

**ANTI-POLITICAL COUNTERCULTURE IN SOVIET LVIV: SAMVYDAV SKRYNIA  
IN POST-1968**

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## Abstract

This thesis attempts to apply the optics of anti-political thinking to the countercultural space of Soviet Lviv through the case study of the samvydav “Skrynia.” It does so through the analysis of the activity of the group of nonconformist youth who held strong personal connections with the circle of Ukrainian dissidents. Through the application of elements from cultural, social, and intellectual history, it aims to prove that the development of the counterculture in Soviet Ukraine of the late 1960s – early 1970s aligned with similar trajectories in the other countries of the Socialist Bloc and that even despite the lack of the plurality of the nonconformists under the Soviet regime, the paths of the resistance were very different and varied based on the generations and the exposure to the international influences. Through the study of the external influences, a close reading of the samvydav, and the analysis of the materials from the KGB investigations, this thesis contributes to the more significant part of the scholarship that attempts to undermine the dissident myth – the idea that those were the dissidents, who played the decisive role in the anti-Soviet opposition. By doing so, this work offers new approaches to studying the circles that were rarely studied together before – the countercultures and the dissidents.

## Acknowledgements

In front of you is the work that represents a part of me – it was me who wrote it, and it was me who hid the matters of essential significance to me. And the most precious part of being a human is that other people define each of us. So, it was me who went through a long process of thinking, but those were also people who were thinking with me, and without them, this project would never look the same way it does.

This work is about a group of people who, at the time of the main events, are the same age as I am while writing this. That means that sometimes I could think about them as people who could be me if I were born earlier. Those people were defined by their friends and mentors, by the ideas of their time, by their national and international influences, by their laughs and tears, by love and friendships. In a way, I am the same.

Therefore, I want to thank the people who participated in this. I am grateful to

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To all the friendships, all the romances, and the warmest moments.

This project also tells the story of non-state actors, who sometimes chose the path of non-engagement with the state, institutions, and the regime. This striking difference between them and me is very significant. This work would never happen without the institutions that are held by people. And I am incredibly grateful to *the History Department of Central European University* and *Invisible University for Ukraine*, who changed how I see things and people. Lastly, I am very thankful to the *Armed Forces of Ukraine* because of whom I can do my best and still be here.

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Introduction .....                                                             | 1   |
| Historiography .....                                                           | 4   |
| Sources .....                                                                  | 8   |
| Skrynia – systemic and countercultural protest.....                            | 11  |
| Anti-political and metapolitical politics .....                                | 18  |
| The Structure of the Research .....                                            | 22  |
| Chapter 1. Locating the Counterculture in Soviet Lviv .....                    | 24  |
| 1.1. Who creates Lviv, and whom does Lviv create? .....                        | 26  |
| 1.2. Who was there before, and who came after? .....                           | 34  |
| 1.3. Nonconformists of all views, unite! .....                                 | 44  |
| Chapter 2. Anti-political and metapolitical politics in Skrynia samvydav ..... | 54  |
| 2.1. Skrynia – a game of hide and seek with the state.....                     | 55  |
| 2.2. Skrynia under the charismatic leader .....                                | 60  |
| 2.3. Intellectual and aesthetical aspects of Skrynia .....                     | 68  |
| 2.4. Hermeticism, silence, and “apoliticism” in Skrynia .....                  | 73  |
| 2.5. Modernism and European tradition in Skrynia .....                         | 77  |
| 2.6. Smuggling the opposition into the samvydav .....                          | 83  |
| Chapter 3. Finding the Enemy: KGB, Skrynia, and the dissidents .....           | 86  |
| 3.1. Skrynia in the KGB documents.....                                         | 87  |
| 3.2. Skrynia in the interrogations .....                                       | 90  |
| 3.3. Unknown samvydav .....                                                    | 93  |
| 3.4. Who were you afraid of, Hrytsko Chubai?.....                              | 102 |
| Conclusions .....                                                              | 111 |
| Bibliography .....                                                             | 115 |

## Introduction

In the early 1970s, during one of the literary evenings in Soviet Lviv, a so-called *kvartyrnyk*, prominent dissident Vasyl Stus, dedicated one of his poems to the young Ihor Aleksandrov, a local hippie.<sup>1</sup> This small event was not unusual, as it was one of many *kvartyrnyky* that took place throughout the late 1960s-1970s in cities of the Soviet Union, where young people shared their new poems, art pieces, or music and informally debated various topics. However, this specific moment, remembered by one of the contributors to the *samvydav*<sup>2</sup> “Skrynja,” illustrates an essential notion that the dissident milieu, subcultures, and countercultures were in closer connection than is frequently presented in contemporary scholarship. This symbiotic relationship between dissidents, whose opposition to the Soviet regime was ideological, subcultures, who engaged in the more symbolical resistance, and countercultures, whose anti-Sovietism was, as I argue, anti-political, is not exclusive to Lviv and Soviet Ukraine but echoes in other local and national contexts. Notably, in socialist Czechoslovakia, the convergence of dissident voices under the umbrella of Charter 77 was prompted by the defense of the countercultural band Plastic People of the Universe.<sup>3</sup> These instances, alongside analogous cases in the histories of socialist Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, prompt a hypothesis for this thesis project: the countercultural environment in Lviv was not isolated from the influence of the dissident circles and the alternative spaces, but closely intertwined with it, thus shaping the symbolical opposition into a more intellectual one.

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<sup>1</sup> Kateryna Nemyra, “Spohad pro Lyshehu i chas” [Memory about Lysheha and Time] in *Polum'ia vidihriie pam'iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha], (Lviv: Piramida, 2019), 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Samvydav*, the Ukrainian term for the Russian *samizdat*, is a form of dissident activity for the spreading of literature that was not allowed to be published officially. Since this topic attempts to overstep the overwhelming predominance of the influence of the Russian Soviet narratives, the Ukrainian equivalent will be used when talking about the Ukrainian context.

<sup>3</sup> See Jonathan Bolton. *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture Under Communism*. (Harvard University Press, 2012)

This thesis looks at the case of the samvydav “Skrynia”<sup>4</sup> – the circle of people who met around 1968-1969 and were gathered by the charismatic leader and young poet Hryhorii (Hrytsko) Chubai, who moved to Lviv from the village in the Rivne oblast in 1969. Young students from different backgrounds created a shared space, spent time in each other’s apartments, organized literary evenings, and decided to make an almanac in 1971. The exceptional factor was that compared to the traditional idea of samvydav, which was meant to spread to many people, “Skrynia” was primarily meant for its contributors and some close friends. Chubai and his friends spent a lot of time with Ukrainian dissidents, with whom they held discussions about literature and art, talked about sociopolitical matters and simply, were creating Lviv intellectual life. However, in 1972, when the wave of the repression against the Soviet nonconformists started and some dissidents from Lviv were arrested as well, Skrynia played a significant role in the investigation. KGB knew about the existing contact between young people and their older and more oppositional friends and brought some of the Skrynia authors to the investigation as witnesses. During this process, Chubai, who was among the interrogated, confessed and exposed a lot of the information about the assumably anti-Soviet dissident’s expressions and behavior and later stated this in the court against Iryna Kalynets. Chuba himself, who was a suspect in the beginning of the investigation because of the previous activity, was then turned into a witness and in the end of the process was not prosecuted. Other Skrynia authors were expelled from universities and jobs. Even though Skrynia appears as a very closed and narrow circle, it serves as a great microhistorical example of the sociopolitical shift that happened to Lviv’s counterculture in the post-1968 period. It also plays the role of the representative case on how the countercultural circles interacted with the dissidents and how they shaped each other’s thinking.

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<sup>4</sup> To make the process of reading easier, in the text I use “Skrynia” to refer to the text of samvydav, and use Skrynia as a group of people, authors of the samvydav of the same name.

Scholarship within the field of subcultural studies,<sup>5</sup> which has developed quite intensively in the last decades, pays a lot of attention to the space of the Socialist Bloc. It distinguishes social and cultural influences that Western culture (most often music) made on the countries of Western Europe and countries under the communist regimes. When considering the existing scholarship, the subcultural studies of Western Europe and the Socialist Bloc took drastically different approaches and paths, where the first ones usually aim to approach the youth culture from a sociological perspective. In contrast, the second (specifically in the past twenty years) aims to frame it in the context of intellectual and cultural history. This project attempts to continue the tradition of writing the history of the youth opposition that is not merely artistic and symbolical but, because of its intellectual background, can be read as essentially political. Therefore, this project relies on the historiography that works with the countries of the Socialist Bloc and the Soviet Union rather than the broader and more global field of subcultural studies per se.

The timeframe of the thesis, which is not quite typical for the field, is also used to trace the intellectual influences after one of the critical points in the history of countercultural movements – the 1968 Prague Spring. A lot of scholarship focuses on the space of the 1960s all over East-Central Europe and traces the features of the building up of alternative spaces and the development of the subcultures in its most active time. This scope then usually ends with the point of 1968 – globally a year in which many student revolutions and protests happened worldwide. Still, in East-Central Europe, these revolts mainly happened as a response to the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops to Prague. In my research, Prague Spring serves as a starting point since it is after this event that the symbolic youth protest becomes more significantly political. In Soviet Ukraine, 1968 did not happen in the same way as it did in Warsaw, Belgrade,

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<sup>5</sup> It is the topic of the countercultures rather than subcultures that lies at the core of this project, however, in the historiography this topic can rather be found in the context of subcultural studies, that serves as the umbrella term. The core of the subcultural studies can be traced back to the activity of the Chicago School, later developed and revised in the activity of the British Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the late 1960s-1970s.

or other cities, where student protests took place as an immediate response to the Prague events. The influence of the Prague Spring on Soviet Ukraine, and more specifically on Soviet Lviv, was very different – a rather intellectual and aesthetical than openly political. In retrospect, the radicalization of society pushed for the development of anti-political and metapolitical discourses among young nonconformists.

One of the aims of the invasion of Czechoslovakia was also as a preventative lesson – it showed the countries of the Socialist Bloc that the revisionism of socialism was not possible, whether it had a “human face” or not. That way, the invasion threatened Lviv’s intellectual and countercultural circles, just as it did in other countries. In Ukraine, it also took place during the most active dissident activity. It was between the first wave of repressions against the sixtiers, the generation of Ukrainian intellectuals who formed the core of the dissident circle, that happened in 1965, and the second one, in 1972, that signaled the end of the sixtiers generation. On a much narrower scale, it was also in 1968 when Hrytsko Chubai, the core figure in the Skrynia, wrote his poem “Vertep” (Nativity Scene), later spread by the samvydav in Lviv. It was also in 1968 when the main alternative space for the Lviv underground – The Republic of the Holy Garden, was created. That way, I argue that the tradition of 1968 did not simply push for political activism but, because of the peculiarity of the generation, moved the revolt into a different dimension.

## Historiography

The topic of countercultures in the Ukrainian context is usually perceived within the historiography of the Soviet Union. The space of the former Soviet Union remains dominated by the works on Soviet Russia. In contrast, the cultural space of the other republics and their role in the creative subversion of the dominant discourses remains underexplored. Furthermore, with respect to the history of the Soviet alternative culture, Alexei Yurchak’s *“Everything Was*

*Forever Until It Was No More*<sup>6</sup> stays primarily unchallenged despite its methodological and geographical limitations. Yurchak's approach to alternative culture, encapsulated by the term "being vnye," revolves around the concept of "inside-outside-ness." It implies that while Western influence was present in Soviet Russia, alternative culture was an integral component of the system within Soviet society. Yurchak's work highlights meta- and antipolitical elements, yet its concentration on a specific urban and intellectual demographic limits its methodological applicability to regions beyond not only the entire Soviet Union but also, more specifically, other Russian cities apart from Leningrad. Yurchak's book overviews the later period of socialism, primarily the 1980s, but his approach towards the relations between the non-state and state actors is often applied to the earlier periods. Therefore, not entirely ignoring his methods, I attempt to build upon some more relevant methodology.

Another essential part of this thesis is the monograph "*The Ukrainian West*" by William Jay Risch, which focuses specifically on the sociocultural development of Soviet Lviv. Even though this work provides an extensive and, in some aspects, a very rich overview of the Lviv social circles and supports it with profound source data (a big part of the book is based on oral interviews), Risch's analysis of the exceptional nature of Lviv tends to overlook the extent of the city's Sovietization. While acknowledging that the degree of Sovietization in Lviv may have been comparatively lower than in other urban centers, its ideological effects should be considered. Additionally, Risch portrays a narrative of distinct social circles within the city. However, in my assessment, his analysis lacks consideration for the potential overlap in the social engagement of students and young individuals from these diverse circles. To comprehensively understand the dynamics of social interaction in Lviv during the Soviet era and, as a result, to develop a defined environment that could establish contact between

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<sup>6</sup> Alexei Yurchak. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006)

counterculture and dissidents, it is imperative to explore the interconnections and shared engagements among youth across varied social strata.

For a more methodological analysis, I rely mainly on the scholarship of other former Socialist Bloc countries. The closest and the most useful for this thesis are works written on Czechoslovakia by Jonathan Bolton<sup>7</sup> and Martin Machovec.<sup>8</sup> In his book, Bolton analyzes the overlap and the intellectual exchanges between the Czech underground and the dissident circles and concludes that the connection these circles had in the period of the Charta 77 events was established way before. Machovec, on the other hand, did something similar. Still, through a slightly different approach – he focused on the samizdat and the underground bands. He noticed the intellectual exchange between these circles through the philosophical and intellectual influences in the songs of Czech bands. The scholarship on Hungary and Poland also helps to research topics that are not very well known in Ukrainian contexts but have equivalents in other countries. The academic debate on the figure of Gábor Bódy, a Hungarian film director who assumably collaborated with the Hungarian Secret Police, is a good example.<sup>9</sup> Borrowing the methodological approaches from this story would help analyze it in Ukrainian contexts, where such works have not been written yet.

The local level of the research also defines it to a significant extent. In the last thirty years, Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian authors debated the importance of pointing out the surprising disengagement of Lviv citizens with the Soviet regime. Scholars attempted to explain this concept through the various spheres: Roman Szporluk approached the “strange politics of Lviv”<sup>10</sup> through the questions of economic and demographic policies, Yaroslav Hrytsak named

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<sup>7</sup> Bolton. *Worlds of dissent...*

<sup>8</sup> Martin Machovec. *Writing Underground: Reflections on Samizdat Literature in Totalitarian Czechoslovakia*. (Charles University in Prague, Karolinum Press, 2019)

<sup>9</sup> Sonja Simonyi, “The Man Behind the Curtain: Gábor Bódy, Experimental Film Culture and Networks of State Control in Late Socialist Hungary,” *Third Text*, 32:4 (2018), pp.519-529

<sup>10</sup> Roman Szporluk, “The Strange Politics of Lviv: An Essay in Search of an Explanation,” *The Politics of Nationality and the Erosion of the USSR: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies*, ed. Stephen White (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992)

Lviv a “hidden capital”<sup>11</sup> and traced its development in the long durée of urban nationalism, paying specific attention to the Habsburgs’ legacy and Polish influence. William Jay Risch approached the city as the “Ukrainian West.”<sup>12</sup> He closely studied the cultural influences in the Soviet period, and Tarik Amar defined the paradox of the city<sup>13</sup> as the Soviets’ intended choice to create the nationally conscious urban working class. While among all of them, Amar received the most extensive level of criticism.<sup>14</sup> All these authors remain quoted and well-known in the discussions on Lviv. In this research, I do not aim to take a stance in these debates. Still, occasionally, I refer to the approaches and arguments of these authors since they all agree that there was something unusual in the type of Soviet development in Lviv. That is precisely what I use when discussing the intellectual influences and aesthetic and artistic conditions under which the Lviv counterculture was developing.

In the context of the counterculture and underground, in more broad terms, the unusual type of Lviv’s development is shown through the high level and quality of the information and literature that were brought to Lviv from abroad. The access to foreign radio stations, specifically the Polish ones, provided opportunities for the Lviv youth to be updated with the latest trends in the Socialist Bloc, including modernist literature, rock music, and less censored news. The radio stations, together with the opportunities for smuggling, as well as quite frequent visits of the foreigners in comparison with the other cities (those were primarily representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora that were visiting the dissidents), as well as the low level of the engagement with the Soviet government made Lviv truly closer to the countries of the Socialist Bloc, than to the Soviet republics on the Eastern side.

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<sup>11</sup> Yaroslav Hrytsak, “Lviv – misto u zentri Yevropy” [Lviv – city in the center of Europe], *Krakiw i Lviv v Europeiskii Tsyvilisazii* [Kraków and Lviv in European Civilization], materials of the conference. Kraków: 2004.

<sup>12</sup> William Jay Risch, *The Ukrainian West. Culture and the Fate of Empire in Soviet Lviv* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015)

<sup>14</sup> For the most precise and concrete criticism of this work see Bohdan Shumylovych. “One Hundred Years of Solitude: Meditating on Tarik Amar’s Book on Lviv,” *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 6 (2020)

## Sources

This research is mainly based on the archival materials from the Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU), which hold the materials from the former KGB database. All the documents I use here are a part of the criminal case N204 – the case of Iryna Kalynets, Lviv dissident. The transcripts of interrogations, protocols of the searches, explanation notes, transcripts of the dual interrogations, and other official documents I refer to belong to the same case. Therefore, this research intends to dig deeper into the formal details of the case, which was previously studied mainly with a focus on Kalynets herself and not on the additional personalities and groups, such as Skrynia.

Constructing a narrative by official bodies such as the KGB requires a particular sensitivity to how information is presented and how objective it is. Since the KGB is also a full-fledged participant in the events and instead imposes a particular paradigm on the persons interacting with them, the information cannot be considered entirely accurate. In the third chapter, where I focus specifically on the criminal case investigation, I draw attention to possible inaccuracies, falsifications, and manipulations of information that could have happened in the case of Skrynia. Despite this, it is essential to emphasize that the positioning of the main sides of this story is specific, and challenging to find what happened and find objectivity. Therefore, the story I present here is based on my understanding and reading of the events, and it remains open for academic discussions.

The figure of Chubai remains quite ambiguous – contemporary scholarship and the public sphere do everything possible to turn Chubai into a heroic poet, who either was the embodiment of the dissident figure for the younger generation and was “broken” by the Soviet punitive system or as somebody who understood all the danger of the self-expression in the Soviet realities and therefore, consciously wanted to save the art from any political doctrine and engaged with the poetry as with the pure art, hermetic and avantgarde. Chubai’s recovery started

in academic and public circles in the 2000s. It was further popularized in the 2010s because of the creation of multiple projects commemorating the Lviv environment, intelligentsia, and literary circles. In 2013, the exhibition entitled “Dissident Room of Hrytsko Chubai” at the Museum-Memorial of Victims of the Occupation Regimes “Loncky Street Prison” was opened under the ownership of the Security Service of Ukraine. Indeed, this also pushed the interpretation of Chubai’s trajectory as the dissident one even more. The movies “Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu” (“Chubai: To Speak Again”) (2020), directed by Mikhail Krupievsky, and “Chubai” (2014) by Oleksandr Frazee-Frazenko, undoubtedly play a significant role in the shift of the attitude and the rediscovery of Chubai and “Skrynia.” While opening previously isolated urban contexts for the broader audience, these movies also support the narratives about the hero’s path, which seems to work for the general support of the dissidence myth dominating the national histories of East-Central European countries for the decades after 1989. While this myth, which pays significant attention to the fact that it was the dissident circles because of whom the path towards liberal democracy in the post-Soviet and post-Socialist countries happened,<sup>15</sup> was quite dominant but slowly started to fade in East-Central Europe, it still is very viable in the Ukrainian context. Partially because of it and partially because of the significant influence of the liberal nationalism trajectory, the dissidents and activists from the 1970s-1980s are widely glorified. Although Chubai died because of kidney disease in 1982, which developed because of his depressive episodes and heavy alcohol usage, and his last years were not artistically or politically productive, he became part of the anti-Soviet canon and receives more and more artistic legacy these days.

Among the alternative approaches towards the perception of the artistic circles and their dissident, or more broadly, oppositional activity, Moskalets probably still holds the leading

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<sup>15</sup> Michal Kopeček. “From Narrating Dissidence to Post-Dissident Narratives of Democracy: Anti-totalitarianism, Politics of Memory and Culture Wars in East-Central Europe 1970s–2000s,” *Central European Culture Wars: Beyond Post-Communism and Populism* (2021)

authority. In his text “Piat medytatsii na ‘Plach Yeremii’” (“Five Meditations on Jeremiah’s Cry”),<sup>16</sup> he suggests looking at Chubai as the trixter with a very high self-esteem. This is the perception I currently see as the most useful as well because while it does not take away from the informational overflow and still promotes the exploration of the new aspects of Soviet history, it also does not propagate the big, heavy, and serious narrative on Chubai and “Skrynia.” Moskalets also did not isolate his research within the space of exclusively Ukrainian context and literary studies but connected Chubai’s poems to the broader intellectual trajectories – he explained it through the connections with the Spanish poetry that Chubai enjoyed, with the unconscious Platonism and with the intellectual influence of American modernist tradition, such as Ezra Pound and Thomas Stearns Eliot. Therefore, the presentation and reinventing of Chubai and Skrynia in the contemporary context can be used for a more global scholarship that would not limit itself to the Ukrainian context.

The topic of Skrynia is yet understudied in Ukrainian academia, and it has had more representation in the last twenty years, when many of the memoirs, commemoration projects, and public events on the legacy of Chubai, Lysheha, and other authors take place. The amount of academic works that involve Skrynia is very limited, and they mainly involve exclusively the perspective of the literary analysis, and thus, are not very useful for this project. However, I use projects that are becoming popular in the public sphere, including movies with interviews and memories from Skrynia’s participants, Chubai’s friends, and acquaintances. “Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu” (“Chubai: To Speak Again”) (2020), directed by Mikhail Krupievsky, and “Chubai” (2014) by Oleksandr Frazze-Frazenko that are used as the statements of the contemporaries here. Besides that, books of memories like *Polum’ia vidihriie pam’iat. Spohady*

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<sup>16</sup> Kostiantyn Moskalets. “Piat medytatsii na ‘Plach Yeremii’” [Five Meditations on Jeremiah’s Cry], in *Hra tryvaie: Literaturna krytyka ta eseistyka* [The Game Goes On: Literary Criticism and Essay Writing] (Fact, 2006), 75

*pro Oleha Lyshehu* (“The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha”<sup>17</sup>), *Movchy, Movchy: Tonkyi Slid*<sup>18</sup> («Stay Silent, Stay Silent: A Thin Trace») by Vasyl Gabor, as well as some testimonies in the books like *Plach Yeremii* (“Jeremiah’s Cry”<sup>19</sup>), are used as the sources too.

Regarding the textual sources, I refer to the number of samvydavs. When discussing “Skrynia,” I use the reprinted copy of the issue, copied in 2000 from the original from 1971 by Vasyl Gabor. Thus, for the content of the samvydav, its details, and its characteristics, it is this version of “Skrynia” that I use. Besides this, I also recall the number of texts written by dissidents. I use the reprinted texts from the various publishing houses because of the lack of access to the originals.

To support some of my arguments and get another perspective on the events that took place around fifty years ago, I also use some of the interviews I recorded from 2019 till today. The use of the interviews in this research is somewhat limited, as most of the people who are essential for the narrative wrote down their memories in many previously mentioned works and in several personal blogs, Facebook posts, and other online platforms. When I approached some of the people for the interview, I would either receive a repetitive story that recalls everything they wrote down before, or I would be rejected because of the same reason – they wrote everything they remember. Thus, some of the clarifications I gathered are used in this research, but most personal trajectories are presented in the written sources.

## Skrynia – systemic and countercultural protest

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<sup>17</sup> *Polum'ia vidihriie pam'iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha], (Lviv: Piramida, 2019)

<sup>18</sup> Vasyl Gabor. *Movchy, Movchy: Tonkyi Slid* [Stay Silent, Stay Silent: A Thin Trace], (Lviv: Piramida, 2020)

<sup>19</sup> Hryhorii Chubai. *Plach Yeremii* [Jeremiah’s Cry] (Lviv, Calvaria, 2001)

The core of this research lies in the nature of Skrynia, both as the circle and as samvydav. From the distance of fifty years, its inner logic can be read so differently, not only because of the Soviet context and the specificity of the policy against the nonconformists that was becoming more radical in the early 1970s but also because of the set of personal relations of its participants to their past. Their memories, published in several books, reflections, and interviews, are forceful attempts to restructure and revise their teen years' events in the minds of grown-up people. And surely enough, these experiences became incredibly diverse. People from the Lviv underground still refer to Skrynia and Chubai's "kompaniia" as Lviv Bohemia. The seventiers (as the next generation following the sixtiers) see it as the high point of literary and, specifically, poetry's development. Others express concerns about Chubai and his role in the trial of Iryna Kalynets, sometimes even blaming him for being a KGB agent himself. That general pictures that can be easily put into quite radical connotations, nevertheless, state the fact: the story of Skrynia needs a revision from the historical perspective, not to find an abstract "objective truth" but to uncover the specificities of this circle for the context of the late 1960s and 1970s, where from all the perspectives Skrynia appears as relatively an unusual phenomenon.

When discussing the context of methodological and historical background from which Skrynia can be approached, some essential terms should be clarified. The theoretical basis I refer to comes from the work of the Birmingham School, a group of scholars from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, who, in the 1970s, developed the ontological differentiation between subculture and counterculture. Their approach to British youth culture was Marxist and heavily relied on the relations between social class and power.<sup>20</sup> Subcultures, therefore, were perceived as a working-class phenomenon, while countercultures became suitable for the middle class. Such division was explained

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<sup>20</sup> James Patrick Williams, "Youth-Subcultural Studies: Sociological Traditions and Core Concepts," *Sociology Compass* 1, no. 2 (2007): 575.

through the ideological reaction to the material conditions in which young people lived, eventually bringing them into opposition to the hegemonic bourgeois culture. Countercultures for the CCCS scholars were seen as a more politicized response to the class struggle from within the dominant culture and were significantly more individualized.<sup>21</sup> In the 1980s, the class factor in the subcultures was revised because of the development of the punk scene in Britain, which was closely studied. Punks signaled that the subculture, in its essence, can express the politicized resistance against the mainstream culture and, therefore, cannot be explained in terms of class only. Countercultures, in turn, also lost their class factor, and their previous position within the dominant or mainstream culture was also revised. Shortly after this turn, an alternative to the CCCS approach suggested studying post-subcultures as not defined and concrete groups but rather ways of connecting the visual style with the musical one.<sup>22</sup> And with the end of the 20th century and the overwhelming growth of the rave and club cultures (that started in the 1990s), CCCS mostly lost its predominance within the field.

I use the theoretical framework of the Birmingham School for this research as a basis to simplify and define the structure of the Lviv environment. CCCS' approach fits the context of capitalist Western Europe better than the Eastern Bloc, where youth consciousness is not built based on class. While the market economy characterizes the British context as having the possibility for competition and social stratification based on wealth and type of occupation, the Soviet system, which aimed to create a classless socialist state, did not allow such a stratification. While it is possible to talk about the Soviet middle class, it was never a part of the official Soviet discourse, and therefore, its occupation and status cannot be defined in the

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<sup>21</sup> This narrative can be noticed in a lot of the works from the CCCS most prominent scholars. See more in John Clarke et al., *Resistance through Rituals*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson. (London: Routledge, 1976) Roszak, Theodore. *The Making of a Counter Culture. Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition*. New York: Anchor Books, 1969.

<sup>22</sup> An interesting position in this regard is taken by Andy Bennet, who suggested the terms “neo-tribes” to explain the fluidity and the absence of determined social circles among youth. See Andy Bennett, “Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste,” *Sociology* 33, no. 3 (1999).

same way as in the Western context. Thus, the Birmingham School Marxist approach is unsuitable for the state socialist context. Still, because it is one of the most defined and comprehensive approaches to subcultural studies and provides a theoretical basis that touches upon youth involvement and self-positioning within the movement, it is the one I will use. Within the Lviv context, I suggest looking at the Skrynia circle as the countercultural phenomenon that corresponds with the characterization of the counterculture provided by one of the CCCS theorists, John Milton Yinger. In his words, the “term counterculture is appropriately used whenever the normative system of a group contains, as a primary element, a theme of conflict with the dominant values of society, where the tendencies, needs, and perceptions of the members of that group are directly involved in the development and maintenance of its values, and wherever its norms can be understood only by reference to the relationship of the group to the surrounding dominant society and its culture.”<sup>23</sup> With this in mind, I propose exploring Skrynia circle as the environment that is, foremost, in permanent opposition on the systemic level with the Soviet system – because of nonconformist thinking, expressed through the acts of creation of samvydav, engagement with the sixtiers literature and keeping contact with dissidents. This factor suggests quite a wide circle of Soviet Ukrainians in Lviv and other cities and, therefore, does not necessarily suggest the countercultural environment of the group.

Another factor is conscious silencing and stepping outside Skrynia’s dissident narrative. The typical nonconformist path for those producing their texts was usually built through the dissident activity and the alternative youth – often subcultures, mainly engaging with the organization of third places and leisure, such as listening to music or performing in self-organized bands. Skrynia, in this context, combined both and simultaneously was relatively isolated in terms of its principal activity – samvydav. Repeatedly, the authors of “Skrynia”

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<sup>23</sup> John Milton Yinger, *Countercultures: The Promise and Peril of a World. Turned Upside Down*, (New York: Free Press, 1982), 22-23.

samvydav mentioned that the texts they produced were never meant to be spread, nor were they for sharing with the public. For example, Oleh Lysheha explained to the KGB officers that the quality of work of the literary circle at the university did not satisfy him, and he did not have enough poems to send them to republican publishing houses separately. Because of that, together with friends, they decided to collect their work together without aiming to distribute it.<sup>24</sup> This explanation can both be read as an attempt to protect the authors and justify the presumably anti-Soviet activity and, alternatively, as an artistic goal for the hermeticism and art isolated from the social and political issues – art for the art’s sake, as can also be commonly explicitly seen in Chubai’s testaments.

The artistic isolation of Skrynina is another factor of the countercultural nature of this group since its silence can be explained only by the dominant Soviet culture. Many Soviet artists remained unpublished, censored, and never published in the official media. However, in the case of Skrynina, it is a conscious choice, not determined by the official norms – the authors existed almost parallel to official discourse and did not interact with it. Nevertheless, in this demonstrative ignoring of the official discourse, the real intentions of Chubai’s circle can be traced.

Another factor of the counterculture, in opposition to subculture and alternative culture, is its conflict with the dominant culture or the mainstream. The level of the radicalization and escalation of such a conflict varies depending on the historical context as well – British postwar counterculture in a more liberal environment could escalate its protest up to direct confrontations, actions with aggression, and ominous violence (such as punks’ radicalization at Notting Hill Carnival, Grunwick, Lewisham and Ladywood in the late 1970s).<sup>25</sup> The context of East-Central Europe under socialism differs significantly: the countercultural circles existed on

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<sup>24</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha”. Sectoral state archive of the Security Service of Ukraine (later SSU), F.6, op. 75513, f.2, p.128

<sup>25</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, (London: Methuen, 1979), 87

the outskirts of the state control, aiming to limit the confrontation with the regime for as long as possible. The state apparatus with the strong surveillance and the general growth in the distrust of the neighbors and people on the streets forced the counterculture to act differently: in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union, one can find similar patterns of young people, whose countercultural trajectory escalated from the creation of the alternative spaces where they could feel “free” or at least “freer,” to more sophisticated intellectual acts of international solidarity and approaches towards the revision of communism.<sup>26</sup> This is where one can trace the most significant difference between the Western and East-Central European counterculture: they both aim for the subversion of the system with its values and norms, but the methods differ. In Theodore Roszak’s words, Western counterculture is “a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as a culture at all but takes on the alarming appearance of a barbaric intrusion.”<sup>27</sup> Counterculture under socialism (even though indeed to a very different extent based on the country) can even be read as more flexible and indirect towards the regime, specifically towards the police as the primary force that represents the state. Still, this fact does not in any way make it less severe or sufficient.

One more essential factor of the alternative environment in East-Central Europe is the spaces of subcultures. Characteristically quite like the Western ones described by Birmingham School, subcultures are defined by how their commodities (style, consumption rituals, specific attitudes, and patterns of behavior) are used. According to Hebdige, these markers can help uncover the secret identity of the person, and this marks the subculture off from more orthodox

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<sup>26</sup> By international solidarity by the counterculture, I mean the type of actions that brought together the intellectuals and underground in different countries of the Eastern Bloc under the common resistance to the Soviet politics. Among them I would highlight the letter of solidarity with Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, signed by 34 Hungarian intellectuals; close connections between the Budapest School and Praxis circle; the full support of Charter 77 to Polish Solidarity in 1980 and 1981; the engagement and sympathy to Prague Spring in 1968 by Polish, Soviet, Hungarian parts of the Socialist Bloc.

<sup>27</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture. Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 42.

cultural formations.<sup>28</sup> Subcultures, most frequently studied through the relation of working-class youth within the parental culture, can offer an interesting analogy in the context of Soviet Lviv. Phil Cohen, famous for his research in the London East End, was more profound in defining the subculture as the one characteristic of the working-class youth, whose protest was targeted at the hegemonic culture. Cohen traced the change in the working class itself and analyzed how the postwar British working class went through the reconstruction of the local economy that essentially polarized the class by two opposing types of social mobility: “upwards into the ranks of the new suburban working-class elite or downwards into the ‘lumpen.’”<sup>29</sup> These changes impacted both younger and older generations, and in the case of the youth, these shifts took different forms, from social and material to cultural and ideological. Ideological revision of the socioeconomic shift, according to Cohen, was the one that caused the differentiation between subcultures and how they interacted.<sup>30</sup>

Something similar, but simultaneously very different, can be traced in the context of the Socialist Bloc. While the alternative culture in the broader interpretation generally shaped itself as the one confronting the parental culture, in the narrower case of the subcultures (in the case of the Soviet Union, the leading role was played by hippie culture), it also was combined with the social background and economic status. For example, in the context of Lviv, the Republic of the Holy Garden was the central spot for the hippie community and other alternative youth. The territory of an abandoned Order of Barefoot Carmelites monastery in the city’s center became the primary place for everyday gatherings, leisure, music, and Western radio listening from 1968 to 1982. Teenagers in the age range from fourteen to twenty years old were coming from various areas of the city and different socioeconomic and intellectual backgrounds: “rockers, pacifists, local hooligans, chuvaky (“dudes”) children of high ranks of the Communist

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<sup>28</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, 103.

<sup>29</sup> Clarke et al., *Resistance through Rituals*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> Phil Cohen, “Subcultural Conflict and Working-class Community,” *Rethinking the Youth Question* (1997), 59.

Party, descendants of Sich Riflemen, hippies, children from quite intelligent, religious Galician families.” The geographical diversity of the Garden was also quite broad. Despite the location in the center of Lviv, people were coming from the city’s outskirts and newly industrialized areas.<sup>31</sup> This way, the social component of the most subcultural place in Soviet Lviv combines simultaneously two contradictions that Cohen pointed out: subcultural and territorial conflicts. While the first one is supposed to signal the highly ritualized defense of youth against a transition to adult life, the second means to root the subculture in the situation of its community. Both displace and weaken the dynamics of generational conflict, a displaced form of the traditional parameters of class conflict.<sup>32</sup> In Lviv, the gatherings of the different smaller units of the subcultural and alternative youth in one common place that developed its values, symbolical unity, and joint leisure made a ground where the very diverse subcultures united under the ideas of the symbolical opposition.

### Anti-political and metapolitical politics

The symbolical opposition, characteristic of subcultural and countercultural spaces in Lviv, requires two more terms to help place Lviv circles in the dynamic with the Soviet regime. The notions of anti-politics and metapolitics are defining, since both help specify the type of non-direct involvement in political discourse regarding the vertical hierarchy with the state. While the term anti-politics is used more frequently in the scholarship that engages with the dissident opposition in East-Central Europe, specifically in the studies on Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, the term metapolitics can be seen primarily in studies on far-right ideologies and is rarely applicable to the non-Western context. When discussing anti-politics, I refer to the conscious choice to reject involvement in the existing political sphere, defined by the ruling power and/or the state. Anti-politics, as a trend in political philosophical thought, is the reaction

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<sup>31</sup> Ilko Lemko. Interview with the author, 23.11.2019.

<sup>32</sup> Cohen, “Subcultural Conflict and Working-class Community,” 61.

to life in a totalitarian regime where the political and civil engagement of the citizen is defined exclusively by the engagement with the dominant power. In response, dissidents hoped to abolish the ideological discourse by moving political activism to civil society. Therefore, unlike apoliticism, anti-politics does not reject engagement with the matter of political life but moves this sphere outside of the conventional and dominant sphere of politics. The ideas of “antipolitics” in the works by George Konrád<sup>33</sup> and Adam Michnik<sup>34</sup>, or “nonpolitical politics” in the texts by Vaclav Havel,<sup>35</sup> suggest ideas of civil society’s resurrection and active involvement in the community, quite often on the level of the region or city. Therefore, when attributed to dissident circles, anti-politics explicitly stresses the importance of personal involvement in the community’s life here and now instead of in the future. When translated to the context of the non-dissident circles, the rejection of the institutions and institutionalization stimulates the simultaneous growth and development of the personal spheres of praxis and micro publics, such as the underground.<sup>36</sup> The underground then does not simply imply dropping out of the system of institutional organization but also may reject the whole notion of traditional political definitions. Because of that, subcultures might be presented as anti-political when their views on social, economic, and ideological matters signal their non-apoliticism, but at the same time, their views cannot be defined by the lenses of left or right. As it can be explicitly shown in the context of the Slovenian counterculture from the 1980s, “politics does not express the ability of men to change the world but only the politicians’ will to dominate.”<sup>37</sup>

Among the scholarship and the existing trajectories of the East-Central European underground, there is one that I consider the closest one regarding the structure and type of

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<sup>33</sup> George Konrád, *Antipolitics: an Essay* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984)

<sup>34</sup> Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)

<sup>35</sup> Vaclav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless* (London: Erasmus Foundation, 1986)

<sup>36</sup> Trever Hagen, “Converging on generation: Musicking in normalized Czechoslovakia,” *East Central Europe* 38, no. 2-3 (2011): 314

<sup>37</sup> Oskar Mulej, “‘We Are Drowning in Red Beet, Patching Up the Holes in the Iron Curtain’: The Punk Subculture in Ljubljana in the Late 1970s and Early 1980s,” *East Central Europe* 38, no. 2-3 (2011): 381.

mutual influence to Skrynia in Soviet Lviv. The creation of Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia is a fitting example of anti-political thought because of a confluence of both the underground and the intellectual circles. The trial of a nonconformist psychedelic rock band, The Plastic People of the Universe (PPU), was the impetus for creating the document calling for recognition of fundamental human rights.<sup>38</sup> The trial of PPU in 1976 because of the accusation of “disturbing of peace” was a part of the more extensive campaign of the Czechoslovak government targeting the broader circles of the nonconformist since even among the arrested were people like Ivan Martin Jirous, not a musician but a PPU’s artistic director, as well as Pavel Zajíček, a member of another famous underground band DG 307, and others.

The members of PPU, as many people from the 1970s Czech underground, were not interested in politics but in the perspective of the nonpolitical politics promoted by Havel. Their nonconformism and “freedom to play rock music was understood as a human freedom thus as essentially the same as the freedom to engage in philosophical and political reflection.”<sup>39</sup> While this understanding and the role of the PPU and the underground in general in the creation of Charter 77 can be read as concrete evidence of the overlap and interrelationship between their circles with the dissidents, it also is in line with Havel’s metaphysical perception that Charter’s origin was in the appeal to morality and conscience.<sup>40</sup> And that, in a way, undermines the dissidents’ engagement with the questions of human rights and their critical attitude to the economic and environmental policies adopted in the later statements of Charter 77.<sup>41</sup> Because of these, the approach to anti-political engagement requires close attention, precisely when it is studied through the connections of groups with different levels of political engagement.

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<sup>38</sup> Bolton, *Worlds of dissent*, 115

<sup>39</sup> Havel, *The Power of the Powerless*, 47.

<sup>40</sup> Bolton, *Worlds of dissent*, 271.

<sup>41</sup> H. Gordon Skilling, “Dissent and Charter 77,” in *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*. (St. Antony’s College of Oxford: The Macmillan Press, 1989), 50.

Metapolitics should also be introduced here. In political philosophy, anti-politics is frequently used when referring to a more critical and challenging attitude toward the existing political system, even if such criticism may not take the form of open opposition. Anti-politics generally criticizes the regime's inefficiency and, in some contexts (for example, in the dissident circles of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary), engages with the growth of civil society, as discussed before. On the contrary, metapolitics is more inclusive in how non-state actors engage with political matters. In the broader sense, metapolitics is not as focused on the instant local changes as anti-politics is but instead attempts to find the paths for the potential subversion of the existing regime in a long-term perspective through the essentially non-politicized actions, such as literature, culture, etc.

In comparison, metapolitics involve much more space for philosophy, sociology, and anthropology – the studies of the patterns of behavior and thinking. Metapolitics are more challenging to interpret because each of these patterns would involve a significant role of individual agency and position. If there is one thing that can be learned from the interrogation documents of the KGB officers, it is that everything can be read politically. There have not been many attempts to introduce metapolitics to the context of East-Central European history, even when talking about nonconformist activity in relation to state power. Among the limited research involving the concept of metapolitics, some efforts were made in the study of Romanian literature by Ioana Macrea-Toma, who took the classical theory of metapolitics suggested by French philosopher Alain Badiou<sup>42</sup> and offered the alternative reading of it in the context of contemporary Romania. While Badiou's idea was in the direct action of politics in thought and in switching the thinking from interpreting the world to thinking, Macrea-Toma argued that it can be possible through layering the levels of engagement, as “rethinking civic projects through literary forms capable of widening the postcommunist-nationalist thematics of

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<sup>42</sup> Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, Verso, 2005.

the literature in the region without losing sight of their concrete ethnocultural conditions.” The idea behind the focus on contemporary literary studies is directly on the engagement with the multiple ways in which the narrative in today’s society can be perceived through fiction and non-fiction, news and other media, and how the overlap of these ways contributes to what Badiou described as the consequences that philosophy gets from the actual instances of politics as thought.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in the context of this research, metapolitics can be applied precisely to the environment of the previously mentioned Republic of the Holy Garden. I consider the nature of the Skrynia to be rather anti-political because they engaged in the search for the alternative path of artistic freedom and chances to “live in truth,” in Havel’s words. However, the influence on Skrynia made by the alternative spaces with their metapolitical engagement helps to look at the Lviv space of the defined era more profoundly.

## The Structure of the Research

This work contains three chapters and presents the narrative in chronological order.

In the first chapter, I analyze the external factors that define Skrynia. Those involve the peculiarities of the postwar development of Soviet Lviv and the demographical and social aspects of the milieu. I also consider the generational aspect of Skrynia and interpret it in connection to the generation of the sixtiers and in the more global context of the baby boom generation and the influence of 1968 on the countries of East-Central Europe. Lastly, I draw the connection between the ideological influences of the dissidents' milieu on Skrynia. Those involve predominantly the ideas of national communism integral and democratic nationalism.

In the second chapter, I pay attention to the aesthetical matters of the milieu, their connection with the main alternative space in Lviv – the Republic of the Holy Garden, and the

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<sup>43</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, XXXIX.

involvement of Skrynia in the subcultural lifestyle. Later, I proceeded with the close reading of the samvydav “Skrynia” and looked at the poetry and texts printed there. I attempt to draw connections with the modernist literature and influences of Western philosophy and Eastern cultural traditions. I also suggest that although the authors of “Skrynia” positioned the samvydav as apolitical, there are some noticeable engagements with the dissident milieus and ideological tradition of the 1920s.

The last, third chapter, is dedicated to the KGB investigation in the first half of 1972. Using the official documents from the SSU archives, I attempt to interpret why and how Skrynia authors were engaged in the investigation. Through the transcripts of the interrogations of Chubai, Lysheha, and Riabchuk, I attempt to analyze the break with the dissident circle and the differences in the attitudes between the counterculture and dissidents. Additionally, I look closely at Chubai's behavior in the interrogations since his trajectory in this matter is rather exceptional.

## Chapter 1. Locating the Counterculture in Soviet Lviv

During the period from 1968 till 1973 in Soviet Ukraine, the regime pursued intensive repressions against all intellectuals and anyone they saw as nonconformist. It is precisely at that time when the events of the Skrynina story in Lviv took place. The circle of Lviv counterculture, which formed under the charismatic figure of Hrytsko (Hryhorii) Chubai, started as quite typical for the context of the East-Central Europe with a focus on intellectual and cultural discussions. Their activity also overlapped with the dissident path – an intellectual and activist criticism of the Soviet regime united under the ideas of the national discourses. These circles interacted because the Soviet system did not provide space for the pluralism of opinions, the oppositional circles more or less kept together, even when their ideological views or just lifestyles did not align completely. The *samvydav*<sup>44</sup> entitled “Skrynina” was printed in the fall of 1971. It signaled that the circle of young Lviv countercultural members, who initially seemed to be patronized by the older and more politically oppositional generation of dissidents, was now taking its own path. Initially the type of almanac published by the group was entirely artistic and did not touch upon any political or even social issue. The second year the KGB seized the publication and

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<sup>44</sup> *Samvydav*, the Ukrainian term for the Russian *samizdat*, is a form of dissident activity for spreading of the literature that was not allowed to be published officially. The practice started in Soviet Russia, where the illegal distribution of “Doctor Zhivago” by Boris Pasternak took place already in the late 1950s, along with the unofficial literary magazine, *Syntax*, edited by Alexander Ginzburg. (See Thomas Crump, *Brezhnev and the Decline of the Soviet Union*, (Routledge, 2013), 105). In comparison with other countries of the Soviet Bloc, the practice of self-publishing developed in Ukraine quite early – as it is noticeable here, it was quite widely known already by the time of mid 1960s. Surely, the strict censorship of the Soviet Union forced *samvydav* to develop faster there than it was in the other countries, like Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary, where the culture of self-printing developed mostly throughout the 1970s. For these countries, it was Poland instead of the Soviet Russia that was seen as the example to follow regarding the practices of *samvydav*. The praising regarding Polish techniques of self-publishing were expressed specifically in Hungary (see Adrian-George Matus, “The Long 1968 in Hungary and Its Legacy,” in ed. Aleksandra Konarzewska, Anna Nakai, and Michał Przeperski, *Unsettled 1968 in the Troubled Present: Revisiting the 50 Years of Discussions from East and Central Europe*, (Routledge, 2020), 48; Tamás Szőnyei, “Kept on File: The Secret Service's Activities against Popular Music in Hungary, 1960–1990,” *East Central Europe* 38, no. 2-3 (2011): 201). In the case of Czechoslovakia the tradition of self-printing is absent before the late 1970s, as in the case of the magazine *Vokno*, distributed since 1979 (See Martin Machovec, “Charta 77 a underground” [Charter 77 and the underground], in *Charta 77. Od obhajoby lidských práv k demokratické revoluci 1977-1989. Sborník z konference k 30. výročí Charty 77* [Charter 77. From the defense of human rights in the democratic revolution 1977– 1989. Proceedings of the conference on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charter 77], ed. Devátá, Markéta, Jiří Suk, Oldřich Tůma. Prague: ÚSD AV ČR, 2007.

expelled its participants from the universities and from the workplaces. None of the contributors to the *samvydav* was arrested. However, the KGB's interrogation of Hrytsko Chubai led to the arrests of the well-known Lviv dissidents Iryna Kalynets and later her husband Ihor Kalynets. Skrynia, in this context, was threatening because of its participants' close connection with those whom the state saw as serious enemies – dissidents. The small case, which can be seen as local and quite precise, turns out to be a quite rare opportunity to research the connections between the counterculture and the dissident circles – environments that, under the Soviet regime, both counted as antagonistic to the government and developed robust networks and connections, based on trust and mutual understandings in order to survive. As is seen in the case of Skrynia, it failed in doing so but left more than enough sources and evidence to look closely at how and why that happened.

The story I am about to tell – remains a story about people. This is a story about people defined by their families, the places they were born, the households they lived in, and the other people they were surrounded by. On a more profound level, these people are defined by their economic class, their ethnicity, and demographic background, by the language they spoke with their parents and their friends, and because of the peculiarity of the time they lived in, by the radio they listened to, and information they consumed. Despite possessing detailed information about these aspects, it remains challenging to fully understand why these people acted, spoke, and thought as they did. The *habitus*, the individual characteristics, and such simple and fundamentally non-explainable things as mood or attitude towards others can never be fully comprehended. Instead, the analysis and research provide a framework that potentially explains sources for Lviv's (anti)political thinking. Therefore, in this chapter I aim to comprehensively depict the social, cultural, and intellectual milieu in which a group of young people existed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this chapter, I will provide an analytical overview of the external factors that, to some extent, defined the Skrynia on the primary level. I will take a

closer look at the topics of the urban and sociodemographic development of Soviet Lviv, the role of the intellectual generations in Ukraine, and the broader context of the European generations formed and radicalized by the 1968 events. Lastly, I will attempt to trace the main intellectual influences on Skrynia and then proceed to the next chapter with a deeper analysis of Skrynia's intellectual production.

### 1.1. Who creates Lviv, and whom does Lviv create?

The generation of Lviv youth that came to age already in the 1960s was a generation that never knew life before the Soviet regime. According to Mannheim, a generation in this context should be perceived as a social phenomenon defined by shared experiences and socio-historical contexts, not simply by an age group or birth cohort.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, what matters here are the essential phases of socialization, such as university years, first jobs, relationships, and marriages. All of these, in the case of the Skrynia, already happened in Soviet Lviv, with a very rapidly changed social strata. The Sovietization of the city, which took place after Western Ukraine occupied by the Soviet Union in 1944, greatly influenced how the city looked and the people who lived there. The ethnologist Aleksandra Matyukhina pointed out four main groups that populated Lviv in the postwar period and who influenced the urban sphere. They were native Lviv families that lived in the city before 1939 and their descendants; people who moved to Lviv from the closest villages and neighboring cities in Western Ukraine; those who moved to Lviv from other Ukrainian oblasts; and those who moved from other Soviet republics. She suggested that among them, the second and the fourth groups were the most conservative and attached to their cultural models to the extent that they would reject any innovations and mostly

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<sup>45</sup> Karl Mannheim. "The problem of generations," *Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952).

stay isolated from other groups throughout the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>46</sup> People who moved from the rural regions proved themselves to be very resistant to the urban lifestyle – their life was still in the villages where they would go for weekends, and from where they brought back to Lviv traditional rituals, ethnic clothes, and the Ukrainian language. Those who moved to Lviv from more distant Ukrainian regions were coming there primarily to work at the newly built Lviv television plant “Electron” (1957) or “Kinescope” (1954) or for other types of work.<sup>47</sup> They were predominately workers, engineers, government officials, teachers, and doctors – often young and educated people, not attached to traditions or isolated hermetic values of the small communities. New locals from the other republics were primarily representatives of the military and intelligentsia – Sovietized and modernized by the regime and they settled in the specially built new areas of the city. They remained mostly isolated from the urban space.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the distinctions between the new locals were based not only on the level of conservatism or isolation but also on social class, ethnicity, and language.

The circle of Skrynia is a part of this environment. In 1968, all the people who later became the authors of “Skrynia” samvydav ended up in Lviv for different reasons that represent the demographic dimensions suggested by Matyukhina. Among the seven authors who formed the core of the circle, only two – Roman Kis’ and Kateryna Nemyra (maiden name – Aleksandrova), for the timeline in which most of the Skrynia events take place, she was married to Victor and held his last name) were born in Lviv. Kis’ father, a Lviv university historian, moved to Lviv from a small city in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast to study at the university in the 1930s and managed to stay in the city. Kis’ became the product of the ideas, that were coming from his more wealthy family from Western Ukraine, and therefore, graduated from the university from the faculty of philology before the prosecution after “Skrynia” members started.

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<sup>46</sup> Aleksandra Matyukhina, “Sovietskyi Lviv” [Soviet Lviv], *Krakiw i Lviv v Europeiskii Tsyvilisazii* [Kraków and Lviv in European Civilization], materials of the conference. (Kraków: 2004), 125.

<sup>47</sup> Risch, *The Ukrainian West*, 41.

<sup>48</sup> Matyukhina, “Sovietskyi Lviv,” 123.

Afterwards, he started work at the Museum of Ethnography as a researcher, but at the end of 1975, after the Higher Attestation Commission of the USSR forbade submission of dissertations for defense in languages other than Russian, Kis' refused to defend his work on family life of the Hutsuls in the Ukrainian Carpathians.

Nemyra's parents moved to Lviv from the small village on the city's outskirts, and her social position was to some extent one of the decisive for the life of the Underground – her father was a head of plywood production, and regularly used his high position to get his children and their friends from the detentions, went to the KGB office to stand in for them, provided them small jobs, and also was the person, because of whom Nemyra got access to the first dissident samvydavs.<sup>49</sup>

All the other members of the samvydav moved to the city without their families, all, except for Hrytsko Chubai, to study at the universities. Vasyl Haiduchok, Oleh Lysheha, and Victor Morozov moved to the city from either the villages or small cities in Western Ukraine. There is not a lot of the information about Haiduchok's life,<sup>50</sup> besides the fact that he studied at the faculty of journalism, and that for the participation in "Skrynia" he was expelled from his third year of studies and was immediately sent to the military. Afterwards, he struggled to find any jobs, and as a result, among all the people in the group, his life trajectory was destroyed the most.

Victor Morozov was another philology student who got expelled from the last year of studies because of "Skrynia" case, however, it served as a push to turn his hobby – music, into the main job. Known as a musician already in the late 1960s, Morozov became one of the most well-known artists and songwriters in Soviet Ukraine, who together with his vocal and instrumental ensemble Arnica, which was based on the merging of two Lviv groups Quo Vadis?

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<sup>49</sup> Kateryna Nemyra. Interview with the author. December 2023, Lviv, Ukraine.

<sup>50</sup> For the matter of clarification, I have to state that the author of this text and Vasyl Haiduchok are not related, despite the fact that author's grandfather held the same first and last name.

and Eureka in 1972, won the All-Union television contest Hello, we are looking for the talents! in Moscow. Right after returning from Moscow, Morozov as the other members of the band, were brought to the local authority because according to them, the song that won the contest – “Chorna Rillia Izorana” (“Black Arable Land is Plowed”), Ukrainian folk song was assumably containing harmful nationalistic echoes. The band was protected by the head of Pharmaceutical Company (based on which the band was organized).<sup>51</sup>

Oleh Lysheha came to Lviv from small city in Western Ukraine to study English philology at Lviv university, and was expelled in 1972. Starting in 1972, Lysheha served in the army in Buryatia, where in 1974 he began teaching English in a rural school in the Mukhorshibir’ district because of his English skills. It was also in Buryatia, where Lysheha became interested in Chinese philosophy and literature.

Mykola Riabchuk moved from Lutsk, one of the cities in northwestern Ukraine – the family of his mother moved from Kharkiv to Western Ukraine after the war, while his father was coming from a peasant family.<sup>52</sup> In comparison to most of people from the circle, he was a student at Lviv Polytechnic Institute, and therefore, did not engage originally much into humanities. He was expelled as others in 1972 but managed to graduate year after. Since his parents also moved to Lviv, Riabchuk got a rare opportunity to live in their old apartment since 1974, when parents received a new apartment from the Soviet state.

Chubai moved to Lviv from the village in the Rivne oblast and was the only one who moved there without any specific reasons or place to stay. This dynamic of the group plays out quite symbolically. People sometimes referred to as Lviv Bohemia or Lviv Underground had an artificially created belonging to the city that pushed them for to establish new contacts. This

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<sup>51</sup> Volodymyr Okarynskyi, “Rock music in everyday life of youth in Western Ukraine under the Soviet regime (1960–early 1980s),” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 3 (2005): 87.

<sup>52</sup> Iryna Pasternak et al., “Tse Bula Sprava Smaku. Rozмова z Mykoloiu Riabchukom” [It Was a Matter of a Taste. Discussion with Mykola Riabchuk], *Bunt pokolinnia: Rozмовы z ukrainskymy intelektualamy*. [Generational Rebellion: Discussions with Ukrainian Intellectuals], (Kyiv: Duh I Litera, 2004), 236.

also influenced the narrower social dynamic between them – Morozov and Lysheha were roommates in the university dormitory, later Morozov married Kateryna, and their newly created family settled in Lviv. Chubai married Halyna Savka, another Lviv family member, and they got one of the rooms in her parents' apartment. The absence of a permanent “home” for students made their connection with each other more substantial and more trustworthy. It also influenced an essential aspect of the special dimensions that counterculture took – the kvartyrnyky<sup>53</sup> they held in the apartments of Chubai's parents-in-law, the temporary residing in each other's apartments or rooms, and spending time in the bars and coffeeshops. All of these became the fundamental activities that created the circle. On the other hand, as thoughtfully pointed out by Kostiantyn Moskalets, all these non-local young people were free from the codification in the strict conservative values of the Lviv families. Since they came to the city mainly to study, they could quickly leave the city at some point without a strong attachment.<sup>54</sup> This is precisely what happened to most of them in the aftermath of the Skrynina events. They were not connected to the city on some sacralized level; therefore, they could behave with it and its behavioral rules way more freely in their activities.

Even with the rapid growth of the non-local population, Lviv was not fully Sovietized. The scholarship by Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian authors in the last thirty years debated the surprising disengagement of Lviv citizens with the Soviet regime. Scholars attempted to explain this through the various factors: Roman Szporluk approached the “strange politics of Lviv”<sup>55</sup> through the questions of economic and demographic policies, Yaroslav Hrytsak named Lviv a

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<sup>53</sup> The Ukrainian term, that corresponds to the Russian “kvartirnik” –an apartment performance, most often, of acoustic rock music, that became a central part of the Soviet youth experiences in the 1970s. Most frequently, it is perceived as Russians' underground rock music experience, but it can be observed in other republics as well. For the detailed research on the duality between youth and regime through the isolation in the apartment in that matter see Polly McMichael, “‘A room-sized ocean’: apartments in the practice and mythology of Leningrad's rock music,” in *Youth and rock in the Soviet Bloc: Youth cultures, music, and the state in Russia and Eastern Europe*, ed. William J. Risch (Lexington Books, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Moskalets, “Piat medytatsii na ‘Plach Yeremii,’” 68.

<sup>55</sup> Szporluk, “The Strange Politics of Lviv.”

“hidden capital”<sup>56</sup> and traced its development in the long durée of urban nationalism, paying specific attention to the Habsburgs’ legacy and Polish influence. William Jay Risch approached the city as the “Ukrainian West.”<sup>57</sup> He closely studied the cultural influences in the Soviet period, and Tarik Amar defined the paradox of the city<sup>58</sup> as the Soviets’ intended choice to create the nationally conscious urban working class.<sup>59</sup> In this research, I do not aim to take a stance in these debates. Still, occasionally, I refer to their approaches and arguments since they all agree that there was something unusual in the type of Soviet development in Lviv. That is precisely what I use when discussing the intellectual influences and aesthetic and artistic conditions under which the Lviv counterculture was developing. In the context of the counterculture and underground, in more broad terms, the non-Sovietized type of Lviv’s development is shown through the high level and quality of the information and literature that were brought to Lviv from abroad. The access to foreign radio stations, specifically the Polish ones, provided opportunities for the Lviv youth to be updated with the latest trends in the Socialist Bloc, including modernist literature, rock music, and less censored news. The radio stations, together with the opportunities for smuggling, as well as quite frequent visits of the foreigners in comparison with the other cities (those were primarily representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora that were visiting the dissidents), as well as the low level of the engagement with the Soviet government made Lviv truly closer to the countries of the Socialist Bloc, than to the Soviet republics on the Eastern side.

Because of Lviv’s location and relative openness to the Socialist Bloc, young people could quickly get the Polish translations of the existentialist philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Albert Camus and contemporary writers such as Sylvia Plath in the “Friendship”

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<sup>56</sup> Hrytsak, “Lviv – misto u zentri Yevropy.”

<sup>57</sup> Risch, *The Ukrainian West*.

<sup>58</sup> Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv*.

<sup>59</sup> Among them, Amar received the most extensive level of criticism. For the most precise and concrete criticism of this work see Shumylovych, “One Hundred Years of Solitude.”

bookstore.<sup>60</sup> For the Soviet city, these authors symbolized the “decadent” capitalist West, focused on individual matters instead of the common goods. Therefore, they were not encouraged to read. Despite this, Western existentialist and nihilistic philosophy found broad resonance among members of the Lviv underground. Within the memories from that time, the participants repeatedly mentioned that almost all of them read works by Friedrich Nietzsche,<sup>61</sup> Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, Thomas Stearns Eliot, David Herbert Lawrence,<sup>62</sup> and others. There was an alternative way of getting limited access to literature – through scientific libraries. One could replicate a text with the help of electrophotocopying machines like ER-620K, ER-420, and ERA, which were used in restoration workshops. Therefore, people who could access ERA machines frequently used them as an additional way of making money. One of the participants of the Lviv underground recalled that his acquaintance Lyonia worked in such a restoration workshop and frequently borrowed books from the scientific library in the name of his director, who had no idea about this and, thus, copied them for the price of 20 rubles per book – a very high price, that nevertheless found its customers.<sup>63</sup>

Another source of the “undesirable” literature was the periodicals – specifically Russian “Inostrannaia literatura” (“Foreign Literature”), established in 1955 by the Union of Soviet Writers, and Ukrainian “Vsesvit”<sup>64</sup> (“Universe”), that published exclusive Ukrainian translations of world classics and contemporary works of literature. As one of the contemporaries recalled - it seemed impossible how the editors Dmytro Pavlychko and Vitalii Korotych, managed to publish the newest modernist pieces in such a magazine. “Korotych was a collaborator, but a moderate one. He was very intelligent and literate - knew the limits to

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<sup>60</sup> Risch, *The Ukrainian West*, 85.

<sup>61</sup> Valerii Shalenko, “Oleh u dushi buv chudozhnykom” [In his soul, Oleh was a painter], *Polum'ia vidihriie pam'iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha], (Lviv: Piramida, 2019), 34.

<sup>62</sup> Taras Pastuch, *Mosty Oleha Lyshehy* [Bridges of Oleh Lysheha], (Lviv: Piramida, 2019), 53.

<sup>63</sup> Shalenko, “Oleh u Dushi Buv Khudozhnykom,” 34.

<sup>64</sup> “Vsesvit” - the oldest periodical, established in 1925 in Kyiv, by previously mentioned Mykola Khvylovyyi and other Ukrainian authors Oleksandr Dovzhenko and Vasyl Ellan-Blakytnyi. In 1934 it was closed and most of its authors were repressed and killed by the Soviet regime. The periodical was renewed in 1958 and exists till today.

which he could climb so that everything ended with impunity.”<sup>65</sup> These judgments are hard to accept because of the lack of evidence. The possibility of publishing within the Soviet regime can be accounted in the separate research. Still, for this topic, one thing should be noted – the possibilities for printing and translations existed in the Soviet context, and all the youth had to do was know where to look.

Members of “Skrynia” recalled their intellectual influences in a very profound and detailed way. It seems like even after a distinct period, those who contributed to different projects about the 1970s shared the memories in the interviews, articles or books, are still proud of that upbringing. Even when observing from a distance in time, the type of literary education and the level of the scholarly discussions that took place in Lviv are impressive, when considering that part of the group did not have anything in common with humanities in their educations, or, as in the case of Chubai, did not have a university education whatsoever. Here comes a significant part of the Lviv counterculture – it was very engaged with the broader public discussions that generally could not take place in the Soviet space. On the one hand, the types of literary evenings and poetry reading sessions were something prevalent for the Soviet space, typical kvartyrnyky, or gatherings of *kompaniia*, that Juliane Fürst positioned as the significant phenomenon of a period of transition from thaw to stagnation.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the nature of these discussions did not fit into the Soviet space because they were happening on the topics beyond the social realism. The Soviet regime could perceive the content of these discussions as something that promote bourgeois and clericalist influences from the West. Engaged closely with the American and European modernist tradition, Lviv counterculture embraced the culture of literary discussions from the capitalist world – the context, where the

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<sup>65</sup> Vlodko Kaufman, “Vin strashno ne liubiv poverkhovosti” [He terribly disliked superficiality], *Polum'ia vidihriie pam'iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha], (Lviv: Piramida, 2019), 88.

<sup>66</sup> Juliane Fürst, “Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomenon of the *Kompaniia* among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s,” in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2006), 229.

idea they were trying to justify in all of their artistic activity – “Art for art’s sake,” could take place. The countercultural element of the Lviv circle here is almost tragic – all their existence, the gatherings, their interaction with each other as well as with the broader circles of artists and poets, dissidents and hippies, aimed to look like they lived in the free society – in this sense, Lviv counterculture adopted the anti-political matter that was previously described regarding Havel and other East-Central European dissidents – they decided to “live in truth.”

## 1.2. Who was there before, and who came after?

The preceding generation to the Skrynja – sixtiers, was decisive in their upbringing. However, even geographically, whether in the capital Kyiv, or in Lviv, their trajectories varied. When discussing the role of Lviv for the underground, Hrytsak somehow was correct – Lviv was a hidden capital, since the importance of the city, which was close to the Polish border, for the nonconformists was undeniably more significant than that of the actual capital, Kyiv in central Ukraine. Lviv had some essential advantages, specifically in the samvydav literature and access to the music market – it was also noticeable in the regions of Eastern Ukraine. As in the case of Dnipropetrovsk (nowadays Dnipro), Lviv was the leading supplier of Western records and local music – apparently, Western Ukrainian music from the amateur rock bands also gained some recognition there in 1970.<sup>67</sup> When discussing Lviv space with Kyiv, I would argue that Kyiv circles engaged directly with the existing public sphere (even when the original Habermas’ term does not fit in perfectly in the conditions of the authoritarian state)<sup>68</sup>. In contrast, Lviv engaged more in creating an alternative public sphere. This idea comes from Fraser’s criticism of Habermas’ perception of the public sphere, and she suggests that there are

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<sup>67</sup> Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnipropetrovsk, 1960-1985*, (Washington, D.C.: Baltimore, Md: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), 95.

<sup>68</sup> Jiirgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 51.

multiple public spheres, and their simultaneous existence does not signal the decrease of the public sphere but constitutes the necessary part of a progressive trend toward greater inclusiveness.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the dynamics of the Kyiv and Lviv circles, while being significantly different, played well together, and specifically, regarding the sixties generation and its dissident part, helped in the establishment of the whole set of network and communication that helped to protect some of the actors of the movement during the repressions.

A more profound understanding of the context of the Ukrainian 1960s is needed to comprehend the specificity of the environment in which “Skrynia” events took place. What Ukrainians call *sixtiers*, is the generation of the cultural intelligentsia, whose main activity was dedicated to art, literature, cinematography, history, journalism, translation, and other spheres of culture and science, contributed to the liberal narratives and the national cultural movement that focused on bringing up the topics of the psychological and cultural legacy of Stalinist terror.<sup>70</sup> They created their main works during the thaw period, which provided the liberalization of the cultural and social spheres of life. However, the liberalization was temporary. In 1964, when Nikita Khrushchev was ousted as General Secretary of the CPSU and was replaced by a collective leadership led by Leonid Brezhnev, the arrests of the intellectuals, the closing of the Club of Creative Youth in Kyiv, cancellation of the literature events took place.<sup>71</sup> It was in 1965 when the first open protest action against the arrests of the *sixtiers* happened. At the premiere of the movie by Sergii Parajanov, “Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors,” in Kyiv, the *sixtiers*, who then explicitly turned into dissidents, Ivan Dziuba, Viacheslav Chornovil, and Vasyl Stus, spoke out about the injustice regarding the arrests.

The first wave of arrests of *sixtiers* started in 1965. The literature evenings were canceled, informal gatherings were interrupted, and official printing of some texts was

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<sup>69</sup> Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” ed., Craig Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 109-111.

<sup>70</sup> Jarosław Bilocerkowycz, *Soviet Ukrainian Dissent: A Study of Political Alienation* (Routledge, 2019), 22.

<sup>71</sup> Bilocerkowycz, *Soviet Ukrainian dissent*, 24-25.

forbidden. Some people lost their jobs, blamed for “formalism,” “idleness,” and most often for “bourgeois nationalism.” However, this wave did not stop the movement. It made it more radical – the literature disappeared from official printing and went to the self-printed production – samvydav, and the protests became more regular and visible. The second wave of repression started in 1972. The repressive actions in the Ukrainian SSR were different from those in other regions of the Soviet Union and involved some methods of repression that the Soviet government practiced for the last time in 1937, for example, pressure through threats to family members.<sup>72</sup> The lack of objective data makes it hard to say how many activists were arrested. Russian samizdat *Khronika tekushchikh sobytiy* (“Chronicle of Current Events,” 1968-82) assumed there were around 100 people detained in January-May 1972 in Ukraine.<sup>73</sup> They also provided the details and biographies of those prominent figures in the national movement who were arrested throughout that time, and they also mentioned Chubai, along with the artist Stephania Shabatura, among the people detained in Lviv.<sup>74</sup> Still, even those sources stated that the data was incomplete<sup>75</sup>. Kasianov also cross-referenced the research by Lyudmila Alekseeva, who said that 89 people were arrested, even though not all of them were brought to court. According to her, out of this number, 72 people belonged to the intelligentsia and 17 to the working class. Out of those, 41 people were arrested in Lviv and Kyiv, and the remaining 16 in other Ukrainian cities (Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi). Additionally, hundreds, if not thousands, of people, were summoned by the investigators and brought to the court as witnesses<sup>76</sup> - some members of “Skrynia” samvydav,

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<sup>72</sup> Georgiy Kasianov, *Nezghodni: Ukrainska Intelihentsiia v Rusi Oporu 1960–80 rokiv* [Dissent: Ukrainian intelligentsia in the resistance movement of the 1960s and 1980s], (Kyiv, 1995), 126.

<sup>73</sup> “Obyski, Doprosy, Aresty” [Searches, Interrogations, Arrests] *Khronika tekushchikh sobytiy* [Chronicle of Current Events], Issue 25, May, 1972. Accessed 26 May, 2024 <https://hts.memo.ru>

<sup>74</sup> “Obyski, Doprosy, Aresty.”

<sup>75</sup> Kasianov, *Nezghodni*, 126.

<sup>76</sup> Lyudmila Alekseeva, *Istoriia inakomyслиia v SSSR: Noveishii period* (“The history of dissent in the USSR: The newest period”). (Moscow, 1992), 23. In Georgiy Kasianov, *Nezghodni: Ukrainska Intelihentsiia v Rusi Oporu 1960–80 rokiv* [Dissent: Ukrainian intelligentsia in the resistance movement of the 1960s and 1980s] (Kyiv, 1995), 126.

such as Hrytsko Chubai, Oleh Lysheha, and Mykola Riabchuk, were among them as well (and Chubai's transition from the position of the suspect to the witness in the investigation will be covered more closely in the Chapter 3).

The new generation found themselves in the Sovietized but not non-Ukrainized environment, where the population was changed and defined by the frames of Lviv belonging. It was also raised in the period of social and cultural liberalization that was suddenly interrupted. The teenagers, born primarily in the early 1950s, were a part of the much more global concept – the Baby Boom. Despite the differences in upbringing and national politics, the whole generation of children born during the substantial demographic increase after the war experienced quite similar tendencies. These teenagers came to age in a period of massive economic shifts, where, in the context of the Western countries, they would be the beneficiaries of the welfare state and new educational possibilities.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, in the context of the Socialist Bloc, they experienced mainly the tightening of state ownership and the centralized economy. However, simultaneously, the growth of urbanization signaled the appearance of new social dynamics. On more social and personal levels, in Western and East-Central Europe, young people experienced a rapid and intense break with the parent culture, which previously was one of the primary sources of support and security. They rapidly became the battlefield for the disintegration of the community structures.<sup>78</sup> Youth who suddenly became alienated from the parental culture eventually became the vanguard of social change<sup>79</sup> – because of the unstable position of the economy, significant shifts from the values held by the older generations, and the growth of education opportunities. The gap between these generations also turned out to be more politicized. In postwar Western Europe, the birthtime displaced the class category as a more significant indicator of a social position.<sup>80</sup> It happened because of the overlap between the

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<sup>77</sup> Clarke et al., *Resistance through Rituals*, 22.

<sup>78</sup> Cohen, "Subcultural Conflict and Working-class Community," 56.

<sup>79</sup> Clarke et al., *Resistance through Rituals*, 198.

<sup>80</sup> Clarke et al., *Resistance through Rituals*, 22.

social and economic change that, in a way, shifted families between the classes, mostly because they became the beneficiaries of the welfare state. In the Socialist Bloc, interestingly enough, a similar directive was coming not from below but from the state itself. “Youth” as constructed in the language of the state term was very close to the notion of a “class” and was used as a part of the policy attempting the ideological upbringing of the young people, addressing them more concretely.<sup>81</sup>

The sixtiers did not have much in common with the general tendencies of the 1960s from East-Central or Western Europe for very understandable reasons – they were the products of very different generations. Sixtiers were born primarily in the late 1930s and entered the sphere of cultural and intellectual debates in their late twenties – early thirties. Therefore, even though the main activity of the sixtiers overlapped with the period of the 1968 uprisings and the process of the youth radicalization that preceded it, the conditions for that differed significantly. In Ukraine, no generation of 1968 would be defined by a revolution, as in the case of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, the Warsaw uprising, or Belgrade protests. Besides the small protest against the invasion on Red Square in Moscow, which was detained a few minutes after the beginning,<sup>82</sup> there was no visible revolutionary protest of 1968 in Soviet space. A similar phenomenon, but in the case of East Germany, was previously observed by Stefan Wolle, who carefully noted that even despite the absence of the 1968 revolutionary events or any significant movement on a big scale in East Germany, a lot of people, specifically those born in the 1945-1950s, highlighted 1968 as a turning point in their biographies. According to Wolle, the dream of revolt and a more precise idea of socialism with more significant individual freedoms was created by this generation despite the events that took place. The East German dissident circles also frequently pointed out the 1968 importance as the event that pushed for

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<sup>81</sup> Sándor Horváth, “‘Wild West,’ ‘Gangster,’ and ‘Desperado’ Feelings: The Perception of the ‘West’ in Youth Subcultures in Hungary in the 1960s,” *East Central Europe* 38, no. 2-3 (2011), 185.

<sup>82</sup> Zbigniew Wojnowski, “The Impact of the Prague Spring on the USSR,” *Eastern Europe in 1968* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018), 14.

the emergence of the more recognized dissident movements in the 1970s-1980s.<sup>83</sup> It seems like something very similar took place in the Ukrainian context. Despite the absence of a big revolt, there was a generational solidarity with those who experienced it and those who did not.

The sixtiers' activities and the global 1968 revolutions happened primarily simultaneously, but they followed different trajectories of political thought. European 1968, while also not wholly homogenized in its senses, was triggered by "existential disgust," as one of the leaders from the German protests put it.<sup>84</sup> While it is evident that the Western youth was initiated for the action as a response to the Vietnam War, and the young people in East-Central Europe were responding to the Prague Spring, intellectual influences still mattered. Western political thought, in these terms, could be defined as "thought in motion" because it attempted to revive the philosophy of left-wing intellectuals, such as Louis Althusser and Marx, and the writings of the Frankfurt School. In the East-Central European context national authors and heroic figures that mattered for the national histories were rediscovered, and quite frequently, this was done through the prism of the left-wing ideology. For example, in the 1960s Czechoslovakia, the youth demanded rehabilitation of Tomáš Masaryk, against whom there was a whole intellectual campaign in the 1950s and writer Franz Kafka.

Along with them, Czech Marxist humanists, who were still very influential, continued the revival of the early Marx and Engels after being influenced by the Eastern critical Marxism from the Budapest school, the Polish school of the history of ideas, and the Yugoslav Praxis school.<sup>85</sup> Soviet Ukraine, in these terms, even though it was limited in space, attempted to revive national figures from the left perspective as well. The sixtiers themselves made the first noticeable attempt, which was brought up in the context of the questions that were one of the

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<sup>83</sup> Stefan Wolle, *Der Traum von der Revolte: die DDR 1968* [The dream of revolt: the GDR in 1968] (Ch. Links Verlag, 2008), 13-15.

<sup>84</sup> Jan Werner Müller, "What did they think they were doing?: The political thought of (The West European) 1968 revisited," in *Promises of 1968: Crisis, Illusion and Utopia* (Central European University Press, 2010), 76.

<sup>85</sup> Jan Mervart, "Czechoslovak Marxist humanism and the revolution," *Studies in East European Thought*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2017): 114.

most important for them - questions of the language and the right for national self-determination. “Internationalism or Russification?” by Ivan Dziuba, published in 1965, can probably be described as the most complete embodiment of these ideas. This work is often considered the manifesto of the sixtiers generation, and it appeared after the protest action of the same year. This work was sent with a letter with the protest against the political arrests to the party leadership of CPSU – Petro Shelest, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR. Later, it was also circulated among the regional party secretaries, sent to Moscow in a Russian translation, and adopted as the most popular samvydav in Ukraine of the 1960s.<sup>86</sup>

Written from a Marxist perspective, the text provides a deep analysis of Soviet national policy that, despite the notion of relying on the Leninist dogmas, went against it by continuing the Russification policies of tsarism. Dziuba challenged the myth of equality between the nations in the Soviet Union by stating the difference between the Russian population and non-Russians, noticing the number of printed materials in media by different contributors. This argument led to his explanation of how Ukrainian intelligentsia is alienated from the system, and therefore, the whole fundamental existence of the Ukrainian nation is threatened.<sup>87</sup> The highly critical text was still written from the ideological perspective that was only encouraged and promoted in Soviet Ukraine – Dziuba did not touch upon any dangerous questions, nor did he question the line in which Ukraine should develop. According to him, the Ukrainian future lies in the communist framework, which should be performed according to the original doctrine.

The reflections on the 1920s and the high praises of Leninist politics in Ukraine, signal Dziuba’s deep connection, both ideological and literary, with the 1920s tradition. Within the context of the Ukrainian dissident thought, it is quite an essential factor since it concludes the

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<sup>86</sup> Bilocerkowycz, *Soviet Ukrainian dissent*, 26.

<sup>87</sup> Ivan Dziuba, *Internatsionalizm chy rusyfikatsiia? [Internationalism or Russification?]* (Kyiv: Vydavnychiy dim “KM Akademiia,” 1998), Specifically chapters 12,14.

first presented tradition of dissident thought – a revival of the national communism of the 1920s. Dziuba, as well as the broader circles of the sixtiers, were closely engaged with the texts of the generation of the Executed Renaissance – the 1920s milieu of intellectuals that contributed to the ideological framework for the Ukrainian future within the newly created Soviet Union. While basing their arguments on Marxism-Leninism, they reflected on the future of Ukrainian culture in the broader framework of European culture. They contributed to the themes of individual freedom, artistic self-expression, human rights, and language questions.<sup>88</sup> Dziuba is an apparent descendant of this tradition, but what differentiated him from the literary sixtiers tradition and brought him closer to the dissident one was the fact that while sixtiers mostly revisited the literary texts by Mykola Khvylovyi, Mykola Kulish, Yevhen Pluzhnyk and others,<sup>89</sup> Dziuba returned to the transcripts of the congresses of the communist party of Lenin's time<sup>90</sup> and their statements about the national politics. Therefore his approach was more socially oriented than artistic.

The criticism of the Soviet national politics that Dziuba provided was tolerated only for as long as the national communist Petro Shelest was the First Secretary. Shelest supported the narrow circle of intellectuals, along with Dziuba, patronized them, and protected them from the charges of “bourgeois nationalism.”<sup>91</sup> In 1970, Dziuba made a capitulatory statement regarding his work “Internationalism or Russification?” under the pressure of the Soviet power. That way, he managed to maintain his literary activity till 1972, when Shelest was dismissed from his post and accused of being a “national deviationist” Dziuba was imprisoned shortly after for five years. However, in 1973, after a few months in prison, he “confessed” again and remained one of the few Ukrainian dissidents and the only prominent dissident who ultimately

<sup>88</sup> Radomyr Mokryk, *Bunt Proty Imperii: Ukrainski Shistdesiatnyky* [Revolt Against the Empire: Ukrainian Sixtiers], (Kyiv: A-ba-ba-ga-la-ma-ga, 2022), 195-200.

<sup>89</sup> Mokryk, *Bunt Proty Imperii*, 203-207.

<sup>90</sup> Ivan Dziuba, “Vid avtora: Z vidstani chverti stolittia,” 11, in Ivan Dziuba, *Internatsionalizm chy rusyfikatsiia?* [Internationalism or Russification?] (Kyiv: Vydavnychiy dim “KM Akademiia,” 1998).

<sup>91</sup> Shapoval. Partiinyi «natsionalist».... p.135

was forced to give up on their statements.<sup>92</sup> The dissident environment in Ukraine mainly judged Dziuba for this “act of weakness.” Still, in the end, Dziuba returned to literary and civil activity afterward and almost entirely regained his reputation. This way, Ukrainian sixtiers from the left wing, who most frequently opted for the revival of national communism from the 1920s, helped to set a path for the further rethinking the improvement of the existing social order in conditions where more open criticism was not possible.

On the dissident side, Dziuba’s national communism had a powerful opponent – another dissident from the sixtiers milieu, Valentyn Moroz, who became strongly associated with developing the far-right ideology of the same period. Moroz was one of the dissidents who became a victim of the first wave of repressions in 1965 and was sentenced to four years in the forced labor camp in Mordovia,<sup>93</sup> charged for the anti-Soviet and nationalist agitation, as well as propaganda.<sup>94</sup> While in the camp in 1967, he wrote the essay “A Report from the Beria Reserve,” which was smuggled out to Viacheslav Chornovil, who later sent it to the deputies of the Supreme Council. “Report from the Beria Reserve” immediately caused a lot of attention – the fact that it was smuggled out of the camp was quite an ironic and symbolic message that dissident activity cannot be stopped even when dissidents are imprisoned in the Soviet system. In the text, Moroz described the cruelty of the Soviet penitentiary system. The text, which was very direct and critical, did not aim to achieve the goals that Dziuba and many other dissidents had – he did not try to call for a constructive dialogue with the system; instead, he criticized its fundamental essence. The essay provided an immense amount of data – names, cases, direct descriptions of the violation of fundamental human rights – an essential component for the dissidents of the 1970-1980s when dissidents in East-Central Europe argued for more rights

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<sup>92</sup> Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Political Thought of Soviet Ukrainian Dissent,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1981).

<sup>93</sup> *Rukh oporu v Ukraini 1960–1990. Entsyklopedychnyi dovidnyk* [The resistance movement in Ukraine, 1960–1990. Encyclopedic guide], ed. Osyp Zinkewych (Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 2010), 443.

<sup>94</sup> Kasianov, *Nezghodni*. 53

based on human rights as defined by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moroz referenced emphasized the need for government representatives to follow the norms of the Soviet Constitution and the Constitution of Soviet Ukraine.<sup>95</sup> The KGB's abuse of power and the harsh conditions of the labor camps, in Moroz's opinion, were not just the struggles for Ukrainians, but for all non-Russian peoples.

Moroz inherited the ideology that interlinks very closely with the integral nationalism of Dmytro Dontsov – the main ideologist of interwar nationalism, who rejected all Russian influence and aimed to create a strong militaristic Ukrainian state.<sup>96</sup> There are no direct references to Dontsov in Moroz's works; however, as Lysiak-Rudnytsky noted, "...perspicacious readers had little difficulty in detecting the sources of his inspiration; certain passages in Moroz sound like paraphrases of Dmytro Dontsov."<sup>97</sup> The actual right-wing similarities between Dontsov and Moroz are based on the aim to maintain the pure national ideal at all costs, rejection of the pragmatic accommodation to the realities, a cult of the strong leader, and self-sacrifice for the nation.<sup>98</sup>

Moroz's fate was brutal: after his release in 1969, he returned to Ukraine, where he spent nine months and wrote a set of articles, among which was another critical work, "Amid the Snow," written in 1970. At this time, Chubai and his circle met Moroz and held some literary evenings with him at Kalynets' apartment. Moroz wrote "Amid the Snow" as a criticism of Ivan Dziuba and he "admitted" being wrong regarding his views expressed in "Internationalism or Russification?", Moroz referred to the concept of *oderzymist*, the expression of Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka, that means obsession or stubbornness, when the individual's obsession lets him inspire others and lead them to the big goal. According to Moroz, obsession was also the

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<sup>95</sup> Valentyn Moroz, *Reportazh iz Zapovidnyka Imeni Berii* [Report from the Beria Reserve], (Munich: Suchasnist, 1968), 7; 9; 11; 20; 34.

<sup>96</sup> For more in depth analysis of Dontsov's ideology see Trevor Erlacher. *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Age of Extremes: An Intellectual Biography of Dmytro Dontsov* (Harvard University Press, 2021).

<sup>97</sup> Lysiak-Rudnytsky, "The Political Thought of Soviet Ukrainian Dissent," 6.

<sup>98</sup> Lysiak-Rudnytsky, "The Political Thought of Soviet Ukrainian Dissent," 6.

power of the sixtiers, and it helped them break the fear of Stalinism and regain human dignity.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, one can note that Moroz's main principle for any action was based on individualism, and surely enough, that went against the collectivism of Soviet ideology. The duality of the power of the individual versus collectively obeying a system that does not value its citizens created a colossal gap that simple changes and reforms could not solve. The system, in Moroz's opinion, was determined. For such judgments, Moroz was punished again – considered an “extremely dangerous recidivist” and sent for the second sentence – nine years of imprisonment and four years of exile, an exceptionally cruel sentence for the Soviet regime.<sup>100</sup>

### 1.3. Nonconformists of all views, unite!

While the sixtiers, and then dissidents, were the natural holders of these ideas, the environment of Skrynia and the part of the underground engaged in the literary discussions were rather inheritors of these trajectories. They latched onto these ideas as soon as they became interested in the talks in the Ukrainian context and as soon as they built their first contacts with dissidents. As is very clear from the context of Skrynia, the first interactions with the sixtiers' thinking often happened already in school – from Iryna Kalynets, who worked as a librarian at school; Mykola Riabchuk obtained literature that, although not illegal, he was not encouraged to read.<sup>101</sup> In his memories, he recalled the poetry by Valeriy Shevchuk, Ivan Drach, Mykola Vinhranovskyi, and Vasyl Symonenko.<sup>102</sup> Symonenko's works, according to Riabchuk, were perceived the best because his ideological views were exposed in his works quite openly and

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<sup>99</sup> Kasianov, *Nezghodni*, 108.

<sup>100</sup> Kasianov, *Nezghodni*, 85.

<sup>101</sup> Mykola Riabchuk, “Tse bula sprava smaku...” [It Was the Matter of Taste], in Pasternak, Iryna, Illia Pershyn, Kostiantyn Sihov, Leonid Finberh, and Roksana Kharchuk Bunt pokolinnia: Rozmovy z ukrainskymy intelektualamy, (Dukh I Litera, 2004), 244.

<sup>102</sup> In his interrogation with the KGB officers Riabchuk stated that once Iryna Kalynets read to him the poetry by Bohdan-Ihor Antonych. He also stated that she was praised the poetry of Ivan Drach, Mykola Vinhranovskyi and Vasyl Symonenko, however, she never read those to Riabchuk. Absolutely obviously that these statements are not completely true, but the acknowledging of Antonych's poetry among all is a clear positioning of him as of the safest one. Probably his mysticism and modernism could be seen as the most detached from any attempts for the serious social criticism. “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Mykola Riabchuk” from 01.03.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2. 301

noticeably.<sup>103</sup> Poetry by Drach and Vinhranovskyi was more difficult and complex.<sup>104</sup> Another dimension of Ukrainian literature became available for this circle through the books published in Slovakia. Those were mostly the works by the interwar authors Volodymyr Vynnychenko, akin to a national communism figure from the period of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917, and Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, a modernist author whose work is filled with the overlap between the urbanistic realism and mysticism. As was stated above, the revival of the 1920s period in literature also happened around the same time – attention to the national communists like Khvylovyi was also growing because of the publications of the “executed renaissance” authors during the thaw period. This way, the leading intellectual influences for the milieu of the early 1970s were quite reachable – in terms of access to the works and, later, even in personal contacts.

Sixtiers trajectory was one of the decisive ones in shaping the young generations' new intellectual and artistic views. For the intellectual and creative environment, this period was the opportunity to express the inner moral opposition to the regime through the revival of the national consciousness, fight for the preservation of the national language and culture, and aim for the democratization and renewal of the society<sup>105</sup>. Sixtiers formed the core of the Ukrainian dissident movement that adopted various ideological trajectories<sup>106</sup> that still primarily aimed at

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<sup>103</sup> Vasyl Symonenko – one of the poets, prosecuted by the Soviet regime in 1962. In his poetry, quite frequently appealed to the ideas of the patriotism and the engagement with the homeland that is coming from the very personal and intimate feeling. He is also well-recognized for the grotesque and satirical poem “Tsar Plaksii and Loskotun” in which he depicted the absurd depiction of the engagement of the Soviet citizen with the regime, where the citizen is a king’s fool, aiming to do everything possible to satisfy even the most nonsense desires of the king.

<sup>104</sup> Ivan Drach – poet from the sixtiers generation, well-known for the expressive adoration of the science and technology, can be described as poetic progressivist. The embodiment of these expressions can be found in his book “Sunflower” (1962); Mykola Vinhranovskyi – another prominent author, actor, and a movie director from the sixtiers milieu. In his poetry, precisely in his first collection of poems “Atom preludes”, published in 1962, Vinhranovskyi appears as a vitaistic cosmopolite, that worships the figure of the human, embraces the felling of the artistic freedom and rejects the weight of the dogmas that are posed on the person.

<sup>105</sup> *Rukh oporu v Ukraini 1960-1990*, 11.

<sup>106</sup> A lot of the dissidents from the *sixtiers* generation, who were not repressed throughout the 1970s, expressed more radical positions regarding Ukrainian national development and the Soviet politics. For example, Viacheslav Chornovil, who in 1967 published “Lycho z rosumu (Portrety dvadzyatoch zlochynziv)” [Disaster from the mind (Portraits of twenty “criminals”)], the first Ukrainian documentary collection, that contained materials about the first wave of arrests among the Ukrainian intelligentsia in 1965-1966, at some point appeared in most of the trajectories of the dissident political thought, coming from the nationalist cultural and civic activism in the late

the solution of the national problem within the Soviet Union, as well as for the democratization of the regime.<sup>107</sup> In the ideological sense, sixtiers were not radical opposition since almost none of them entirely and openly rejected the Soviet system. Instead, the general trajectory was in search of improvement. Therefore, if the system had not struck the repression campaign against mostly artists and scholars, the sixtiers movement could have passed unnoticed. However, in terms of history, sixtiers remained a much more significant ideological movement than initially. In its turn, it was widely intercepted by the younger generations that witnessed the period of the first repressions and were somewhat more inspired than threatened by its development. Skrynina authors and the broader Lviv underground circles were coming of age in the period of sixtiers most considerable activity. Therefore, Vasyl Symonenko, Ivan Drach, Pavlo Tychyna, and Ivan Dziuba turned them into the most prominent authorities and influences. Significantly, these influences were not ideological but rather aesthetical. They turned to how sixtiers openly engaged with the regime, how publicly expressed their opinions, and not that much to the content of the expressions themselves. Young teenagers' sentimental, almost intimate connection with the image of the sixtiers and their poetry served as a basis on which their views and positions were built. In this matter, the sixtiers generation should be addressed as the primary influence on the generation that followed it. While Skrynina and the artists from the 1970s did not fit into the trajectory of the sixtiers either intellectually or politically, they were connected to the previous artistic tradition, the romanticism of the revolt, precisely the artistic one, that is a characteristic feature of such early sixtiers poets like Vasyl Symonenko or Mykola Vinhranovskyi. On the other hand, and that is crucial when perceiving Skrynina in terms of the generation, this romanticism was linked not only with the sixtiers but more generally with most

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1960s to the one of the main ideologists of the human rights movement throughout the 1970s, and later in 1988 he became the person who established the first non-communist party in Ukraine – *Rukh*, the People's Movement of Ukraine. Besides that, he was a candidate for the first president of independent Ukraine in 1991, however he did not win, losing it to the former member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk.

<sup>107</sup> *Rukh oporu v Ukraini 1960–1990*, 12-13.

of the modernist influences from the literature as well as with the alternative music and culture of the 1960s.

Illegal literature was another mandatory part of the intellectual upbringing of the counterculture. Spread mainly through the samvydav or the personal connections with the authors, these works were more politically engaged and were a part of the dissident trajectory. In the same memories, Riabchuk recalled that it took some time after he met Iryna Kalynets before she started lending him samvydav literature and the “tolerated” works.<sup>108</sup> Among the must-read samvydav for the young intellectuals in Lviv were works like previously introduced “Internationalism or Russification?” by Dziuba or the journalistic reports “Chornovil Papers” by Viacheslav Chornovil, the most vocal representative of the democratic nationalism and human rights doctrine. The “Chornovil Papers” was a set of the supplemented official documents, petitions, and letters of the persecuted activists that exposed the Soviet judicial system in detail.<sup>109</sup> This text is an essential contribution to the dissident response to the 1965 arrests, at the center of attention for this paper are publications from the later period. Chornovil’s name was already well-known to the KGB because his works were regularly published abroad, and Chornovil was sentenced to imprisonment multiple times.

For youth, Chornovil became an important representative of the other way of thinking – the one, that suggested more liberal approach to national communism or integral nationalism. Chornovil was the main person in the line of democratic nationalism used together with the human rights activism. This vector aimed at a political plurality used the language of human and civil rights and precisely, because of its international character, saw this in collaboration with the other human rights-oriented networks and groups within and outside of the Soviet Union. In Ukraine, human rights activism was evoked earlier than in the socialist countries. In

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<sup>108</sup> Riabchuk, “Tse bula sprava smaku,” 244.

<sup>109</sup> Balázs Trencsényi, et al., “Dissidents and Opposition Movements,” in *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II, Part II: Negotiating Modernity in the “Short Twentieth Century” (1968 and Beyond)*. Oxford University Press, 2018. p.79

the second half of the 1960s, as was noticed earlier in the example of Moroz's work, references to the Declaration of Human Rights were made. Other intellectuals in Ukraine also chose this vector in their works, as in the case of Petro Grigorenko, who defended the human rights of Crimean Tatars in his text<sup>110</sup>. Human rights initiatives arose in other countries soon after: in 1975 in Yugoslavia after members of the Belgrade Praxis group were expelled from the university, in Poland, after the creation of the Workers' Defense Committee (KOR), in Czechoslovakia, after the Plastic People of the Universe (PPU) trial in 1976.<sup>111</sup> Surely enough, the main push for the appellation to human rights were the Helsinki Accords in 1976. For the Eastern Bloc, it meant the creation of the framework for anticommunist democratic activism.

"Ukrainian Herald", the periodical where Chornovil was the chief editor, appeared regularly in different Ukrainian cities from 1970 to 1974. Each issue started with the foreword, which stated the main aim of the samvydav: to share information about the violation of the democratic freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, the judicial and extrajudicial repression in Ukraine, violations of national sovereignty (facts of chauvinism and Ukrainophobia), about attempts to misinform the public about the situation of Ukrainian political prisoners in prisons and camps, various protest actions, etc.<sup>112</sup> They published a set of texts by different authors from Ukrainian cities within each issue. Also, they put together systematized and descriptive information on the political repressions, administrative persecutions, and the state of the resistance movement.<sup>113</sup> The most essential aspect of the "Ukrainian Herald" activity lies in its legalist strategy. Within the magazine, the editorial board stated that it is not anti-Soviet or anticommunist, but on the contrary, they aimed for legal and constitutional publications,

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<sup>110</sup> Trencsényi et al., "Dissidents and Opposition Movements," in *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II, Part II: Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century" (1968 and Beyond)*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi et al. (Oxford University Press, 2018), 80.

<sup>111</sup> Trencsényi et al., "Dissidents and Opposition Movements," 94-100.

<sup>112</sup> *Ukrainian Herald*. Issues I-II, (Paris, Baltimore: Smoloskyp, 1971), 11.

<sup>113</sup> See, for example *Ukrainian Herald*. Issues I-II, 232-238; *Ukrainian Herald*. Issue III. Paris, Baltimore: Smoloskyp, 1970, 66-91; *Ukrainian Herald*. Issue IV. Paris, Baltimore: Smoloskyp, 1971, 99-121.

appealing to principles of socialist democracy.<sup>114</sup> Surely, editors understood that such principles would be ignored entirely, and therefore, the publications were spread through samvydav. However, in more ideological terms, this legalistic coloring was a new trajectory that synchronized for a while Ukrainian dissident with the mainstream tendency in East—Central Europe. By appealing to human rights and democratic freedoms, “Ukrainian Herald” and later the Ukrainian Helsinki Group positioned themselves as the keepers of law and order. And surely enough, when their publications were spread abroad, the audience perceived them as the ones that both illustrated the legal fight with the regime and suited the predominant language of the time. When mentioning legalism, there is one significant difference between the activity of the “Ukrainian Herald” and the Helsinki Group. “Herald” was an underground publication with anonymous or pseudonymous editors and contributors, and the Ukrainian Helsinki Group acted openly, therefore, their work was even more transparent.<sup>115</sup> While this strategy was creating a framework for democratic engagement with the Soviet apparatus, it also can be interpreted as a conservative turn within the Ukrainian dissident thought – because while these dissidents were rebelling against the system, they were partisans of law and order.<sup>116</sup>

Another exciting part of the “Ukrainian Herald” activity is their close connection to Russian samizdat. As was mentioned earlier, throughout the late 1960s-1980s, Ukrainian and Russian liberal dissident movements were closely aligned. The structure and style of “Ukrainian Herald” were very similar to the ones from “Chronicle of Current Events,” probably the most famous Russian samizdat that was produced from 1968 to 1982, so it is pretty clear that it served as the prototype for “Ukrainian Herald.” Except for that, Leonid Plyushch, a Ukrainian neo-Marxist dissident, worked as a writer on Ukrainian correspondence for “The Chronicle of Current Events.” The connection between Ukrainian and Russian environments was established

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<sup>114</sup> Kasianov. *Nezghodni*, 118.

<sup>115</sup> Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Political Thought of Soviet Ukrainian Dissent,” 9.

<sup>116</sup> Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Political Thought of Soviet Ukrainian Dissent,” 12.

because of Plyushch's slightly alienated position in the Ukrainian dissident milieu. He copied works smuggled from Moscow in Kyiv and spread them in Ukraine and abroad. He also did the opposite in this exchange: he organized the translations of the best works of Ukrainian Samvydav into Russian to get them to Moscow and abroad. This was how “Internationalism or Russification?“, “Chornovil Papers” and other works became known.<sup>117</sup>

The Lviv alternative public sphere almost turned these readings into the quite recognized and established canon – massively spread, almost publicly available. This literature also served as a bridge between the generations: those were not only the sixtiers and the following generation of Skrynia, but sometimes even the older milieus of their parents, – Kateryna Nemyra, who, as mentioned before, came from the family of Lviv residents, recalled that her father who was a head of plywood manufacturing, used his position frequently not only to get young people out of the KGB arrests but also to get samvydav to their house. Books like “Chornovil Papers,” “The Justice System or the Terror Raising its Head Again?” (another work by Chornovil) were distributed so well, that it was relatively easy to get them.<sup>118</sup> A little bit later, the works by Valentyn Moroz also became widespread and quickly received a lot of attention because they introduced a radical line of political thought for the Ukrainian intellectuals – far-right integral nationalism.

The dissidents, not only as political thinkers but rather as moral authorities, helped to shape the counterculture. As Nemyra recalled – with the lack of teachers at schools and universities who could satisfy the need for more literary knowledge, the underground turned to dissidents as teachers.<sup>119</sup> The precise age difference of more or less a decade between them (Chornovil was older than Chubai by twelve years, Moroz – by thirteen) only helped to establish a vertical hierarchy between them. Dissidents influenced counterculture, and counterculture

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<sup>117</sup> Borys Zakharov. *Narys istorii dysydentskoho rukhu v Ukraini (1956-1987)* [Essay on the history of the dissident movement in Ukraine (1956-1987)] (Kharhiv: Folio, 2003), 99.

<sup>118</sup> Nemyra. “Spohad pro Oleha I Chas,” 102.

<sup>119</sup> Kateryna Nemyra. Interview with the author.

influenced dissidents – the contact between them was mutual and quite strong. It is undeniable that Chubai made a strong impression not only on Iryna and Ihor Kalynets but also on Moroz and Chornovil. During the celebration of Chubai's birthday, either in 1969 or 1970, the Skrynina circle and Lviv dissidents were gathering. At that time, Moroz, who was in Lviv, already knew he would be arrested for the second time and proclaimed that Chubai should continue his ideological line.<sup>120</sup> It is worth mentioning that it was precisely the period when Moroz was deeply engaged in Dontsov's view on nationalism, and somehow, in Moroz's eyes, Chubai was the most nationalistic person in the environment. Judging by the documents from the later years, such a loud recognition influenced Chubai a lot. During this interrogation in 1972, one can see that Chubai repeatedly recalled that his poem "Vertep," written before even his meeting with Moroz, had influences from Dontsov. Chubai did not elaborate on that, but from the documents, this reading of "Vertep" existed at least from 1971, during the first round of Chubai's engagement with the deputy regional prosecutor at the regional prosecutor's office. While the recordings or any transcripts from 1971 are unavailable, Chubai referred to these meetings during his interrogations in the KGB later this year.<sup>121</sup> He mentioned a review from the regional prosecutor's office that mentioned Dontsov's influence on "Vertep." The comment of one of the Chubai's Kyiv acquaintances, poet Mykhailo Savchenko, apparently also remarked on the similarities in their views.<sup>122</sup> Supposedly, after these comments, Chubai attempted to find copies of Dontsov's articles to trace these similarities – with the help of Mykola Kholodnyi's friend, Chubai got the photocopies of at least eight articles published in the Ukrainian magazines from the 1920s. These were seized during the search of Chubai's apartment in 1972. The most exciting part of this is that even when taking a closer look at the "Vertep" poem I will do in the other chapter, there are no evident similarities between Chubai and Dontsov. Chubai's poem is

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<sup>120</sup> Ihor Kalynets. *Koleso Fortuny*. (Lviv: Spolom, 2016), 282.

<sup>121</sup> "Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai" from 15.01.1972, SSU, 50-60.

<sup>122</sup> "Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai" from 15.01.197, SSU, 52.

anti-systemic and even anti-globalist, and it criticizes the world where human beings are defined by consumerism and material values. There does not seem to be anything that would even hint at the nationalistic views. There could be some alternative reading of it back in the 1970s, but unfortunately, I cannot find it now.

Ihor Kalynets, whose views can be located somewhere between cultural-civic and liberal nationalism, called the circle formed in the late 1960s – early 1970s nationalistic. While this idea is undoubtedly presented through a very strong self-positioning, in his opinion, nationalism was almost spontaneous and very diverse – while Dziuba built it on Marxism-Leninism, Moroz, as well as Horyn' brothers, built it on the traditional basis of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), a military far-right group from the interwar, whose ideologist was Dontsov. Kalynets did not define Chubai's or Lysheha's nationalism in any terms. Still, they stated that it was evident that none of them was in any sort Soviet or Marxist cause; otherwise, "they" simply would not accept them.<sup>123</sup>

The participants of Skrynia, in my opinion, were very flexible regarding any views on the matter of societal and political questions. Undeniably, the narrative about Skrynia created by the dissidents differs significantly from how Skrynia participants would describe themselves. However, I suppose their narrative would vary, and the youth's actual behavior and positioning would be shaped according to their surroundings. While people like Kalynets, Chornovil, and Moroz were undeniable authorities, youth aimed to be seen, understood, and recognized. Therefore, during the literary events in Kalynets' apartment, Chubai, Lysheha, Morozov, and others could express the opinions that can be considered as more nationalistic. Among the circle of the underground, where they were among people of the same age, much broader backgrounds, and ways of living, their discussions could have taken entirely different turns. For example, Riabchuk recalled that in his conversations with Lysheha, he was desperate to prove

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<sup>123</sup> Kalynets, *Koleso Fortuny*, 282.

that the Marxist definition of freedom as a conscious necessity is not so absurd - unless demagogues adopt it.<sup>124</sup> Yurii Vynnychuk recalled that Chubai kept the logo of the Italian newspaper “l’Unità,” the communist newspaper established by Antonio Gramsci, in his wardrobe. Chubai assumably wrote the letter “Z” in the end, so that would make it a word play, saying “unitaz” (“toilet bowl”).<sup>125</sup> I do not think that any of these encounters had any sort of strong ideological undertones nor am I convinced that there was something nationalistic in the sense that dissidents aimed for. In this context, I see Skrynia as a circle of very average teenagers – those who are highly educated but easily influenced and constantly need recognition.

Skrynia circle was the product of its time in a lot of senses. It was the result of the closeness to the Socialist world that made the consumption of the latest literature, music, and fashion possible to receive, as much as it was the peculiarity of time, that even despite the isolation of the Soviet Union, still could opt for the sense of the international solidarity with the baby boomers in other countries. Defined by their background and being alienated from the city initially, they became new Lviv citizens slowly and even adopted the idea of the intelligentsia, or in their case more closely – the concept of Bohemia, as a tool used to express the overlap between their class, tradition, and intellectual influences they consumed. Indeed, that was a local canon that formed Skrynia – the generation of sixtiers and dissidents that showed the possibilities of engagement with the Soviet state, and while being somehow intrusive about the path Lviv counterculture should take, still let the younger generation choose their own path.

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<sup>124</sup> Mykola Riabchuk, “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu” [Five songs about Lysheha], *Polum’ia vidihriie pam’iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha] (Lviv: Piramida, 2019), 14.

<sup>125</sup> Yurii Vynnychuk, “Hrushi v Tisti” [Pears in the Dough], (Lviv: Piramida, 2010), 96.

## Chapter 2. Anti-political and metapolitical politics in Skrynia samvydav

“We knew, of course, what kind of world we were living in; we visited Kalynets’ couple frequently, knew Mykhailo Osadchyi and Viacheslav Chornovil; we carefully read the samvydav that we got from them and discussed the draconian sentence of their colleague Valentyn Moroz - a sentence that unequivocally indicated that there would be no more “gentle” sentences, as in the 1960s, but instead of a few years in prison everyone who disagreed would get a sentence for a few decades. And yet we dared to compile our almanac, realizing that sooner or later, it would fall into the hands of the Kagebists. That is why we did not include political journalism — only “pure art,” or at least what we thought it was.”<sup>126</sup>

This reflection by Riabchuk is an interesting revision of the 1970s events in Lviv. While it does not fully represent the views of all the authors of the samvydav, it provides an interesting thought – the samvydav was consciously apolitical because the authors knew it would be seized sooner or later. It creates the possibility for precisely the anti-political reading of Skrynia since one of its authors precisely states that there was an apparent contradiction – people who were not apolitical, instead opposite, actively politically engaged and preoccupied with the ideas of the freedom and rights of the individual in the authoritarian state, issued an “apolitical” almanac. I suggest that this is precisely an anti-political idea that evokes the notion that the immediate reaction to the dominant power should be created through acts that do not engage with this power. “Skrynia,” in this regard, was created as a product of collective political thinking by counterculture and dissidents engaged with the contemporary political discourses of its time and, among all the strategies, opted not for the dissident confrontation, but for the hermetic silence and avoidance of the political situation in which its authors found themselves. Therefore, something that seemed apolitical was like that only from the surface, and even with the slightest attempt to dig in that was made by the KGB, the apoliticism crashed. The close

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<sup>126</sup> Riabchuk, “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu,” 16.

reading of the samvydav by the KGB, which was created probably after it became clear that the authors were in contact with the nationalist faction of the dissidents, allowed decoding of the (a)political meanings. As a result, the relations between counterculture and the KGB can be illustrated through the changes in meanings: political engagement was covered as the investigators decoded apoliticism as political. Ironically, while often in the scholarship, the investigatory process in the Soviet context creates the image that KGB officers were primitive and were assigning sentences almost without elaboration, in the case of Skrynia, the KGB investigation was somehow proper. Even if their interpretations of the poems and texts in the samvydav did not wholly correspond with the vision that the authors put in there, in the end, the motifs were aligned: what was read as nationalistic, in fact, to some extent, was such. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at the content of “Skrynia” samvydav, the texts, the design, and the physical characteristics of the issue. By doing so, I will trace more closely the intellectual influences that its authors imprinted there. Since literary analysis and literary criticism are not a part of my academic qualifications, I attempt to analyze “Skrynia” from the point of intellectual history instead.

## 2.1. Skrynia – a game of hide and seek with the state

Before getting to the text of the samvydav, it is worth paying some additional attention to the aesthetical atmosphere that surrounded “Skrynia,” as those were not only the dissidents who influenced Lviv counterculture but also the broader circles of the underground, the concept of “kompaniia,” that formed based on the kvartyrnyky, visits of the exhibitions, literary evenings and concerts, and indeed, under the influence of the alternative spaces, such as the Republic of the Holy Garden. Unlike the generation of the sixties and the dissidents, whose main common places were the coffeeshops and their apartments, the generation of the 1970s engaged more profoundly with the city. It also happened because, as previously stated, they did

not belong to Lviv and, therefore, constantly had to discover it, learning new spots, coming from the apartment of Chubai or Nemyra back to the student dormitories or own homes, and creating a new connection between the traditions and modernism, as carol singing, organizing the concerts, home parties or other events. A big part of the engagement with the city depended on how the underground broadcasted their attitude to it. And in this matter, the appearances and characteristics of their attitude mattered a lot.

The need to highlight the “bohemianness” found its way through the clothes and personal style. The sense of the “emotional community” regarding the circle of the nonconformists was previously studied by Juliane Fürst, who used the concept of Barbara Rosewein.<sup>127</sup> The emotional communities as “groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions” implies the need for self-expression that still would contribute to the sense of the community. Something like this can be closely observed in Lviv: among the counterculture, the set of unimaginable styles and aesthetical appeals were combined very organic. From the memories of the contemporaries, it is recalled that, for example, Volodymyr Onyshchenko wore a very lush beard, Roman Kis’ had big round glasses, Orest Yavorskyi preferred a military trenchcoat, and Chubai frequently appeared with the silk scarf around his neck.<sup>128</sup> Even this wide variety of details, which represents crucially different approaches and symbols, plays the role of the tool for differentiation and unity. Chubai’s dedication to the silk scarfs refers to the Teddy Boys subculture, a British subculture from the 1950s, inspired by the Edwardian dandy style, that was adopted as a symbol of rebellion against the mainstream culture of the time. The appeal to military clothes can be associated with the pre-punk era and more sharp confrontation with

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<sup>127</sup> Juliane Fürst, “Love, Peace and Rock’n’Roll on Gorky Street: The ‘Emotional Style’ of the Soviet Hippie Community,” *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 4 (2014): 566.

<sup>128</sup> Riabchuk, “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu,” 13.

societal norms, and the long beards were highly probably an indicator of the sympathy towards the hippie community – a subculture that was the biggest in Soviet Lviv.

While united by the matters of artistic and intellectual thinking, the circle of “Skrynia” authors was no longer isolated from the broader circles of Lviv underground. While engaging with the urban space, they were engaging with alternative space while almost wholly ignoring the space of the official and, therefore, oppressive for their culture. In a way, Lviv underground managed to isolate themselves from the Soviet regime to the extent that they attempted not to notice its presence in their everyday lives for as long as possible. Indeed, avoidance of the Soviet system was impossible if one was in a university class or dealing with any sort of official representative. Still, in their leisure, they lived in a world that did not have to oppress them. In Lviv, where the alternative order was unofficially proclaimed, was the Republic of the Holy Garden – the central spot for the gatherings of the alternative youth, primarily hippies. The Republic of the Holy Garden, which existed from 1968 until 1982, was located on the territory of an abandoned Order of Barefoot Carmelites monastery in the city center and united teenagers from all possible locations and backgrounds: it seemed that there was no common background besides the adoration by the Western rock-n-roll. Morozov recalled that with Chubai, they were also coming to the Holy Garden to lie on the grass and talk about poetry.<sup>129</sup>

This connection with the space of common thinking and common rejection of the existing status quo could be linked to the famous concept of “being vnye” developed by Alexei Yurchak.<sup>130</sup> Teenagers were out of the Soviet system, simply not reacting to its existence, and thus, were “vnye,” as Yurchak suggests. They perceived a lot of the Holy Garden activities as a “play” – giving each other nicknames of the famous contemporary political figures, such as Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao, when China stopped being the USSR’s ally, or Alexander Dubček and

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<sup>129</sup> Victor Morozov, “Nasha osin z malenkymy derevamy duzhe shvydko mynula..” [Our fall passed very fast...], *Plach Yeremii* [Jeremiah’s Cry] (Lviv, Calvaria, 2001), 266.

<sup>130</sup> Yurchak. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*.

Vasil Bil'ak during the Prague Spring invasion<sup>131</sup>; coming up with the idea of the state within the state with the President and the ministries, flag, coat of arms, and anthem. The coat of arms was a stylized trident in the form of an elongated attic and two towers of the Church of the Barefoot Carmelites. The flag was a coat of arms on a green background with crossed walnut leaves and a soccer ball (football was another everyday leisure for most of the participants of the group) below it<sup>132</sup>. The anthem “We won’t live with our enemies...” written by Ilko Lemko, had an unambiguous message about who were those “enemies” in the Soviet state. The Garden’s greeting “Srav pes!” (“Dog was shitting”) that required the answer “On KPRS” (“CPSU”) or “V chervonu konyuishynu” (“On the red clover”) was also very clear in the meanings. Undoubtedly, the nationalistic raising in the old Galician families, often the descendants of the Ukrainian partisans, Sich Riflemen, and members of the resistance movement, also played a considerable role there. Holy Garden was slowly turning from the alternative space that felt “outside of the Soviet Union”<sup>133</sup> to the society within the Soviet Union directly opposing the regime.

Occasionally, the “playful” protest would take more radical turns - one of the Holy Garden members hung anti-Soviet propaganda posters, for which he spent ten days in the Loncky Street Prison. On the Soviet holidays, the so-called Gardeners were tearing red flags from houses and throwing them on the ground. And the eternal respect among the Republicans was won by the one who dared to blow his nose into the flag that hung on the Party's regional committee<sup>134</sup>. The Party's regional committee was around fifty meters from the Holy Garden. That was another rebellious act of the group – they always knew how close to the party

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<sup>131</sup> Marichka Kryzhanivska, “Respublika Sviatoho Sadu – ostrivets svobody u Radianskomu Soiuzi” [Republic of the Holy Garden – the Island of Freedom in the Soviet Union], Accessed 04.06.2024: <https://localhistory.org.ua/texts/statti/respublika-sviatogo-sadu-ostrivets-svobodi-u-radianskomu-soiuzi/>

<sup>132</sup> Oleksandra Klishch. “The Republic of Holy Garden – to the question of the primary source formation of youth subculture of Lviv.” *Naukovi zbirky Lvivskoi natsionalnoi muzychnoi akademii im. M. V. Lysenka* N32, 2014: 287.

<sup>133</sup> Ilko Lemko. Interview with the author.

<sup>134</sup> Kryzhanivska. “Respublika Sviatoho Sadu...”

representatives they were while listening to the latest Western albums and playing them on guitars. The conscious rejection of the “corrupted socialist society” was a permanent trigger, where the arrests by the officers or talks with the regional prosecutor were not considered a serious threat that would stop youth from engaging in these activities. The Republic of the Holy Garden, with its high walls decorated with the portrait of John Lennon and the loud sounds of Western rock music, became a symbol and a place of alienation from the Soviet Union. Shumylovych, referring to Evgeny Steiner,<sup>135</sup> suggested that the “residents” of the Holy Garden can be considered as the carriers of the “para-Soviet” mentality – a type of consciousness that is not Soviet, anti-Soviet, or non-Soviet.<sup>136</sup> While this idea resonates with the kind of discourses that appeared in the alternative spaces, I suggest that this type of mentality can also be described through the methodological approach I propose in this work – through the duality of the anti-political and metapolitical discourse. The “Skrynia” circle can be explained through anti-politics, as their engagement with the matter of the social and political is more severe, and their interaction with the political occurs through denial of the status quo and, accordingly, non-interaction with it as a type of response to this regime. Instead, their actions focus on how to act in the “here and now,” even if these actions may not bring about significant systemic changes immediately afterward. Instead, the metapolitical discourse suggests a lack of interaction with social and political narratives but a confrontation with them at more detached levels - at the levels of philosophy, ideas about domination, power, and hierarchy. Undermining these ideas is the answer to what is happening more broadly in society. Thus, The Republic of the Holy Garden can be perceived as an example of the metapolitical engagement of alternative youth with the regime.

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<sup>135</sup> Evgeny Steiner. “Apolohiia zastoinoho yunoshy” [Apology of The Stagnant Young Man], *Zerkalo* N 33, 2009. Accessed 06.06.2024 <http://magazines.russ.ru/zerkalo/2009/33/sh6.html>.

<sup>136</sup> Bohdan Shumylovych. “Abandoning Socialism: Alternative Spaces in L’viv in the 1970s–2000s,” *Ukraina: kulturna spadshchyna, natsionalna svidomist, derzhavnist* N 23 (2013): 618.

One additional part that can bring some light to why the nonconformist engagement of the late 1960s – early 1970s with the matter of escape in the different means and the rebellious atmosphere. It is connected to the previously explained situation of the broad and international solidarity broadly supported by popular culture, specifically music. Music broadcasted not only the central motifs and topics characteristic of one or other epoch but also directly expressed the mood of a particular era.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the period of the late 1960s, known for the rapid growth and development of psychedelic rock, transmitted the general anxiety of the generation that found themselves in a period of significant social changes. Still, it also was an overcoming period after the era of pop music's hypomanic peak in the early 1960s, during the period of thaw expressed hope and excitement that everything still seemed possible – whether on the big or small scale. That way, the mentality that did appear as something quite uniting for the whole generation was constantly prolonged by the contact with popular music – that, indeed, in the Soviet Union was considered alternative culture rather than popular. The mood of excitement, slowly replaced by the anxious complex tones, also influenced the underground. In a way, *Deep Purple*, *Led Zeppelin*, and *Rolling Stones* signaled the shift of the undertones when they overpopularized *The Beatles*. Simultaneously, while subcultures and alternative youth, mostly also younger than members of Skrynia, were “being vnye” in this artistic way, the circle of Skrynia was more detached from these realities, even though occasionally they would also engage with them. The outside pressure on them and the influence of the dissident circle made “Skrynia” more considerable in terms of how they could participate in the dialogue or disengage with the state altogether.

## 2.2. Skrynia under the charismatic leader

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<sup>137</sup> The idea of pop music as the expression of the mood of particular era, and the following attempt to trace the development of pop music as an externalized bipolar affective disorder projected into society, with the characteristic periodic switches from mania to depression and back, belongs to Mikhail Kurtov. See Mikhail Kurtov, “The Music of the Depressive Resistance: from Psychopolitics to Pneumopolitics,” *Translit*, N20, (2017): 80-87.

When looking at Chubai's trajectory, one can notice the move from radical national activism to more subtle artistic self-expression, defined as "art autonomous from the nationalistic pathos."<sup>138</sup> Chubai's life before moving to Lviv in 1969 is not very well-known. He was born in the village Berezhyn (Rivne Oblast) in 1949 in a family of Ukrainian patriots, where some relatives were former soldiers in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and his uncle was a Ukrainian nationalist already in the time of the 1920s. The patriotic upbringing seemed to be why young Chubai had problems with the Soviet government from a very early age. Being a talented child who read all available literature from the local library and the neighboring village, he started publishing his poems in the local newspaper in his teenage years<sup>139</sup>. Being very interested in music, he started a collection of vinyl, mainly consisting of classical music: Mozart, Bach, Vivaldi, Beethoven, Stravinsky, and Debussy. Among that collection were also the records of Ukrainian classical music – Dmytro Bortniansky, Maxym Berezovsky, Artemy Vedel, and contemporaries - Leonid Hrabovsky and Myroslav Skoryk<sup>140</sup>. Such an upbringing created a basis for the young intellectual who was profoundly educated both in Ukrainian and European culture.

Chubai was a winner in a set of philology championships, which were supposed to help him with a scholarship at the university in Kyiv to which he applied. Chubai was not allowed to participate in the entrance exams because KGB officers discovered that before that, he had participated in the action of protest near the Taras Shevchenko monument in Kyiv. Such demonstrations were happening annually and were related to the transportation of Shevchenko's ashes from St. Petersburg to Kanev<sup>141</sup>. During one of these, Chubai read poetry and, assumably,

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<sup>138</sup> Iryna Skrypnyk. "Grycko Chubaj: Personality as a closed text with an open extratext and literary environment of Lviv late 60's - 70's", *Ministerstvo okhorony zdorovia Ukrainy Bukovynskiy derzhavnyi medychniy universytet*, (2014): 78.

<sup>139</sup> Yaroslav Polishchuk, "Fenomen Hrytska Chubaya" [Phenomenon of Hrytsko Chubai], *Dyvoslovo*, № 7, 2000.

<sup>140</sup> Halyna Chubai. "Z Vesny u Vichnist" [From Spring to Eternity], in Hrytsko Chubai *Plach Yermii* [Jeremiah's Cry], Lviv, Calvaria, 2001. p. 307-308

<sup>141</sup> The date 22 May is a commemoration date for Taras Shevchenko's ashes transportation. In 1861, the most well-known Ukrainian poet died in St. Petersburg and was buried there by the cost of his friends. 58 days later, Mykhailo Lazarevskyi, Taras Shevchenko's close friend, finally received the confirmation for the transportation

mentioned something regarding the transportation of ashes that did not coincide with the generally accepted postulates<sup>142</sup>. After unsuccessful attempts to get into the universities in Lviv and Rivne, and after some work at a radio station in a small city in Rivne oblast, Chubai moved to Lviv.

It is worth looking at “Vertep” more closely to explore the dissident image that this poem created for Chubai. The poem “Vertep,” written before moving to Lviv, presumably in 1968, made Chubai famous. Modernist in its essence, the poem reminds readers of the baroque literary tradition of the world as the theater. “Vertep,” received the title of one of the most spread samvydav poems in Lviv.<sup>143</sup> The dissident circle of the national-patriotic line paid attention to Chubai precisely because of the anti-Soviet and patriotic themes they read in the poem – Chubai “turned out to be our man,” said Ihor Kalynets.<sup>144</sup> What was read as anti-Soviet by the dissidents was often perceived as a public expression of the philosophical and existential motifs for the underground, who noticed that such ideas were not seen that often among the literary circles of the late 1960s in Lviv. Based on personal memories, it is easily noticeable that among the circle that later became the core of Skrynina, Mykola Riabchuk, the youngest one, was especially impressed by Chubai’s thinking and performances. Introduced to Chubai’s reading of “Vertep” during one of the literary events Iryna Kalynets organized, Riabchuk reflected that it made more of an impression than anything he had read. After “Vertep,” the poems by Vasyl Symonenko, Ivan Drach, and Mykola Vinhranovsky (poets among the core of the oppositional circles, often

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of Shevchenko’s ashes back to Ukraine, to Kanev, a city near Kyiv, according to poet’s will. Shevchenko was buried there on 22 May 1861, at the place, that later received the name “Taras Hill”. Throughout the Soviet times, 22 May became a symbolical day when people, specifically students, gathered near Shevchenko’s monument for a commemoration. Throughout the 1960-1970s people who would put flowers to the monument were under the risk of the arrest, and Shevchenko’s words “Let us be put in prisons” became the symbolical slogan of the liberation movement.

<sup>142</sup> Out of the sources and available memories, nobody states exactly, what did Chubai say during the action. People who talk about this event usually mention that Chubai “expressed some opinions” or “spoke about the transfer of Shevchenko’s ashes”. For more on this, see: Chubai, “Z vesny u vichnist,” 305.

<sup>143</sup> Moskalets, “Piat medytatsii na ‘Plach Yermii,’” 69.

<sup>144</sup> “Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu” (“Chubai: To Speak Again”) (2020), directed by Mikhail Krupievsky.

very openly and directly critical of the Soviet system) completely faded.<sup>145</sup> Riabchuk also explained this effect through Chubai's performative skills – his readings were generally described as hypnotizing and powerful.<sup>146</sup>

Handsome, young, and very confident, Chubai attracted much attention and quickly became an easily recognizable figure, representing Weber's idea of charismatic leader. Besides intellectually engaging the broader circle of Lviv underground, he quickly made his small circle of friends. This cult-like gathering became the core of the "Skrynia" samvydav, printed in the fall of 1971. Based on the attitude and the self-positioning of the person who seeks artistic freedom and ways for the expressions, as well as based on the later fate, Chubai can be compared with another person who formed around himself the core of the underground circle in Hungary - Gábor Bódy, a film director and the screenwriter of the experimental movie, who turned out to be a secret informant for the Hungarian secret police. The trajectory of the strong charismatic leader who creates a narrow social circle for the matter of art or a higher aim is not unusual – such stories can be found in the case of Romania with Constantin Noica, which took a more intellectual rather than artistic turn, in East Germany with the case of Sascha Anderson, and elsewhere. Sometimes, these leaders turned out to be engaged with the higher authorities as informers or collaborators, and such a story also exists around the figure of Chubai. Truthful or not, one can trace the realities of the shifts in the attitude towards the group leader after he gave the KGB officers enough information on dissidents to make their sentences longer while Chubai was released.

Charisma, together with the talent, created the figure of the young Chubai. His "Vertep" was spread, quoted, and analyzed in Lviv and, afterward, was printed abroad and broadcast on

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<sup>145</sup> Riabchuk, "Tse bula sprava smaku.," 246.

<sup>146</sup> For example, Roman Kis' described Chubai's readings as "...when he [Chubai] read "Vertep", it was not about poetic power. Power came from Chubai himself. He was the kind of charismatic person whom we were expecting for a long time" in "Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu", 2020.

Radio Liberty.<sup>147</sup> The existence of “Vertep” abroad immediately caught the attention of the KGB office – from the position of Soviet law, the spread of the materials abroad, not the production itself, was illegal. From that point, Chubai’s figure remained under the close supervision of the KGB officers. “Vertep” depicts the devastated and exhausted picture of the world and civilization (“our powerful civilization”<sup>148</sup> is one of the grotesque refrains in the poem), which is determined because of consumerism and escapism in various empty ways. Within the Soviet context, the poem ironically attacks the Soviet ideological reality:

*..Everything is dictated and everything is repainted  
and awarded a proper price:  
tortured for doubts, for thoughts!  
And for sloppiness - dressed in orders!*

*Everything is dictated and everything is repainted  
and it is legalized that thinking is a sin!  
Everything is drilled, redrilled,  
and the living were elevated to the ranks of robots!<sup>149</sup>*

In the post-Soviet reality, it can be easily read as an anti-globalist and anti-consumerist piece. Chubai focuses attention on the endless movement, on the fact that people, civilization, and the world in general constantly moves (“...it moves. On foot. In the car. In the hearse. On the tram...”) but does not develop in any meaningful sense – it just distracts itself though the permanent escape into empty hedonism. The author created a loud depiction of life in the constant lie, which is not only the story of Soviet life (even though some words in the poem hint that that system is a part of the world: “Tirades. Edicts. Speeches. Denunciations”), but of the capitalist global as well: the hydrogen bomb, Egyptian pyramids, Coliseums and paintings by Picasso and Rembrandt, mentioned in the text, depict the global picture of the world.

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<sup>147</sup> Yurii Vynnychuk in “Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu”, 2020; also, Halyna Chubai, in the same movie mentioned that it was either Chubai himself or Iryna and Ihor Kalynets, who managed to send the poem abroad to Western Germany.

<sup>148</sup> Hryhorii Chubai. “Vertep”, *Plach Yeremii* [Jeremiah’s Cry] (Lviv, Calvaria, 2001). The translation from Ukrainian here and later is made by the author.

<sup>149</sup> Chubai, “Vertep,” 66.

“Vertep” is Chubai’s liberal manifesto about progress that cannot be limited to the totalitarian society.

As was mentioned, “Vertep” presents the world as a theater, and even more than that, as a puppet theater (“The world is a nativity scene”), and while this picture still corresponds to the tradition of the baroque poetry, the conditions under which the actors act differ. In baroque literature, people find themselves in certain situations because of their decisions. For Chubai, people-puppets in this modernist, heavily developed world act under the pressure of external circumstances and do not carry the weight of the conditions. However, they do not try to challenge the status quo. It is hard to see “good” and “evil” in “Vertep”; the world is instead one big grey zone, without the division into religious and secular parts (or, speaking more generally, into high and low), as was observed in the baroque nativity play.<sup>150</sup>

Moskalets noticed one more detail about the hierarchical dichotomy in “Vertep”: the puppet masters in this story, described as “gods,” ironically are presented among other positions of power: “demigods,” “Kremlin” and “trade unions,” and their role in the nativity scene is projected towards the aliens (who will one day write in their diaries that “on the planet Earth there are so many walking stomachs, who only chew and swallow, and do not do anything else”).<sup>151</sup> Besides the obvious statement that such narratives expressed in the poetry did not fit into the Soviet trajectory of socialism realism, it also could be easily interpreted as anti-Soviet and disrespectful towards the power hierarchies. Moreover, with some background in the leading intellectual traditions in Ukrainian history, one can notice that Chubai’s intellectual background and literary influences can be traced back to 1920-1930s. Literary critics mention the poem “Galileo “(1927) by a poet from the generation of the “Executed Renaissance” Yevhen Pluzhnyk, with its vitaistic call, “And live as you wish; Because; do you hear; it does rotate!”

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<sup>150</sup> Nadiya Gavryliuk, “‘Vertep’ by Hryhory Chubay as a modification of vertep drama,” *Slovo i Chas*: 7, (2008): 69.

<sup>151</sup> Moskalets, “Piat medytatsii na ‘Plach Yermii,’” 70.

and the poem “Ball in the Opera” by Julian Tuwim, that is known for the anti-elite and antipolitical satirical motifs can be traced in “Vertep.”<sup>152</sup> Through the memories of the Chubai’s contemporary Sviatoslav Maksymchuk, Chubai knew both poems from Maksymchuk, who was performing them.<sup>153</sup>

Among all Chubai’s poetic works, “Vertep” remained the one that caused the most discussions and was perceived as the most critical and oppositional both by the underground and by the KGB agents. Therefore, from the late 1960s and up to Chubai’s death in 1982, “Vertep” served as the most fundamental work of the poet. While the poem was perceived as a genius and unique for the counterculture, oppositional and “grotesque in the creation of the picture of the pathological state of the world,”<sup>154</sup> it was also seen as dangerous and anti-Soviet by the state.

Rather as an intuitive assumption than an argument that can be fully proved, I would suggest considering Chubai as a narcissistic figure with a very high self-esteem and a significant need to gain validation from others. Indeed, such an assumption might be sharp and, in medical terms, cannot be stated without contact with the person or the proper education in the corresponding field. Therefore, I suggest looking at Chubai’s figure and actions with more attention to the personal agency that corresponds to his personality. As traced among the memories from his surroundings and his literary contributions, Chubai had an exaggerated feeling of self-importance. There were three portraits on the wall of his office: Ezra Pound’s, Thomas Stearns Eliot’s, and Chubai’s himself. To them, he referred to regularly as the three best poets in the world.<sup>155</sup> However, sometimes this title was also shared with Oleh Lysheha – one of Chubai’s closest friends and probably one of the most exciting poets and later carver-

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<sup>152</sup> Maryana Cheletska, “The Late-Modernism Markers of the Literary Generation of 1970: Peculiarities of the Underground Poetics” *Visnyk Lvivskoho universytetu, Serii filolohichna* 67, (2018):122

<sup>153</sup> Cheletska, “The Late-Modernism Markers of the Literary Generation of 1970,” 122.

<sup>154</sup> Ivan Dziuba, The introduction to Hrytsko Chubai *Plach Yeremii* [Jeremiah’s Cry] (Lviv, Calvaria, 2001), 5.

<sup>155</sup> Yurko Koch. “Vidnaideni Faily” [Found Files], *Plach Yeremii* [Jeremiah’s Cry] (Lviv, Calvaria, 2001), 259.

artist in Skrynia, who was named “the only Ukrainian poet who is better than Chubai.”<sup>156</sup> Chubai was a prominent center of “Skrynia,” both samvydav and the social circle; he commented on every work, his word was decisive, and he was leading youth after him – “he became our leader, our shepherd. We all followed him not because he convinced us of something, but because we could feel the strength in him, this source of strength, this real creativity”.<sup>157</sup> Besides that, it is unequivocally that Chubai also depended on external recognition – it was not only about Skrynia circles where his role had to be acknowledged – Chubai also aimed to be admitted among the dissident circles. Riabchuk noted that when the samvydav was completed, it was important for Chubai to show it to Chornovil, Iryna, and Ihor Kalynets. There was some sense of competition, but also he aimed for recognition.<sup>158</sup>

Chubai also would tease people a lot – frequently mimicked his friends and laughed at them, sometimes in the entirely innocent sense, sometimes in a rather insulting way. Undoubtedly, the question of humor and what laughter is can be interpreted very differently based on the time, space, and people. Still, even in the broad essence of Henri Bergson’s view of comical as something strictly human-like, mimicking and acting as the other person is often the basis of social laughter.<sup>159</sup> Within Skrynia circle, such scenes were relatively frequent: nicknames for everyone<sup>160</sup>, improvised concerts at someone’s home with kitchen utilities such as musical instruments,<sup>161</sup> collective trips, and other possible activities, which are so characteristic of your youth. Chubai was only twenty-two when “Skrynia” was published; most people in this circle were primarily the same age, with Riabchuk being the youngest one – only eighteen in 1971. This is precisely why personal development and individual personalities

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<sup>156</sup> Riabchuk, “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu,” 21.

<sup>157</sup> Roman Kis’ in “Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu”, 2020.

<sup>158</sup> Mykola Riabchuk in “Chubai: Hovoryty Znovu”, 2020.

<sup>159</sup> Henri Bergson. *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. (Neeland Media LLC, 1901).

<sup>160</sup> Victor Morozov, “My Zalyshyly Po Sobi Slid” [We Have Left Our Mark], *Polum’ia vidihriie pam’iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha] (Lviv: Piramida, 2019), 28.

<sup>161</sup> Vynnychuk, “Hrushy v Tisti,” 87-119.

matter this much in this narrative – being very young yet fully aware of the peculiarities and limitations of the Soviet system. Keeping both in mind would help approach the environment from the position of intellectual history in the most profound way.

### 2.3. Intellectual and aesthetical aspects of Skrynia

The inventory of items seized in Chubai's apartment contains the information about "Skrynia" in the form that corresponds to the available copy of the samvydav, which I consider here as original: it is the version of the almanac, which has 31 pages, has a cover made in the dark red color with yellow frame and title "Skrynia." According to the inventory, the issues start with content, where the first poem, "Vich-na-Vich" ("Face to Face"), is of Lysheha's authorship, and it ends with the phrase "Paths to our self-search?" from the questionnaire by Roman Kis'.<sup>162</sup>

The inventory stated that the issue contains the poetry of eleven authors – quite an apparent misreading of the content section, which has eleven points. However, some authors simply wrote more than one text, which still makes it seven authors altogether.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, the original version of the samvydav was found during the search. Besides, KGB also found ten copies of the "Skrynia" cover in the same form as it was used in the original samvydav, eleven copies of the same image but on white paper with a red frame, and one copy in black color. The authorship of Volodymyr Onyshchenko, who created the cover, is not mentioned among the documents since only Onyshchenko's first name appeared among the list of authors – "in between the texts – the signs of the book by Volodymyr." Because he did not write any texts, he was not prosecuted.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>162</sup> "Inspection report of things and documents" from 13.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.3, 133-134.

<sup>163</sup> *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. (Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000), 2.

<sup>164</sup> Orest Yavorskyi, "Odyn iz zapiznilykh" [One of the latecomers], *Polum'ia vidihriie pam'iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha] (Lviv: Piramida, 2019,) 76.

The samvydav was printed using the typewriter that belonged to Chornovil<sup>165</sup> and was printed assumably in seven copies for each author. Some copies were typed on regular paper, others on onion skin paper,<sup>166</sup> which was way thinner and more accessible to print on. Therefore, creating 4-5 copies of the samvydav was possible simultaneously. While all the copies were seized or destroyed by the authors themselves (as did Lysheha, who burned his copy on January 15 after he learned that Chubai was arrested<sup>167</sup>), one issue was saved by Chubai's wife, Halyna, who later allowed one of the scholars and literary critic – Vasyl Gabor to reprint “Skrynia” in 2000. Gabor's reprint is the version that I rely on in this research. Therefore, on the matter of creation, “Skrynia” is a quite typical samvydav – typewritten, created in a relatively limited number of copies – as Martin Machovec pointed out, those are quite typical characteristics for the types of self-printed literature that existed in other countries, specifically in Czechoslovakia.<sup>168</sup>

Following the different approaches to the classification of the samizdat literature suggested by Machovec, I would suggest that the trajectory of “Skrynia” fits into the line of publishing as a result of moral and personal influence, where, in a way, the production of this literature follows the tradition of the preceding generation, in this matter – the generation of dissidents, for whom samvydav was the only way of distributing more openly their views and ideas. For “Skrynia,” this tradition is instead inherited, parallelly with the Czechoslovak context, it also fits into the concept of the more precisely defined generations – the second and

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<sup>165</sup> The typewriter that belonged to Chornovil - made in Germany “Optima”, was seized from Chubai's apartment after the search on 12.01.1972. Chubai admitted in the interrogation from 15.01.1972 that it belonged to Chornovil and he let Chubai lend it to Chubai to reprint some of his poems and translations. However, in the interrogation from the day before, 14.01.1972, Chubai stated that after the conflict with the dissidents that happened because Chubai decided not to participate in the production of their magazine, he asked Chornovil about using his typewriter to print “Skrynia”, to which he received a response “you should buy your own”. In the interrogation that Lysheha went through on 15.01.1972 he stated that he personally had no idea where did they get the typewriter from.

<sup>166</sup> Mykola Riabchuk. Interview by Anna Chukur. “Project for the Study of Dissidence and Samizdat” (PSDS), 2014. Assessed April 24, 2024, [https://samizdatcollections.library.utoronto.ca/interviews/en/mykola-riabchuk#\\_ftn2](https://samizdatcollections.library.utoronto.ca/interviews/en/mykola-riabchuk#_ftn2)

<sup>167</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 128-129.

<sup>168</sup> Martin Machovec, “The types and functions of samizdat publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1989,” *Poetics Today* 30, no. 1 (2009), 5.

third underground generations, as in the case with Ivan Martin Jirous and the whole circle around the Plastic People of the Universe, or with Jáchym Topol, Petr Placák, and J. H. Krchovský.<sup>169</sup> In the case of the Skrynia circle, they can be defined as the second generation of dissidents, to whom the idea of political nonconformism already proved to be not as essential as it was for the previous generation. The engagement with “political” in the broader sense, for the Skrynia group was not mandatory; even more – political matters were not a part of the artistic tradition they adopted from the American modernists such as Ezra Pound and Thomas Stearns Eliot.

The idea that the nature of art is in bringing up the profound fundamental basis of human existence and that poetry specifically should evoke personal responsibilities rather than engaging in the polemics with the outside world was a big part of the worldview that Chubai and Lysheha had. Both of them were the most knowledgeable about the poetry of very different milieus and traditions, earned a lot not only from the American modernist tradition but also from the other Western literature, such as Federico García Lorca, Maurice Maeterlinck, Guillaume Apollinaire; Eastern philosophy – Taoistic notions and poetry by Li Bai and Du Fu (most noticeable in the later poetry and texts by Lysheha from the 1970s, as his work “Druzhe Li Bo, Brate Du Fu” (“Friend Li Bai, Brother Du Fu”). The engagement with the literary culture of the neighboring countries and republics was also quite strong – from the concepts of the theater of inconsistency that Chubai closely engaged with when translating the excerpts by Tadeusz Różewicz (that are a part of “Skrynia”) to the close readings of Armenian literature that was available to buy in the Soviet Union as it was a reading from the “fraternal nations.” Chubai and Lysheha were the most experienced in writing poetry. They had a profound knowledge of the literature's trends and trajectories; therefore, for others in Skrynia, they were considered the most significant literary influences. Everyone was reading what these two read.

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<sup>169</sup> Machovec, “The types and functions of samizdat publication,” 9.

Because of this, the ideas about the nature of art were more or less homogenized within the group.

These notions of the detachment of literature from sociopolitical matters, in a way, remind me of the approach to poetry that Martin Heidegger saw in the works of Friedrich Hölderlin. This parallel, suggested but not elaborated in the work on Lysheha by Taras Pastuch,<sup>170</sup> is an interesting one regarding the dichotomy between the perception of art by Lviv counterculture and dissidents. For Heidegger, the poetry of the German poet Hölderlin reveals the philosophical renewal that, in a way, precedes and underlies any authentic political change. This poetry does not propose political actions or engage with everyday conventional political discourse. Poetry is supposed to reveal the truth; therefore, Heidegger emphasized the ontological over the ontic means.<sup>171</sup> Similarly, Lysheha and Chubai disregarded the discourse, heavily promoted by sixtiers, but more profoundly by dissidents, that chose the path to criticize, comment on, and in all the meanings to engage with that world and reality connected to the regime and power.

This conflict about the purpose of poetry between the Skrynja circle and dissidents can be observed through Chubai's testimonies during the interrogations. In the interrogations from February 7 and March 1, he told in detail about the conflict that appeared during one of the literary evenings in the fall of 1971, held in the apartment of Stephania Shabatura, carpet artist and human rights activist, who was also a neighbor of Iryna and Ihor Kalynets. The evening was initiated because one of the poets from Donetsk, Petro Svyntsytskyi, was in Lviv, and it seemed like a good chance to listen to his poetry. Chubai, who, as he said, was not invited to the evening, decided to come to one interrogation and stated that he was invited there in the

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<sup>170</sup> Taras Pastuch. *Mosty Oleha Lyshehy* [Bridges of Oleh Lysheha], Lviv: Piramida, 2019. p.50

<sup>171</sup> Martin Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art." *Basic Writings*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008. pp. 139-212.

other interrogation. Ultimately, he came there with his wife,<sup>172</sup> Lysheha, Yavorskyi, Morozov, and his wife Kateryna. When the group arrived, there were around twenty people from the artistic circles of Lviv. Svyntsytskyi started with the readings of his poems that, according to Chubai, were anti-Soviet and suggested the skeptical evaluation of the Soviet reality and were making “slandorous fictions about the Soviet state and social order.” These phrasings are too artificial to belong to Chubai, and most probably, they are a part of the KGB narrative that either threatened Chubai to the extent that he adopted these phrases or those were written down instead of him. In any case, Chubai elaborated on the content of these “slandorous fictions”: Svyntsytskyi’s poems were about the spiritual devastation of the Soviet citizen, about the downgrade of the moral values in a human, and also about the “alleged” persecution of the intelligentsia in Ukraine and in the USSR in general. Afterward, Chubai and Lysheha also read their poems – the ones that were a part of “Skrynia,” which are poems “Maria” by Chubai and “Vich-na-Vich” by Lysheha.

This dichotomy created tension between the circles – “Everyone except for my friends approved Svyntsytskyi’s poems,” stated Chubai. Svyntsytskyi also expressed a strong criticism towards Chubai – his argument was the following: “Poetry cannot be detached from the politics and the criticism of the social matters in the Soviet society.” He called the Chubai’s and Lysheha’s poems very complicated and non-comprehensible as they did not touch upon any actual questions for contemporary society. He added that the criticism that poetry provides should be understandable for people – for educated people and should be written in an educated manner. Chubai’s response went along the lines of what had previously been described and

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<sup>172</sup> Halyna’s presence is also mentioned in one interrogation and skipped in the other one, but most probably she was there as well.

embraced in Heidegger's terms, the ontological meanings of poetry. He stated that politics must discuss social questions, and poetry should not aim to do this, as it is not a purpose of poetry.<sup>173</sup>

This duality of the meanings of poetry brings more light to the understanding of the break between Skrynia and dissidents. These matters were too important for both circles, and none of them would break them – those were the matters of the positionings. It also explains why Lysheha and Chubai mentioned that dissidents acted superior regarding “Skrynia.” In the context of the samvydav, these aesthetical notions were above everything else and indeed were not understandable for the older dissidents – they were dedicated to the national tradition, less exposed to the non-Ukrainian literary approaches, and for them, their artistic performances were a part of the more significant role that they held – it was a part of resistance, and therefore political from the beginning till the end.

## 2.4. Hermeticism, silence, and “apoliticism” in Skrynia

Among the eleven texts in the samvydav, there is one translation of the excerpt from the play by Polish playwright Tadeusz Różewicz, six poems, two essays, and one questionnaire for the contributors they were supposed to answer in the next issue. None of these texts contained openly ideological considerations that did not engage with sociopolitical issues, but the samvydav appeared on the KGB radars. This self-publishment was unauthorized and therefore illegal, despite its content, but for the case of Skrynia circle, the content of their works was also criticized. Riabchuk and Nemyra mentioned that KGB provided their reviews of the works from “Skrynia” and found some hidden meanings and images in the poetry.<sup>174</sup> While I do not intend to go into a deep analysis of all the works from “Skrynia,” it would be helpful to touch upon

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<sup>173</sup> All the details from this story are a part of two transcripts of Chubai's interrogations. See “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Hryhorii Chubai” from 07.02.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2. p.66-68; “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Hryhorii Chubai” from 01.03.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2. p.78-80.

<sup>174</sup> Riabchuk. “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu” p. 16; Nemyra. “Spohad pro Oleha I Chas” p.102

some of the works and the undertones in them to see the motifs that are common to all works that make up the main line of “Skrynia.”

It was Chubai who stood behind the selections of the texts, editorial work, and order of the publications, and therefore, “Skrynia,” first, broadcasts the aesthetical views that Chubai had and only afterward represents the views of the other authors.

The samvydav starts with the poem “Vich-na-Vich” by Lysheha – a song-like poem inspired by blues that brings together two contexts that were not very welcomed in the Soviet context – obvious American origin of blues with the mentioning of the black musician with the saxophone, whom a young boy in Ukraine wants to meet to express the adoration. The poem switches to the image of very typical Lysheha images: river, rocks, fish, very rural and traditional pictures of the household together with the calm process of fishing. These themes became later recurrent for Lysheha, for whom the urban city never replaced his small village, Tysmenytsia. Among all the authors, Lysheha is the most independent in his thinking – both in this poem and his other work in “Skrynia” – the article “Lytsar” (“A Knight”), which is a reflection on the sculptures made by Orest Yavorskyi. The significant role of nature in the poem is intertwined with the phrases that would somehow unite a lot of other works from the almanac. Lysheha wrote:

*can you hear me brother  
I can't find the words for that  
it is very light and painful  
I'll just say:  
listen to me  
no one listens anymore, only you  
this evening.*<sup>175</sup>

The topics of silence, inability to talk, desperate need to relate to somebody, and trusting someone with your words are unifying topics of Skrynia. Literary scholars traced it and defined

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<sup>175</sup> Oleh Lysheha. “Vich-Na-Vich” [Face-To-Face]. Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000. p. 3-4

it as one of the specific trajectories of the poets from the seventies – silence and hermeticism. This silence is instead forced rather than voluntary and uses inner autonomy and aesthetical closeness to signify the readiness to be silent.<sup>176</sup> Lysheha's appeal to silence is the closest to the means of closeness with nature, and these motifs are an evident influence from the poetry of Pound and Eliot. In his turn, Pound was initially inspired by Eastern culture and philosophy, and it also broadcasted to Lysheha's poetry. From Eliot, Lysheha took the aesthetics of naivety, the simple form of poetry that simultaneously was very concrete and precise, where there were no significant metaphors or philosophical considerations, but instead, every word signified something profound and touching.<sup>177</sup>

Another point noticed among literary scholars was the appeal to the visual sense when the state of mind cannot be vocalized. The references to the views, silence, steady moments, the feelings of incompleteness, and misunderstanding (or rather a complete inability to understand) are also present in the other poems of "Skrynia." In the poem "Chlopchyk" ("Boy"), Roman Kis' pictured a repetitive figure of the probably last wish to see the familiar and essential for a boy places and creatures once again:

*Mom, bring me home,  
I want to look at my school  
I want to look at my sister  
I want to look at my dog  
I want to look at all, at all.*<sup>178</sup>

Victor Morozov depicted the romantic visions of the "loss of sense" when seeing the eyes of a beloved one. The poem ends with a decadent image of closing the coffin in front of the lyrical hero, prompting him to return "to my dear world at first"<sup>179</sup> and thus uniting the

<sup>176</sup> Oksana Zahorodniuk. "Silence in Skrynia: Some Postcolonial Visions", Visnyk of the Lviv University. Series Philology, 2014. p.100.

<sup>177</sup> Pastuch. Mosty Oleha Lyshehy. p.75

<sup>178</sup> Roman Kis'. "Chlopchyk" [A Boy], Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000. p. 5

<sup>179</sup> Victor Morozov. "Koly Sens Vylletsia V Isnuvannia" [When The Sense Will Be Spilled Into Existence], Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000. p. 6

permanent topics of life and death and the idea of the permanent returning. In the poem “Na pelustci” (“On the petal”), Kateryna Nemyra depicted a woman enjoying the beauty of the sunrise, and that was also criticized in the KGB review. She did not express enough civil engagement with the state, as the lyrical heroine stood aside while life passed.<sup>180</sup> These accusations were about the following lines:

*On a petal of a green bank  
that hung over the life of the water  
I stand in the morning feeling refreshed  
and catch drops of pink sun.*<sup>181</sup>

The set of poems by Vasyl Haiduchok is also united by the idea of slow life hidden in the details: a lamp on the street, a room, many images of sensitive intimacy and kisses, described with very fragile metaphors of roses, butterflies, and nightingales. Haiduchok also engaged deeply with the idea of silence. Somehow, it is a very recurrent image in his visions: “the silence that smells like falling apples” and complex depictions of the silence that follows all the interaction between the lovers:

*in the palm of your silence  
i will put all the colors of your look  
nightingales sing the sun to the last  
our lips meet*<sup>182</sup>

This poetic part of the samvydav, therefore, in fact closely goes in line with the matter of the separation of art from the actual life – art for the art’s sake, where everything that could be expressed does not even find its way out – there are simply no words for this. Hermeticism, conscious isolation, and almost radical absence of any notions would contain anything besides

<sup>180</sup> Kateryna Nemyra, “Spohad pro Lyshehu I chas,” 104.

<sup>181</sup> Kateryna Morozova, “Na Pelustci” [On the petal], *Skrynja: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000. p. 7

<sup>182</sup> Vasyl Haiduchok, “Stezhkoyu Pohliadu Prokhodiat’ Kvity” [The Flowers Pass On the Path of The Look], *Skrynja: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*, Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000, 8.

the character's mind, the mind that seeks beauty and big feelings and eternally is forced to find new ways to feel – through visual images, for example.

## 2.5. Modernism and European tradition in Skrynia

Another part of samvydav is undoubtedly more complex and slightly more enjoyable regarding the intellectual tradition and the anti-political discourse of “Skrynia.” It starts with the metaphorical poem “Maria” by Chubai, which depicts a very mystified image of Mary that creates references to the biblical Holy Mary but simultaneously depicts the independent, to some extent, sinful woman. It was pretty telling that for the matter of keeping “Skrynia” distanced from the political engagement, Chubai did not decide to put “Vertep,” the poem that made him famous, the poem that created his name, into “Skrynia.” Instead, he printed the poem, which depicts a life path of Maria, written from the perspective where the author observes her entire life and path as if from above:

*I see her very first words, I see her very first movement  
I see the first loves, I see the naked body  
I see an irradiated face that stares incessantly  
to where the water is volatile  
to where stars' golden crickets are*<sup>183</sup>

The author also detachedly orders the ephemeral image of “others” not to stop Maria or stand in her way. The poem's author instructs and points to the path that should be the right one. Chubai stands in the characteristic position of teacher, mentor, and charismatic leader. “Maria” also can be connected through the image of the maternal figure with the works of the people who influenced Chubai before as well: “Skorbna Matir” (“Grieving Mother”) by Pavlo Tychyna and “Mater Dolorosa” by Bohdan-Ihor Antonych.<sup>184</sup> The KGB reviewers found their way to

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<sup>183</sup> Hryhorii Chubai, “Maria”, *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000, 10.

<sup>184</sup> Cheletska, “The Late-Modernism Markers of the Literary Generation of 1970,” 125.

criticize the poem: in the lines quoted above, they noticed elements of pornography that made this piece unacceptable to the public.

The short novel “Nesy Svii Nimb” (“Carry Your Halo”)<sup>185</sup> in “Skrynia” is another distinguishable piece written by Riabchuk. It is a Kafkian piece about the modest legal consultant M., who woke up one day with a luminous nimbus. This novel is a fascinating piece that somehow does not only represent the intellectual influence of Kafka in the sense of reflecting on the absurdity of the system, its almost grotesque obsession with the bureaucracy and the matters of the role of the individual in society, but it also touched upon the topics that do not seem to be very characteristic for Kafka. A legal consultant with a halo becomes the state's ruler and solves people's problems. He seems to rule until, one day, he is not able to revive a dead man lying in the middle of a railroad. A shutdown of the railways accompanies the death of a random man, and later, the man's body simply disappears, which leads to the fact that all the people in the state rush to find him. This shows the legal consultant that he is unable to rule. At the end of the work, the character is transformed into a saint and finds his place in the middle of the icon in a small church. In the finale, the legal consultant laughs from the icon in an empty church, along with the devil who accompanied him throughout the plot and gave him a halo. This story's religious part is not a part of the Kafkian style. Therefore, I clarified this with Riabchuk himself for this research. He stated that this text may have some subconscious influence from another work by Moroz – “I saw Mohammed” (1970), a satirical piece about the big quasi-religious celebrations that were held for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lenin.<sup>186</sup> While KGB did not trace the multi-level connection to Moroz, they did recognize the decadence and mysticism in Riabchuk's novel in their reviews. In these terms, Riabchuk's work seems to be the most non-apolitical in “Skrynia” since even when undoubtedly taking place in

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<sup>185</sup> Mykola Riabchuk, “Nesy Svii Nimb” [Carry Your Halo], *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000, 14-18.

<sup>186</sup> Comment from Mykola Riabchuk to the author. 02.06.2024.

some abstract state, it creates an obvious allusion to the realities in which the group found themselves. Therefore, it is interesting that all the criticism toward that text was connected to mysticism rather than classical for the KGB “bourgeois nationalism.”

Another work that indeed fell off the Soviet standards of socialist realism was the translation of the Polish play “Kumednyi Staryhan” (“Funny Old Man”) by Tadeusz Różewicz, translated by Chubai<sup>187</sup>. Różewicz is known for his “theater of inconsistency” as a peculiar analogy of the Western European theater of the absurd. The translation is printed with the short introduction written by Chubai, where he reflected on the specificity of Różewicz’s plays and attempted to put them into the broader intellectual trajectory. Chubai mentioned that “Kumednyi Staryhan” is a specific parallel to the play “The Breasts of Tiresias” by Guillaume Apollinaire. Still, when Apollinaire tried to show the French the threat of low birth rates for their nation and to call for repopulating, Różewicz depicted the hyperbolized image of the overpopulation of the globe from the point of view of a funny old man. According to Riabchuk, including Różewicz’s play into “Skrynia” served two purposes: to reflect their cultural orientations and define the limits of their artistic activity. In a way, the Polish experience was always closer to Lviv citizens as well, and it symbolized that more liberal approach to art that Lviv underground only dreamed about.<sup>188</sup> The choice of that specific play for the samvydav is also quite self-reflective. The absurdist monologues of the old man about the overpopulated Earth and the fear of leaving the room are, in a way, close to the feelings that the “Skrynia” circle expressed in their work. Lviv underground was not terrified of overpopulation but felt trapped in a society with limited possibilities. Both Różewicz and “Skrynia” wrote about the existential feeling of alienation and the tragedy of loneliness and detachment. In contrast, they

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<sup>187</sup> Hryhorii Chubai, “Teatr Neposlidovnosti I “Kumednyi Staryhan” Tadeusha Rozhevycha” [Theater of Inconsistency and “The Funny Old Man” by Tadeusz Różewicz], *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000. pp.20-26

<sup>188</sup> Mykola Riabchuk, “Polshcha, polskyŭ, poliaky: Sproba filolohichnoho kraieznawstva” [Poland, Polish, Poles: An attempt at philological local history], *Suchasnist*, N 11, (1998): 144.

also embraced the idea of personal freedom and an inner world where they have their limited islands of freedom.

In the second piece written by Lysheha in “Skrynia” – “Lytsar,” an overview of the Yavorskyi’s sculptures, one can get a deeper look at how the Western literary tradition is rooted in the Ukrainian canon. Lysheha references both the big names in the art world, such as Picasso and Giotto, and simultaneously reflects on the literature by Lesia Ukrainka, which, as it seems, made a big impression on Yavorskyi. At the beginning of the text, Lysheha commented on Yavorskyi’s autoportrait and mentioned that on it, Yavorskyi wore the pin with the phrase “get up in whom the thought arose” – the phrase of Lesia Ukrainka’s authorship. Lysheha combines the memories about his and Yavorskyi’s visit to the exhibition dedicated to Lesia Ukrainka when he discusses one of the sculptures titled “Siyach” (“The Sower”), and he puts this in a way where her motifs are closely connected with the traditions of German Gothic and expressionism. Lysheha almost created the symbolical long durée trajectory of the sculpture – “the warrior came from the Middle Ages, I hear the clang of his armor in the crusade, he passed through the Renaissance, although he was beaten a little there; he passed through the Baroque, where he was further stripped; he came in the 19th century, at the end of which he drank the life-giving water. He came in the twentieth century and drank a lot of blood in the year 14, and from then on, he was expelled, albeit for a short time. Now, the “weak” and “strong” are fighting him. But his ghost is always on the horizon - the ghost of the Apocalypse.”<sup>189</sup> And then Lysheha recalled that he criticized Yavorskyi for these images, for the usage of well-known tropes and plots – “that’s the pseudo-classical composition,” “a step behind,” to which Yavorskyi responded with the questions on why one would reject the classical composition and allegory.

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<sup>189</sup> Oleh Lysheha, “Lytsar” [Knight], *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*, Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000, 27-30.

This text by Lysheha creates a profound picture of the vibrant intellectual and artistic life that Lviv Underground lived – filled with elaborate discussions and reflections on each other’s art and the art from the Western canon, neighboring countries, and Eastern cultures. In its nature, this lifestyle is close to the one that Western youth in the capitalist countries had at precisely the same time, with the difference that Lviv discussions were supposed to be kept silent. This artificially created silence, nevertheless, did not stop the process of self-reflection related to the purpose of art and regarding the threats of conformism. Because of this, the last part of the *samvydav* – the questionnaire by Roman Kis’ appeared in “Skrynia.”<sup>190</sup> This one page of notes implies there was supposed to be a second issue of “Skrynia,” where the authors would provide their answers posed by Kis’. Kis’ by himself is another unique person among Lviv Underground – an ethnologist, very knowledgeable on Western philosophical tradition, who also avoided prosecution for the participation in an unauthorized issuing of the *samvydav* because he graduated from the university in 1971. Kis’ was the philosopher in the group, the most educated and interested in the literature that nobody else knew.

“While Chubai was the soul of the circle and its charismatic leader, Kis’ was its brain, a reference book, a living encyclopedia.”<sup>191</sup> Kis’ brought approaches to the group from the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis about language. He was the only one in the circle who joined Christianity, specifically its reformed version. That was when the predominant tendency of the spiritual searches within the group was in Oriental practices, such as Zen Buddhism. Therefore, because of the deep reflexivity and engagement with the broader circle of intellectual influences than the rest of the group, in “Skrynia,” Kis’ wrote a questionnaire. It contains only three essential notes explaining the need for the questionnaire and then proceeds with five questions. In a way, these questions are a quiz that helps to

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<sup>190</sup> Roman Kis’. “Kvestionar” [Questionnaire], *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*. Ed. Vasyl Gabor. Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000, 31.

<sup>191</sup> Mykola Riabchuk, “Romko,” *Zbruč*, Accessed 05.06.2024: <https://zbruc.eu/node/102133>

determine the existential creative nature. In the beginning, Kis explains that the circle of “Skrynia” is gathering individuals. Therefore, it should also exist based on expressing the individual traits and not neglecting them for the conformism of the group. Thus, these questions aim to create the foundations of true unity based on the principle of complementarity of complete differences. The questions posed there encourage the authors to reflect on their understandings of such concepts as “reality” and “human life,” as well as attempts to dig deeper into the personal understanding of art and its social functions. Indeed, the answers to these questions would be crucial in the broader discussion on Skrynia’s circle perception of the art for the art’s sake vision and their anti-political discourse. However, the second issue of “Skrynia” never appeared. Thus, the only way to trace these trajectories is through the alternative sources and the notions of the peculiarities of the time. In a way, Soviet education provided more than enough “correct” answers to the questions about the social functions of art – social realism would surely opt for the promotion of the state ideology and embracement of the Soviet figures. However, these answers were not satisfying for the circle that desperately aimed to reach something more significant. This question also, in a way, points out the reasons why “Skrynia” authors fell under the influence of the dissidents. Nationalism, in its variety of forms and meanings, therefore, was an alternative that offered an opposite type of thinking.

The following questions Kis’ posed are more targeted at the individual trajectories of the authors – “What is the place of creativity in the context of your existence?” “Where is the creative process oriented for you: outward or inward?” These questions also broadcast that the attempts to find common ground without the loss of personal creativity were the critical and probably recurrent topic for Skrynia authors. Kis’ concluded the questionnaire by asking what the authors’ wishes regarding their common path of self-search are, and thus defined “Skrynia” once more as a collective unity of the authors whose aim for the samvydav was in the search for self-expression.

## 2.6. Smuggling the opposition into the samvydav

The political culture of Skrynia was focused on aesthetics and personal involvement with politics. Therefore, reading Skrynia's political thought can be done through aesthetics. The idea of "art for the art's sake," which was crucial for the "Skrynia" samvydav, can explain this as well, as it hinted at the radical distinction between the matter of social and artistic. The artistic isolation visible in "Skrynia" can be explained through the understanding of the dangerous political situation in the early 1970s, when the authors were aware that, sooner or later, it would be read by the KGB.<sup>192</sup> This positioning still does not explain precisely the need to publish the samvydav – in other words, if authors knew or felt in advance that their activity would be caught, why did they decide to publish it? Therefore, the decision to create the samvydav already stands for itself as a matter of personal involvement with political matters. Another point is that what authors recall as "apolitical" can hardly be so – even if, keeping in mind the extraordinary skill of the KGB reviewers to find the ideological undertones in all the pieces of literature, Skrynia was not as apolitical as its authors state repeatedly. If taking a closer look, it appears that even without the close attention of KGB officers to the texts in the samvydav, the almanac contains some notions that can be undoubtedly perceived as hinting at Ukrainian national tradition.

According to KGB, one of them is the almanac cover, which was the most scandalous part of the samvydav. The cover, designed by Volodymyr Onyshchenko, whose full name was not mentioned in the list of authors, the cover of Skrynia depicts the graphic ornament full of triangular figures and naturalistic elements. There is not much information on Onyshchenko's biography besides the fact that he studied at the Lviv Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts and proceeded with work in Kyiv in the aftermath of the "Skrynia" events. Because of the

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<sup>192</sup> Marko Robert Stach, "Kontur i Slovo. Kateryna Nemyra" [Outline and Word, Kateryna Nemyra], *Ukrainskyi Zhurnal*, Czechia: RUTA, N 9 (38): 52; Riabchuk, "P'iat pisen pro Lyshehu," 16.

limited information, it is also hard to trace the exact artistic tradition that Onyshchenko followed in his other works. Still, regarding the “Skrynia” cover, the influence is evident. The cover almost identically repeats the part of the ornament used on the image on the cover of the magazine “Mystetstvo” (“Art”), published in Kyiv in 1920. The well-recognized Art Nouveau painter and graphic designer Heorhiy Narbut created the cover of that magazine. Narbut, who was well-known for the designs of the coat of arms, banknotes, postage stamps, and charters for the Ukrainian National Republic, was one of the most famous and influential artists in early Soviet Ukraine.

The usage of the image that hinted at the tradition of the 1920s Ukrainian art would be, without any doubt, perceived as an ostent of the national tradition. Riabchuk mentioned that the KGB officers read the allusion: “KGB reviewers... noticed it. One of the points of this review sounded roughly like the cover is similar to the covers of nationalist magazines of the 1920s and 1930s. It was emphasized that it was nationalist. In their way, they were right.”<sup>193</sup> Based on the Skrynia’s engagement with the art of the interwar period, it does not seem that such a hint could be coincidental. Even less coincidental seems the connection with the dissident tradition that appears later in between the pages of samvydav. Between the texts in “Skrynia,” occasionally, there is a set of illustrations portraying different miniatures – when taking a closer look, it is quite clear that those are a set of varying ex libris. On page 19 of the samvydav, there is a small picture of the fantasy creature that looks like Pegasus. In this picture, the letters that are placed around the animal say “Sya knyha Kalyntsa” (“This book belongs to Kalynets”). This ex-libris is the same one that was found and seized during the search in the apartment of Iryna Kalynets.<sup>194</sup> For now, three other images of the ex-libris on the pages of “Skrynia” are hard to identify.

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<sup>193</sup> Riabchuk. Interview by Anna Chukur.

<sup>194</sup> “Inspection report of things and documents” in the apartment of Iryna Kalynets from 13.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.1, 68.

Despite being relatively well hidden in the hermetic aesthetical poetry, these symbols still tell that “Skrynia” is more complex than it seems. Even on the level of the samvydav, which supposedly was not meant to spread among wide circles, it still reached circles of dissidents. Being criticized for aesthetics and the absence of a standard view on what poetry should be about, “Skrynia” still did not fall entirely into the planned apoliticism. Whether conscious or not, the absence of engagement with the regime, ignorance, and creation of a supposedly parallel political culture could not be isolated from the dominant discourse since, while disengaging with it, it was symbolically admitting its dominance. The complete “dropping out” of the system that Yurchak suggested did not happen since the intellectual life and aesthetical forms in which it found its expressions; nevertheless, it only happened as a rejection or disagreement with the status quo. “Skrynia” samvydav precisely illustrates these important notions – an absence of the paths where the state would not be present, at least in the form of the shadow. Therefore, the anti-political discourse fits into this trajectory – it reflects precisely on the attempt to live according to one's values and matters despite the external status quo. Living in truth, not in that profoundly louder and distinguished way that dissidents chose, but in a way where the inability to talk is also an answer. And this answer should also be taken in the context with the investigation of the KGB, that took place in 1972.

### Chapter 3. Finding the Enemy: KGB, Skrynia, and the dissidents

The story of Skrynia samvydav should be read from at least two sides – from the side of the group and the side of the KGB. This relation of power, inherent in the authoritarian state, creates a vertical dichotomy, where the personal agency of both sides matters. It does not require a long explanation of why the narratives presented within the KGB documents cannot be perceived as the exact sources of what happened or what was said. The Soviet penal system, as well as its ramifications in other socialist countries, did not create a border or any differentiation between the attacks on the understanding and attacks on the personality. As it was carefully studied in the context of Eastern Germany by Andreas Glaeser, the Stasi system was, at its core, about the irreducibly social character of understandings, and the understanding, specifically self-positioning, is the essence of the very capacity of human beings to make themselves the object of their reflection.<sup>195</sup> It leads to the point that, without doubt, the personal levels of engagement of those interrogated and the officers of the KGB mattered in how the final version of the individual file looked, as well as to the fate of the sentenced people. In the documents studied here, one can still try to bring their type of reading and recreate the “real” events in the Lviv investigative department in 1972. Ultimately, these visions would never be completed without the complete knowledge of what happened during these interrogations.

The level of understanding of the political situation and the awareness about how much the officers knew before the talks themselves influenced the received testimonies. The position of the KGB officers was complemented by the engagement of the officers from the other regions, for example, investigator Captain Shkurba from the investigative department in Poltava region who was present during the search in the Iryna Kalynets’ apartment,<sup>196</sup> or Lieutenant Hlushchenko, investigator of the KGB branch of the Ukrainian SSR Republic in the Kharkiv

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<sup>195</sup> Andreas Glaeser, *Political epistemics: The secret police, the opposition, and the end of East German socialism*. (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 186-187.

<sup>196</sup> “Resolution on seizure” from 27 January 1972. SSU, F.6, op.75513, f.1, 115.

region, who did the protocol of inspection of things and documents found in the apartment of Kalynets' couple.<sup>197</sup> These factors, as well as the general Soviet practice from the times of the Red Terror of paying attention not to the particular crime but to the whole biography of the accused<sup>198</sup> that Cristina Vatulescu closely studied in the Romanian case, also add complexity to the ways on how to research Skrynia story. In this chapter, I will analyze the case of "Skrynia" using the investigation documents from the case of Iryna Kalynets. Researching these documents along with the set of memories, sources, and secondary literature, I will attempt to define the main strategies used during the interrogations that will serve as another basis on which the trajectories of "Skrynia" and dissident circles differed.

### 3.1. Skrynia in the KGB documents

The case of samvydav Skrynia, according to the KGB office, is a part of the more significant case in the personal file of Iryna Kalynets (maiden name – Stasiv), the poet and a dissident whose views can be located somewhere between cultural-civic and liberal nationalism. In its turn, the investigation on Iryna Kalynets was brought into the criminal case as an investigation connected to the criminal case on Viacheslav Chornovil, an activist and dissident within the line of the democratic nationalism and human rights movement, as well as the creator of the samvydav "Ukrainian Herald." These investigations signaled the beginning of the more significant Soviet attack on dissident circles.

On January 12, 1972, a s wave of arrests happened simultaneously both in Lviv and Kyiv , and was later referred to as an "arrested carol."<sup>199</sup> The title is connected to the Christmas

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<sup>197</sup> "Protocol of inspection of things and documents" from 13 January, 1972. SSU, F.6, op.75513, f.1, 62.

<sup>198</sup> Cristina Vatulescu, *Police aesthetics: Literature, film, and the secret police in soviet times*. (Stanford University Press, 2010), 32.

<sup>199</sup> Maria Hrytsiv, "Areshtovana Koliada, abo Pohrom 12 Sichnia 1972-ho" [The Arrested Carol or the Pogrom of 12 January 1972], *Istorychna Pravda*, 12 January, 2011. Assessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2011/01/12/13866/>

celebrations among the dissident circles – the participants studied carols, wore traditional ethnic clothes and costumes, and performed a play about the birth of Christ – such celebrations are rooted in Ukrainian national tradition. Christmas celebrations, no matter the civil positions of its participants, could already have been perceived as anti-Soviet due to their essentially religious character and characteristic national undertones. In 1972, this event served as the ground for the arrests that were meant to uncover more severe crimes. Among the people arrested in Lviv were Iryna Kalynets, Stephania Shabatura, carpet artist and human rights activist, Viacheslav Chornovil, and Mykhailo Osadchy, a journalist, poet, and dissident.

The criminal investigation of Iryna Kalynets lasted quite long – her trial took place after almost seven months of investigation. It also announced the sharpening of the KGB tactics – among all the Soviet republics, it was Soviet Ukraine, where the latest techniques of the Soviet penal system were tested and then adopted elsewhere. In 1972, for the first time, women were arrested on accusations of “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda”<sup>200</sup> – Iryna Kalynets was one of them. The personal file N204 on her started from considering the criminal case against her as a separate case and investigation from the file N196 on Viacheslav Chornovil, even though many of the same materials were used in both cases.<sup>201</sup> The court verdict was announced on August 2, 1972, and it sentenced Iryna Kalynets and Stephania Shabatura to six years in labor camps in Mordovia and three years of exile.<sup>202</sup> The sentence was passed based on the usual criminal charge for dissidents, Article 62 of the criminal code of the Ukrainian SSR (corresponding to Article 70 of the Russian SSR criminal code) — “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.” Viacheslav Chornovil’s trial happened on April 12, 1973, and ended with the same sentence. Mykhailo Osadchy went through a trial on September 5, 1972, and got an even longer

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<sup>200</sup> Orest Subtelny, “Law and Repression in the Soviet Union,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 114.

<sup>201</sup> “Resolution on allocation of materials on the indictment of Kalynets I. from criminal case No. 196 into a separate criminal case and its acceptance into its proceedings.” F.6, op.75513, f.1, 6-10.

<sup>202</sup> “Verdict of August 2, 1972, Judicial Panel in Criminal cases of the Lviv Regional Court.” SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.5, 136-145.

term — seven years of camps and three years of exile. The husband of Iryna Kalynets — Ihor Kalynets, went through the court and was sentenced to the same term as his wife on August 11, 1972.

The involvement of Skrynina with the case of Iryna Kalynets is quite direct — Hryhorii (Hrytsko) Chubai, Oleh Lysheha, and Mykola Riabchuk were brought as the witnesses who gave the testimonies based on their connection to Iryna and Ihor Kalynets.<sup>203</sup> Skrynina members were frequent visitors of Kalynets' apartment, where some of them met for the first time. According to Mykola Riabchuk, it was Iryna Kalynets who introduced him to Hrytsko Chubai when she invited both over for the literary evening sometime in 1970.<sup>204</sup> In this chapter, I will focus primarily on the testimonies of Chubai, Lysheha, and Riabchuk, given to the KGB in 1972 as part of the criminal investigation of Iryna Kalynets. While in the broader context of all the testimonies, protocols, searches, and other administrative operations carried out by the KGB in the inquiry, the data that involves “Skrynina” members is minimal and overlooked, it is vital for this topic. From the positionality of the author and, symbolically speaking, almost an observer in a room with the officer and young Chubai, Lysheha, or Riabchuk, it is worth keeping in mind that at the point of these interrogations, they would not know whether they would be charged with any sentences, or whether they would be considered guilty at all. This makes a story even more difficult from the ethical perspective as well. While a lot of people interrogated in the course of the case were sentenced, as Iryna and Ihor Kalynets, Shabatura, Chornovil, or Osadchyi, all the “Skrynina” members brought to the case were used only as witnesses (the status was changed from the suspect to witness in case of Chubai), and all three young people were released. Therefore, in these statements, one can see a survival story — something in their behavior, or, as I will argue later, in their willingness to protect themselves, could be a decisive point in how the “Skrynina” story ended. Besides my ethical and moral questions, these

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<sup>203</sup> “Inventory of documents in the investigative file N204.” SSU, F.6, op.75513, f.1.

<sup>204</sup> Riabchuk. Interview by Anna Chukur.

testimonies and the supporting documents from the KGB investigation I will use to recreate the line of the interconnections between the countercultural Skrynia and the dissident circles.

### 3.2. Skrynia in the interrogations

Among seven people who were the authors of the “Skrynia” samvydav, only three – Hrytsko Chubai, Oleh Lysheha, and Mykola Riabchuk - were brought to the KGB office as the witnesses to the case of Iryna Kalynets. This selection may be explained in this way: Chubai was brought to the case almost immediately, most probably in connection with his previous activity, which had already attracted KGB attention in 1970 and 1971. Additionally, ex-libris with Chubai’s name, as well as some of the letters where his name was mentioned, were seized during the search in the Kalynets’ apartment on January 12.<sup>205</sup> In his first testimony from January 14, Chubai mostly talked about “Skrynia” samvydav, its authors, and the conflict that occurred between him and dissidents, precisely the Kalynets’ couple, Osadchyi and Chornovil, dissidents caught during the “arrested carol.” He briefly explained “Skrynia” members’ connections to the dissident circle and, in that talk, mentioned that among all of them, Lysheha knew Osadchyi and Chornovil, as well as he kept the contact with Ihor Kalynets. According to Chubai, Lysheha and Kalynets were discussing poetry till the point of the argument that happened in the fall of 1971.

Regarding Riabchuk, in the same interrogation, Chubai said that Iryna Kalynets introduced Chubai to Riabchuk and that some of Riabchuk’s novels were seized during the search in Chubai’s apartment. Other *Skrynia* authors are also mentioned in his story: Roman Kis’ Chubai stated that he knew all the previously mentioned dissidents but did not keep any contact with them. Victor Morozov, according to Chubai, only knew Ihor Kalynets. The

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<sup>205</sup> “Protocol of inspection of things and documents”. SSU, F.6, op.75513, f.1, 48.

paragraph about Vasyl Haiduchok in his statement is the shortest, and it only states that Haiduchok studied in the faculty of journalism and wrote exclusively intimate lyrics. The seventh author of “Skrynia,” and the only female author, is not mentioned in the statement. Kateryna Morozova (Aleksandrova), the wife of Victor Morozov, was pregnant in early 1972, and according to her, she managed to avoid all involvement with the investigation.<sup>206</sup>

Therefore, among all the authors, Chubai, Lysheha, and Riabchuk, whose connection to the circle of dissidents was undeniable, were brought under investigation. Throughout the investigative process in 1972, Chubai went through six interrogations (January 14, January 15, February 7, February 12, March 1, and June 27) at the KGB investigative detention center of Ukrainian SSR. He was also brought to give testimony to the deputy regional prosecutor at the regional prosecutor’s office in 1971. While the recordings or any transcripts from 1971 are unavailable, Chubai referred to these meetings during his interrogations in the KGB later this year.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, there was a search done in Chubai’s apartment at the beginning of the investigation on January 12, where they found the copy of “Skrynia” samvydav, as well as much illegal literature, including copied by hand texts by Friedrich Nietzsche, photocopies of the articles by Dmytro Dontsov, and Ukrainian magazines issued in 1917. The order for the search is followed by the protocol of the items that were seized, which does not contain a precise analysis of the content but instead provides only an overview. The written reviews by the KGB, which in detail covered how the content of the literary texts was anti-Soviet or nationalistic, are not available among the documents in the case – Riabchuk mentioned that those reviews were shown to the authors during the interrogations.<sup>208</sup> Still, somehow, they did not end up in the folder with the other documents after the opening of the archives in the post-Soviet period. Besides these sources, among the files that mention participants of Skrynia, there is a copy of

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<sup>206</sup> Nemyra, “Spohad pro Oleha I Chas,” 102.

<sup>207</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 50-60.

<sup>208</sup> Riabchuk, “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu,” 16.

the simultaneous interrogation of Chubai and Iryna Kalynets from June 27, which is focused on the previous contradictions in their statements, as well as the final stage of the case – the transcript of the court session from August 2.

The seriousness of Chubai's importance in the investigation cannot be underestimated, and it remains an entangled story. Chubai was brought to the criminal case as a suspect immediately after the beginning of the investigation and arrest, and after the second interrogation on January 15, the resolution on his release from custody was issued, and his status in the testimony documents was changed from the suspect to the witness.<sup>209</sup> However, on July 3, with the decision of the principal investigator of this case, Lieutenant Ruzhynskyi, and the head of the investigative department of KGB in Lviv Oblast major Klymenko, Chubai's materials were sent for additional inspection as he was suspected in additional crimes, that need investigation.<sup>210</sup> As it is obvious for now, Chubai was not accused of any crimes afterward. Whether or not he made any sort of a deal with the KGB in the first three days of his being caught is hard to tell. Still, it is quite possible based on the notion that in most of his testimonies, Chubai exposed nearly all the representatives of the Lviv (and some Kyiv) dissident circles. This fact is hinted at very clearly in the cassation appeal that Iryna Kalynets wrote. In it, she stated that Chubai's accusations were false and were made to protect himself since the list of crimes committed by Chubai should also have involved criminal liability. Among them, she noted the publication of the poem "Vertep" ("Nativity Scene") abroad, the publication of the self-published "Skrynina," the preservation of Dmytro Dontsov's works at home (which, in her words, is even more severe than the phrases about "independent Ukraine" that Chubai attributed to her). Despite this, Chubai was released from custody three days after her arrest, while she

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<sup>209</sup> "Resolution on selection of materials from a criminal case and sending them for verification" from 03.07.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.4, 142-144.

<sup>210</sup> "Resolution on selection of materials from a criminal case and sending them for verification" from 03.07.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.4, 143.

ended up in court.<sup>211</sup> The statements of Kalynets can also be perceived as skeptical, but the accusations against Chubai she made are, in fact, hard to deny.

At a distance of fifty years from the events, it is undeniable that for the investigation of anti-Soviet behavior by the KGB, the existence of samvydav, as well as the activity of most of its authors, was insignificant. Another point that proves this irrelevance is that the samvydav is not even mentioned in Riabchuk's interrogation. However, to maintain the appearance of a fair and transparent investigation, as well as to potentially find and expose other names of dissidents whom the underground may have known, "Skrynia" played a significant role in the investigation and a large part of Chubai's and Lysheha's conversations with the officers took up this topic. It is also possible that the "Skrynia" circle considered their greatest guilt before Soviet law precisely in the samvydav. All the authors seem to be aware that their activity with the publication of even an utterly apolitical publication still threatened them if the existence of the samvydav was revealed. Therefore, Chubai and Lysheha stressed during the interrogation that the purpose of the samvydav was to gather the texts not for distribution but exclusively for the authors themselves. Additionally, it was mentioned that the samvydav was exceptionally artistic, and there was no anti-Soviet agitation or motifs in the texts.<sup>212</sup>

### 3.3. Unknown samvydav

Among the first questions and contradictions that appear about the samvydav is the question about its original form. That limited scholarship that covered "Skrynia" disagreed on how many issues of the journal were there, how many copies were printed, and how they were distributed. In the 1990s, when the samvydav was counted as lost, one of the dissidents, Mykhailo Osadchyi, previously mentioned as one with whom Chubai and his friends had

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<sup>211</sup> "Cassation appeal to the Supreme Court of the Ukrainian SSR" from 02.08.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.5, 169-193.

<sup>212</sup> "Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha" from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 129.

contact, wrote, that “Skrynia” was released in 1973.<sup>213</sup> While that is quite obviously misleading, since “Skrynia” appeared in the interrogations from 1971, the question about the proper date of the release is more complicated. The official date, and the most logical one, is the fall of 1971 – this time is mentioned in the reprinted copy of “Skrynia” itself, as well as Riabchuk<sup>214</sup> and some scholars.<sup>215</sup> In the end, even in the samvydav, some poems are signed with a date – 1971. However, it is also possible that some earlier version of “Skrynia” was created in the 1970s because it is also a recurrent date. For example, in his explanation note, Oleh Lysheha said that two of his works, the poem “Vich-na-Vich” (“Face to Face”) and an article “Lytsar” (“A Knight”), were published in the issue “Skrynia” in 1970.

Besides that, Lysheha mentioned all the other six authors who published their works in the samvydav.<sup>216</sup> In the interrogation from the same day as the explanatory note, he stated that the idea to create the samvydav belonged to him, Chubai, Morozov, Haiduchok, and Kis’ in 1970, and they published the samvydav in the same year.<sup>217</sup> The following question is why Riabchuk and Morozova suddenly disappeared from his narrative. While the disappearance of Morozova can be explained through the desire to protect a pregnant woman or simply through the possible smaller level of her engagement in the creation of the samvydav, the absence of Riabchuk in this narrative seems somewhat mysterious. Kateryna Nemyra (maiden – Aleksandrova, in the early 1970s – married to Victor Morozov and having his last name) mentioned that she was deeply engaged in the creation of samvydav, but similarly to Lysheha, she mentioned that “as far as she remembers, Riabchuk did not publish in ‘Skrynia.’”<sup>218</sup> While

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<sup>213</sup> Mykhailo Osadchyi, “Samvydav - peredvisnyk svobody slova, vilnoi presy Ukrainy” [Samvydav - a harbinger of freedom of speech, free press of Ukraine], *Zasoby masovoi informatsii y utverdzhenia derzhavnoho suverenitetu Ukrainy*. Lviv: Svit, (1993): 108

<sup>214</sup> Riabchuk. Interview by Anna Chukur.

<sup>215</sup> Vasyl Gabor, “Do istorii literaturno-mystetskoho samvydavnoho zhurnalu ‘Skrynia’ (1971)” [To the history of literary-artistic samvydav “Skrynia” (1971)], *Skrynia: literaturno-mystetskyi samvydavnyi zhurnal [literary and artistic self-published magazine]*, Lviv: LNB im. V. Stefanyka, 2000, III.

<sup>216</sup> “Explanation Note to the Head of the KGB in Lviv Oblast from Oleh Lysheha” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 122.

<sup>217</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 127.

<sup>218</sup> Nemyra. Interview with the author.

it is also possible that this exclusion of the person can be read as a simple example of emotive understanding – Lysheha could be very scared during the interrogation, and then, his narrative would be poorly comprehended as oriented by discursive understandings alone, but instead, it needs to be perceived together with other characteristics of his personality – his way to protect people who were not supposed to be caught or simply a fact that under pressure he could have forgotten one of the names. In that instance, Nemyra's answer is more complicated to comprehend. If one takes a closer look at “Skrynia,” then it may be noted that the only text of Riabchuk’s authorship in the samvydav, the story “Nesy Svii Nimb” (“Carry Your Halo”), is signed with the date April 1971. It leads me to suggest that it is possible that there was a previous version of “Skrynia” that differed in the set of authors and the date of publication.

Two predominant topics are covered in the testimonies by Chubai, Lysheha, and Riabchuk during the rounds of their interrogations: “Skrynia” samvydav and the connection to the dissident circles, specifically, as it is not surprising, to Iryna Kalynets. Among the documents, Lysheha gave statements three times in 1972 – on January 15, March 7, and June 28. Besides that, among the files in Iryna Kalynets’ criminal case, there is an additional explanation note written by Lysheha on January 15 which contains testimonies almost identical to the ones he gave on the same day. Regarding the content of these conversations, there are two main topics: “Skrynia” and Lysheha’s contacts with Iryna Kalynets. His testimonies on the samvydav mostly correspond to the ones given by Chubai and are also related to the search in Chubai’s apartment. Riabchuk went through only one interrogation on March 1, and he is the only one who talked exclusively about his relationships with the Kalynets’ couple, mostly with Iryna, who was a librarian in his school.

Looking more closely at Lysheha’s interrogations, it immediately strikes that his testimonies are repetitive which means that he was confirming his narrative repeatedly. Only the last interrogation introduced a different narrative. The explanation note mentioned before

almost entirely repeats the interrogation transcript from January 15, and his later interrogations return to the same story – the incident with Iryna Kalynets regarding Ukrainian symbols and traditions. Lysheha elaborated that he speaks about Chubai's story, which was previously mentioned in his interrogation on January 14. This data indeed can be found in the documents, and Chubai explained the situation very similarly: in fall 1971 when Lysheha and Chubai were in Kalynets's apartment, there were guests – a couple from Canada, whose names none of them recalled, as well as a girl that worked in the bookstore in Lviv somewhere. Regarding the couple from Canada, I would suggest that it is highly possible that the woman could assumably be Vira Malanczys, who was an artist and activist from the diaspora in Toronto. A lot of postcards and letters from her were found during the search in Kalynets' apartment,<sup>219</sup> and therefore, she seems to be one of the closest connections that Iryna and Ihor Kalynets had in Canada.

Iryna Kalynets started a discussion about the national symbols and traditions and stated that “for contemporary youth “red viburnum”<sup>220</sup> and blue and yellow flag are closer than the flag of Soviet Ukraine.” Both Chubai and Lysheha mentioned in their talks with the KGB that Lysheha disagreed with this and said that these symbols are dead and unrelatable for contemporary youth. Kalynets got angry and kicked them out of her apartment, calling them both stupid and telling them never to return there again.<sup>221</sup> That situation surely caught the attention of the investigators since this story became the center of all the following interrogations with Lysheha. Throughout the later interrogations, more and more details of that situation appeared in the documents, and what is especially interesting is that each interview with Lysheha was conducted by a different investigator. Senior Leitenant Ruzhynskyi was the

<sup>219</sup> “Protocol of inspection of things and documents” from 13.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.1, 67,68,70.

<sup>220</sup> Red viburnum is one of the traditional folklore symbols of Ukraine, often used in folk embroidery, songs, and other forms of art. Under the conditions of the Soviet regime, this symbol was considered nationalistic.

<sup>221</sup> “Explanation Note to the Head of the KGB in Lviv Oblast from Oleh Lysheha” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 124-125; “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 130; “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha” from 07.02.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 134; “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai” from 14.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 45.

person who led all six rounds of interrogations that Chubai went through, the interview with Riabchuk, the simultaneous interrogation of Chubai and Iryna Kalynets, and put together most of the directives on behalf of the decisions of the arrest of Kalynets. However, for some reason, he had only one interview with Lysheha – the final one from June 28,<sup>222</sup> and the only interview in which the testimony given by Lysheha is significantly different from all previous testimonies.

That one last interrogation is on the same topic: the investigator questioned the connection to Iryna Kalynets and the type of conversations happening in her apartment. In the beginning, the same narrative reappeared: in the fall of 1971, guests from Canada discussed youth. However, Chubai's presence was not mentioned that evening in this interrogation. Moreover, only in this interrogation did Lysheha suddenly add that the discussion was about the émigré youth in Canada, their life, and views. Therefore, when Iryna Kalynets said that contemporary youth values red viburnum and blue and yellow flag, it only meant youth in Canada, for whom the symbolic attachment to their home is essential. Assumably, Lysheha answered that émigré youth in Canada were raised in different conditions. For them, the difference between the blue and yellow flag and the flag of Soviet Ukraine does not matter that much. Lysheha added that during that evening, all the guests consumed alcohol, and some conversations were more intense. At some point in the evening, Lysheha somehow (according to him, he does not fully remember) offended Iryna by behaving rudely. When everyone left that evening, she said she did not want to see him again. Lieutenant Ruzhynskyi followed up on this with questions about the difference between this and previous statements and that the context of the émigré community did not appear in Lysheha's interrogations before. Lysheha blamed everything on a misunderstanding from the side of investigators and Chubai, to whom he also retold this story, but briefly and unclearly. That way, among all the investigators,

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<sup>222</sup> "Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha" from 28.06.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 135-139.

Ruzhynskyi somehow got from Lysheha a very different statement that undoubtedly was meant to smooth the edges of the conflict and protect both Chubai and the Kalynets family.

There is no way to get the whole picture of the interrogation process and to know how Lieutenant Ruzhynskyi behaved with people during the interrogations, nor is there any way to see how the entire process of the interrogation looked like, since it is known that KGB had a set of different strategies to obtain information. In the very limited testimonies that can be found on the topic, Riabchuk said that in his interrogation (that was also led by Ruzhynskyi), a gentle investigator was telling him that it is impossible to live in the society and to be free from that, trying to convince Riabchuk to share all the information on dissidents he knew. When that direct recalling of the Leninism dogmas<sup>223</sup> did not work, the other investigator broke into the room, pounded his fists on the table, and promised that Riabchuk would “rot in Siberia.”<sup>224</sup>

In the same recollection, he stated that he and Lysheha were discussing their interrogations afterward, and Lysheha’s talks with KGB looked approximately the same. It is hard to say whether any physical power was used against them, even though Chubai’s wife Halyna speculated that Chubai was beaten in the KGB isolation cell to collaborate.<sup>225</sup> The question about the potential usage of any substances or chemicals during the interrogation is also a hard-to-prove one. Among the scholars who looked at the transcripts of the interrogations, Moskalets speculated that it is quite possible that some psychotropic substances could be used on Chubai,<sup>226</sup> and he could have been intimidated to death or threatened with imprisonment in a psychiatric hospital, which in the experience of Soviet Ukraine was one of the most common paths for the nonconformists.<sup>227</sup> The use of the substances in Chubai seems

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<sup>223</sup> “One cannot live in society and be free from society” quote from Vladimir Lenin. “Party Organization and Party Literature,” *Novaya Zhizn*, No. 12, (November 13, 1905).

<sup>224</sup> Riabchuk, “P’iat pisen pro Lyshehu,” 16-17.

<sup>225</sup> Gabor, “Do istorii literaturno-mystetskoho samvydavnoho zhurnalu ‘Skrynja,’ V.

<sup>226</sup> Moskalets, “Piat medytatsii na ‘Plach Yermii,’ 73.

<sup>227</sup> For more on the Soviet policy of sending dissidents into the mental hospitals see Peter Reddaway, “Soviet Policies Toward Dissent, 1953–1986,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 24.1–2 (2012); Olga Bertelsen, “Rethinking psychiatric terror against nationalists in Ukraine: spatial dimensions of Post-Stalinist state

quite possible since the description of the neuroleptics effects on the human body resembles Chubai's state when he was found immediately afterward. "[People] became deranged and indifferent to their surroundings, refraining from any activities and generally losing their grip on reality"<sup>228</sup> is the general description of the neuroleptics usage. Simultaneously, Chubai's wife described his condition when she and Lysheha picked him up from the KGB building: "When we took him home in a taxi together with Oleh Lysheha, he cowered in a corner like a cornered animal. For many days, squeezing a single word out of him was impossible."<sup>229</sup> She also mentioned that after the interrogations, Chubai had moments of despair, when he would destroy his poems and burn them on the fire, saying that nobody needs his poetry and that all of that is useless.<sup>230</sup>

While it is quite interesting that the despair that Chubai had was targeted in his poetry and not in the testimonies he gave or more general sense of responsibility and pangs of conscience, Chubai's depressive condition was apparent and stayed with him till the time of his death in 1982. His friends and relatives also recalled the post-interrogation period as the downgrading and depression for his artistic work, as well as being more aggressive and less self-confident in personal matters. The question that follows is what could have caused such a significant change in his personality and, more precisely, why these interrogations influenced Chubai and, more generally, led him to the depression that, in turn, led him to his death.

During their interrogations, Chubai and Lysheha discussed the "Skrynia" samvydav in detail. While mostly the general explanation of the artistic almanac to keep the poetry and texts

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violence," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 1 (2014): 27-76; Robert Van Voren, "Psychiatry as a tool of repression against dissidents in the USSR," *Darbai ir dienos* 55 (2011): 29-42.

<sup>228</sup> Bertelsen, "Rethinking psychiatric terror against nationalists," 40.

<sup>229</sup> "Halyna Chubai about Hrytsko Chubai," Interview from the opening of the project "Dissident room (prison) of Hrytsko Chubai" in Lviv, 2013. Accessed 24 May, 2024: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3R99CAA1EY>

<sup>230</sup> Olesia Kotubei-Herutska. "'Oдна з найзавблывишх і найворушлывишх legend ukrainskoho bezchassia'. Zhyttia y smert poeta Hrytska Chubaia" ['One of the most seductive and moving legends of Ukrainian timelessness.' The life and death of the poet Hrytsko Chubai], *Suspilne: Kultura*. Accessed 24 May, 2024: <https://suspilne.media/culture/362806-odna-z-najzavblivisih-i-najzvoruslvisih-legend-ukrainskogo-bezcassa-zitta-j-smert-poeta-gricka-cubaa/>.

of young Lviv poets aligned between them, the duality of the leadership is slightly different. The statements about “Skrynia” that Chubai makes in his first interrogation on January 14 are the ones that, at least from the transcript, look the most confident and self-aware. Chubai has a well-defined agency and leadership regarding the samvydav: “The publishing of “Skrynia” was my idea, regarding both the title and the content.”<sup>231</sup> Immediately in the following sentence, he mentioned the alternative project of the “sound” magazine to which Osadchyi and Kalynets invited him. From the point of view of the twenty-first century, it can be said that Chubai was invited to join the “dissident podcast.” Shortly after, the alternative idea of simply producing printed magazines appeared among the same circle of people. Within it, dissidents planned to publish some literary criticism and poems. Chubai also mentioned that it was either Chubai or Osadchyi who stressed the importance of publishing only materials on literary topics so that they do not appear as “subversives of Soviet power.” Chubai agreed to participate in that project. Therefore, if one trusts his narrative on this topic, even before “Skrynia,” Chubai opted for the literary path of isolation from the politicized discussions. However, when the materials for the magazine appeared, in Chubai’s words, those were nationalistic and slanderous poems about the oppression of individuals in contemporary Soviet society.

Ihor Kalynets dedicated a poem to the imprisoned Valentyn Moroz – a prominent dissident from the integral nationalism line and one of the few representatives of the far-right ideology within dissident thought. Chornovil wrote an article criticizing some Kyiv artist for his Soviet ideological thinking and all those Chubai characterized as “clearly defined anti-Soviet.” He also rejected the offer to work with them for the magazine and decided to act independently – thus, Chubai picked the authors and published his issue, “Skrynia.”<sup>232</sup> In Chubai’s opinion, this decision became the main reason for the break between Chubai and dissidents – in his words, they were highly offended, Iryna Kalynets called him a

<sup>231</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai” from 14.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 46.

<sup>232</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai” from 14.01.1972, 43-49.

“schizophrenic,” while Chornovil stated that Chubai was still a child. When Ihor Kalynets recalled these events in his own memories, his comment regarding Chubai’s position there was relatively straightforward: “Chubai told KGB that Iryna had a nationalistic discussion with the foreigners in our apartment. Like he did not, he also contributed to these discussions.”<sup>233</sup>

In the testimonies that Lysheha provided, the idea of “Skrynia” samvydav was very collective (even though, as mentioned before, Morozova and Riabchuk are missing from the story in one of the testimonies), and even the technical work on the production was done together with others in Chubai’s apartment. Besides the fact that Lysheha’s version of the story “Skrynia” was published in 1970, he also mentioned that there were four copies of it – Lysheha’s copy, that he destroyed on January 15, after he learned that Chubai was arrested, the one that belonged to Chubai, and two which location Lysheha was not aware of.<sup>234</sup> From the characteristics of the other people from the environment, made afterward, and from this collective mindset that Lysheha described, I would assume that he tried everything possible to reduce the influence and authority Chubai held in the story.

It is now very unambiguous that the idea of creating Samvydav belonged to Chubai and that he was the main person in “Skrynia.” According to Riabchuk, Chubai was the chief editor who collected and edited all the texts in the almanac.<sup>235</sup> Morozov recalled that Chubai gathered everyone and that the “Skrynia” process was based on him. Similar reactions can be found among the other participants of the samvydav and the broader circles of Lviv underground. Stating that “Skrynia” was a collective effort was only an attempt to take part in the responsibility and to reduce Chubai’s initiative, which was already causing him damage in the eyes of the KGB officers. The same argument can be used on behalf of four copies of “Skrynia” – the amount is significantly reduced so as not to target additional people who possibly were

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<sup>233</sup> Kalynets, *Koleso Fortuny*, 282.

<sup>234</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Oleh Lysheha” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 127-129

<sup>235</sup> Riabchuk. Interview by Anna Chukur.

not brought into the investigation at that point. Then why would Lysheha mention four of them? – It is possible that two other copies were indeed found in Kalynets' and Chornovil's houses. Align with this conscious reduction of Chubai's agency and "Skrynia"'s efforts, and it is also possible that the mysterious date of 1970 can also be explained to distance the creation of the samvydav from the time when "Skrynia" circle contacted with the dissidents. Riabchuk's absence in the narrative can potentially also be explained similarly – because the basis of the circle was in discussions on literature and poetry, Lysheha could have known that Riabchuk's novels are in Chubai's house and tried to isolate him from Skrynia.

### 3.4. Who were you afraid of, Hrytsko Chubai?

Another question that later seems to have played an essential role in the investigation was the number of printed "Skrynia" samvydav copies. The official version is seven – one for each of the authors. That way, the idea that appears in Lysheha's testimonies is confirmed – the almanac was not supposed to be spread but was created only for the authors themselves. However, it seems that the authors were sharing their copies with other people from the underground and dissident environment – people like Chornovil or Iryna and Ihor Kalynets, who were quite obviously, significant authorities for "Skrynia" authors, knew about the content of the almanac, heard the poems, and even criticized them. Lysheha mentioned in the explanation note that their attitude towards "Skrynia" was very superficial.<sup>236</sup> Probably because dissidents knew about the activity of the Skrynia circle, the myth arose that some copies of the almanac were found in the apartments of Kalynets and Chornovil.<sup>237</sup> However, this fact does not see any reliable proof in any of the inspection reports or among the testimonies. While the presence of this samvydav would not have played a decisive role in their sentences, in general,

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<sup>236</sup> "Explanation Note to the Head of the KGB in Lviv Oblast from Oleh Lysheha," SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 124.

<sup>237</sup> Riabchuk. Interview by Anna Chukur; Nemyra. Interview with the author.

the protocols of apartment searches are quite complete, so it is quite likely that “Skrynia” was not found among them. However, one of the narratives that emerged after the end of the criminal case in 1972 was the possibility that the copy of “Skrynia” could have functioned as a target. Its existence in someone’s house could point to the KGB on who could be the next in the wave of arrests.<sup>238</sup> While this idea might sound tense, it grew after Chubai’s general reputation was destroyed after he served as witness against Kalynets in court. Many people from Lviv underground were disappointed in Chubai and his non-dissident path of resistance and behavior during the interrogations. Besides that, the notion that he was witnessing in the court against Kalynets and himself made from the case without any consequences was enough to create the “traitor” image. The ideas varied from relatively more innocent – that Chubai made a deal with KGB and gave all the information on the dissidents in exchange for getting out freely, to more extreme – that Chubai himself was an informal collaborator or a spy for the KGB long before the arrest. In that essence, the assumable preservation of “Skrynia” samvydav in Kalynets’ apartment, as well as in Chornovil’s, was supposed to play a card of Chubai’s and KGB’s common interest to catch the most “dangerous” actors for the Soviet state.

This argument is hard to prove because of the revival of Chubai’s “heroic” figure in the public sphere that started in the last decades, which undoubtedly influenced the testimonies and memories recorded afterward. However, the perspective of Chubai as of the non-glorious dissident is worth looking at, since it presents a possible type of reading of the “Skrynia” story as well. It also requires a closer look at Chubai’s behavior during the interrogation and his statements during the court to observe more profoundly the duality. As mentioned before, in his testimonies, Chubai offered a lot of information about the circle of dissidents, a circle which Chubai had known closely since around 1968. Besides the stories about the planned magazine and the plots of the works, Chubai also speculated a lot about the actions of people who were

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<sup>238</sup> Nemyra. Interview with the author.

not in the circle of the dissidents who were arrested. Sometimes, Chubai pointed out the activity of less-known people, like the geologist Roman Leschchuk, who presumably also was invited to print the magazine, or Iryna Senyk, who held a copy of Chubai's "Vertep" in Ivano-Frankivsk. The most interesting figure mentioned is Mykhailo, who was introduced without the last name, and even the first name may not be real. Mykhailo was a friend of Mykola Kholodnyi, one of the sixtiers poets, and according to Chubai, Kholodnyi introduced Chubai to Mykhailo as the person who had resources to find some rare and surely illegal, which is not stated in Chubai's story, literature. Mykhailo helped Chubai get the photocopies of the articles by Dmytro Dontsov, which were later found in Chubai's apartment during the search. These articles, presumably, were the most substantial evidence and reason for bringing Chubai for the interrogations since Dontsov, one of the main ideologists of the right wing in the interwar period, argued for the strong militaristic Ukrainian state. The preservation of the materials as such (and there were not one or two articles, but according to the inspection report, at least seven)<sup>239</sup> would immediately count as "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." However, the personality of the person who provided it, as it seems, remained undiscovered.

Besides that, Chubai's testimonies are very personal and self-reflective. It is undoubtedly worth remembering that Chubai was only twenty-two at the time of the interrogations. Therefore, he still had a specific youthful vulnerability and somewhat high self-esteem. From his narrative, it looks like it was not only the dissidents that were offended by Chubai, but that this feeling was very mutual, – Chubai overexposed, responded to the questions of the KGB officers very profoundly, providing even more details than asked and exposing a big circle of people and their activity. He seems very offended not only because the older generation of Kalynets, Chornovil, and Osadchyi did not accept his low level of engagement with the political matter but also because they felt superior towards his art. He recalled

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<sup>239</sup> "Inspection report of things and documents" from 13.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.3, 134-136.

frequently the distrust that was becoming bigger and bigger when Chubai did not engage into the discussion about the existing social order, the condition of Ukrainian literature and culture in general, the dissatisfaction about the Soviet national politics, etc.<sup>240</sup> Because of that, it seems that dissidents even started to doubt whether Chubai wrote the poem “Vertep” himself. This is, - in fact, a fascinating and essential detail that reflects the dynamic between the dissident political thought and the countercultural, and at the same time, helps to explain Chubai’s attitude or at least one of the reasons for such a “betrayal” during the interrogations.

The poem “Vertep” was the core of Chubai’s image for Lviv circles. He became known specifically because of this poem, it was spread massively through samvydav and his friends, and it reached students and dissidents, as one can see through the memoirs.<sup>241</sup> According to Chubai’s earlier interrogations, he gave the opportunity to read “Vertep” to Kalynets and Osadchyi, then Osadchyi passed it to Chornovil and Ivan Svitlychnyi and Ivan Dziuba. Valentyn Moroz also owned a copy of the poem. In spring of 1970 the poem was read also in Kyiv by Leonid Seleznenko and Vasyl Stus.<sup>242</sup> While it was not clear for Chubai who brought it there, the samvydav spread very widely. Therefore, it is quite clear that the reputation that Chubai held in 1968-1969 was very “dissident”. Ihor Kalynets recalled that even though after his arrival to Lviv, there were gossips about Chubai being an “unreliable” for the Soviet system, and Kalynets accepted him to the Lviv circle. In his words, Chubai became a very prominent figure there: he performed, wrote poems, later he brought his friends. “Vertep” was highly praised, as well as other Chubai’s poem “Vidschukuvannia prychetnoho” (“Search for the Person Involved”), written in 1969.<sup>243</sup> The question of whether “Vertep” was in fact written by Chubai without any doubts was a harmful attack, which was taken by Chubai very personally.

<sup>240</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the witness Hryhorii Chubai” from 07.02.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 63-

<sup>241</sup> Yosyp Vilkhovyi, “Vin inshym zhyv...” [He lived differently], in *Polum'ia vidihriie pam'iat. Spohady pro Oleha Lyshehu* [The flame will warm the memory. Memories about Oleh Lysheha], Lviv: Piramida, 2019, 70.

<sup>242</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai” from 15.01.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 56-57.

<sup>243</sup> Kalynets, *Koleso Fortuny*, 279.

The questions on the spread of “Vertep,” its motifs, and the author's intentions are recurring topics in Chubai’s interrogations. He recalled that the poem “Vertep” was created in 1968 because of the failures in his personal life – Chubai did not get into the universities a few times and had some conflicts with supervisors at work. All of that was with the influence of such Ukrainian sixtiers poets as Mykola Kholodnyi and Vasyl Symonenko, as well as the less well-known poet from Kirovograd Petro Kutsenko.<sup>244</sup> At this point of the interrogation, the strategy of behaviors the KGB officers Chubai took is quite well noticeable.

During the interrogation on January 15, Chubai tried to defend himself and to justify through the idea that he never intended to do anything oppositional. Even if “Vertep” was read as such, it was connected to some external factors, such as failures, that also made him more fragile in front of the sixties' more radical views. Chubai did not try to justify or defend the oppositional ideas in the poetry of Symonenko or Kholodnyi. On the contrary, he phrased it that he, while being vulnerable, tried to bypass them in the “slandorous fictions against the Soviet social order.”<sup>245</sup> Out of this, one can assume that Chubai was trying to save his own life rather than going along the quite common narrative, suitable for the dissidents – admitting their actions and arguing for the rights they had to do so (such type of statements became more frequent among the human rights defenders in the second half of the 1970s, but were noticeable in the testimonies of Chornovil or Iryna Kalynets even before).

The following answers of Chubai in the same interrogations also illustrate this position: he recalled the 1971 interrogations about “Vertep” and mentioned that he behaved not as was supposed to – unjustifiably indignant about the fact that he, and later his father, were brought to the prosecutor’s office. However, in this case, he blamed Mykhailo Osadchyi and Ihor Kalynets, who visited his house in the evening after the first interrogation and tried to convince Chubai that everything done to him was illegal since literary activity could not be considered a

<sup>244</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai,” SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 54.

<sup>245</sup> “Protocol of interrogation of the suspect Hryhorii Chubai,” SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 54.

reason for the arrest. Osadchyi suggested collecting the signatures of the literary critics from Lviv and Kyiv and the National Writers' Union of Ukraine (NSPU), who would confirm that "Vertep" is not anti-Soviet. Among the invited people would be Ivan Dziuba, Lina Kostenko, Ivan Drach, Bohdan Horyn, and others – people in close interest to KGB precisely because of their literary activity that was on the edge with political activism. Chubai rejected this idea but agreed to the strategy that, later the same evening, Iryna Kalynets suggested– not to give any additional statements to the prosecutor.

This scene, taken more broadly, depicts a fascinating correspondence between the dissident circles and the underground, embodied in the figure of Chubai. Even though toned down for the KGB statement, the duality in the ideological views is still evident and is more ethical than practical here. The dissidents mentioned in Chubai's responses were predominantly the representatives of the national line of the dissidents, whose focus often was on the national right for self-determination cultural and linguistic pluralism as the integral notions of preserving Ukrainians and other non-Russian peoples. For example, Drach and Dziuba were in the line of national communism in the 1960s, even though Dziuba was much more national in that sense. The Kalynets Iryna and Ihor, as well as Osadchyi were dissidents in the national line with a profound focus on cultural and civic engagement. These beliefs were also expressed in their ethical positions, – generally described as the dissidents' peace with their chosen path. When taking a closer look at any of the interrogations of Kalynets, Chornovil, or Osadchyi, their statements are rather non-emotional and self-centered; they do not expose too much, often recalling that they "do not know" or "do not remember" how they got some specific samvydav texts, however, they do provide all the necessary details to the questions they are asked. These dissidents did not hide anything regarding their activity. It seems that Kalynets and her husband, as well as others caught in 1972, were aware that they did not have enough chances of getting out free and, therefore, were rather proud of their positions. In the testimonies, they often say

that they do not see certain poetry or text as anti-Soviet and almost nothing appears that way. A good illustration here is the testimony of Osadchyi from February 14 and March 25, 1972.<sup>246</sup>

When asked about his relationships with Iryna and Ihor Kalynets, he responded that they met somewhere in 1968 and became friends because they shared similar views on the literary process and acknowledged each other's talents. Even though their techniques were somewhat different, they shared their new works and commented on each other's poetry. Later, Osadchyi added that there were no talks of anti-Soviet characters and no intended actions of such characters in his presence. During the subsequent interrogation in March, Osadchyi mentioned that he, Iryna Kalynets, Chubai, and Chornovil all felt very bad about the second arrest of Valentyn Moroz. He said that this circle greatly respected Chornovil and his views. Osadchyi and Chornovil shared the same interest in the Ukrainian language and literature, and later, during one of his trips to Lviv with the use of the typing machine, he made a few copies of the article with the "anti-Soviet content" – "Regarding the trial of Pogruzhal'skyi."<sup>247</sup> According to Osadchyi, this article, found at his home, became the main reason for his arrest and sentence in 1966.

Therefore, in this case, the dissident line of the testimony has quite a solid internal differentiation on what is anti-Soviet and what is not. Most of the people mentioned here, in fact, were engaged in literary activity and probably spent a lot of time discussing it. However, it is easy to assume that some of their actions, such as the collective letters (for example,

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<sup>246</sup> "Extract From the Protocol of Additional Interrogation of the Accused Mykhailo Osadchyi" from 14.02.1971. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 192-193; "Extract From the Protocol of Interrogation of the Accused Mykhailo Osadchyi" from 25.03.1972. SSU, F.6, op. 75513, f.2, 194-196.

<sup>247</sup> This article, assumably written by Yevhen Sverstyuk in co-authorship with Chornovil or Ivan Svitlychnyi, was one of the most-spread samvydav texts in 1960-1970s. The article is created in the form of radical political pamphlet about the events from 1964. In May, 1964 the arson in the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine burned a lot of the books from the section of Ukrainian studies. It was committed by the employee of the library, Viktor Pogruzhal'skyi, possibly a secret KGB employee. The case against Pogruzhal'skyi was opened and in the end he was sentenced to 10 (or 15 according to other literature) years, but the whole court was staged. During the investigation, the nationality questions were not brought up even though it seemed that Pogruzhal'skyi, who worked in the Russian section of the library, specifically targeted for the fire Ukrainian section. The article "Regarding the trial of Pogruzhal'skyi" quite openly suggests that the perpetrator of the arson is the anti-Ukrainian authorities.

Osadchyi suggested to Chubai in 1971, but he rejected them) and petitions to the higher authorities such as the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, can be easily considered as anti-Soviet, even if they are presented through the legalistic prism. In the case of the “Regarding the trial of Pogruzhal'skyi” article, Osadchyi admitted that it was anti-Soviet, possibly also because he was already punished for that, and there was no sense in arguing over this statement anymore. Returning to Chubai's interrogation, the position is entirely different – this is also not his first interrogation, and after the first one in 1971, he was released. In 1972, he did not engage with the anti-Soviet distinction, but rather readily admitted that “Vertep” was anti-Soviet, and that was a mistake that he would never do again in any of his poetry. Chubai also repeatedly used a very official Soviet phrasing that he probably heard from the prosecutor, or the ones that the prosecutor wrote himself in the transcripts – “slandorous fictions about the Soviet state and social order.” Chubai self-criticized “Vertep” for that, explaining that the dissident circle influenced him. Therefore, one can sense the ethical duality – the personal responsibility of the dissidents and blame on the more intellectually profound and stronger individuals.

The investigation that took place in 1972 and that involved “Skrynia” samvydav, in a way, was a decisive point in life for its authors. Being expelled from universities and jobs afterward, young people who did not aim to confront the regime in a way as KGB investigators read it paid the price. After a close reading of the investigation documents, “Skrynia” samvydav was a simple reason that was not even close to the actual reasoning. The close connection with the dissidents, their close connections, their nationalistic discourses, and the literature they spread to the Lviv counterculture was the reason for the close attention to samvydav its circle. It seems that KGB officers, besides trying to get all the information on Kalynets, Chornovil, Osadchyi, and others, also aimed to do a preventive strategy: Skrynia could turn into the second generation of the dissidents, possibly more radical than the preceding one. The regime already saw that happening once: after the wave of the 1965 arrests, which did not stop the sixties

movement, but radicalized it. The thing that could not be foreseen back then was that the generation that came of age in the late 1960s could not follow the same line of the nonconformist activity that dissidents took. These young people rose in the period of the internationalization of the culture, in a very different sociocultural atmosphere, where the national trajectory stopped being the only possible one.

## Conclusions

At the beginning stages of this research, it seemed apparent that the tragedy of *Skrynia* samvydav was because the young people, its contributors, happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Thus, their activity was closely investigated by the KGB officers. However, at this final note of the research, the story became more complex and entangled than it seemed. *Skrynia* is one of the best examples of the social, intellectual, and cultural overlap between the countercultural environment and dissident circles. Simultaneously, it represents a needed for Ukrainian studies alternative vision of the national history, overly dominated by the dissident myth. Using the countercultural context as the basis, this research also contributed to the understudied history of the youth culture during the Soviet period, where the predominant attention lies on the Russian centers, such as Moscow and Leningrad. The limited scholarship in the Ukrainian context is mainly focused on the close studies of the subcultures, such as hippies and the consumption of Western music. Therefore, this thesis offers a new perspective on the countercultural engagement with the Soviet regime during the Soviet times.

*Skrynia* circle, as the countercultural concept, fits into the larger perspective of the dichotomy between the Soviet state and nonconformists. According to the main argument of the thesis, *Skrynia* fits into the trajectory of the anti-political engagement and is a middle point between the trajectory that was chosen by the dissident circles – in the context of Lviv in the late 1960s – early 1970s it is the context of various nationalism, and the path of the alternative youth, specifically subcultures, that went with the path of metapolitics. *Skrynia* group shared some common spaces, visions, and influences with both environments: from dissidents, the authors took a deep involvement in the national history and literature, being in dialogue with the generation of the 1920s – “Executed Renaissance,” and close engagement with the ideological discourses that were popular – national communism, integral nationalism, and democratic nationalism. The influence of the subcultures and alternative youth mainly targeted

the patterns of behavior – appearances, aesthetics, knowledge of the Western popular culture, and engagement with non-Ukrainian traditions, including Western philosophical tradition, American modernism, and Eastern spirituality. The dissidents undoubtedly made a more vital and closer connection with Skrynia. Still, they also heavily implied their language of understanding — as a result, years after, they interpreted the nature of the *samvydav*, as well as the nature of the environment of the circle, as way more politicized than it originally was.

The prevalent dissident myth that slowly gets dissolved in the countries of East-Central Europe still dominates Ukrainian scholarship and the public sphere, and thus, sharpens the understanding of the input toward the establishment of the liberal democracy and new national canon made by those who are conventionally referred to as dissidents. The heroic and, to some extent, quite glorified image of the figures of Ihor and Iryna Kalynets, Viacheslav Chornovil, Mykhailo Osadchyi and other people who were openly opposing the dominant Soviet regime, neglects and undermines the role of the actors that were not a part of the dissident trajectory. However, closeness to the dissidents somehow equalizes these contributions. As a result, the Ukrainian public sphere and state institutions have also pushed for the application of the “dissident” title to Hryhorii Chubai. In 2013, the Museum-Memorial of Victims of the Occupation Regimes “Loncky Street Prison,” under the ownership of the Security Service of Ukraine, opened the exhibition entitled “Dissident Room of Hrytsko Chubai.” The exhibition that shows the space where Chubai was interrogated implies the straightforward notion – Chubai, who overexposed the dissident circles during the interrogations and most likely made a deal with the KGB officers, is considered another heroic dissident figure. Thus, this research is one of many steps needed to revise the role of dissidents and countercultural actors within the broader framework of democratic transformations.

The analysis of the *samvydav* in the second chapter illustrates the ambiguity regarding the ideological content. On the one hand, the text was supposed to be completely apolitical. On

the other hand, it contains not only symbols of dissidents and references to nationalist publications of the 1920s but also veiled depictions of Soviet realities (as in Riabchuk's text), as well as admiration for European modernism. In the realities of the Soviet regime, it should not have existed at the same time as socialist realism. Therefore, the representation of *Skrynia* as the apolitical almanac by its authors is another question that should be more carefully studied in the future, as it can potentially demonstrate the understanding of politics by the counterculture.

The close work with the materials from the investigation in the third chapter helped to get closer to the understanding of the moral and intellectual clash between *Skrynia* and dissidents. The plots about the usage of the national symbols, as well as about the role of poetry, illustrate that the misunderstanding between the two circles was based not purely on the difference in approaches to the societal questions but also on the very personal bases involving offenses, sense of competition and mix of attitudes and individual features. The transcripts of the interrogations illustrate that even the types of behavior varied significantly between the circles: while the representatives of the national line were rather honest and direct, admitted their actions but frequently stated that they did not see anything anti-Soviet in those, counterculture tried to name as little names as possible, with the careful changes in the stories they told. Chubai's trajectory in the interrogations is unique: he is the only one whose interrogations look more like confessions, with the overexposure of the dissidents and admitting previous "mistakes."

The image of Chubai remains somewhat biased, as well as his ideological views: his views were changing based on the circle he was with, and therefore, for the dissidents, he remained a follower of Dontsov, while for *Skrynia* Chubai was the main ideologist of the art for art's sake and focus on the modernism. This notion demonstrates instead the specificity of the countercultural thought of the post-1968 generation, for whom the creation of new leaders

and moral authorities was necessary for self-assertion. Chubai, with his very self-centered and narcissistic personality, was the charismatic leader only for those who were admiring his dominant position. He was more suppressed in the circles where he saw more authority than himself – as with the dissidents or with the KGB investigators.

This research on the anti-political nature of *Skrynia* is the basis for future broader studies that can bring together the contexts of the engagement of the nonconformist circles with the authoritarian regimes in East-Central Europe. Some parallels to that were already made within this text. Still, much more attentive and close readings of similar stories from socialist Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia can be done in the future. This thesis project, which is focused on the nature of the circle and its intellectual activity, allows us to see the understudied samvydav *Skrynia* as a complex and vital phenomenon. Based on this project, I will proceed with a more transnational approach to the topic in my further studies.

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