consideration by the United Nations (UN). To conclude the Congress, a demonstration titled “Defending the Rights of Ukraine – For the Decolonization of the USSR” was organized.

The article highlights key achievements of the Commission on Human Rights of the WCFU, including the defense of the rights of political prisoners such as Valentyn Moroz, Leonid Plyushch, Mykola Rudenko, Oleksiy Tykhyi, Lev Lukianenko and others. The Commission also participated in conferences under the auspices of the UN in honor of the International Women's Year in Mexico in 1975 and Habitat Conference in Vancouver in 1976. Moreover, the article examines the reaction of the Soviet press to the Third WCFU and identifies the main *clichés* of Soviet propaganda used to describe this event.

Key words: Ukrainian diaspora, Commission on Human Rights, campaign on the decolonization of the USSR, memorandum, demonstration.

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1. Introduction

The WCFU was an coordinating organization within the Ukrainian diaspora in the West, consolidating it despite differences among various political groups. Since 1993, the organization has continued to function under the modified name of the World Congress of Ukrainians (WCU) and has supported the Ukrainian people both within Ukraine and beyond its borders. Among the key achievements of this organization are the preservation of the identity of Ukrainian expatriates and the historical memory of key events in Ukrainian history, drawing the attention of influential political structures to violations of the rights of the Ukrainian people in the USSR, and aiding in the restoration of Ukraine's independence. Examining the successful experience of this organization, with the possibility of borrowing from it by contemporary Ukrainian civil and political institutions, shapes the *relevance* of the research.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the exploration, using various sources, including archival documents from Fund 429 of the Central State Archive of Public Organizations, memoirs, and interviews with participants of the WCFU, as well as diaspora and Soviet press.

Various research methods are employed in the article, including theoretical analysis, induction, deduction, generalization, historicism and comparison.

2. Preparation for convening the Third World Congress of Free Ukrainians

The Presidium of the Secretariat began preparations for convening the Third World Congress of Free Ukrainians on June 15, 1977, by sending a questionnaire to the Leaders of Ukrainian Churches, members of the Presidium and the Plenum of the Secretariat, and member-organizations of the WCFU (*Veryha, 1988*) about the duration, location, slogan, character, delegates, the topic of the plenary sessions of the upcoming event. From July 1977 to November 1978, responses with completed questionnaires, comments, and wishes for the future event were received. The Presidium of the Secretariat conducted the XII Plenary Session and broader meetings on November 12–13, 1977, and December 17, 1977, based on which a Press Release was published on January 23, 1978. In this document, the announcement was made regarding the holding of the Third WCFU during November 23–November 26, 1978, in New York, USA (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.5*), and the conditions for the delegation of representatives by various organizations.

To prepare for the Congress, a Preparatory Committee was established, headed by Father Vasyl Kushnir and assisted by Yosyp Lysogor and Ignat Bilynskiy (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.5*). This committee consisted of various commissions: the Program Commission (chaired by Mykola Kushpeta), the Organizational Commission (chaired by I. Bilynskiy), the Statute Commission (chaired by Ivanna Rozhankivska), the Financial Commission (chaired by Bohdan Hnatyuk), the Nominations Commission (chaired by Leonid Fil), the Church-Religious Commission (chaired by Father Myroslav Kharyna), the Verification Commission (chaired by Vasyl Kyryliuk), the Registration Commission (chaired by Ivan Bazarko), the Manifestation Commission (chaired by Yevhen Ivashkiv), the Banquet Commission (chaired by Ivan Vynnyk), the Resolution Commission (chaired by Stefaniya Savchuk), and the Press-Information Commission (chaired by Vasyl Solonyuka and Borys Potapenko). It is worth noting that the Committee was located in New York, while the Secretariat of the WCFU was in Toronto, which resulted in the scattering and later loss of documents related to the Third Congress. This posed significant challenges in compiling materials for future reference (*Veryha, 1988*).

The First Meetings of the Preparatory Committee took place on February 25 and March 19, 1978, in New York. Initially, they determined the event's location, which was the "Americana" Hotel in New York, and the registration fee for delegates, set at \$50. Traditionally, the Congresses were dedicated to significant events in Ukrainian history, so the Third Congress was dedicated to marking the 60th anniversary of the Ukrainian statehood. I. Bilynskiy was tasked with preparing a joint appeal of all Ukrainian political organizations on this occasion. They also planned to conduct a political manifestation in support of Ukraine's freedom and the decolonization of the Soviet Union in front of the UN building and a Ukrainian song festival at Carnegie Hall, featuring choirs "Homyn" from the UK, "Dumka" from the USA, and "Burlaky" from Canada (later replaced by the choir "Vesnivka" from Canada) (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.8*). As we can see, WCFU members continued their efforts to consolidate Ukrainian expatriates and demonstrate to the world that the result of Ukraine's self-determination was the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR), and the Soviet regime was an occupation.

The next meetings of the Preparatory Committee were held on April 8 and June 10, 1978, in Toronto. During these meetings, the chairpersons of the Preparatory Committee's subcommittees were instructed to establish contact with the Financial Committee by June 24 to create

a budget in preparation for fundraising for the WCFU (*Veryha, 1988*). They were also tasked with sending invitations to the leaders of all political centers, and the head of the Statute Commission, Y. Mastyash, presented a project with changes to the composition of the WCFU's leadership bodies. At the same time, I. Bilynskyi reported on the refusal of certain Ukrainian political organizations to sign a declaration on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian statehood (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.8*). As we can see, the issue of discord within the Ukrainian diaspora was still unresolved.

WCFU President V. Kushnir expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of organizing the Third Congress in a letter to the Presidium and heads of the Preparatory Committee's commissions dated June 28, 1978. He requested that clarifications be made to the Congress program and that its budget be established as soon as possible. Additionally, he called for the coordination of the delegate and speaker lists (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.5*). Partial progress towards these goals was made during the Preparatory Committee's meeting on July 22, 1978, in New York. Firstly, the participants of the meeting introduced changes to the program of the Third WCFU, which was scheduled to host congresses and conferences of interregional member organizations of the WFCU, as well as its Councils and Commissions before its official opening. The Congress program also included reports from the leadership bodies of the WCFU from the last term, the election of new leadership, amendments to the Statute, approval of the WCFU's budget, and the "In Defense of Ukraine's Rights and the Oppressed Peoples Enslaved by Moscow – for the Decolonization of the Soviet Union" campaign (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.5*).

On September 15, 1978, the Presidium of the Secretariat of the WCFU issued a Press Release addressed to "To Ukrainians in the Free World", in which they called on the Ukrainian diaspora to unite under the banner of the Third WCFU with the slogan "In Defense of Ukraine's Rights and the Decolonization of the Soviet Union" (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.5*). "This will be a grand manifestation of our community in the free world, an expression of Unity, Will, and Determination to continue the struggle for an Independent, Sovereign, United Ukraine, for the Right of a person to be free from fear, deprivation, and persecution for national, religious, and political beliefs, which the oppressed by the Moscow-Bolshevik occupier Ukrainian people in Ukraine endure" (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.5, p.208*) – thus defining the nature of the upcoming Congress and urging contributions to form a budget of \$100,000.

In the printed periodical of the founding organization of the WCFU, known as the Ukrainian Liberation League (a socio-political and cultural-educational organization with ideological affiliations to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists led by Stepan Bandera (OUN-B)), titled "Homin Ukraine", an article was published five months prior to the Congress. This article was dedicated to the impending event, and within it, the author advocated for increased transparency regarding the forthcoming proceedings. Specifically, the proposal included an early disclosure of the WCFU's presidential candidates and providing the public with comprehensive biographical information about them. (*TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.7*). On the pages of the "Svoboda" newspaper, Yaroslav Haivas, a member of the OUN-B, also emphasized the insufficient coverage of the preparations for the upcoming event. Furthermore, he proposed to reintroduce the principle of rotating the leadership of the WCFU (*Haivas, 1978*). However, these proposals were not considered at the joint meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the Presidium of the Secretariat of the WCFU on September 23, 1978, in Toronto. On October 31, 1978, the President of the UCCA and the Registration Commission of the Preparatory Committee, I. Bazarko, submitted a report to the Presidium of the WCFU. He reported on the gradual completion of preparations for the convening the Congress and emphasized the need for media coverage about the future event.

As we can see, during the preparation of the Third Congress, organizers faced declining interest from the public and the media in the event, as well as a lack of funds. The former can be explained by the fact that in the 1970s, the Ukrainian diaspora had focused on the struggle for human rights and the rights of the Ukrainian nation in the USSR. This was seen as a modified form of the struggle for the revival of Ukraine's state independence (Neduzhko, 2008). Consequently, the attention of the media and the public was primarily directed towards human rights activities.

Secondly, Ukrainian diaspora members expected the fulfillment of the declared mission in the statute of the WCFU: "...to provide all possible assistance to the Ukrainian people in their struggle for freedom and state independence; to strive for the realization of the rights of the Ukrainian people in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; to coordinate the activities of its members in accordance with the resolutions and resolutions of the First and subsequent Congresses; to preserve Ukrainian national identity and pass on the Ukrainian language, culture, and traditions from generation to generation" (Didiuk, 1986:349). Christyna Isajiw, a member of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) of the WCFU, gave the following assessment of the prospects for implementing these provisions: "The realization of such noble goals would have exhausted the resources of any state administration, much larger than our organization, and the stated goal of resisting no less than the Soviet empire with modest financial and human resources was idealistic at best" (Isaiv, 2016:54). Consequently, societal expectations were not met, and interest waned.

The implementation of the WCFU's tasks was hindered by the lack of a sufficient number of professional workers. As recalled by C. Isajiw, working in Ukrainian community organizations was unpaid. Because of this, only a small number of qualified individuals were willing and able to engage in this work, while at the same time, leadership and the community opposed the need to transition to a professional level of personnel recruitment (Isaiv, 2016). Her words were corroborated by Mykola Plaviuk, the Deputy President of the WCFU, in an interview just before the opening of the Congress, where he proposed finding a stronger financial base for financing the WCFU and attracting as many professional workers as possible (TSADAHOU, f.429, op.1, d.7).

In addition to the observance of human rights and freedoms, since the 1960s, the global community has been actively concerned with the process of decolonization. On December 14, 1960, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 1514 (XV) on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and in 1961, to implement its provisions, it established the Special Committee on Decolonization of the UN (Pavlichenko, 2017). Representatives of the Ukrainian, Belarusian, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Latvian World Congresses decided to use this opportunity. For two years, the WCFU's Secretary-General, Yuriy Shymko, coordinated the cooperation of these organizations to create a joint "Memorandum on Decolonization of the Soviet Union". On November 21, 1978, through the mediation of the Canadian mission to the UN, newly elected Canadian Federal Parliament deputy Yuri Shymko handed this document to the President of the UN General Assembly, Indalecio Lievano, and the WCFU's UN bureau distributed it to each delegation of UN member countries (Shymko, 2017).

In the document, the signatory organizations called on the UN, in accordance with the provisions of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, to promote the creation of a separate Russian state on its ethnic lands, and on the territory of the 14 non-Russian Soviet republics – sovereign independent states (Veryha, 1988). As Yuri Shymko recalled: "With the exception of my first trip to Ukraine a few days after Independence

was declared, I consider that my greatest personal and public achievement took place at the end of my term as Secretary-General of the WCFU' (Shymko, 2017). Considering that Ukrainians were officially represented on the international stage by delegations from the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR, we consider this action an important step in drawing attention to the plight of our people in the Homeland and beyond. In addition, the New York authorities demonstrated their support for the Ukrainian cause by declaring November 22 as "Ukrainian Week" in the city (Svododa, 1978).

On the eve of the Congress's opening, meetings of the Congress Commissions were held, each of which prepared resolutions. Given the political context at the time, the conferences of the HRC garnered the most interest, which took place on November 22–23, 1978, in three sessions: the first session included reports from 19 delegates, the second discussed the state of human rights in the Ukrainian SSR during 1975–1978 (e.g., the presentation by Prof. Kostyantyn Savchuk on "The Soviet interpretation of international human rights norms and their application in law, jurisprudence, and administrative practice"), and the third discussed future plans (Siromskyi, 2020). A particular feature of these meetings was the presence of dissidents such as Leonid Plyushch, General Petro Hryhorenko, Viktor Borovskiy, and Nadia Svitlychna (Svododa, 1978), which significantly increased interest in the event.

3. The course of the Third World Congress of Ukrainian

The Third World Congress of Free Ukrainians opened at 2:00 p.m. on November 23, 1978, with an ecumenical prayer at the Americana Hotel in New York, USA. This prayer involved representatives from Ukrainian churches in the diaspora, all delegates, and event guests. It's worth noting that initially, the religious service was planned to take place at St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral in New York. However, both the Ukrainian Catholic Church (*Patriarchate*, 1978) and the Orthodox Church vehemently rejected this location, citing the negative stance of Cardinal and Archbishop Terence Cooke of New York regarding the Ukrainian national issue (*TSA-DAHOU*, f.429, op.1, d.6).

The First Plenary Session commenced on November 23 at 4:00 p.m. with solemnities that included the performance of the American and Ukrainian anthems and a prayer: "for our brothers and sisters who are in exile, in prisons, and those enduring hard labor, punishment, and torment" (Veryha, 1988:39), recited by Metropolitan Mstyslav Skrypnyk of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. After this, Fr. V. Kushnir, the President of the WCFU, officially opened the Third World Congress of Free Ukrainians.

A separate address on behalf of the Presidium of the Secretariat of the WCFU, delivered by M. Kushpeta, marked the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian statehood: "Armed with the experience passed down to us by the creators of the State Acts of the 1920s, armed with the experience of the past 60 years of our National Struggle for a Free Ukrainian State, armed with the experience of the previous two World Congresses of Free Ukrainians—inspired by the thought, united by the will and heart of the Ukrainian people in Ukraine and beyond, let us heed the words and the demand of our best sons and daughters: Let us be united! For only in the united, purposeful action and struggle of the entire Ukrainian people is the realization of the ideal of our own sovereign state possible" (Veryha, 1988:43). Despite the calls and appeals to the past, representatives from all Ukrainian political backgrounds did not sign this document, indicating divisions among the Ukrainian diaspora.

The Second Plenary Session, dedicated to the reports of the Presidium of the Secretariat and the Control Commission of the WCFU, began on the morning of November 24

(*Veryha, 1988*). M. Plavyuk was the first to deliver the presentation on behalf of the Presidium of the WCFU. Between 1973 and 1978, there were 87 narrow and 12 wide meetings-conferences of the Presidium and five plenary sessions of the Secretariat of the WCFU. The speaker highlighted the following achievements: the arrangement of the list of member-groups after including new participants in the Second World Congress of Free Ukrainians; visits by representatives of the governing bodies of the WCFU to Ukrainian communities in cities in Canada and the United States, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Spain, and Venezuela; the use of "Radio Vaticana" and "Radio Liberty" to transmit information to the Ukrainian SSR; the publication of six appeals to Ukrainians in the free world to commemorate the anniversaries of the deaths of Roman Shukhevych and Symon Petliura, the 60th anniversary of Ukrainian statehood, the tenth anniversary of the WCFU, and appeals from the HRC; the establishment of the Information Service of the WCFU, which issued 36 communiqués in Ukrainian and English for the press and launched the "WCFU Bulletin" in 1974 (*Krasnodemska, 2015*).

The report also emphasized the human rights activities carried out by the HRC, led by Senator Paul Yuzyk. One of the major accomplishments was the establishment of a separate bureau in New York for contacts with the United Nations in 1975, under the leadership of Andriy Semotiuk and later B. Potapenko. They succeeded in accrediting the Information Service of the WCFU with the Department of Public Information of the UN. That year, they prepared a press release regarding the situation of dissidents imprisoned in the Ukrainian SSR and sent it to English-language periodicals (*Siromskyi, 2020*). The Commission was also involved in the defense of the rights of specific political prisoners such as Valentyn Moroz, L. Plyushch, Mykola Rudenko, Oleksiy Tykhyi, Lev Lukianenko, and others. Members of the WCFU participated in conferences under the auspices of the UN in honor of the International Women's Year in Mexico in 1975 (*Isaiv, 2016*) and the Habitat (housing and sustainable urban development) conference in Vancouver in 1976.

The World Coordination Educational Council (WCEDC), led by Edward Zharskyi and later Theophile Minenko, convened the Pedagogical Conference in Detroit in April 1975. The conference had about 100 educators from Canada and the USA in attendance, and its materials were distributed to all regional representations of Ukrainians. During this event, the Pedagogical Center of the WCEDC was established under the leadership of Roman Drazhnovskyi. It was Roman Drazhnovskyi's initiative that led to teacher conferences in Leicester and Munich in the summer of 1977. In our opinion, this focus on education was entirely correct, as it was educators who were nurturing the new generation in the Ukrainian spirit beyond their homeland.

The financial situation of the WCFU was presented to the delegates by the treasurer of the Presidium, Franko Martyniuk, and the chairman of the Control Commission, Ivan Vynnyk. The budget deficit amounted to 8.47%, and the activities of the governing bodies were being financed by funds raised at the Second Congress (*Veryha, 1988*). Ivan Vynnyk proposed reevaluating membership dues, conducting collections for the WCFU in all Ukrainian diaspora countries, and involving experts in the Secretariat who could dedicate more time to current work.

According to the program, the next event was a luncheon, which was dedicated to honoring Ukrainian parliamentarians. In his speech, Executive Director of the UCC, Yaroslav Kalba, summarized that over the 90 years of Ukrainians living in Canada, 120 of them had been elected to parliament, and as of 1978, there were 38 Members of Parliament of Ukrainian origin, constituting 5% of the total number (*Veryha, 1988*). As we can see, Ukrainians successfully integrated into Canadian society and became full-fledged citizens of the country. At the same time, they recognized their affiliation with the Ukrainian people and actively

advocated for the idea of an independent democratic Ukrainian state (*Neduzhko, 2008*), utilizing their positions.

After lunch, the discussion on the reports of the Third Plenary Session began. Firstly, some delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the presentation of reports in English at the Congress. In response, M. Plaviuk raised the issue of the inadequate level or complete lack of proficiency in the Ukrainian language among the younger generation of the diaspora, indicating a gradual assimilation. Furthermore, the Youth Commission of the last term did not function. Secondly, when comparing the functioning of the governing bodies of the WCFU during the first and second terms, focusing on rotation and the presence of a permanent center, they concluded that the last model was more productive and should be further utilized. Thirdly, they discussed the non-implementation of the resolution of the Second Congress regarding the creation of the WCFU Fund due to tax nuances within the UCC and UCCA, which accounted for the largest share of contributions (*Veryha, 1988*). We assume that this became one of the reasons for the constant lack of funds for the operation of the WCFU.

Following that, the subsequent individuals delivered presentations on the following subjects: B. Potapenko – “Our Assistance to the Liberation Struggle of the Ukrainian People”, General Hryhorenko – “The Liberation Struggle and the Ukrainian Diaspora”, Omelian Kovch – “The Issue of Involving Ukrainian Youth in Ukrainian Civil Life”, and Iryna Pelenka – “Defending the Ukrainian Child”. The morning of Saturday, November 25th, began with the Fifth Plenary Session, opened by M. Plaviuk with a presentation titled “The WCFU's Action in Light of the Needs of the Ukrainian Community in the Free World”. In his speech, he outlined his vision for the organization's activities in the upcoming term. Plaviuk proposed the creation of a separate commission within the WCFU to assist Ukrainian dissidents and suggested including the most prominent among them in its composition (*Veryha, 1988*). He also called for the active engagement of young Ukrainian professionals in leadership positions, active participation in international events to draw attention to the Ukrainian cause, resistance to Soviet propaganda, and continued cooperation with other Congresses.

At the end of the report, to support such activities, a budget of approximately \$800,000 to \$850,000 was proposed. The topic of finances was further developed by Omelyan Pleshkevich in his presentation titled “Economics – the Foundation of the Ukrainian Diaspora”. He emphasized that the lack of financial resources often became an obstacle to the implementation of various plans. To improve the state of the Ukrainian economy in the diaspora, he proposed the establishment of reference offices within the WCFU and regional centers to coordinate existing financial institutions and create new ones (*Veryha, 1988*).

Later, a panel on “Challenges for Ukrainian Science” was held, featuring prominent scientists from the Ukrainian diaspora at that time. They concluded that it was necessary to develop Ukrainian scientific studies and debunk Soviet historical myths. The final official part of this day was the Sixth Plenary Session. It began with the presentation of reports by the Commissions, which had met the previous day before the Congress opening, and the transmission of their resolutions to the Resolution Commission. The Chairman of the Finance Commission put the preliminary budget for 1979, totaling \$125,000, to a vote, with regional centers responsible for funding it (*Veryha, 1988*). Despite calls to change the formation of the WCFU's financial fund, these suggestions were not implemented.

Following this, a congress banquet took place in the hotel's grand hall with the participation of 1,200 individuals. Canada's Minister of Multiculturalism Norman Cafik delivered a speech, in which he emphasized on the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe signed in Helsinki in 1975 by the governments of European countries,

Canada, and the United States. This document elicited mixed reactions; particularly, Ukrainian and Baltic diaspora representations in North America interpreted it as legitimizing the division of Europe and Soviet domination in its eastern part. Canadian historian James Eayrs and former Prime Minister of Canada John G. Diefenbaker argued that it favored the Soviet side (Siromskyyi, 2020). However, N. Cafik stressed the Act's key advantage: "...for the first time, it allowed the governments of free countries to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. Since the USSR signed this act, we have gained the right to speak on behalf of oppressed people in that part of the world..." (Veryha, 1988:207). He also assured continued support from the Canadian government for defending the rights and freedoms of people worldwide.

The final official component of the Congress was the Seventh Plenary Session on Sunday, November 26, 1978, during which the composition of the WCFU's leadership for the upcoming term was presented, focusing on the Canadian branch. The position of president was divided into two parts; initially, it was held by M. Plaviuk, with I. Bazarko serving as the first deputy president, and in the second half, the roles were reversed (Veryha, 1988). Vasyl Bezhlivnyk was elected as the General Secretary, and Frank Martyniuk was re-elected as treasurer.

The organizers of the Third WCFU continued the tradition of concluding the congress with a demonstration outside the Soviet consulate in New York, under the slogan for this year, "In Defense of Ukraine's Rights and the Enslaved Peoples of Moscow – For the Decolonization of the USSR". Approximately 5,000 people participated in the protest, and speeches were delivered by dissidents L. Plyushch, P. Hryhorenko, N. Svitlychna, and Lithuanian Simas Kudirka, the personal representative of New York City Mayor Herbert Rickman, Vitaut Kipel, Janis Rikstins, and Paul Saar, representing the Belarusian, Latvian, and Estonian World Congresses, respectively (Veryha, 1988). During the protest, participants chanted anti-Soviet slogans, sang Ukrainian songs, and burned Soviet flags. The demonstration eventually escalated into clashes between protesters and the police. According to the leading U.S. newspaper "The New York Times", this was provoked by a group of youths who threw firecrackers and eggs at the Soviet embassy building and the police officers (Dionne, 1978). In contrast, Ukrainian organizations in the U.S. submitted a protocol to the New York City authorities and the police department regarding the unlawful actions of the latter towards the protesters (Veryha, 1988).

The Third WCFU held in the USSR caused considerable concern. In the Soviet press, both before and after the Congress, there were publications of an offensive and discriminatory nature about this event. The attacks began on November 21, 1978, with a publication by poet Mykola Podolian in "Literaturna Ukrayina", in which the author referred to participants of the Congress as "SKVUlyants" (This word in Ukrainian sounds similar to "speculators") (Podolian, 1978). On November 29, Ivan Drach published a poem titled "The White Horse" in "Radyanska Ukrayina", in which he metaphorically associated its participants with Nazis and discredited the organization's purpose (Drach, 1978). Even the humorous publication "Perets" did not refrain from mocking this event. Participants of the WCFU were called a "bunch of sellouts" who, for the money of anti-Soviet forces, spread slander against the USSR, accompanied by caricatured depictions of them as dogs crawling before their imperialist masters (Bilkun, 1978).

On January 6, 1979, the Moscow newspaper "Pravda" accused the United States of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, including the USSR, by supporting: "...a gathering of five hundred sworn enemies of the Soviet Union under the banner of some so-called world congress of anti-Soviet emigrant organizations". They did not spare epithets for certain leaders of the WCFU: "...Vasyl Kushnir, who even before the war was known for his close ties with Hitler's supporters in Canada", "...Omelyan Koval, who, on the orders of the CIA, recruits agents to work against the USSR; Ignat Bilinsky, the protege of Bandera's fascist executioner during

the war; Lev Dobriansky, a professional intelligence officer...” (Zhukov, 1979). In March 1979, in the magazine "Vsesvit," Vitaliy Cherednychenko traced the genesis of the WCFU, linking it to “European fascism of the 1930s” (Cherednychenko, 1979). This publication demonstrated the Soviet government's good knowledge of the history and current state of Ukrainian political emigration. At the same time, due to the increasing political influence of Ukrainian emigrants abroad and their active struggle for the rights of their people in the USSR, as well as the penetration of information about this beyond the “Iron Curtain”, it prompted the Soviet press to create a negative image of the Ukrainian diaspora. The main *clichés* used by Soviet journalists to describe the WCFU included accusations of collaboration with the Nazis, spreading slander against the USSR, and working for American intelligence agencies for financial reward.

4. Conclusions

Therefore, the convening of the Third World Congress of Free Ukrainians marked a significant milestone in the history of Ukrainian emigration. Firstly, scattered across many countries worldwide, Ukrainians representing various political centers gathered to create a unified vision for the development of the Ukrainian cause. Secondly, the Congress re-elected the leadership of the WCFU, formulated its budget, and outlined its plan of activities for the next term. Thus, the hierarchical structure of Ukrainian overseas organizations continued to function and fulfill its tasks, namely preserving national identity, advocating for the rights of Ukrainians in the USSR, and working towards the revival of Ukrainian independence. Thirdly, the WCFU, as a representative body of the Ukrainian people, had already gained a certain authority within the international community and effectively lobbied for their interests.

Within the framework of the Congress, two significant events occurred that resonated globally. The first was the decolonization initiative of the five World Congresses of oppressed nations in the USSR and the presentation of a joint memorandum to the United Nations. The second was the demonstration “In Defense of the Rights of Ukraine and the Enslaved Nations of Moscow – for the Decolonization of the Soviet Union”. The success of the Third WCFU is also confirmed by the reaction of the Soviet government, which organized campaigns of harassment against the organization and its most active members in its media.

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