

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE2142

Ukrainian Women's Association in Australia of New South Wales

Summary

The first branch of the Ukrainian Women's Association was formed on September 13th, 1949 in Cowra migrant camp. Mrs. I Polensky was the inaugural president. Ukrainian women were holding meetings in all the migrant centres across Australia, however Cowra is always considered to be the cradle of the U.W.A in Australia

Details

The Ukrainian women who came to Australia in the period immediately after the second world war were highly organised at a very early stage. This, in part, can be explained by the fact that they regarded themselves to be simply 'renewing' pre-existing associations that were established in the Ukraine some years earlier. The National Women's Council founded in Ukraine in 1919 served Ukrainian women during the period of Ukrainian independence and continued its work in exile in Prague, Czechoslovakia until 1937 when the Ukrainian Women's Association in Lvov, Western Ukraine took upon itself the task of founding another co-ordinating centre – the World Association of Ukrainian Women. World War 2, however, terminated the work of this co-ordinating body.

As well as organising events and services for the local community, the organisation took a keen interest in the position of women back in the Ukraine. They circulated petitions to bring attention to human rights abuses of women under the Soviet system. For instance, the following petition was circulated in 1975:

'Among the violations are an alarming number of arrests and the persecution of Ukrainian women, who have been sentenced under the Criminal Code for simply raising their voices in defence of basic human rights and dignity, opposing the forced russification of the Ukrainian language and culture, and objecting to the state imposition of atheism and suppression of the freedom of worship and the pervasive police control of private and family life.

Therefore, in the name of humanity and justice and in the spirit of the International Year of Women, we petition this House of parliament to intervene before the Government of the USSR and request it to grant amnesty to Ukrainian and other political prisoners in the USSR, and to allow them to return to their families and homeland with the restoration of all their citizen's rights. In particular we request that you intervene on behalf of the following women political prisoners:

Stasiv-Kalynech Iryna Onufrivna, Strokata_Karavanska Nina Antonivna, Svitlychna nadia Alexeivna, Shabatura Stefania Mychailivna, Oksana Popvysh, inmates of camp p/ja ZH/CH 385/3 Potma, Mordovian ASSR, USSR.

Under these conditions, it was impossible for some immigrants to leave their politics at the door.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Ukrainian Women's Association in Australia of N.S.W. - records, 1949-1986](#)

State Library of New South Wales

[Ukrainian Women's Association in Australia of N.S.W. - further records, 1949-1995](#)

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