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"OH, THE RED VIBURNUM IN THE MEADOW": REFLECTING THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL MOOD*

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ABSTRACT
The article investigates the Ukrainian folk song "Oh, the Red Viburnum in the Meadow", recognised for its opening verse, and examines its historical, cultural, and social dimensions, alongside its various adaptations. By addressing questions of authorship and the folklore origins of the song, this study explores its transformations in response to prevailing socio-political contexts. The endurance of this tradition is traced from the Cossacks to the Sich Riflemen, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the modern Armed Forces' soldiers of the Russo-Ukrainian War, as well as civilians. The research reveals the song's dynamic interplay between historical tradition and contemporary relevance. The findings highlight the song's power in building collective identity and expressing aspirations for independence, resistance and endurance.

KEYWORDS: Ukrainian folk song • Ukrainian Sich Riflemen • collective identity • national identity • resistance • transmission • song variations

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INTRODUCTION

During the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War,[1] Ukrainian folk songs, including riflemen and rebel songs, have gained renewed attention. Among them, the old riflemen song "Oh, The Red Viburnum in the Meadow" (*Oy u Luzi Chervona Kalyna*) stands out for its historical and cultural significance. With a history spanning 110 years since its creation in 1914, this song has resonated through various periods of upheaval, often serving as a source of energy and motivation, and faith in statehood, as well as a symbol of national identity for many Ukrainians. Its evolution as an anthem – from the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (1914–1918), to rebel units of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in the 1940s, gatherings for independence, and revolutionary Maidans – reflects its significant role in shaping collective identity.

The Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, formed in 1914 within the Austro-Hungarian army, were the first organised Ukrainian military force in the 20th century.[2] Although limited in number, they significantly affected Ukrainian military and cultural history, fighting against imperialist Russia and for Ukrainian national interests (Lanovyk and Lanovyk 2005: 290; Subtelny 2009: 340–341). During and after World War II, from 1942 to the early 1960s, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrainska Povstanska Armiia*) emerged as a key rebel unit fighting for Ukrainian independence. As a guerrilla force, it played a crucial role in resisting both Nazi and Soviet occupying forces, with its songs reflecting the aspirations and struggles for sovereignty (Lanovyk and Lanovyk 2005: 39; Subtelny 2009: 473–474).

Public demonstrations for independence, especially in the 1980s leading up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, revived and sustained Ukrainian national consciousness (Subtelny 2009: 575–576). Songs like "Red Viburnum" provided a sense of unity and purpose for those advocating Ukraine's sovereignty. Revolutionary Maidans, notably the Orange Revolution in 2004 (ibid.: 636) and the Revolution of Dignity in 2013–2014, were pivotal moments in Ukraine's recent history. These uprisings, driven by demands for political reform and independence from Russian influence, prominently featured folk songs as symbols of resistance and hope.

Riflemen songs are a cycle of songs of both folkloric and literary origin, reflecting the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians at the beginning of the 20th century (Vinnichuk 2020: 102). The term 'riflemen songs' was introduced in 1938 by the Ukrainian folklorist Filaret Kolessa, who considered them a type of historical song. Kolessa acknowledged their spread among rural communities during and after World War I due to the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, but remained cautious about their future within tradition. As he noted, "whether they will endure and what changes they will undergo in the oral tradition, only time will tell"[3] (Kolessa 1938: 94; 1983 [1938]: 94), emphasising the potential transformations they might undergo over time.

During the Soviet era, folklore that emerged in the wake of significant socio-historical confrontations was often suppressed and disregarded (Pravdiuk 1995: 25). In addition, authorisation of research topics was related to censorship and only ideologically approved content was permitted (Zakalska 2017). The Ukrainian Sich Riflemen and their songs were considered ideologically unacceptable and were excluded from academic study. This resulted in a situation where these songs existed but were not acknowledged by official scholarship (Zakalska 2021: 26). The same applied to rebel

songs. Only after Ukraine declared independence in 1991, with the opening of previously restricted archives, did researchers gain the opportunity to study riflemen and rebel songs.

At the heart of historical song research is Yaryna Zakalska's (ibid.: 68) assertion that during times of socio-political upheaval, such as war and rebellion, folk songs act as both a means of forming, and preserving, collective memory. These songs carry practical, historical, cultural, perceptual, and military experiences that resonate within Ukraine and beyond its borders.

My article examines the song "Red Viburnum", tracing its evolution and effect on Ukrainian identity through various historical contexts. The primary research question of this article is: How does the song "Red Viburnum" contribute to the formation and expression of collective identity and aspirations for independence in Ukrainian society? To address this question, this study employs an interdisciplinary methodology, combining historical, folkloristic, and sociocultural analysis. This study integrates comparative textual analysis to examine variations of the song across different historical periods, identifying patterns of adaptation and continuity, and assessing how these changes reflect broader socio-political shifts. The research draws on the historical records, memoirs, and song collections available in digital repositories of libraries and archives, such as the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, Diasporiana, and Chtyvo. Observation of contemporary performances and public receptions of the song provides insights into its modern significance.

In addition, my research underscores the importance of clarifying the connection of the riflemen song genre through time, drawing on the insight of Juha Pentikäinen (2025 [1978]: 237). This process of passing tradition from one generation to another forms the foundation of the concept of cultural and social transmission. Furthermore, collective identity studies and cultural transmission theory provide a theoretical framework for understanding how this song functions as both a historical artifact and a living cultural expression.

The hypothesis of this research suggests that the evolution of "Red Viburnum" from its folkloric origins to its contemporary international recognition reflects a dynamic interplay between historical tradition and modernity, highlighting its role in forming collective identity and expressing aspirations for independence. This article aims to explore the folkloric origins and distribution of the song, trace its transformation over the years, and examine the variability of the text and melody as a dialogue between past and present.

THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING ASPECTS OF FOLK SONG, AND ITS ROLE IN COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Music as a cultural practice, plays a pivotal role in identity construction, particularly during periods of historical change. It serves as a powerful tool in social movements, shaping collective culture, emotions, identity, and free spaces[4] (Danaher 2010). Collective identities often emerge in times of sociocultural challenges (Snow 2001). Protest songs, anthems and rallying cries can unify people around a common cause, reinforcing a shared identity. Identity production occurs within an ideological field where signs

can be discursively re-articulated to construct new meanings and connect with different social practices (Hall 1996).

During socio-political upheavals such as war and rebellion, folk songs act as both a means of forming and preserving collective memory. Music and memory are central in shaping individual and community identities, linking people to their cultural heritage (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Kruse 1993; Stokes 1994 [1988]; Honko 1996; Leyshon et al. 1998; Whiteley et al. 2004). Jez Collins and Paul Long (2014) further illustrate how music and collective memory intertwine, reinforcing identity over generations.

Collective identity is multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and moral aspects (Melucci 1996; Polletta and Jasper 2001). Songs function as transmitters of information within communities, strengthening national and ethnic unity as people identify with songs that evolve into national symbols (Kuutma 1996). Music also facilitates self-understanding, social connection, and even spiritual experiences (Hays and Minichiello 2005). Emotions play a central role in how individuals experience music, often surpassing cognitive responses in shaping identity (Wood and Smith 2005 [2001]).

Émile Durkheim underscores music's role in fostering social cohesion, emphasising that societies must regularly reaffirm their collective sentiments through shared musical experience. Durkheim (1995: 474–475) states:

> There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which makes its unity and its personality. Now this moral remaking cannot be achieved except by the means of reunions, assemblies and meetings where the individuals, being closely united to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments.

This aligns with broader research on collective identity and social movements, which highlights how music generates and sustains communal ties (Hunt and Benford 1994; Melucci 1996; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Snow 2001).

These connections between social movements and music are essential for understanding the role of songs like "Red Viburnum" in shaping Ukrainian identity and the mood of resistance. In the context of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War, the resurgence of riflemen songs reflects contemporary processes that influence national self-awareness. This study examines the connections between riflemen songs, identity formation, and social dynamics as unity and resilience.

THE FOLKLORIC ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE SONG

The formation of Ukraine's national identity emerged as a response to Russian imperialist policies that historically undervalued the Ukrainian nation. Drawing on Miroslav Hroch's (2000 [1985]) concept that Ukraine is an integral part of the Europe, Larysa Zariczniak (2015–2016: 18–19) identified three key stages of Ukrainian cultural nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries. During the first stage, the peasantry's ethos and language, distinct from Russian and Polish cultures, were emphasised. Lviv, under Austro-Hungarian rule, became a centre for the Ukrainian national movement, fostering cultural, education, and social improvement, establishing the basis for national identity.

The second stage involved intellectuals, such as Lesia Ukrainka, Olha Kobylianska, and Ivan Franko, codifying peasant culture by integrating folk traditions, language, and historical narratives into national discourse. This cultural synthesis was then reintroduced to the broader peasant population, fostering a mass cultural movement. Through this process, local traditions were transformed into a unifying national identity, shifting the focus of the Ukrainian national movement from intellectual circles to the rural majority. The third stage saw this cultural nationalism supporting the political struggle for independence in the early 20th century. This movement ultimately underscored the nation's distinctiveness and its aspirations for self-determination.

Ukrainian folk music, particularly the song "Red Viburnum", demonstrates how historical memory, cultural symbolism, collective emotions, and resistance narratives interweave to shape and express national identity. Ukrainian researchers (Kyrchiv and Yakymovych 2001; Kuzmenko 2005; 2009; Kyrchiv 2010: 357) have extensively explored this intricate process of cultural representation through musical tradition. This relationship is particularly evident during critical historical periods such as World War I and World War II, when the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army emerged, during which the concept of statehood became central to these movements.

"Red Viburnum" emerged in the literary tradition during World War I and quickly passed through military practice in the ranks of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, subsequently being embraced more widely among Ukrainians and becoming integrated into the folk song tradition. Hryhorii Nudha (1956: 68–69) argues that the popularity of historical folk songs is not coincidental; songs that reflect the interests and ambitions of people in a specific era invariably gain widespread appreciation. This connection is evident in the song's rapid dissemination and adaptation within the Ukrainian community, extending to various composers creating new musical and performative works based on the song.[5]

The Cossack Past as a Pillar of Ukrainian National Awakening

The modern era of Ukrainian history is a complex narrative marked by the struggle for independence and the preservation of cultural identity. Key figures in this story include the Cossacks, Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and other resistance movements. The construction of Ukrainian Cossack identity laid the foundations for the Ukrainian national project of the modern era (Plokhy 2006: 8), while the Cossacks became archetypical and symbolic figures in Ukrainian history and culture (Subtelny 2009: 5).

Originating in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Cossacks settled in the Dnieper River region in the southern part of modern Ukraine. These Cossacks were predominantly runaway recruits and peasants escaping the serfdom imposed by the Polish nobility (Snyder 2003: 112; Plokhy 2006: 162).[6] They established the Zaporizhzhya Sich, a semi-autonomous military community regarded as the cradle of Ukrainian Cossackdom (Subtelny 2009: 109). Initially defending against Tatar and Ottoman invasions (ibid.: 105), the Cossacks later resisted the oppression of the Polish nobility.

The Cossacks led several uprisings, most notably the Khmelnytsky Uprising of 1648, which aimed to liberate Ukrainian territories from Polish rule. The Pereiaslav Agree-

ment of 1654 united Ukraine with Muscovy (later Russia) for protection against Polish and Tatar threats. However, this alliance cost Ukraine its autonomy as Muscovy expanded its influence (ibid.: 135).

The Hetmanate, established by the Cossacks in the mid-17th century, was a significant political entity whose elites developed a collective identity rooted in Cossack traditions. By viewing Ukraine as a distinct fatherland led by the Cossack estate (Plokhy 2006: 359), they laid the foundations for modern Ukrainian national consciousness, supplying legends, myths, and symbols that later inspired national awakeners, including those reflected in "Red Viburnum".

Historical and Cossack Roots

There are five main types of song classified in Ukrainian folk singing culture: calendar-ritual songs, family-ritual songs, epic songs, ballads, and lyrical songs. Historical songs are a type of epic song, alongside bylynas, dumas and chronicle songs. However, unlike these genres, which share a recitative singing style, historical songs are closer to lyrical songs in their melodic structure and performance. They emerged after bylynas and alongside dumas around the 15th to 16th centuries. Historical songs stand out for their lyro-epic nature, balancing historical narrative with personal and emotional expression. Historical songs feature a clear poetic form with rhythmic-melodic structures, consistent syllable counts for the rhyming lines (most commonly 8+8 or 8+6 syllables), and stanzaic composition, typically comprising four lines united by end-rhyme (Lanovyk and Lanovyk 2005: 281). This structure enhances their lyricism and musicality, distinguishing them from dumas, which lack regular strophic division and have lines of varying syllabic length.

Thematically, historical songs often focus on resistance, battle, and national pride, reflecting the socio-political challenges faced by the community. They narrate wars and national liberation struggles, recounting significant events and real heroic figures. Their primary function was to preserve and transmit historical knowledge in the oral tradition. According to the classification by Roman Hromiak, Yurii Kovaliv and Vasyl Teremko (2007 [1997]: 317–318), historical songs are divided into cycles based on chronological and thematic principles:

- Songs of the Cossack era (15th to first half of the 17th century).
- Songs of the Koliivshchyna[7] and Haidamaky uprisings[8] (second half of the 17th century to the 18th century).
- Songs of peasant uprisings (first half of the 19th century).
- Songs of national liberation movements (first half of the 20th century).

This chronological categorisation highlights the evolution of historical songs in response to Ukraine's shifting socio-political landscape.

In historical songs, lyrical elements are secondary, serving as a backdrop for the unfolding events or appearing only as occasional insertions within the overall narrative. However, in historical songs from later periods, lyricism can become more pronounced, shifting the balance between historical narration and emotional expression (Lanovyk and Lanovyk 2005: 281–282).

"Red Viburnum" combines the historical song style with lyricism, the narrative of historical events with the expression of emotions, enduring as a cultural touchstone and providing a shared historical consciousness and a sense of belonging. The song's origins can be traced back to the Cossack era, with its roots found in the historical song "Steep Banks Spilled Over" (*Rozlylysia Kruti Berezhechky*), which dates back to the time of the Zaporizhzhya Sich around the mid-17th century (Pohrebennyk 1990). The theme of "Steep Banks Spilled Over" reflects the socio-political situation of the time, calling for armed struggle for a better future – a theme closely aligned with that of "Red Viburnum". Fedir Pohrebennyk (ibid.) pointed out that the final stanza of "Steep Banks Spilled Over" closely resembles the opening lines of "Red Viburnum". The original stanza of "Steep Banks Spilled Over" reads:

Hei, u luzi chervona kalyna,	Hey, in the meadow, the red viburnum,
hei, hei, pokhylylasia;	hey, hey, it has bent down;
Chohos nasha slavna Ukraina,	For some reason, our glorious Ukraine
hei, hei, zasmutylasia.	hey, hey, has become sad.
A my zh tuiu chervonu kalynu,	And we, that red viburnum,
hei, hei, ta pidnimemo;	hey, hey, will raise it;
A my zh svoiu slavnu Ukrainu,	And we, our glorious Ukraine,
hei, hei, ta rozveselymo!	hey, hey, will cheer it up!

(Antonovych and Drahomanov 1875: 50)

This older song became the foundation for "Red Viburnum", which underwent further transformation into an anthem in the hands of the Sich Riflemen. In particular, Stepan Charnetsky removed the refrain "hey-hey" from the first three lines and made several editorial changes, enhancing the song's imagery and musicality. The revised version in "Red Viburnum" reads:

Oi u luzi chervona kalyna pokhylylasia,	Oh, in the meadow, the red viburnum has bent down,
Chohos nasha slavna Ukraina zazhurylasia,	For some reason, our glorious Ukraine has become sad,
A my tuiu chervonu kalynu pidiimemo,	And we, that red viburnum, will raise it.
A my nashu slavnu Ukrainu,	And we, our glorious Ukraine,
hei, hei, rozveselymo.	hey, hey, will cheer it up.

(Spivanyk 1918: 8–9)

Beyond its direct historical lineage, "Red Viburnum" resonates with Ukrainian songs from the 16th to 18th centuries that reflect themes of freedom and resistance to enslavement: "Our volunteers are marching to the bloody dance / To liberate our Ukrainian brothers from Moscow's shackles" (*Marshyruiut nashi dobrovoltsina kryvavyi tan / Vyzvoliaty brattiv-ukraintsiv z moskovskyh kaidan*) (*Sim pisen* 1915: 14). The semantic pairs "freedom–slavery" correlates with the pairs "fortune–misfortune" and "happiness–misfortune" (Lykhohrai 2017: 69). Within the context of "Red Viburnum", the lack of freedom is depicted as a state of emotional and physical illness, sadness or longing.

The connection between Cossack, riflemen, rebel, and modern folk songs of resistance is evident in shared use of parallelisms, comparisons, symbols, and metaphors, and other figurative expressions intrinsic to folk songs (Kyrchiv 2010: 357). Roman Kyrchiv

(ibid.: 110) argues that riflemen songs are rooted in Cossack songs through their victorious patriotic spirit. In contrast, recruit and soldier songs often convey themes of pessimism and pacifism due to the hardships of compulsory military service. Researcher's considerations (ibid.: 357) of the 'migration' of Cossack disdain for death in the struggle to later historical and contemporary folk songs underscore the enduring influence and continuity of themes within Ukrainian folk songs.

Thus, in Cossack times, the song was associated with themes of freedom and resistance to enslavement. It resonated with the "freedom–slavery" semantic pair inherent in Cossack songs. As the historical landscape transformed through subsequent centuries, the song adapted to convey broader themes of Ukrainianness, continuity, and tradition.

Charnetsky's Play and New Additions by Riflemen

The interplay between individual and traditional elements in folklore reveals a complex cultural dynamic where individual contributions are integrated and adapted by the community, creating a diverse array of shared cultural expressions. This symbiotic relationship between communal essence and individual nuances is exemplified in creative processes where individual additions – such as new stanzas or varied lyrics – must simultaneously reflect individual experiences and meet traditional community criteria. Oleksandr Pravdiuk (1995: 25) notes that "the riflemen song is a very valuable material for asking questions about creative processes in folklore, about the collective and individual in it and their mutual transitions". The collective nature of folklore allows individual creativity to emerge while maintaining a coherent cultural framework, demonstrating how personal innovations are woven into the broader communal narrative. This dynamic interchange highlights how individual artistic impulses are not merely absorbed but actively transform and enrich traditional cultural forms, creating a continuous, collaborative process of cultural expression and preservation.

"Red Viburnum" encapsulates the socio-political climate and collective aspirations of its time. Pravdiuk (1991: 10) emphasises that the primary theme of the song is the creation of Ukrainian statehood which resonated with the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen's ambitions. Later, the changing historical context, including wars, movements, and cultural shifts, served as a catalyst for creative processes, where both individual responses and collective expectations shaped the evolution of "Red Viburnum".

The authorship of the lyrics of "Red Viburnum" remains a subject of scholarly debate. The song was first publicly performed in February 1914 in Sambor as a part of Vasyl Pachovsky's play "The Sun of Ruin" (*Sontse Ruiny*). The play was adapted and directed by Charnetsky, an artistic and social activist, and after 1913 by the artistic director of the Ukrainian Theatre of the "Ruska Besida" (Ruthenian Conversation) Society in Lviv. The adapted script of the play has not been preserved (Morykvas 2005: 59).

The play depicts one of the most tragic periods in Ukrainian history – the collapse of Ukrainian statehood (Hetmanate) in the late 17th century. These events, known as The Ruin, refer to the chaotic decades following the successful 1648 uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, which expelled Polish magnates and shifted power to a Cossack-led regime. However, twenty years after Khmelnytsky's death, the successes against a common enemy and the promising opportunity to attain political self-determination

were undone because of inability of Ukrainian political and military leaders to unite for a common goal (Subtelny 2009: 139).

Some researchers (Ivanets et al. 1991 [1935]: 128; Kobryn 2007: 57) attributed the authorship of this song to Charnetsky, while others affirm that Charnetsky never claimed authorship of the text, he merely selected the melody for the text, relying on the musical melos of historical songs (Pohrebennyk 1998: 593; Morykvas 2005). This is confirmed by Charnetsky's (2014: 365) memoirs, where he described the process of the play's adaptation:

> The author [of the play "The Sun of Ruin"] gave me permission to shorten its length, but at the same time, this was his beautiful drama. I did it, cutting it down by more than one-third and replacing the sad and drawn-out song "Oh, Don't Be Surprised, Good People" [*Oy ne dyvuytesia dobriyi liude*], which was sung by the army choir at the end of the second act, with a new song, "Red Viburnum", to which I added the melody, and the kapellmeister Mykhailo Kossak arranged it for woodwind and brass wind instruments.

Charnetsky's decision to complete the melody himself without saying anything about the creation of the lyrics suggests a perceived folk origin.

According to Nadiia Morykvas (2005: 64), the transmission of Cossack songs and motifs among the troops of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen contributed to the creation of new riflemen content. This process was particularly recognisable in the context of the play by Pachovsky and Charnetsky, where the tragedy of Cossack Ukraine was dramatically portrayed. The inclusion of "Red Viburnum" in a theatrical play underscores Charnetsky's intention to convey a specific mood or message, especially since the song accompanies the culmination of the play, when the army led by hetman Petro Doroshenko goes on a campaign. Therefore, it is plausible that a complete, or at least substantially longer text of "Red Viburnum" existed, specifically created by Charnetsky for the theatrical performance. Until the original manuscript is discovered, scholarly debates regarding the song's folkloric or written origins will persist, with both sources probably having contributed to its complex textual formation.

The song became an integral part of the military chronicles during the time of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, who considered themselves inheritors of Cossack traditions. The riflemen adopted both the raspberry Cossack flag and Cossack songs, with "Red Viburnum" becoming their anthem. One of the oldest descriptions of singing "Red Viburnum" by the riflemen was written by Ukrainian Sich Riflemen commander Ivan Kossak in 1916:

> 'Chervona Kalyna' was sung by the choir of the theatre group under the leadership of the kapellmeister Mykhailo Kossak in Chortkiv during the march of the Sokil-Sich movement in June 1914. The song was widely appreciated. Detachments of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, formed in Chortkiv, went to the drill with a song, then went to Stryi, and then to Hungary. My sotnia sang this song in Horonda,[9] other sotnias took over this song from ours. The riflemen themselves created a new content, a riflemen's one, during the first two weeks of their stay in Horonda. (Vytvytskyi 1967: 474)

The riflemen composer and musician Mykhailo Haivoronsky also mentioned that in Horonda, the song was generally sung by the divisions that came from Chortkiv (Melnychuk 1991: 9). This information does not completely align with the later memoirs of Hryhorii Trukh.[10] Trukh wrote that he first heard "Red Viburnum" in August 1914 in Stryi, performed by artists of the Lviv Ukrainian Theatre. Inspired by this song's spirit, he added new stanzas that emphasised the riflemen's goals, reflecting the changing context of the time. Trukh (1967: 354–355) claimed to be a co-author of the lyrics:

> The words of that song, which captivated me so much, were its first words:
>
> Oh, the red viburnum bent down in the meadow,
> Our glorious Ukraine is upset about something...
> [*Oy u luzi chervona kalyna pokhylylasia, /*
> *Chohos nasha slavna Ukraina zazhurylasia…*]
>
> These words so closely suited our situation at that time, and so vividly expressed our entire riflemen idea, that I repeated that charming stanza to myself again and again, and when the next day we went out again for drill, I sat down in front of the bursa[11] at the table and composed three new additional stanzas, which together created that glorious 'Chervona Kalyna'...

Trukh supplemented the song with a new meaning, and has been called the co-author of "Red Viburnum" (Vytvytskyi 1967: 357; Kuzmenko 2005: 36). The replacement of the word 'cossacks' with 'sich riflemen' in the song demonstrates a conscious effort to align the lyrics with the military and political identity of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen. This alteration signifies the common practice in folk traditions of varying, improvising, and adapting texts to better suit contemporary or specific contexts.

The anti-Moscow theme within the song was particularly resonant for the riflemen, aligning with their goal of liberating Ukraine from the Moscow tsar's forces (Morykvas 2005: 65). Although in some variants 'Muscovites' was replaced with the abstract 'enemies', the essence of resistance remained evident (Pohrebennyk 1998: 594).

Thus, the creational process of "Red Viburnum" unfolds through several versions. Charnetsky's contribution to Pachovsky's drama and the incorporation of an old Cossack song, with subsequent additions by different authors, symbolise the intricate genesis of this song. Folklore embodies essentially the experiences, traditions and expressions of a community. The riflemen song reflects the collective creativity of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, emerging from common historical events and narratives within the community. While individual creators, like Charnetsky and Trukh, played crucial roles in shaping these songs, their contributions were framed within a common cultural context.

The text and melody of "Red Viburnum" were first printed in 1915 in a small pamphlet titled *Seven Songs for Soldiers* (*Sim pisen* 1915: 14), which was published in Vienna. The song later appeared in *Songbook of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen* (*Spivanyk* 1918: 8–9). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, "Red Viburnum" was included in various song collections, often attributed as a riflemen's folk song. Notable publications during this period include *Sounds of Ukraine: Ukrainian Songs with Sheet Music for Solo Voice* (Andreiko 1923: 67), *Surma: A Collection of War Songs* (Surma 2020 [1922]: 8–10), *An Album of Riflemen Songs for Choirs* (Vakhnianyn 1937: 57), and *One Hundred and Forty Songs: A Folk*

Songbook (Lepkyi 1940: 6). These editions often featured choral arrangements and aimed to preserve and popularise the song within the Ukrainian diaspora. In addition to these early publications, the song's historical and cultural importance was further underscored in later collections, such as *Riflemen Songs* (Kuzmenko 2005), which included "Red Viburnum" with attribution to Charnetsky and Trukh. This edition also presented five folklorised versions of this song, highlighting the song's enduring popularity and transformation over time.

Theoretical analysis of the creation mechanisms of riflemen songs highlights their role as historical reflections of aspirations for independence and as models of Ukrainianism at the turn of the 20th century (Kolessa 1938; 1983 [1938]; Ripetskyi 1956; Kupchynsky 2015 [1933]). In this context, the concepts of folklorisation and folklorism are particularly significant.

The concept of folklorisation describes the process through which cultural elements (such as songs, narratives, etc.) are transformed and integrated into the realm of folklore. This process often involves shifts in function, meaning and context as elements move from their original setting into a more generalised, communal, or traditionalised framework. Scholars highlight the role of folklorisation in both historical and contemporary contexts, where elements of folklore are revived, modified or repurposed to fit changing social and political needs (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Bendix 1997).

Lauri Honko (1996) emphasises the importance of understanding the social and situational contexts in which folk songs are performed, as their meanings and functions can vary significantly across different groups. Honko also discusses the dynamic nature of folk narrative, noting that they often undergo adaptation to resonate with local ideals, values, and social structures, thereby reinforcing communal, regional, or national identities. This process of adaptation and integration into a community's cultural framework closely aligns with the concept of folklorisation, where cultural elements are transformed and recontextualised to fit new social settings. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), in the theory of invented traditions, further contextualise how cultural elements are selectively adapted and reinterpreted to serve national and ideological purposes, reinforcing a sense of continuity with the past. Contemporary discussions of folklorisation also engage with issues of commercialisation, heritage politics, and the role of technology in transmitting folklore beyond its original cultural environment (Noyes 2009).

This theoretical framework is particularly relevant when considering songs like "Red Viburnum". Although this song has authors, it became so popular among the people that it is now often perceived as having folk origins, with its authorship becoming obscured over time. Oksana Kuzmenko (2005; 2009) identified key mechanisms of folklorisation, such as adapting authorial poetry to popular folk tunes or reusing the poetics of traditional folklore genres in new musical compositions, which gained popularity among the Sich Riflemen and facilitated the transmission of works to a broader audience. Liudmyla Ivannikova (2012: 126) highlighted the actualisation of problems and generally prevailing feelings, which ensured that the process of folklorisation was rapid. This perspective helps explain how "Red Viburnum", initially composed in specific historical contexts, became part of the broader folk tradition.

Despite the ongoing disputes over authorship and unresolved questions about the relationship between folklore and literature in the formation and spread of the song,

riflemen songs have clearly emerged as a symbol of national identity, demonstrating continuity and the durability of popular traditions, serving as a means for social cohesion during times of military and political confrontation. Researchers have underscored different criteria of uniqueness, interpreting the importance of riflemen songs in various ways – as a manifestation of Ukrainian patriotism, an embodiment of resistance spirit, and an accumulation of individual and collective creativity.

Modern Songs Expanding Internationally

The resurgence and international spread of folk songs such as "Red Viburnum" today highlights the interplay between music, national identity, and cultural heritage, asserting that music plays an important role in the construction of individual and collective identities, often reflecting cultural and political contexts and historical conflicts (Frith 1996; von Glahn 2003). During the Soviet era, "Red Viburnum" was performed rarely in Ukraine. However, it re-emerged in the era of Perestroika[12] during the course of the protests of the 1980s, which sparked a resurgence of national aspirations inspired by the policy of *glasnost*[13] (Subtelny 2009: 574). Dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the Chernobyl disaster[14] and other issues fuelled widespread criticism. By the late 1980s, Ukraine faced a demographic collapse and growing discontent over the status of the Ukrainian language and historical falsifications.

In early 1989, the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Reconstruction (Rukh) was formed, they organised significant demonstrations in Lviv in 1988-1989 involving between 50,000 and 200,000 people. The largest demonstration, a human chain on January 21, 1990, involved about 800,000 people with the chain stretching from Lviv to Kyiv. In July 1989, Donbas miners held a massive strike against the Communist Party, involving 250,000 workers (Subtelny 2009: 575–576).

During this turbulent period, "Red Viburnum" was revived by the folklorist and choirmaster Leopold Yashchenko with the Homin (Eng. 'Hum') choir (see Photo 1). In 1989, at the first congress of Rukh, it was the Homin choir that, for the first time in decades of prohibition, sang the national anthem "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished" (*Shche ne vmerla Ukraina*) in Kyiv, along with "Red Viburnum". Following this 'breakthrough', the song was included in the repertoire of nearly all choral groups in Ukraine, both professional and amateur. As the song spread throughout Ukraine, various versions were embraced, with various arrangements by different composers, and new stanzas added by contemporary authors.

Photo 1. Choir Homin at the Shevchenko Evening in the Kyiv Metrobud House of Culture (Kyiv, Ukraine) on March 8, 1992 (Homin 2014).

In the historiography of the choir (Homin 2012), its founder and leader, Yashchenko, along with one of its first members, Nadiia Svitlychna,[15] recalled a conversation in the late 1980s in which they discussed the lyrics of "Red Viburnum", created in 1914. They noted the lack of a thematic connection between the first and third stanzas and decided to compose a second stanza:

Ne khylysia, chervona kalyno –	Do not waver, red viburnum –
Maiesh bilyi tsvit,	You have a white flower,
Ne zhurysia, slavna Ukraiino –	Do not be sad, glorious Ukraine –
Maiesh dobryi rid!	You have a good family!
A my tuiu chervonu kalynu pidiimemo,	And we will raise that red viburnum,
A my nashu slavnu Ukraiinu,	And we will cheer up our glorious Ukraine,
Hey-hey, rozveselymo!	Hey-hey, cheer up!

(Homin 2012)

Today, the song has gained international recognition, especially since the beginning of the Russian war against Ukraine in 2022. Andrii Khlyvniuk, the frontman of the band Bumboks, performed an a cappella version that went viral across social media platforms, garnering 1,630,255 views on YouTube, 625,735 on Instagram, and 89,000 on Facebook (as of February 14, 2025). Social media users, showing solidarity, in turn

began to present and distribute this version following a rendition by Khlyvniuk. This version also gained the sympathy of the international community of musicians, leading to a remix by South African musician The Kiffness and a rock composition by members of Pink Floyd titled "Hey Hey Rise Up". The lyrics of the viral version are (see, for example, Football Hub 2022):

Oy, u luzi chervona kalyna pokhylylasia	Oh, the red viburnum in the meadow
Chohos nasha slavna Ukraiina zazhurylasia,	Our glorious Ukraine is upset about something,
A my tuiu chervonu kalynu pidiimemo,	And we will raise that red viburnum,
A my nashu slavnu Ukraiinu,	And we will cheer up our glorious Ukraine,
hey, hey, rozveselymo!	hey-hey, cheer up!
Ne khylysia, chervona kalyna,	Do not waver, red viburnum,
maiesh bilyi tsvit,	you have a white flower,
Ne zhurysia, slavna Ukraiina,	Do not be sad, glorious Ukraine,
maiesh vilnyi rid!	you have a good family!
A my tuiu chervonu kalynu pidiimemo,	And we will raise that red viburnum,
A my nashu slavnu Ukraiinu,	And we will cheer up our glorious Ukraine,
hey, hey, rozveselymo!	hey-hey, cheer up!

"Red Viburnum" has historically been performed by folk singers and community members, as well as choirs at various public events, especially during important national celebrations where the themes of resistance and national unity resonated deeply with audiences.

TRANSMISSION AND ADAPTATION

Discussion of the transmission of wartime songs is often viewed through the lens of both vertical and horizontal transmission pathways. Vertical transmission refers to the passing down of songs from one generation to the next, such as from the Sich Riflemen to the Insurgent Army, while horizontal transmission occurs through peer interaction, with individuals learning songs in communication with their contemporaries. Olena Ivanovska (2012: 315) suggests that in this case the mechanisms of dialogical transmission were operating, according to which "differentiation into subject [respondent, author-performer] and recipient is quite unstable, because it is immediately assumed that the recipient will enter into a dialogue and become the bearer of this tradition, and therefore, in the future, will be its subject". Ivanovska (2007) suggests, though based on an analysis of narratives, that the variative nature of folklore texts is related to the reinterpretation of the text by the tradition bearer, and the transformation of its functions. As individuals engage with the text, their cultural awareness subjectively imbues it with personal meaning, contributing to the continuous reinterpretation of the text. Applying her claim to "Red Viburnum" we can conclude that perpetual transformation highlights the song's adaptability and resilience in reflecting the evolving cultural identity of the Ukrainian people.

The contemporary popularity of "Red Viburnum" illustrates the modern trend of folk songs gaining global recognition. This process involves several stages: from traditional folk song performance to an a cappella rendition of its shortened version, and

then to various mixed music arrangements, leading to the creation of new variations that resonate with contemporary audiences.

The practice of performing a cappella versions of "Red Viburnum" gained popularity at the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian War and is closely tied to social media. Increased mobility, digital capabilities, and the rise of social media have significantly influenced the transmission of folklore (Blank 2009; Bronner 2012; McNeill 2015). These modern factors have led to a new perspective on transmission, one that transcends traditional boundaries of time, space, and community, all of which applies to distribution and perception of "Red Viburnum" as well. Users often upload short videos of their performances to platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, etc. This rapid dissemination allows the song to reach a much wider audience, transcending the borders of Ukraine, uniting people worldwide with its emotive themes.

The next step involves creating remixes of the most popular renditions. Social media platforms facilitate the remixing, uploading, and sharing of these songs. Contemporary variants fusing traditional elements with modern musical genres play an important role in its popularity, attracting a broader audience and enhancing the song's adaptability to current cultural trends. This process highlights the dynamic interplay between historical tradition and modernity, demonstrating how traditional forms of cultural expression can adapt and thrive in the digital age.

The choice of this particular folk song reflects a desire to connect with Ukraine's historical narrative and cultural heritage. Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of "imagined communities" resonates here, highlighting that a nation is rather a socially constructed community than a geographical one. "Red Viburnum" contributes to sustaining a sense of community among Ukrainians worldwide. In the context of the diaspora, music plays an important role as a preserve of ethnic identity (Lidskog 2016). The concept of collective identity is central to this process, as individuals within a diaspora community assemble around shared cultural elements, including singing "Red Viburnum", to reaffirm their ties to a common heritage and expressing support for Ukrainians. Thus, "Red Viburnum" serves as a powerful cultural artefact for international and diaspora communities.

"RED VIBURNUM" AS A POWERFUL SYMBOL

Every war or revolution has its own song(s). The Orange Revolution[16] was associated with the song "Together We Are Many, We Cannot Be Overcome" (*Razom nas bahato, nas ne podolaty*) sung at the 2005 Eurovision Song Contest by the Ukrainian hip hop duo GreenJolly (*Gryndzholy*). The Revolution of Dignity[17] will forever be remembered for the song "The Duck Swims" (*Plyve Kacha*) to which a funeral procession took place on the Maidan.

The present study has revealed how, during the Russo-Ukrainian War, "Red Viburnum" has become the anthem of the Ukrainians. The various settings in which the song is performed – at public meetings, at private gatherings, on marches, in shelters, online forums, etc. – represent different forms of free space where Ukrainian cultural identity, resistance and solidarity are reinforced. Nataliia Kobryn (2007: 59) has noted that its active marching rhythm is reminiscent of popular Cossack marches and Sich Riflemen songs from the early 20th century.

Singing "Red Viburnum" evokes emotions that foster a sense of community and solidarity, while singing it collectively allows individuals to share and connect with the same emotions and feelings, reinforcing the social and collective aspect of singing. Trukh (1967: 354–355) described in his memoirs how,

> the words "Our volunteers are marching to the bloody dance / To liberate our Ukrainian brothers from Moscow shackles" reminded us every day of the nearest goal of our riflemen movement, and the cheerful, triumphant refrain: "And we will cheer up our glorious Ukraine, / Hey-hey, cheer up" lifted us up in spirit, warmed our young hearts with love for Ukraine, and stimulate to sacrifice for its freedom.

The lyrics and melody of "Red Viburnum" act as cultural markers, voicing protest and resistance, embodying the collective spirit of the community. The following points outline the ways in which this song has facilitated that contribution:

1. The symbolism of the red viburnum. Viburnum, a recurring symbol in the song, represents Ukraine mentally and receptively (ESCU 2015 [1997]: 326) and depicts Ukraine's resilience and sacrifice through the parallel Cossack–rifleman–insurgent–modern armed forces soldier, whose blood is viburnum. Kuzmenko (2005: 30) noted that "the stable formula 'to raise the viburnum' meaning 'to gain political independence' stood out based on riflemen symbolism". This statement is confirmed by its enshrining in rebel songs. Thus, the viburnum is a national symbol of unity, victorious struggle, and mourning for the heroes who died for Ukraine.

2. Cultural resilience. The song serves as a means of cultural expression and resilience during periods when Ukrainian culture and identity were, and are, suppressed by Russian imperialist efforts aimed at assimilating Ukrainians and suppressing their aspirations for self-determination. These actions include policies designed to diminish Ukrainian cultural distinctiveness and promote a homogenised identity aligned with Russian interests. Since the Tsarist Russian Empire, Russian rulers have attempted to transform all three eastern Slavic countries (Russia, Belarus and Ukraine) into one "Russian nation-state" because according to their policy "Little Russians" (Ukrainians) and "White Russians" (Belarusians) are not separate nations (Weeks 1996: 93). The process of nationalisation was carried out through repression (Plokhy 2017: 135) and by banning Ukrainian and Belarusian languages and cultures.

The lyrics and melody of the song have been adapted to convey messages of protest and solidarity during various historical periods. In response, the preservation and singing of traditional folk songs like "Red Viburnum" act as a form of cultural resistance. By maintaining and celebrating their musical heritage, Ukrainians assert their unique identity and preserve their historical narratives. This practice reinforces a sense of belonging within the community and defends against attempts to erase their cultural and national uniqueness.

3. National identity and independence. Ewa Thompson's (1998: 256) perspective, aligning with Zbigniew Herbert's (1999) notion (see also Uffelmann 2019) of Poland as a victim of colonisation, delves into the concept of defensive nationalism as a characteristic of "memory communities" perceiving vulnerability due to factors such as the country's small size or the threat posed by expansionist neighbours. According to Thompson (1998: 256), defensive nationalism serves as a crucial means of "resisting the encroachment of a hostile Other upon one's identity". This statement resonates closely

with Ukrainians as well. The historical background and shared experiences embedded in the song strengthen the narratives that underlie defensive nationalism and reinforce a sense of unity among individuals who perceive their national identity as at risk.

"Red Viburnum" has been sung during protests, independence movements, and significant historical events, serving as an anthem of sorts for those advocating Ukrainian sovereignty. For instance, a fragment from "Red Viburnum" was sung on August 24, 1991 in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine after the declaration of independence. Thus, this song is considered the second, unofficial, Ukrainian national anthem.

The uplifting verses of "Red Viburnum" further underscore the unwavering faith in Ukraine's prosperous and independent future: "And we will raise that red viburnum, / And we will cheer up our glorious Ukraine, / Hey-hey, cheer up!" These lines resound as a rallying cry, uniting hearts in a shared commitment to Ukraine.

CONCLUSION

The study emphasises the significance of singing "Red Viburnum" as a cultural practice that promotes collective identity. In times of socio-political upheaval and existential threats, such as the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine, the song serves as a powerful symbol of national solidarity. By exploring its historical context, variability, and societal impact, this research highlights the transformative influence of "Red Viburnum" in identity formation, collective memory preservation, and social cohesion.

Drawing on insights from collective identity theory and collective memory studies, this study illuminates how the song acts as a conduit for transmitting cultural heritage, inspiring social action, and nurturing resilience. Engagement in singing not only reinforces collective identity but also cultivates a sense of belonging, as individuals contribute to the cultural dialogue through their active involvement in performing this song.

The transmission and transformation of "Red Viburnum" contribute to this ongoing dialogue by incorporating traditional elements along with contemporary meanings, narratives, and interpretations. The song's evolution over time, through distinct historical phases, reflects the shifting cultural, social and political contexts, demonstrating its dynamic nature. Individuals and communities adapt the song to current circumstances, altering lyrics, melodies and contexts to address contemporary issues, thus showcasing the flexibility of this cultural practice.

The enduring significance of "Red Viburnum" is exemplified by its depiction on a commemorative coin issued by the National Bank of Ukraine on July 18, 2022, as part of the Immortal My Ukraine series. Designed by Kyiv artist Dmytro Kryvonos, the coin features a stylised composition with defenders from different eras – a Cossack, a Sich rifleman, and a modern Armed Forces soldier raising a viburnum, Ukraine's national tree (ESCU 2015 [1997]: 326–327). This coin visually represents the song's historical and cultural evolution, illustrating its transformative journey through the centuries.

Furthermore, "Red Viburnum" continues to resonate as a form of cultural resilience. From its origins with the Cossacks to its relevance among the Sich Riflemen, the Insurgent Army, and the modern Armed Forces soldiers in the Russo-Ukrainian War, the song's adaptability and transmission serve as means of preserving cultural identity and resisting occupation and authoritarian regimes.

Debates are connected with the question of whether the well-known version of the song has a literary origin or whether it is composed of folk songs (or is a transformed folk song). Most believe that this song has a literary origin (names of the people who added new stanza are known: Trukh, Yashchenko and Svitlychna), but at the same time these researchers claim that this song underwent a process of folklorisation and has therefore been classified for many years as a folk song.

In emphasising the enduring significance of "Red Viburnum" for Ukrainian society, this study highlights how cultural expressions shape collective consciousness and social behaviour. Amidst complex historical and political challenges, the song symbolises resilience, unity and aspirations for a future marked by autonomy and peace.

NOTES

1 The presentation of this article was given at the From Desperation to Hope: The Meanings and Effect of Group Singing conference in November 2022 in Tartu, already 11 months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24. During the editing of the article, in early 2025, the full-scale war persists. The Russo-Ukrainian War began in February 2014 when, following Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity, Russia occupied and annexed Crimea and supported pro-Russian separatists fighting the Ukrainian military in the Donbas War.

2 Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (*Ukrainski Sichovi Striltsi*). The use of 'Sich' in their name was a deliberate reference to the Zaporizhian Cossacks. Zaporizhzhya Sich was the fortified military and administrative centre of the Cossacks from the 16th to 18th centuries. The name Sich is derived from the verb sikaty 'to cut'.

3 Hereinafter, unless otherwise indicated, the translation is the author's.

4 Free spaces are physical or symbolic autonomous places where individuals and groups can gather, communicate, and express themselves freely without any repression or censorship by authorities.

5 During the 1920s and 1930s, "Red Viburnum" was incorporated into numerous choir repertoires through choral arrangements by composers such as Filaret Kolessa (for male quartet), Oleksandr Koshyts (for male choir), Yaroslav Yaroslavenko (for solo and mixed choir), Zenon Lysko (for male choir), and Bohdan Vakhnianyn (for mixed, male, and children's choirs), Borys Kudryk (for male choir) (Kuzmenko 2005: 517). Ukrainian singer Mykhailo Zozuliak, a performer at New York's Metropolitan Opera, made the first recorded version in 1925. Since 2022, the song has seen a resurgence with new versions by South African musician David Scott (stage name The Kiffness), rock band Pink Floyd featuring Andrii Khlyvnyuk, and German singer Marlene Maas in multiple languages. The Air Force Military Music Art Centre (in Vinnytsia) also presented an academic arrangement (Sinenko and Narozhna 2022). Other covers include those by Hradovska Metal Band, Anatolii Haidenko (with his bandura suite "Banduriada"), and Ukrainian-American bard Volodymyr Dayneko, who created a blues version.

6 The term Cossack derives from a Turkic word meaning "the free, masterless men who lacked a well-defined place in society and who lived on its unsettled periphery" (Subtelny 2009: 108).

7 Koliivshchyna was a Cossack and peasant uprising that took place in 1768 in Right-Bank Ukraine, primarily against the Polish nobility, Catholic clergy, and Jewish communities. It was driven by social, religious and national grievances under the rule of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The rebellion, led by Maksym Zalizniak and Ivan Gonta, was initially supported by the Russian Empire but was later suppressed by both Polish and Russian forces.

8 The Haidamaky uprisings were a series of Cossack and peasant rebellions in Right-Bank Ukraine during the 18th century, primarily against Polish rule and the nobility. These uprisings

were driven by economic hardship, religious tensions and opposition to serfdom. The Haidamaky fighters sought to defend Orthodox Christian communities and resist Polish domination.

9 Horonda is a settlement in Transcarpathia (Ukraine), where the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen were stationed in September 1914.

10 Ukrainian Sich Riflemen soldier, publicist, chaplain for the Ukrainian Galician Army and priest of the Basilian Order of Saint Josaphat.

11 A bursa is an education institution.

12 Perestroika was a programme of economic reforms in the Soviet Union announced in June 1987 by Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party. In a broader sense, it marked the political period after 1985 and was an attempt to emerge from stagnation.

13 Glasnost, the disclosure policy in the USSR brought to life by Mikhail Gorbachev. This meant a reduction in secrecy in Soviet society and a slight reduction in the Communist Party's control of the press. Initially, this did not mean full freedom of expression, but in the course of time the history of nationalities was revealed, and several politically driven crimes against individuals and entire peoples were made public.

14 The Chornobyl disaster was an explosion that occurred on April 26, 1986, at the Chornobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukrainian SSR. The incident was a highest-level accident, according to the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (Steinhauser et al. 2014). The nuclear power plant's Block 4 reactor exploded. As a result of ionising radiation, many people received acute radiation poisoning and died. The radioactive cloud emitted from the reactor contaminated large areas in Ukraine, Russia and especially Belarus. More than 600,000 people were involved in eradicating the consequences of the disaster and were taken there under the pretext of military exercises. Both the extent of the consequences of the disaster and the incident itself were concealed from the inhabitants of the Soviet Union.

15 Svitlychna (1936–2006) was a Ukrainian dissident and human rights activist, and an active member of the Ukrainian Helsinki group. She was a publicist, journalist and editor, and for a time was a political prisoner of the Soviet regime (Bazhan 2012).

16 The Orange Revolution is called the protests that followed the results of the second round of the 2004 presidential elections between November 2004 and January 2005. The election was linked to corruption, voter intimidation and election fraud. The focal point of the demonstrations was Kyiv and its central square, but there were protests elsewhere in the country.

17 The Revolution of Dignity, also the Euromaidan protests, took place in Ukraine between November 2013 and February 2014, culminating in deadly clashes between protesters and state forces in the capital Kyiv, resulting in the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovych, the return to the 2004 Constitution of Ukraine, and the outbreak of the 2014 Russo-Ukrainian War.

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