

LASTING VALUE OF AN ORGANIZATION

On the Occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of
the Ukrainian National Youth Federation of Canada

by

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The axiom "as you sow, so shall you reap" and "you get out of anything as much as you put into it" applies not only to individuals but to organizations as well. Of course, it must be remembered that organizations, large or small, are composed of individual members and are only as strong and dynamic as are their members. As with individuals, so with organizations, those possessing meaningful and practical aims, initiative and adaptability get the furthest ahead. The country and society stand to benefit.

In the celebration of its Thirtieth Anniversary, the Ukrainian National Youth Federation of Canada is once again submitting its record of achievement and its purposefulness to public scrutiny and judgment. If it is found wanting in certain respects, it will strive to make the improvement. If it is found to be worthwhile, useful and necessary, it will continue its work, for which it will continue to seek public endorsement.

The UNYF came into being thirty years ago, during one of the most critical periods in Canadian history. At that time, the Great Depression was at its height, leaving in its wake economic ruin and stagnation, untold misery across the country, demoralization and loss of faith in Canada's political system and future. Communist agents on behalf of the Soviet Union had built up powerful organizations from coast to coast, spreading revolutionary propaganda. Their avowed aim was the overthrow of the Canadian government by violence and the establishment of a Soviet regime in this country.

Leaders of the Ukrainian community in Canada became alarmed at the rapid growth of communism in their midst. Finally, when the leaders of the Ukrainian churches, Catholic and Orthodox, failed to find a common platform of action against the forces of communism, secular leaders took the initiative and in 1932 established the Ukrainian National Federation of Canada, emphasizing the need of religious tolerance.

Two years later, in 1934, a group of Canadian-born university, normal (teachers') school and high school students and other youth of Ukrainian descent met in Saskatoon. In consultation and co-operation with the leaders of the UNF they launched the Ukrainian National Youth Federation of Canada. The new youth movement steered away from a purely anti-communist and negative policy of condemning religious strife and intolerance to a constructive and positive platform of action. Together with the parent body, the UNF, the youth organization crystallized its aims, formulating them in what became known as the Seven Beliefs.

The founders and leaders of the UNYF were convinced that the ideals expressed in the Seven Beliefs, the credo of the UNYF, were the answer to the needs of the Ukrainian Canadian on the one hand and Canadians of all origins on the other hand.

Canada is a vast country of tremendous natural and human resources, demanding of her citizens, for the good of all, their devotion, their work, their talents and their special contributions.

As a country composed of many peoples, Canada is multi-cultural in character, demanding of all her ethnic groups their finest cultural contributions to be incorporated into the emerging pattern of the Canadian mosaic. On a broad basis, Canada stands for unity in diversity. To fulfill its aims with respect to Canada and the Ukrainians, the UNYF stressed unity among the Ukrainian Canadians and the unity of Canada.

The response of the youth was better than had been anticipated, permanently establishing the UNYF as an active force in Canadian society.

The members in the various branches of the UNYF used their unbounded energy for good constructive activities — cultural, recreational, educational and also vocational. They learned or improved their Ukrainian, public speaking in two languages, organizational procedure, Ukrainian folk-dancing and choral and instrumental music. The halls which accommodated the branches were virtual beehives of many-sided activities. For each of the members this training and experience proved to be useful for the rest of his life.

There are two significant achievements of the UNYF, out of many during the last thirty years, which warrant special mention:

Besides giving wholehearted support to Canada's war efforts, in which many of its members paid the supreme sacrifice, to make this world safe for democracy and human freedom, the UNYF has actively espoused the cause of the freedom and the statehood of Ukraine, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations.

With considerable pride the UNYF draws attention to the fact that many of its former members have achieved high positions in various walks of Canadian life, such as officers in the Canadian Military Services, professors, scientists, school principals, aldermen, mayors, reeves, provincial and federal members of parliament, cabinet ministers, senator, etc. Many of these have attributed some of their success to the valuable experience that they had gained in the ranks of the UNYF.

Perhaps enough evidence has been presented to show that this organization has greatly contributed to the progress and the good name of the Ukrainians in Canada as well as to the general welfare of Canada. Dedicated to the highest ideals of humanity it was bound to make headway. If the leaders and members continue to adhere to the proven programme, the organization is bound to make greater contributions in the future. Those who understand the value of the UNYF wish it continuing success in the fulfilment of its objectives.

If I may be permitted to conclude on a personal note, I would like to underline a very important aspect of the work of the UNYF. High ideals supply guidance and motivation to youth, but it is the whole-hearted participation of the individual member that benefits him or her the most. When a member develops the attitude what he can do for the organization, rather than what the organization can do for him, the rewards for his efforts will be manifold. A member should accept his responsibilities as a challenge that will bring out his best qualities. He or she should strive to become the best committee member, the best treasurer, the best secretary and the best president not for the honors of the position, but for the satisfaction of achievement.

Many will testify, and certainly I among them, that the practical experience gained from participation in the work, and particularly in the executive positions, of the UNYF has stood them in good stead in their lives and has made possible significant personal achievements. I hope that more youth will realize this, take pride in the people of their origin, and serve the best interests of Canada through such an organization as the Ukrainian National Youth Federation.