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**HAPPY NEW YEAR —
3 НОВИМ РОКОМ!**

The National Executive Committee of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians extends best wishes for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2018 to all members and friends of the AUUC and readers and supporters of *The Ukrainian Canadian Herald!*

AUUC National Committee Meets

The National Committee of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians met in Winnipeg on the weekend of December 9 and 10, setting an ambitious path into 2018 and beyond.

The first order of business, following a moment of silence for departed members and routines like adoption of the agenda and a number of housekeeping items, was consideration of a brief "President's Report" presented by AUUC National President Bob Seychuk.

In his report, Mr. Seychuk touched on some financial matters, the issue of archives, a request from the Canadian Society for Ukrainian Labour

Research (CSULR), properties the AUUC owns in Toronto, reactivating the National Grants Committee, and a couple of questions related to arrangements for National Committee meetings.

The "Treasurer's Report" followed the report from the National Audit Committee, in which the NAC expressed its satisfaction that the national accounts were in order. The NAC paid particular tribute to Sharon Dentry for her work.

A number of financial topics were subsumed under the report by National Treasurer Kathy Schubert. Among them was a request that the AUUC assume responsibility for the WBA Scholarship Award Fund. The National Committee agreed to do so, and also agreed that part of the fund would be spent to finance seminars for youth on AUUC history, to be held in each in-

terested AUUC Branch.

The NC also accepted the proposal from the National Executive Committee that taxes (where applicable) and insurance on AUUC properties be paid centrally, subject to the Branches meeting certain conditions.

The annual review of salaries and bonuses was conducted, and an agreement reached.

Consideration of the "Treasurer's Report" having been completed, attention turned to the "National Office Report", also presented by Kathy Schubert.

The National Committee was pleased to approve several membership applications received from Ottawa and Edmonton AUUC Branches.

A less-happy action was the dissolution of AUUC Vegreville Branch, after noti-

(Continued on Page 6.)

Trade Dispute Continues

As we go to press, the dispute between Bombardier and Boeing was days away from being heard by the US International Trade Commission with a final ruling expected in January, 2018. The ITC, a quasi-judicial body, heard arguments on whether American industry was harmed by Bombardier's sale of C Series jets at what Boeing calls an unfairly low price to Delta Air Lines.

Boeing has accused Bombardier of dumping its mar-quee jets on the US market at below market prices and taking unfair subsidies from the Canadian and Quebec governments.

Boeing won the first round in its fight with Bombardier over the C Series jets, when the US Commerce Department sided with Boeing in a preliminary ruling in October

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The Next Issue

The next issue of the "UCH" will be dated February, 2018. Announcements of events in February or early March, 2018, as well as articles for the February, 2018, issue should be in our office by January 10. Thank you for your consideration.

Lethal Arms for Ukraine

It was a long struggle, but Ukraine is finally going to be given access to lethal weapons by Canada and the USA.

ABC News reported on November 17, that President Donald Trump will be presented with the recommendation to finance and sell anti-tank missiles to the Ukrainian government, a move aimed at deterring aggression from pro-Russian separatists, a State Department official told ABC News.

(The "pro-Russian separatists" are actually fighting on their own territory in defence of their own positions.)

The National Security Council decided during a meeting to approve the presentation of a \$47 million grant package to the Ukrainian government to purchase American defence arms, including the powerful Javelin antitank missiles.

Such a sale must have both presidential and Congressional approval.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defence Secretary Gen. James Mattis were in discussions since June about how to best make the sale. The State Department official added that, in the upcoming weeks, there will be a meeting to discuss the public messaging on the sale to make it palatable to the American people.

On November 27, the Atlantic Council chimed in, with an article by Stephen Blank, Senior fellow at the American foreign Policy Council. The article referred to the possibility of the \$47 million grant, and mentioned that it had now been approved by the National

Security Council.

Apparently Congress gave President Trump the choice whether the weapons would be sold or given to Ukraine.

The article said that, "This means that the full institutional weight of the US government, with the exception of the president, recommends the transfer of these weapons to Kyiv."

Mr. Blank appears to agree with the analysis that Russia will not try to match the escalation, because the resulting spiral would be too expensive.

The conclusion of the article, "Ukraine is fighting our fight against a common aggressor and showing our understanding of this situation by finally giving it the weapons to defend itself makes eminent sense," is full of questionable asserted assumptions.

On December 11, the Ukrainian Canadian Committee

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National Inquiry Saga Continues

The storm continues to swirl around the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as it continues its work.

As hundreds of families and individuals populate the waiting list to appear before the commission, some sections of the Indigenous population continue, one year into the commission's work, to call for a "reset" of the commission by a replacement of Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and, perhaps, the other commissioners as well.

A prominent voice among the critics of the commissioners has been that of Sheila North Wilson, reported by the *Winnipeg Free Press* (WFP) on December 8, 2017, as "the grand chief of an organization of First Nations in northern Manitoba". Ms. North Wilson, who says that she would support the inquiry "if a new plan was put forward", also has ideas about how the commission should be formed.

Until fairly recently, other forces in the community have resisted calling for a "reset", recognizing that such a step would set the process back

substantially — and perhaps kill it.

At a special meeting of chiefs hosted by the Assembly of First Nations, a resolution was passed calling for the replacement of Chief Commissioner Buller by "a process of full engagement with Indigenous survivors and families".

According to the "WFP" Chief Commissioner Buller addressed that meeting, and was met by "families who were loudly crying during the chief commissioner's remarks".

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde said that it was up to the federal government to decide which way to go. He also said that he takes his direction from the chiefs who make up the Assembly. He also said "We support improving things because nothing is ever perfect." At the end of July, 2017, the AFN had declined to pass a similar motion, though it did pass a motion calling for a change in the commission's process and mandate.

As of December 8, it was reported, Minister of Crown-

Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett had not responded to the calls to replace the chief commissioner, but that could change if enough pressure is applied.

In the meantime, the stresses are having an effect on the commission itself. A report by Jorge Barrera on the CBC website, posted on November 21 and updated on November 22 said that, "Another lawyer for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has resigned.

"Iqaluit lawyer Joseph Murdoch-Flowers sent a short email to reporters on Tuesday morning saying he was no longer with the inquiry."

Mr. Murdoch-Flowers was the third lawyer to leave the inquiry in a two-month period.

"The departure of Murdoch-Flowers," the report said, "raised the number of people who have either resigned, quit or have been laid off to at least 22."

The report noted that Mr. Murdoch-Flowers was the eighth departure following the appointment of Debbie Reid as executive director to replace former executive director Michèle Moreau.

Ms. Reid, the report noted, "is a former adviser to former Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine".

On October 12, a little over a week after she was named to her position, Ms. Reid reportedly "sent an email to all staff telling them their top priority was to protect the commissioners from 'criticism or surprises.'"

According to the CBC report, "Three fired staffers... went public with criticism of the inquiry saying they faced a toxic, high-pressure work environment with long hours and little support."

That might sound merely like the result of the conditions created by a very tight schedule and difficult conditions imposed on the inquiry. However, it appears that a toxic atmosphere may be resulting, at least in part, from Debbie Reid's zealous efforts to protect the commissioners. However, it should not be forgotten that the resignations and firings started before Ms. Reid was appointed.

Perhaps Ms. North Wilson will not achieve her aim to "reset" the inquiry; the question is whether she, and the commission's other critics, will be just as happy to have the commission crumble from within as staff flee the pressure.

In the meantime, it seems that Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and the other commissioners intend to tough it out in pursuit of their schedule of meetings with hundreds of families and individuals on the waiting list.

No doubt much more drama not related to the missing and murdered victims is to come.

Freedom Road

In its December 10, 2017, issue, the *Winnipeg Free Press* carried a report by Alexandra Paul which began, "Freedom Road is on track to open in 2019 and Winnipeggers who pushed for it want to keep it that way."

The report was about a meeting of church and environmental groups at the city's Thunderbird House to hear Chief Erwin Redsky of Shoal Lake 40 talk about the construction of Freedom Road and when it will be ready for use.

More than 100 people gathered in the Circle of Life Thunderbird House.

Chief Redsky's report was positive: Shoal Lake 40 First Nation completed the first nine-kilometre stretch of road through reserve land under budget and six weeks early. The province was due to start construction during the winter on the rest of the road, and take a year to complete it.

The off-reserve portion of the road will be built over crown land.

Shoal Lake 40 became an artificial island cut off from the mainland in 1917, when Winnipeg's aqueduct was created. The reserve sits on Indiati Bay in Shoal Lake, which is the source of Winnipeg's drinking water. Ironically, the community has no access to clean drinking water, and has been under a boil water advisory for 20 years.

Freedom Road, an 23.4-kilometre all-weather access

road, will connect the community to the Trans-Canada Highway, allowing the First Nation an opportunity to start improving its living standards. Of course, water treatment and a sewage plant are highest priority.

The commitment to fund the construction, at a projected cost of \$30 million, was made by all three levels of government in 2015. The agreement to build the road dates back to 1989.

"The road is expected to move forward on schedule despite the fact the province will spend a little less on infrastructure projects next year," the "WFP" reported.

Freedom Road is widely seen in Winnipeg as an act of reconciliation for the community in return for water.

Indigenous activist Alma Kakikepinace said. "Got water? Thank Shoal Lake 40."

The forum expected to hear from a curator from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The museum and the city's universities are working with Shoal Lake 40, chronicling the community's experience with human rights violations and the best strategies to restore them.

In the last couple of years, Shoal Lake 40 has become an open-air classroom to teach non-Indigenous Canadians about living conditions on the country's First Nations.

Chief Redsky called the grassroots support "humbling".

"We've had so much support from Winnipeg, including school-age children writing the prime minister and the other ministers...."

Back to Grassy Narrows

At the end of November, it was reported, Chief Simon Fobister, Bill Fobister and other leaders from Grassy Narrows and Whitedog were in Toronto, once again, to ask federal and provincial officials to build a home for victims of mercury poisoning close to their home.

This was no abstract mission for the community leaders. Bill Fobister himself has Minimata disease, and needs a walker to get around. He has a granddaughter, Betty, 25 years old, who is unable to speak and has to use a wheelchair. His cousin, former Chief Steve Fobister, was recently in a Kenora hospital.

Because there are no local facilities for her, Betty lives with foster-parents in Fort Francis, 280 kilometres from her family. Bill, Betty, and ex-Chief Fobister are just three of the many victims of the mercury poisoning of the English-Wabigoon River system.

On November 28, federal Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott, apparently, was still seeking more information, and the federal government had already committed to a feasibility study for a care home.

The delegation from Northern Ontario had a proposal for a \$4.5 million facility to house eight people, with a range of facilities, services and equipment required by these victims

of Canada's crimes against humanity.

("Crimes against humanity" was the term used by University of Toronto Professor Stephen Beded Scharper and lawyer Annamaria Enenajor in a *Toronto Star* article on November 23, 2017. They specifically cited persecution and forcible displacement.)

On November 30, it was announced that the federal government has pledged to help develop, plan, design and construct a treatment centre in Grassy Narrows, based on the plan which the delegation had presented. Though no firm date was set, there was a possibility that construction could begin in summer.

The centre will provide palliative care, physiotherapy, counselling, and traditional healing.

Minister of Indigenous Services Philpott said that a community health assessment survey would be done, to determine additional needs. In fact, such an epidemiological study was already being conducted by Dr. Donna Mergler, a researcher from the University of Quebec in Montreal, and others.

Minister Philpott also expressed a commitment to provide mental health services, programs for at-risk youth, and for children with learning disabilities.

Indian Act Amended

In his opinion piece in the *Toronto Star* on December 6, 2017, Tim Harper discussed an amendment to the Indian Act that he said finally eradicated sexism embedded in the law for 148 years.

Since 1869, Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men lost their status, along with the benefits of that status and their ability to pass status to their children. An Indigenous man who married a non-Indigenous woman not only maintained his status, but was able to pass that status to his spouse and children.

In response to a 2015 court ruling that determined that sexism had not been eradicated despite previous governmental tweaks, the Senate insisted on an amendment that essentially extends eligibility to anyone with First Nations ancestry.

Rather than looking like a supporter of sexism in the Indian Act, the government decided to support the amendment, which passed in the House of Commons on De-

ember 4.

Implementing the amendment could cost \$407 million annually, compared to the annual cost of \$55 million of the government's more modest proposal.

What is not known is how many of the eligible people will claim their birthright. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that 670,450 more persons would be eligible to register as Status Indians under these amendments, and about 40% of those eligible will register.

Others, like Robert-Falcon Ouellette, the Liberal MP for Winnipeg Centre who helped push for the Senate amendments, believes it will be closer to 60%.

Some will not apply because their Indigenous heritage is too distant, some because they hate the Indian Act, and some because they will not know that they are eligible.

In the 2016 census, 1,525,570 persons identified as

(Continued on Page 7.)

Current Eclectic

Attack on Nord Stream 2

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reported that a US diplomat has dismissed the idea that the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline will ever be built. In a telephone briefing to European journalists on November 29, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John McCarrick said that US officials don't see the possibility that Nord Stream 2 can be built.

The main reason? "We are against this."

Earlier in 2017, the United States introduced sanctions calling for penalties against European companies that participate in the Nord Stream 2 and other Russian energy projects in Europe.

Several EU members in Central and Eastern Europe have expressed concern that the project would strengthen

Moscow's hand by increasing European reliance on Russian natural gas.

At the end of November, Denmark passed a law to allow it to ban Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from going through its waters on grounds of security or foreign policy. Previously, these were not valid grounds for objection.

Russia's Gazprom and its European partners sought to build Nord Stream 2 to Germany through the Baltic Sea, bypassing existing land routes over Ukraine, Poland and Belarus, in a route that goes through Danish waters.

However, the pipeline consortium is investigating an alternative route which would run in international waters, running north of the Danish island Bornholm, and therefore

not be impacted by a potential Danish ban.

The US argues that Nord Stream 2 and a multi-line Turkish Stream would reinforce Russian dominance in Europe's gas markets, reducing opportunities for diversification of energy sources.

Clearly the USA hopes to create a clear field for its own companies. It also hopes to give Ukraine control over Russia's access to European markets — "that's a particular concern of ours", according to the US diplomat.

It is exactly to remove Ukraine's power to turn off Europe's taps that Gazprom and its partners are looking for alternative routes — even if it would economically undermine Ukraine by depriving it of about \$2 billion in annual transit revenue, 6% of the country's entire budget revenue.

The USA wants Germany, among others, to risk its own energy security to subsidize central European states like Slovakia and Ukraine.

Cheating on Bread

Often in little ways, and sometimes in spectacular fashion, we are reminded why businesses in a capitalist economy have to be regulated. And the bigger they are, the more tightly they have to be controlled.

The scandal in the food industry revealed by Loblaw Cos. Ltd. and George Weston LTD, both of which have Galen G. Weston, one of the richest men in Canada as their CEO, is a glaring example.

Though fixing the price of bread industry-wide, because those companies blew the whistle, their executives will not be charged.

Wait to see whether anyone else faces a judge or jury,

but do not hold your breath.

They have their \$25.00 gift certificate plan all ready to go, but who knows whether that comes close to covering what they stole?

Nor is this the first time that food chains have broken the law in search of profit. There was the scandal some time back when nitrates were added to meat to hide their deterioration, and it sounds like fish and seafood are regularly misrepresented to pose as their higher-priced kin.

Such shenanigans are hard to detect, and harder to prosecute. And the culprits are pillars of the community with deep pockets for their defence.

Trump's National Security Strategy

In mid-December, President Trump unveiled a 68-page document outlining his national security strategy. Our exposure to it was through Thomas Walkom's article in the *Toronto Star*.

The publication was intended to set out the security challenges facing the USA, as the president sees them, and how he means to tackle them.

Surprisingly (or perhaps not) the document reflects one Republican view, but not always President Trump's expressed positions.

President Trump's view that the USA has fallen behind is reflected, as is his explanation that the reason is that his predecessors allowed other countries to take advantage of the USA.

Though the Cold War is over, nevertheless America still faces rivals.

Donald Trump's favourite targets during the election campaign were Iran and China — the document adds Russia and North Korea (AKA as the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea). The document consistently treats Iran and the DPRK as rogue states, which must be treated harshly.

However China and Russia pose a greater danger, greater even than terrorism, according to the document, because they threaten US hegemony globally.

But all four are involved in "fundamental contests between those who value human dignity and freedom and those who oppress individuals and enforce unanimity."

This language is reminiscent of the Cold War, and is not usually the way President Trump talks about Russia and China.

In fact, President Trump has been known to actively praise both President Vladimir

Putin and President Xi Jinping.

His conflict with China is based more in economics than politics. Furthermore, while President Trump's cabinet regularly criticizes Russian intentions in eastern Europe, he himself usually does not.

The document does reflect President Trump's economic themes. It denies that he is a protectionist ready to destroy the global system of international economic institutions. However, it does say that those institutions were "distorted and undermined" by expanding the liberal trading system to countries that "did not share our values", a thinly disguised reference to China.

Completely absent in the document is candidate Donald Trump's promise to stay out of unnecessary military adventures. On the contrary, the document says that, in light of the dog-eat-dog nature of foreign relations, America must be willing to confront China and Russia everywhere.

The threat of China and Russia is that they want to shape a world antithetical to US values and interests," according to the document.

While President Trump has resisted accepting the charges by his own intelligence agencies that Russia interfered in the 2016 US presidential election, the document flatly accuses "actors such as Russia" of using "information tools in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of democracies" and otherwise interfere in the domestic politics of "countries around the world." (Which, of course the USA does not do. Not even against its allies.)

The document is probably of little importance to President Trump's behaviour. However, it will probably be a guide to staff in their day-to-day activity.

Some Economic facts

Economists are still wringing their hands over the growing levels of household debt in Canada. For example, at the end of November, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) warned that Canadians are vulnerable. Canadians outpace their cousins in other developed countries when it comes to the various ways of borrowing money.

We're above 400% as a measure of household debt to GDP. In the measured language of economists, the OEDC warns, "Empirical evidence suggests that rapid growth in household debt is typically associated with negative economic out-comes such as severe recessions."

As long as we have a growing "precariate" and downward pressure on earnings, Canadians will continue, to go deeper into debt.

When it comes to shopping sprees, like the annual boxing day, the ultimate winner is not the consumer, but the retailer desperate to push its sales numbers into the black in the all-important fourth-quarter, thus meeting targeted revenue numbers, and pleasing Wall Street or Bay Street.

That's the government's conundrum: too much household debt is bad, stopping its growth is also bad, from a macroeconomic viewpoint.

Not all the news is bad. At the beginning of December a headline screamed "Canada sees trade deficit shrink in October". Statistics Canada reported that Canada's merchandise trade deficit narrowed more than expected, to \$1.5 billion in October as exports improved for the first time since May. Exports increased 2.7% as imports fell 1.6% for the month, shrinking

the country's trade deficit compared with the \$3.4-billion shortfall in September.

"Looking ahead, exports should manage to gain some traction, supported by a healthy US economy and a Canadian dollar hovering around the 80 US cent mark," said TD Bank economist Dina Ignjatovic.

Economists were also happy that "A wave of job creation last month knocked the unemployment rate down to 5.9 per cent— its lowest level in nearly a decade", as Andy Blatchford wrote in the *Toronto Star* on December 2.

There were 79,500 net new jobs created in November, during the 12th straight month of positive job creation.

Unfortunately, the mix was still 29,600 full-time jobs compared to 49,900 part-time positions in November.

Oh, and the economy grew at an annual pace of 17% in the third quarter.

warned Boeing it could lose UK defence contracts. British Prime Minister Theresa May has said she was bitterly disappointed by the tariffs, which threaten about 1,000 jobs in Northern Ireland.

British Ambassador Kim Darroch said that the company's complaint isn't consistent with US trade law, or international agreements the US has signed.

The ITC decision is critical to Bombardier's medium-term profitability as it prepares to deliver the planes to Delta in April, 2016. The No. 2 US airline ordered 75 of Bombardier's CS100 jets. The order has a list value of \$5.6 billion

(US) before customary discounts.

Bombardier hasn't disclosed Delta's price, nor has it revealed its unit costs. Losing the case would make other US carriers hesitant about buying the C Series and could potentially prompt Delta to drop its order.

The ITC process runs parallel to the one run by Commerce and will decide if the tariffs become permanent.

Bombardier, a crown jewel of Canadian manufacturing, has billed itself as a major US employer in the run-up to the ITC hearing. It employs about 7,000 people in 17 American states.

Trade Dispute

(Continued from Page 1.) and ordered tariffs of about 300 per cent, a penalty Delta has vowed not to pay.

Canadian Ambassador to the USA David MacNaughton said that a decision in Boeing's favour would put US jobs in jeopardy.

The case has bruised US relations with Canada and the UK. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cancelled an order for Boeing fighter jets in retaliation.

The British government has

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN

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not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board.**DPRK in the Sights**

AN EDITORIAL by WILFRED SZCZESNY

On December 19, Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland met US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for a half day, following which they were joined by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. One of the major announcements following that gathering was that Canada and the USA would jointly host a meeting in Vancouver on January 16 of the countries (not including China) that were involved in the Korean War in the early 1950s, as well as a few additional countries, like Japan. Half of Korea is invited; half is not.

The proclaimed purpose of the meeting is to turn up the pressure on North Korea (apparently there is no such entity as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) to "force it to the negotiating table to give up its nuclear ambitions". (Quotations are from the *Toronto Star* report on December 20.)

Ms. Freeland seems to think that the added pressure will lead to "diplomatic engagement and a 'real conversation'". To me, that seems delusional.

The DPRK has been pressing for diplomatic negotiations since 1954, hoping to reach a peace treaty to end the war. The United States, which entered the war to buttress a dictatorial regime that had little popular support and whose army was deserting in droves, has had no intention, in all that time, to negotiate anything.

The DPRK has few ambitions other than survival against an increasingly threatening enemy in an increasingly hostile world. In over 60 years, the DPRK has seen no trace of American interest in a peaceful settlement. All the current sabre-rattling is hardly likely to suggest to the DPRK that a peaceful solution with national security is at hand.

Why would the government of Canada, or anyone else, for that matter, imagine that gathering together, for a new council of war, all the countries that joined the attack at the start of the 1950s will cause the DPRK to throw up its arms in surrender?

The plan hatched by the USA and Canada looks like the very definition of madness. It is far more likely to spur the DPRK to greater arms development efforts than it is to lead to peaceful disarmament.

This seems to me to be so self-evident that I suspect the hawkish Chrystia Freeland and her American counterpart to be more interested in regime change in the DPRK, whatever that might take, than they are in coming to the table for a diplomatic solution.

COMMENTARY**Favouring the Rich**

For several years, I have been pointing out to people that "The richer the banks get, the poorer the rest of us get." The banks, of course, stood for the corporate world; the rest of us stood for — well, the rest of us.

If my audience seemed disposed to listen, I would point out that, not so long ago, the five major banks combined cleared less than a total of \$1 billion annually. Today, they average more than a billion dollars each — quarterly.

During that same time, all the social services we could happily afford, in those days when banks were pressing for legislation to allow them to be "more competitive", have become socially "unaffordable".

Rather than being expanded to include areas like dentistry and drugs, many health services have been privatized.

Hospitals have cut back, with rationalisation often making treatment unavailable or exceedingly inconvenient. Hospital beds have been closed, leaving rooms empty while patients lie on gurneys in hallways.

Guaranteed benefit pensions, negotiated in a trade-off against other benefits have become unaffordable, and have arbitrarily been replaced by guaranteed contribution options.

Unemployment insurance, designed to provide a safety net against income losses caused by job losses, has become employment insurance, with reduced benefits and far more difficult to access.

Infrastructure maintenance has become unaffordable, unless managed with the added cost of a private-for-profit corporation. Roads, bridges, and buildings deteriorate to the brink of collapse (and sometimes, actually, to the point of collapse) before being upgraded.

Education is unaffordable. Supplies that used to be provided are increasingly the responsibility of pupils and their

parents, or supplied out of the pockets of concerned teachers. Resources like libraries or music programs, where they still exist, are under increasing pressure from underfunding and under-staffing. Tuition fees skyrocket, while students' earning opportunities plummet.

Add it all up, and the rich are getting richer faster, the poor drown as household debt climbs to dizzying record heights, and the middle class is chewed up by precarious employment and inflated user-pay economics.

"A rising tide lifts all boats" was revealed as a fraud.

All of that was just my sense, unsupported by any hard evidence; just a rant by a radical.

Until it wasn't.

There were hints earlier: occasional voices from the 1% saying, "We don't need more tax cuts — we need more help for the poor"; occasional comments by Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that, if current trends continue, we could be headed for trouble; other expressions of concern about the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots.

It really did not amount to a hill of beans.

Now, however, there is more than a feeling and a rant, more than expressions of concern. Now there is a study conducted by the *Toronto Star* and *Corporate Knights*, reported in the December 15 issue of the "Star", brief and stark, titled "The high cost of low corporate taxes".

In large type on Page 1, the report points out that 1952 was the last year in which personal and corporate income taxes were equal. By 2016, the personal amount paid was \$145 billion, while the corporate income tax contribution to the Canadian budget was a mere \$41 billion, far less than a third as much. The opening sentence of the article says, "For every dollar

corporations pay to the Canadian government in income tax, people pay \$3.50."

This study reveals, partially and in the matter of income taxes at least, the extent to which rapacious corporations, abetted by compliant Canadian governments, have feasted on the country's increasing wealth while starving the rest of society.

It gives the lie to all the apologists for the corporate elites who insisted that feeding the corporate welfare bums (as an NDP politician once called them) would nourish us all.

The report in the *Toronto Star* supports our list of shortcomings produced by the shortfall in corporate income taxes, what they call the "corporate income tax gap" (the difference between what the corporations owed, on the basis of official tax rates multiplied by pre-tax profits, and the amount they actually paid).

Referring to public infrastructure, the report contrasts the building of Canada's first subway line (along Yonge Street in Toronto) between 1949 and 1954, with the "years of slim budgets and inadequate maintenance", culminating in the "mass breakdown of air conditioning on the subway during the summer of 2016, so that "a quarter of subway cars on line 2 were 'hot cars' with internal temperatures over 32 degrees".

Another example of infrastructure neglect is cited: the Gardiner Expressway, built between 1955 and 1966, and so neglected in the last decade that falling chunks of concrete have damaged cars.

On the matter of health, the report points out that, in 1952, there were 1,233 hospitals in Canada, with 146,032 beds. In 2015, there were only 719 hospitals, with 93,595 beds. (The newspaper report assumes that you know of the growth in Canada's population in the interim, and are aware that alternatives to hospital care have not been adequately developed.)

On housing, the report notes that the government introduced the Public Housing Program in 1949, leading to "a
(Continued on Page 5.)

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Favouring the Rich

(Continued from Page 4.) tenfold increase in social housing in the 1960s, when more than 20,000 units were built each year". Now, in Toronto alone, public housing has a \$2.6 billion backlog in repair expenditures "and foresees closing over 7,500 units over the next five years".

The federal government has recently announced plans to spend \$11.2 billion to create 100,000 new housing units and to repair another 300,000. The finer print says over ten years for all of Canada.

This plan is projected to address only 50% of chronic homelessness and the urgent housing needs of 530,000 vulnerable families and individuals. It is also merely a promise, subject to any number of limiting factors. In addition, there is nothing to ensure that the new housing units, should they ever be built, will actually benefit those who need them most — the most recent projects have been mixes of subsidized and market units, guaranteeing profits for developers, but inadequately providing for the homeless or underhoused.

In terms of incomes, the report says that average

wages in 1952 were a 9% increase over the previous year, but 2016 average wages were only a 0.3% increase from a year earlier.

The study by the *Toronto Star* and *Corporate Knights* found that the amount of taxes paid by large corporations has dropped as a proportion of their pre-tax profit.

Part of the reason for that is reductions in the corporate tax rate, but much is also due to "complex techniques and tax loopholes" which result in taxes well below the official corporate tax rate.

The average tax paid by Canadian corporations worth more than \$2 billion (that is, the largest ones) in 2011 to 2016 was 17.7%. The average official corporate tax rate for that group of companies in that period was 26.6%.

The difference, almost 9%, represents billions of dollars that could have been spent on service "we all rely on".

The *Star* mentions, as these corporations always stress, that the "accounting manoeuvres Canadian corporations perform to reduce their tax bills are legal". However, the newspaper also notes that "complex reporting rules make

it difficult to determine if a company is actually paying its fair share of taxes". In other words, any cheaters will be hard to find.

An interesting note in the report is, "At a time when stocks and corporate profits are near record highs, Ottawa has targeted small private corporations, expecting to recoup an estimated \$250 million in tax revenues by closing loopholes.

"If it instead closed all the loopholes used by large corporations, it could collect 40 times more than that". In an average year, the 102 biggest companies in Canada pay \$10.5 billion less in taxes than they would at the official rate.

To me, that says, "more of the same." Revenue Canada is merciless in hounding ordinary people for their tax arrears, and gets laxer as it goes up the scale. At the top, deals can be cut, and at the very top shortfalls can be forgiven, especially for corporation that are "too big to fail" or those that can threaten to move their operations elsewhere, tossing thousands of people in Canada out of work.

So, let's go back to banks, my stand-in for the corporate sector. The report notes that the banking sector is the most profitable, and is also the sector that pays the lowest taxes.

According to the *Toronto Star* report, "Last year, Canada's Big Five banks — BMO, CIBC, RBC, Scotiabank, and TD — occupied the top five slots on Report on Business magazine's Top 1000 ranking of the country's most profitable companies. Collectively, they booked \$44.1 billion in pre-tax profit. (Their just-reported 2017 profits were even higher.)"

That year, they avoided \$5.5 billion in tax.

While these banks have been racking up record profits every year in the last six years for a total increase of 60%, their tax rate has dropped by almost the same amount.

In 2015, according to the report, the tax rate paid by banks was a third of the rate paid by all other businesses. Canadian banks also pay taxes at lower rates than banks in other countries, including the lowest in the G7 countries.

Though most of their revenues is generated in Canada, the big banks reported to investors that "international operations" saved them \$6.5 billion in the last six years.

They all have subsidiaries in tax havens (including Barbados, Cayman Islands, Ireland, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and Luxembourg), where tax rates range from 0% to a maximum 19%.

Some have tiny offices but report massive profits. The TD bank, for example, has an office in Ireland with two employees, which is valued at \$1

billion.

These tax havens all have a Tax Information Exchange Agreement with Canada. These tax treaties allow corporations to declare their profits in low-tax jurisdictions offshore, and they transfer the income to Canada tax-free.

While the official line is that the treaties were intended to prevent double taxation of corporate profits, such agreement with countries with 0% tax rates (like the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas and Bermuda) clearly point to tax evasion collusion between Canada and this country's corporations.

"Collusion" doesn't have to mean any kind of shady negotiations. It could be nothing more than the Mulroneys and the Trudeau's and others like them and their friends just looking after their families' and (like Donald Trump) their investors' best interests. Blind trusts and all that nonsense really do not change the overall picture.

Among all the tax breaks available to Canadian corporations is the provision that "dividends paid by foreign subsidiaries to their Canadian parent companies are tax free".

"Tax-exempt income" was an \$8.6 billion tax gift to Canada's Big Five banks in the years 2011-2016.

This tax break was a deliberate government policy to encourage Canadian corporations to invest abroad. This improves Canada's international balance of payments accounts; it also puts this country squarely in the camp of imperialist super-exploiters of labour in countries where child labour, and sweat shops housed in fire traps with locked doors, are the norm.

The significance is vividly revealed in the images of Canadian gunboats off the coasts of South American and Asian countries to support the interests of Canadian mining companies against local populations fighting for their human rights and their families' welfare.

The *Toronto Star* and *Corporate Knights* addressed the Big Five banks with their findings. The banks referred them to the Canadian Bankers Association. The CBA came back with all the general public relations smog about the benefits to all Canadians of a profitable, stable banking system.

The CBA tried to divert the investigation by referring to the additional taxes paid by the banks, but it was pointed out that everybody pays additional taxes.

The CBA also pointed to the banks' contribution to community organizations. This elicited the information that, in the last six years, the total donations by the Big Five banks amounted to less than a tenth of what they avoided

in taxes. (The report did not say whether the donations were tax deductible.)

As a wag once said, "Philanthropy is when the rich give back publicly a little bit of what they stole privately."

The CBA also argues that most Canadians own bank stock, either directly or indirectly (through pension funds, etc.) However, "more than 80 per cent of Canadian stocks are owned (both directly and indirectly...) by foreigners and Canada's wealthiest households.

"People's capitalism" is a myth created to protect the multimillionaires and billionaires from the proverbial little old lady who owns a few shares of Bell Canada.

Other myths have also been created to gain support for lower corporate taxes.

One is that higher corporate taxes reduce investment. However, the report says that drastic corporate income tax rate cuts in the last twenty years have not stimulated new investment.

Rates were cut from 43% in 1997 to 26.7% in 2016 (and remember, these are merely nominal rates, which the large corporations do not pay). Nevertheless investment in machinery, equipment and intellectual property, as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, is still below 1997 levels.

What the tax-rate cuts have produced is large cash reserves, corporate share buy-backs, huge increases in executive compensation packages, and much increased merger activity (meaning more concentration in the economy and reduced competition).

Sadly, the discussion of corporate income tax payments as a source of problems in the public accounts and governmental budgets is just one part of official beneficence to the corporations. It doesn't take into account the grants corporations get for various purposes like technical innovations, the breaks they get as communities vie for their factories and offices, and the benefits they get from arrangements like Private-Public Partnerships.

A table analysing the situation, called "How 10 companies avoided \$41 billion in taxes from 2011 to 2016", included responses by the companies involved. Most of the companies said that: the measure used (the tax gap, as defined above) was not a good measure; they pay a lot of tax; they pay taxes in the jurisdictions where they invest (meaning the tax havens); they donate to the community.

Still, the fundamental truth remains: the richer the banks get, the poorer the rest of us get.

— Wilfred Szczesny

Five Big Banks 2018 Record Profits

Canada's five biggest banks have published their financial statements for 2018. As expected, each reached new profit records.

In terms of gross revenue reported, the largest was the Royal Bank of Canada, with income of \$40.7 billion. After deducting expenses, the bank had a net income, before income taxes, of \$11.5 billion, a bit over one billion more than last year, an increase of about 10%. Equity was \$74.4 billion. Return on equity was reported at 17%, compared to 16.3% last year. (How much did they pay you on your accounts?)

The RBC was added to the list of 30 Global Systemically Important Banks for 2017.

Toronto Dominion was next in line, with revenues of \$36.1 billion. This bank's net income this year was \$10.5 billion, compared to \$8.9 billion last year. The 2017 return on equity at TD was 14%, down slightly from 2016. Equity (which means assets minus liabilities, or net worth of the company) was reported at \$75.2 billion.

Scotiabank was third, with gross revenue reported at about \$27.2 billion, compared to 26.4 last year. Its net revenue was \$8.2 billion (up from \$7.4 billion), providing a 14.6% return on equity, compared to 13.8% last year. Eq-

uity was up to \$55.5 billion, compared to \$52.7 a year earlier.

BMO was fourth with gross revenues of \$22.3 billion. Net income at the Bank of Montreal was 5.4 billion, compared to \$4.6 billion last year. With equity reported at \$44.4 billion, the return on investment was 13.3%, compared to 12.1% last year.

Closing the list was CIBC, with revenues of \$16.3 billion and net income of \$4.7 billion (up from \$4.3 billion). The return on equity was 18.3% (compared to 19.9% in 2016) at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, a continuing decline.

If return on equity is taken as the measure of efficiency, CIBC, with 18.3%, was at the top, followed fairly closely by RBC at 17%. Scotiabank (14.6%), TD (14%) and BMO (13.3%), performing in that order, will be working hard to catch the leaders. Look for changes in tax shelters, closed branches in Canada, reduced staffing, and increased fees.

Of course the leaders will not be sitting on their laurels; they, too, will take the measures to "increase efficiency". There is no reason to believe that Canada's big banks will not continue to be excellent investments for years into the future.

Harvest Luncheon at AUUC Toronto

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 19, 2017, the AUUC Toronto Branch held a Harvest Luncheon at the AUUC Cultural Centre to celebrate the autumn season.

On entering the hall, the guests were welcomed by a splash of seasonal colours that adorned the white tablecloth dining arrangements: hand-made napkin rings of festive fall leaves, an assortment of red, yellow and orange serviettes with bouquets of burgundy, yellow and green fresh cut flowers as centrepieces.

The 33 participants began the event with a Remembrance Day tribute, in which Jerry Dobrowolsky read aloud

the names of all AUUC Toronto Branch war veterans, while the music and lyrics of "The Strangest Dream" played softly in the background. A moment of silence concluded the service.

The deliciously hot meal included shepherds pie, chicken penne alfredo, a medley of autumn root vegetables, coleslaw, and a broccoli salad. And of course, the food was accompanied by the choice of either a red or white soothing beverage.

After the dessert offerings of apple strudel, Nanaimo bars, butterscotch squares, a cheese platter and coffee, the guests were engaged in a



Fall colours greeted the 33 participants in the Harvest Luncheon at the AUUC Cultural Centre in Toronto on November 19.

number of activities: a 50/50 draw, a raffle for embroidered items by Natalka Mochoruk and a final draw for the eight fresh flower centrepieces.

While some were content to linger and enjoy the friendly conversation around the tables, a substantial number of guests retired to the bar lounge where the CFL Eastern Conference Final between the Toronto Argonauts and the Saskatchewan Roughriders was showing on the wide-screen television. The Argos won that game to many cheers, and well, hey... the rest is history!

Another attraction that drew much attention was the large photo album display of past Toronto Branch events at the hall and at Camp Palermo. Many spontaneous expressions of laughter and reminiscence could be heard from this display table.

All in all, the day was a great success, with everyone particularly enjoying the harvest of treasured friendships.

— Bernardine Dobrowolsky



An opportunity to chat with friends was enhanced by a delicious hot meal, with a soothing beverage and a variety of desserts.



Sports fans had an opportunity to watch the Canadian Football League Eastern Conference Final, in which the Toronto Argonauts defeated the Saskatchewan Roughriders.



Jerry Dobrowolsky's large photo-album display of past AUUC Toronto Branch events at the hall and at Camp Palermo evoked many spontaneous expressions of laughter and reminiscence.

National Committee

(Continued from Page 1.) fication that membership had dropped below the required number of members. It is expected that some continuing Branch members will apply to transfer to AUUC Edmonton Branch.

The National Committee also agreed to print the revised Constitution in a pocket-sized format, to be distributed through the Branches.

As required by the federal law governing corporations, the National Committee members re-elected the Board of Directors to another annual term.

The National Committee received a delegation from the CSULR, composed of Lillian Stearns, Brent Stearns, Lucy Nykolyshyn and Rhonda. After hearing a presentation by Ms. Stearns, focusing mainly on urgent archiving issues, the National Committee decided to research sending archives to public institutions, to enable the NEC to form an archival committee with the CSULR, and that the committee pro-

vide guidance on archiving to AUUC Branch Presidents.

Dianna Kleparchuk presented a report from the National Performing Arts Committee, and the NC decided to take the recommendations under advisement.

The National Grants Committee made its report. The National Committee approved the proposed forms, commended the committee (Emily Halldorson, Glenn Michalchuk and Kathy Schubert) on their work, and approved September 30 and March 31 as intake dates for grant applications.

Eugene Semanowich presented a progress report on setting up a web site.

Bob Seychuk reported on developments in the work of the Lands Development Committee. Among other decisions, the NC mandated the continuation of the LDC as an oversight body as long as necessary.

Following a discussion, the National Committee made several decisions pertaining to the

Ukrainian Canadian Herald.

The celebration of the centennial of the AUUC was considered, and some plans by Branches were reviewed. Decisions concerning souvenirs and give-aways were made, with time lines attached.

With the Annual General Meeting of the Taras H. Shevchenko Museum and Memorial Park Foundation looming, and several items of interest to the AUUC expected on the agenda, the National Committee discussed the AUUC position on this institution at some length.

In light of the growing international threat of war, and in keeping with the traditions of the AUUC, the National Committee instructed the National Executive Committee to negotiate a return to membership in the Canadian Peace Congress.

The National Committee decided in its closing minutes that it should meet more than annually. The next meeting is expected to be in May or June, 2018, depending on members' schedules.

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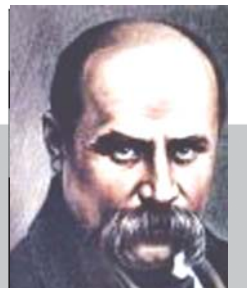
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Indian Act

(Continued from Page 2.)
 having First Nations ancestry. That number can't be explained by natural growth. It is a product of more Canadians self-identifying as Indigenous, or as Senator

Ouellette, who is from the Red Pheasant First Nation in Saskatchewan said, "Today, it's popular to be Indigenous."

Tim Harper wrote about "financial incentives". He listed \$18,433 annually, government spending on education, health care, and income assistance, and a tax exemp-

tion for income earned on reserve." However, government spending on reserves is below off-reserve levels, and the other "incentives" are also less than attractive.

It was just at the end of November that Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services, dropped a judicial review of a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal finding that it was discriminating against Indigenous children.

The government is supporting New Democrat Romeo Saganash's private member's bill that would fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That could ultimately have an impact on energy projects and other aspects of life in Canada.

Consultations with Indigenous leaders are still in the offing, due to begin early in 2018, but with no deadline, and no commitment other than to listen to all voices.

There is another side to this coin — the story of Christopher Fragnito and his mother, cold-shouldered off the Kahnawake Mohawk reserve across the St. Lawrence River when his mother married an Italian man. They

are part of a 16-member group challenging a membership rule that enforces "marry out, move" against mixed couples.

Amending the Indian Act may undercut part of the discrimination against mixed couples based on the old law, but it will not change the attitudes based on scarcity of land and concern about maintaining community identity.

The Indian Act is only part of the problem.

**Best Wishes for
the New Year!**

*The AUUC Ottawa Branch
sends
Warmest Greetings and
Best Wishes
to all
AUUC members and
supporters
for a Happy and Peaceful
2018!*

Apology

We apologise to
AUUC Ottawa Branch
for our error in the last
issue of the "UCH".

**PEACE AND HAPPINESS
IN 2018!**

Mary
Eugene & Sharon
Kathy & Wilf & Family
Susan
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IVAN FRANKO MANOR

200 McGregor Street
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Extends Best Wishes
To All Its Tenants
and
AUUC Members for a



HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR

**To all friends and supporters
of the AUUC —**

*May 2018
bring you
good health,
happiness, and
prosperity!*

AUUC Toronto Branch

**Canadian Society
for
Ukrainian Labour
Research**

A HAPPY 2018 TO ALL

*May the New Year
bring
Peace, Happiness and Joy
to all our friends.*

Olga and Myron Shatulsky

Happy New Year!

To the members of the AUUC, and
their cultural forces, supporters, and friends
across Canada, United States and Ukraine.
We wish all
good fortune, health and happiness
in the New Year!

**AUUC Regina Branch
Poltava Ensemble of Song, Music and Dance**

FROST

("MOROZ")

A STORY FROM THE PAST

By STEPAN VASYLCHENKO

It happened a long time ago, perhaps only our very old bearded grandfathers would remember: there were heavy frosts.

There were heavy frosts, the white snow covered the earth...

The village was preparing for the holiday.

Like a fiery porcupine, its golden bristles standing an-

grily on end, the sun was sinking behind the snows. Against its fiery rays rose the smoke from the chimneys: weaving, turning over, hurrying by leaps and bounds into the clear blue sky, itself clear, rosy-grey, blue, as if painted.

This was above, but below...

It sang beneath one's feet, crackled below the sleighs as if someone was throwing

handfuls of pistons beneath the sledges; like tinkling bells rose the sound of children's laughter as they sped downhill on their sleds, looking for all the world like little stuffed scarecrows. White strings of gleaming beads hung from the branches of the trees on fluffy cords. A white mist rose in spirals over people, over horses, over every living thing. The people, wrapped up against the cold weren't walking — they hurried along at a run, as if to a fire, rubbing their burning ears from time to time. Instead of stopping with greetings they called out, "What a frost!" or "This is a frost — with eyes!", as they sped past each other. A grey, gloomy forest stood beyond the meadow, and above it, from that land where darkness comes, hung the dark heavy mist of an advancing snow storm, while highwayman frost peered greedily out from among the trees awaiting nightfall. "Soon, soon... Once the sun goes down, I'll come out to partake of some of your wheat and honey *kutya!*"

That little cottage in the forest is no more, the one whose walls were pocked with bullet holes, nor is the forester there. Only the forest remains.

All day long the forester's cottage was filled with a rosy-golden dimness, its windows bound with frost. As night approached the frost horned into its warmth even more pugnaciously.

A nest of hay lay in the corner. In the nest — a pot of wheat and honey and another of stewed fruit. On a bench alongside sat two children — a boy and a girl. They are alone in the cottage.

The day was ending — evening was approaching. Pulling their shirts down over their knees to keep warm, the two were blowing bright circles into the frosted window with their warm breath and called out repeatedly:

"Frost-frost, come visit our home to partake of our *kutya* with honey and don't please, freeze our wheat!"*

"Frost-frost..."

At last a stamping of feet was heard. In the hallway, the frost-covered door burst open and a voice emerged out of the whirl of vapor that plunged into the room:

"Coming, coming," it announced. "I've long prepared



to make this visit!"

He wore a long fur-lined coat, under it a blue cossack shirt, a black fur hat with a red top covered his head, and in his belt glittered a silver pistol.

Ah' Just look at what their calls brought in!

But only their shirts could be heard rustling from the oven bed*

"Now children, why are you frightened? I'm that frost that you have been inviting in for a meal of *kutya* and honey." The voice was human and friendly.

They stuck, their heads out from behind the chimney timidly.

He spoke again:

"Where are your parents, children — your father and mother?"

They looked at each other. He wasn't at all frightening, then answered politely: here and there.

Then more confidently:

"Did you come because we were calling you?" "Exactly. That's why I'm here."

"You are frost?"

"Frost."

The children whispered a moment to each other, then ventured playfully:

"Then you won't freeze our wheat in the ground this winter?" asked the boy.

Frost laughed:

"If you give me some wheat and honey I won't."

Then the little girl:

"And you won't strangle us?" quickly from behind the chimney, breath awaiting the answer.

"No, children, I don't strangle anyone like you."

He sat down on the bench, joking, and trying to get the children down from the oven bed with a gift offering.

It grew darker.

Finally, the father came in:

"Who is this you're speaking with?" he asked. The children hopped down from their perch, grabbed their father by his coat-tails, and whispered:

"Daddy, daddy! Who is this man who has come to visit us?" she asked holding her

* *In the New Year Ukrainian tradition the froit is .i ymbolically invited to the New Year feast. This was sri that he u'ozddn t destroy the winter crop of uhisat.*

* The oven bed orpich was a pare of the clay oven in the Ukrainian household and used by the children or other members of the/emily as a bed.

"What do you want of me

(Continued on Page10.)



Ukrainian Miscellany

Ban on Land Sale

Ukraine's parliament decided by a narrow margin to extend a ban on the sale of agricultural land by one year, delaying what financial backers say is a key reform essential to Ukraine's long-term

economic growth.

Currently, Ukraine's more than 40 million hectares (99 million acres) of farmland can not be bought or sold. The land is instead divided into smaller plots many of which are

leased, with relatively low productivity and limited private and foreign investment.

The International Monetary Fund wants to open the land market to a take-over by powerful businessmen or foreign conglomerates — agribusiness — under the slogan of efficiency.

Some Agricultural Results

According to a Reuters report, "India was the biggest market for Ukrainian agriculture products in the first 10 months of 2017, importing 11.3 percent of exports in cash terms. UkrAgroConsult said that 334,000 tonnes of sunflower oil was exported to India in September-October against 206,000 tonnes in the same two months of 2016. Ukraine's share of the Indian market rose by 10% points to 39.4%.

India is a key market for

Ukrainian sunflower oil, taking about a third of exports. The EU takes about 29 percent, while 10 percent goes to China. Egypt was the second-largest importer, with a 7.5% percent share, and the Netherlands was the third, with 6.9%.

Ukrainian agriculture exports were worth \$14.7 billion in the 10 months to October, about 23% more than in the same period last year.

Sunflower oil dominated Ukrainian agriculture exports

in January-October, with a value of \$3.6 billion. Ukraine also exported 15.6 million tonnes of maize for \$2.4 billion and 14.2 million tonnes of wheat for \$2.2 billion.

Ukraine is among the world's biggest exporters of sunflower oil, maize, and wheat.

Ukraine's 2017 sunflower harvest was somewhat smaller than in 2016. Agriculture consultancy UkrAgroConsult said Ukrainian sunflower oil available for export was expected to fall 4% to 5.58 million tonnes in the 2017/18 season due to the smaller sunflower harvest.

Ukraine-China Trade

Ukraine and China marked the 25th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with a new strategic level of cooperation, envisaging the implementation of joint projects for a total of about USD 7 billion. Agreements on the projects were reached during a meeting of Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman and Vice-Premier of the State

Council of the People's Republic of China Ma Kai.

The parties noted that China has always demonstrated strong support for Ukraine, and enters the top three trading partners of Ukraine. During 9 months of 2017, trade turnover between the countries has increased by 14.5% — up to USD 5.6 billion. All was sweetness and light.

Atlantic Council Expresses Concern

On December 4, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress reported a rare criticism of Ukraine by the Atlantic Council. We print the report below.

Atlantic Council Senior Fellow Adrian Karatnycky wrote on December 1, "Ukraine has experienced some major reforms, particularly the ProZorro electronic procurement system, the restructuring of corrupt banks, and fundamental reforms in the gas sector. Nonetheless, the country still suffers from widespread corruption and a malfunctioning court system that has delayed major cases against allegedly corrupt officials.

In this environment, politicians on all sides have been rushing to claim that they are the true leaders in the fight for corruption. That isn't a bad thing; their efforts illustrate a healthy political competition that is occurring within constitutional, parliamentary, and electoral bounds. It is likely to lead to progress in creating a new anti-corruption court and in improving the effectiveness of the procuracy, the police, and the recently established National Anti-Corruption Bureau and National Bureau of

Investigation.

Ukraine is home to a combative, highly competitive political environment where political leaders are often prone to exaggeration and populism. By no means is the reform process easy and clear-cut. But it is broadly occurring within the context of legitimate democratic discourse, much of it critical of the government and the president.

Increasingly, however, politicians, who were once regarded as responsible voices, are drifting toward extremist rhetoric that is disproportional to the serious problems that exist in Ukraine's political system. This language is unfortunately also now starting to be accompanied by threats of violence from groups that are often armed and have often engaged in vigilantism. [...]

Whatever the failings of the Ukrainian political system, it is far from authoritarian, and these views are veering further away from responsible criticism in a system that has significant scope for peaceful protest and political contestation. [...] A gradually reforming Ukraine under attack from Russia cannot afford the luxury of ignoring extreme political rhetoric."

Saakashvili in Action

On December 5, the Ukrainian authorities launched new charges against former Odessa Oblast governor Mikheil Saakashvili. Prosecutor General Yuri Lutsenko expressed suspicion that he had received financing from Serhiy Kurchenko, a member of the criminal group of former President Viktor Yanukovich. Mr. Kurchenko, a close ally of Mr. Yanukovich, was then in Russia, hiding from Ukrainian law enforcement.

With their money, Mr. Saakashvili and people close to him financed protests with the goal of seizure of state power in Ukraine (taking a lesson from Poroshenko, no doubt). Their goals included stopping the criminal prosecutions against members of the criminal organization of Yanukovich-Kurchenko, and regaining control over their ill-gotten gains.

Mr. Lutsenko stated that direct communication between Kurchenko and his associates and Saakashvili and his associates has been established, regarding financing of activities by transferring approximately \$500,000 for organizing mass protests in Ukrainian cities, as well as agreements on monthly financing of these protests of approximately \$1 million.

The Prosecutor General's office presented what it stated were audio and video recordings of conversations between Kurchenko, Saakashvili and their associates during the press briefing.

With all this evidence

against him, law enforcement agents (does that mean cops?) entered Saakashvili's apartment and arrested the former Odessa governor. However, hundreds of his followers faced off against police in riot gear, and freed him from the paddy-wagon.

Having been free, Mr. Saakashvili led hundreds of people toward parliament while urging Ukrainians to rally on Independence Square.

It was a confusing day, and the order of events is not that clear, but at some point the US Embassy in Ukraine felt called upon to call for all sides to de-escalate tensions and avoid violence. "We are monitoring the situation closely and expect any investigation will be conducted expeditiously and in accordance with Ukrainian law," the US embassy is reported to have cautioned.

No doubt sharing the concerns of the American embassy, on December 6 Mikheil Saakashvili declined to turn himself in for questioning. This followed a predawn clash between National Police officers and protesters camping out near the Verkhovna rada (Ukraine's parliament).

Authorities said that at least four police officers were injured in clashes that broke out as they began searching tents in an attempt to locate Saakashvili.

A spokeswoman for the prosecutor-general said, on December 6, that Saakashvili now faced three (additional) criminal charges: attempting to commit a crime, involvement

in premeditated criminal activity by a group of persons, and providing assistance to a criminal organization and concealing their criminal activities."

Five days later, having been arrested on December 8, Mikheil Saakashvili appeared in court in Kyiv for a hearing on whether he should continue to be held in custody.

About 200 of Saakashvili's supporters scuffled with police outside the Pechersky District court during the hearing.

It was unclear when the decision on custody would come.

On December 17, Ukrainian police clashed with backers of opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili, preventing them from forcing their way into Kyiv's October Palace after a rally against President Petro Poroshenko.

Police said that the attempt to enter the October Palace occurred while a children's concert was going on inside.

During the confrontation, police fired tear gas canisters.

The situation was relatively calm at the Palace after darkness fell with a large number of riot police blocking the entrance to the centre.

Interior ministry adviser Anton Gerashchenko accused Mikheil Saakashvili of wanting, unsuccessfully, to spill the blood of Ukrainians. However, the Kyiv police department reported that 32 law enforcement officers were injured during the attempt to seize the October Palace.

The Canadian, UK and US embassies felt obliged to comment on the "abuse of the right to peaceful protest".

Lethal Arms

(Continued from Page 1.) reported two significant events related to the questions of weapons for Ukraine. One report was a 28% increase in 2018 in Ukraine's defence budget.

The budget was passed by Ukraine's parliament on December 7. That would make defence over 6% of the Gross Domestic Product forecast by the National Bank of Ukraine for 2017 to reach \$100.1 billion."

The other report by the UCC was on the recommendations by the House of Com-

mons Standing Committee on National Defence, which recommended, among other things, the provision of lethal weapons to Ukraine.

In thanking the Defence Committee on behalf of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, UCC National President Paul Grod noted that, "Many of the recommendations are policy positions for which the UCC has long advocated."

The Committee report had 17 recommendations echoing the position of the Ukrainian government, including sale of automatic firearms sales to Ukraine, provision of lethal weapons, and the Ukrainian government's position on a United Nations peacekeeping force.

FROST

("MOROZ")

A STORY FROM THE PAST

By STEPAN VASYLCHENKO

Continued from Page 8.)

— I'm a poor man?"

"Well, we'll see right away," and he lit a small lamp.

The man on the bench spoke up: "Will you accept me as a guest, or will you drive me out of the house?"

"A good man is always welcome, but an evil man — we may drive out of the house," the father answered gaily, picking up the lamp and shining it into the visitor's face.

"You'll make up your mind yourself as to what kind of a man I am — good or evil," answered the visitor. "Perhaps you'll know me — I'm Frost."

"That's why I came to you, because you are poor," answered Frost. Then he explained: "Your children were shouting at the window asking frost to come in and eat wheat and honey with you. I was walking by and heard, re-

membered what day it was, and thought: why not go in and visit with those people?"

The father then bowed low before the guest:

"Then I invite you to be our honoured guest of the day," he said, and turned to the children, willing them with his eyes to get back on the oven bed. It didn't work. They were fascinated with the stranger and were all eyes and ears. He was quite wonderful, like a painting, friendly — no, he couldn't be frost — they were deceiving them...

The door opened again, squeaking loudly and filling the room with vapor. The mother came in with it, taking off her coat, but seeing nothing for the mist. Her face was rosy from the cold and she herself was cheerful.

"What a frost," she called out gaily, "I tell you, you can feel it right down to your toes!"

The guest answered her

from the bench:

"No, my good mother, that is not yet frost. The true Frost is sitting right here in your home!" and he gave a peculiar laugh.

The father whispered something furtively to the mother, and the children again saw their mother give a start, then turn to the guest with a frightened look. Again their hair felt as if standing on end — "He must, really must be frost!"

Frost began to ask, for some reason, if the local landlord had come home for the holiday. Mother covered the windows with thick linen cloth and locked the door into the hallway. They began to talk.

The children continued to stare at their guest from their corner and wondered: a man like a man — young, black-mustached, yet the hair on his head looked as if covered with snow, and his eyes were like ice. When he wasn't looking at them he seemed like everyone else, but when he accidentally met their eyes with his icy glance — they felt like rushing up onto the oven bed.

The mother laid out the holiday meal and invited their guest to the table, after which they all sat down. Frost drank some whiskey

Gazing children this and at their father expectantly, the saw his face change when he heard the hand holding the lamp tremble.

"Truly, he's frost!" the thought flitted through their minds.

The father then turned to Frost and spoke softly:

and suddenly lowered his head into his hands and began to sob. Then he started to sing, but so sorrowfully that it touched the heart:

Oh Frost — dear Frost, you glorious cossack, For you, dear Frost, all Ukraine weeps...

He finally wiped his eyes and grieved:

"There is no place on earth for me. I wander the forest like an animal..."

The children didn't know why they felt so sorry for frost — the little girl's eyes even filled with tears. The mother sighed and the father shook his head in sympathy — yet when the father passed him



another drink and the mother food — the hands of one and the other trembled.

Finishing his supper, Frost thanked them.

The old people tell about what happened next: he took off his belt and threw, like stars across the table, a generous handful of silver coins, so that they lit up the humble dwelling.

"This, children," he said, "is a holiday gift from Frost."

And he went out.

The father saw him out of the door.

The mother, meantime, stood by the window, her hands clasped to her heart, listening, disturbed — her eyes shining like stars — and at the same time saying quietly to her children:

"So you invoked the frost? And now you're not happy about it!"

The father came back in and the mother, forgetting what she had just said, turned toward him immediately:

"Well now — did he go?"

"Straight to the manor he went!" He sighed deeply, his eyes also burning for some reason. "Our gentry will have a guest this holy night," he added softly, then looked at the children as if seeing them sud-

denly:

"What are you sitting there for with your mouths wide open? To the bed with you!"

But the children asked:

"Was that really frost? Is that what he's like?" "That's what he's like. What did you think he was like?"

"But why does he walk, eat, and talk? And why does he carry a pistol in his belt?"

The father gave his children a severe look:

"You foolish children! This was the rebel highwayman whose name is Frost, and who travels about assassinating the landlords on their estates. You hear? Then take care, nobody must know about him being here — not one word, understand?"

The night was dark — quiet.

Someone continued to paint the windows with white flowers, like embroidery, the outside petals tinted with gold and sending their glitter through the dark house like bedecked golden lanterns.

The night crackled. A tiny golden rainbow sped across the window like a golden thread, and perhaps it was that famous rebel, Frost, who was sending those golden shimmers across the tiny windows from his forest home.

— Translated by Mary



JoKe TiMe

Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Officer asks a young engineer fresh out of the Mas-

sachusetts Institute of Technology, "And what starting salary are you looking for?"

The engineer replies, "In the region of \$125,000 a year, depending on the benefits package."

The interviewer inquires,

"Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?"

The engineer sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are

you kidding?"

The interviewer replies, "Yeah, but you started it."

* * *

A child asked his father, "How were people born?"

So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on."

The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now."

The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!"

His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."

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Join the AUUC community! Each Branch has a unique schedule of events and activities. To discover what we have to offer, contact the AUUC in your area:

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Who, What, When, Where

Vancouver — AUUC Vancouver Branch will host the annual Malanka (Ukrainian New Year) celebration at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, 805 East Pender Street, starting at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 20, 2018. Enjoy cocktails, concert program, a delicious traditional Ukrainian supper and dancing to a live band. For tickets call (604) 254-3436. Don't be disappointed, book your tickets early. Admission: \$60:00.

* * *

Calgary — AUUC Calgary Branch presents Malanka on January 13, 2018, at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, 3316 – 28 Avenue S.W. Come early and stay late! Join us as we bring in the New Year. 6:00 p.m. cocktails, 7:00 p.m. traditional Ukrainian supper, 8:30 p.m. program, 9:15 p.m. dance to a live band. Tickets can be purchased by calling 403- 289 – 8480.

* * *

Regina — Poltava presents its 20th Annual Malanka, our Ukrainian New Year's Celebration, at the Regina Performing Arts Centre on Saturday, January 13, 2018. Cocktail Hour — 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., with appetisers; Full Buffet Supper — 6:30 p.m.; brief Poltava Ensemble performance; Door Prizes and Raffle; Cabaret Dance to Slow Motion Walter — 9:00 p.m.; a traditional kolomeyka — 10:30 p.m.; snacks — midnight. Admission: \$50.00/person.

This event sold out very early last year. Avoid disappointment — tickets are on sale at the Regina Performing Arts Centre Box Office, or online on the Regina Performing Arts website!

* * *

Readers of the *Ukrainian Canadian Herald* are invited to submit items of interest to the progressive Ukrainian Canadian community for free listing in this column. The deadline for material is the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication.



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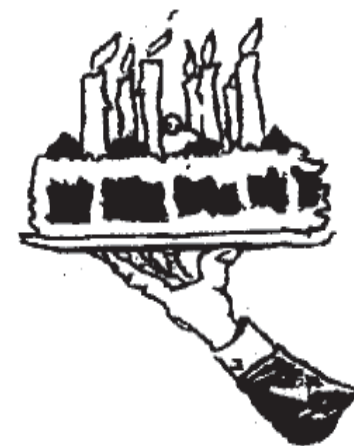
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Happy Birthday, Friends!



The Edmonton AUUC Senior Citizens Club wishes a happy birthday to the celebrants of January:

- Eva Doskoch
- Victor Horon
- Rose Kereliuk
- William Maxim
- Bill Uhryn

May you have good health, happiness and a daily sense of accomplishment as you go through life.

The Toronto AUUC Senior Citizens Club extends best birthday wishes to January celebrants:

- Lorna Clark
- Rose Nedbailik

May good health and happiness be yours in the coming year!

The Vancouver Seniors Club wishes the best of health and happiness in the coming year to January celebrant:

- Larry Kleparchuk

Enjoy your day with family and friends!

The Welland Shevchenko Seniors extend a happy birthday wish to January celebrants:

- Joe Panetta
- John Sitak
- Sandra Sitak
- Mary Wasylenko

May the coming year bring you all the best in health and happiness!

Calgary Ensemble Presents *Kultura*

— Story photos: Darlene Hrynchyshyn and Juia Meeder



The Calgary Hopak Ensemble opened the concert with a rousing Ukrainian dance of welcome.



The opening dancing was followed by the Calgary Hopak Ensemble Choir, singing “*Laskavo prosymo*”, a song of welcome, and “*Dobryi vechir susidonko*” (Good Evening, Neighbour).



Cherevychky (little shoes), the youngest dance group, danced their way into the hearts of the audience with “*Hutsul Dance*”.



Another Hutsul dance was presented by Tynok. This lovely group of girls is choreographed by Jenna Dudar. The girls demonstrated both skill and artistry in their presentation.



With the orchestra playing “*Zaporizhan March*”, the all-boys group, under the direction of Dianne Gereluk, boldly marched into view. With swords clashing and feet crashing, the Harniy Sharavary left us wanting more!

On Sunday, December 3, 2017, at the Calgary Ukrainian Cultural Centre, Calgary Hopak Ensemble presented “*Kultura*”, a celebration of Ukrainian culture, through song, dance and much music.

Under the musical leadership of Violetta Dimitrova, the Calgary Hopak Ensemble, opened this concert with a rousing Ukrainian dance of welcome. Choreographed by Trevor Shular, the Hopak senior dancers swirled the costumes of the many regions of the Ukraine into a tapestry of visual delight.

The Calgary Hopak Ensemble Choir was next, singing “*Laskovo prosemo*”, a welcoming song for the new year, and the folk song favourite, “*Dobryi vechir susidonko*”. The song asks about borrowing a husband, just for a few days. The set included two additional numbers.

Our youngest dance group, Cherevichky, choreographed by Natasha Jeanson, with assistant Christopher Monaghan, presented their version of the “*Hutsul Dance*”. With the Calgary Hopak Ensemble Orchestra providing music from the “*Hutsul Wedding Suite*”, these tiny dancers danced their way into our hearts.

The next dance group, Chervony venochok, under the instruction of Liza Makarov, presented a dance



Chervony venochok, under the instruction of Liza Makarov, presented a dance with many intricate steps. “*Hop, skop, hopachok*” was delightful to watch.



Accompanied by the Calgary Hopak Orchestra, the senior dance group presented “*Hutsul Dance*” (below) and “*Kuban Dance*” (above). Embued with enthusiasm, skill, and artistry, these dancers closed the afternoon concert.



The Hopak Orchestra accompany the choir and dance groups, but it also performs a variety of other pieces.

with many intricate steps. “*Hop, skop, hopachok*” was as delightful to watch as it was to clap out the rhythm.

Another Hutsul dance was presented by Tynok. This lovely group of girls is choreographed by Jenna Dudar. The girls demonstrated both skill and artistry in their presentation.

With the orchestra leading with the “*Zaporizhan March*”, our all-boys group, under the direction of Dianne Gereluk, boldly marched into view. With swords clashing and feet crashing, the Harniy Sharavary, as the group is called, left us wanting more!

Accompanied by the Calgary Hopak Orchestra, the senior dance group brought forth “*Hutsul Dance*” and “*Kuban Dance*”. Embued with enthusiasm, skill and artistry, these dancers closed out the afternoon concert.

Not only does the Hopak Orchestra accompany the choir and dance groups, but it

also performs a variety of other pieces. For this concert, Violetta selected pieces to highlight different instruments: “*Musical Moment*” by A. Petro; “*Koltada-Malyeda*”, “*Brightly Shines the Moon*”, “*Dance*”, and “*Round Dance*”. Well done orchestra!

Following the concert, our guests were invited to stay for refreshments and mingle with the performers. We are always so grateful for the most positive comments from audience members. So, thank you to all for your feedback.

A big thank you to: our costume mistress, Kay Skrabeck, for organizing and distributing those beautiful costumes; to Trista Bailey, Calgary Hopak Dance School Director, for keeping those young ones hopping and happy; and to Lori Forte, who always does such a lovely job as MC.

We will see you all at our 100 Year Celebration Concert on May 5, 2018.

— Darlene Hrynchyshyn