PRESENTATIONS AND PEER REVIEWS

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ENLIGHTENMENT OF “PROSVITA” SHINING OVER THE ZBRUCH: SKETCHES ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF VIL’HIVCHYK, ITS EDUCATION AND "PROSVITA: ENLIGHTENMENT"

"The Choir of the reading club "Prosvida" in the village of Vilkhivchyk " (1935)

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Анотація: На прикладі історії західноукраїнського села (Вільхівчик Гусятинського р-ну Тернопільського області), функціонування в цьому селі читальні «Просвіти» (1907-1939) та інших українських організацій показано пробудження національної ідентичності.

Ключові слова: історія села, Вільхівчик, читальня «Просвіти», голова читальни, українські організації, національна ідентичність.


Résumé: A l`exemple de l`histoire du village de l`Ukraine de l`Ouest (Vilkhivtchyk, province
The book focuses on the history of the village of Vil’hivchyk (Husiatyn District, Ternopil’ Region) which is given in the broad context and cultural aspects for the first time in its entirety. The authors do not only elucidate a complete presentation of the history of the village based on systematic study of research, archival documents and eyewitness accounts of the events of this period. They also touch upon education and enlightenment in dates (from its foundation till 1953). The sketches on “Prosvita: Enlightenment”’s formation (1869-1939) as well as on other cultural and sports organizations in Western Ukraine are also presented in this book. The encyclopedic information about the history of the reading club of "Prosvita: Enlightenment" in the village of Vil’hivchyk, its functioning, leaders and active workers is given here for the first time. It allows reaching objective conclusions about the nature of educational processes in Western Ukraine in the period given above.

The history of the Enlightenment in the village is impossible without consideration of the history of the village itself (in the wide range of Western Ukraine). That’s why the structure of the book contains three parts and supplements: I. Main periods as milestones in the history of the village and the land (till 1953) II. The history of enlightenment and the society "Prosvita: Enlightenment" in Western Ukraine; III. The history of the reading club of the society "Prosvita: Enlightenment" in the village of Vil’hivchyk (Husiatyn District) IV. The Amendment.

Part I.

The village and the city cannot exist without each other. Therefore the history of the village Vil’hivchyk is inseparable from the history of Husiatyn which satellite it was for centuries. It is also closely connected with the history of Podillya and the region of Ternopil’. For ages Vil’hivchyk was functioning as a Vorwerk (complex of residential and commercial buildings to monitor agricultural farms of landlords and to master gathering and recycling of their products). So Vil’hivchyk became a permanent and faithful "companion" of the town of Husiatyn which was developing successfully, lying conveniently on the trade route to Kamianets'-Podil’s’k (initially within the skirts of Podillya, then - as the part of Ternopiliya), having received Magdeburg Law (1559). The village-satellite and the town of Husiatyn were forming within the region and then within the County, where they shared common destiny and socio-economic, historical and cultural changes within the Prekyivan and Kyivan Rus’, the Halytch-Volyn’ principality, Lithuania, Poland, Habsburg Austria, ZUNR, Poland, Soviet and independent Ukraine. It should be pointed out the Polish settlers, having got close relationship with local Ukrainians, influenced deeply on the mentality of people and later on education and spiritual enlightenment of the village.

Due to powerful Polish colonization in the 16th -19th centuries and polonization (spol’scheny) in the 19th-20th centuries that took place historically, bilingualism and multiculturalism of the village of Vil’hivchyk were formed for ages. In these circumstances, the Greek Catholic Church, having existed in the village since at least 1750, managed to preserve the Ukrainian language, contributing to its development by services and sermons. In 1848 - during the "folks’ revolution" – the Western Ukrainian intellectuals and Uneaten Church sought the abolition of serfdom, education for people and recognition of the Ukrainian language by the Emperor. As a result of those claims in the village of Vil’hivchyk there was not only abolished serfdom (3/18.05.1848), but there was also organized a primary school (20.05.1855), at first - Polish, but later it turned into Ukrainian since the village community had found its identity.
Part II.

However, there was no form of socialization for the creation of civil society in a foreign country. Such form appeared later - with the formation of the society of "Prosvita: Enlightenment" in L’viv (1869). It became possible because of struggle of newly formed dualist Austro-Hungarian monarchy (1867) against the dominance of Russophiles, propagated by neighboring Russia. A lot of polytypic Ukrainian organizations such as the Taras Shevchenko scientific society, the Pedagogical Society "Rus’ka School" originated from the "Enlightenment". Children's organization "Plast", the female organization “Union of the Ukrainian Women” and youth sports’ organizations "Sich", "Sokil", "Luh" and others were closely related to "Prosvita: Enlightenment"’s social activities. "Enlightenment" led cultural and educational work among the Ukrainians through its specialized subsidiaries and village reading rooms. It also started grinding the Ukrainian national identity of Podillian peasants. Thus, the appearance of the reading club in the distant village of Podillya was actually a small stone in the future foundation of independent Ukraine.

Part III.

According to archival data the reading club of the village of Vil’hivchyk was initiated by F. Tutkalyuk and functioned in 1907-1909 years, but because of disagreement it broke down till 1925. From 02.07.1926 till 3.17. 1928 the head of the village reading club of "Enlightenment" was 32-year old Mykhailo Borodiy, from 17.03.1928 till 17.03.1929 it was headed by 53-year old Fedir Moroz, from 03.17.1929 till 02.15.1930 it was headed by 50-year old Stefan Kurchaba, from 15.02.1930 till 03.13.1932 it was headed by 48-year old Petro Kurchaba and from 03.13.1932 till 10.30.1933 it was headed by Joseph Zdeb'ya, an active participant and long-term conductor of the choir and of the theatre group, in 1934 it was headed by F. Kurchaba, from 13.03.1935 till 26.01.1936 it was headed by Y. Derenivs’kyi, from 01.01.1936 till 24.02.1938 it was headed by Fr. Theodore Rak-Rachenko, and from 25.02.1938 it was headed by Y. Derenivs’kyi. For those years the reading club was built (1929), there were meetings, readings and discussions of books, choral concerts and theatrical performances organized there (see complete lists of assets and the work in the annexes).

According to consideration and analysis of the available materials on the "Prosvita: Enlightenment" and its reading club in the village of Vil’hivchyk, the strategic goal of society creating was first of all the preservation and strengthening of Ukrainians’ national identity that should become the basis for building of their own state. This was achieved by different, often mutually interlinked forms of work: by the collective construction of the reading club by the entire community, by financial, almost "self-supporting" forming of its economy (with strict regard to its budget), by cultural mass "enlightenment" of peasants during their collective readings of newspapers for expanding of peasants’ outlook, by the concerts of choral performances which united peasants, by didactic selected performances, by nationally directed literature, which helped establishing of peasants’ authenticity.

In this way, the leaders of that time "Enlightenment" almost succeeded in creating a "civil society", capable of self-governing and associating to assert national interests by cost of rural branches and reading clubs (under the slogan "Own to own for his own") (Master of political science and international studies H. Ivasiuk). Due to historical circumstances, this type of society that started sprouting from the traditional patriarchal one, had suffered a collision with the Communist political system, which it threatened, and so it was ruined mercilessly. Having prophetically looked into the future of Ukraine Taras Shevchenko wrote his lines: "We were altered by the mean ...". Shards of "Prosvita: Enlightenment" members were altered and thrown to different sides of barricades – the irreconcilable had died in the ranks of the OUN-UPA, others had fallen "hero's death" in the Red Army, and others had adapted being locked in their "households" and working in the collective farms for the sake of a different one they dreamt of, but still for Ukraine.

"Enlightenment" that had organized social life in the countryside didn’t exist in the Soviet period. Possessing the diametrically opposed ideological foundations, the national Ukrainian "Enlightenment" had been replaced by almost three bodies: the club, managed by the newcomers from eastern Ukraine (I. Nikitenko) - for amateur performances, the library (for reading) and village council (sil’rada).

The available documentary materials are presented in 30 annexes.

References:
1. Reports and letters about activities of the reading club in the village of Vil’hivchyk (1907-


2 Husiatyn archive department of Husiatyn district administration; Central State Historical Archive in the city of Lviv (CSHA); Ternopil region state archive.