

UKRAINE GAINING IN SOVIET AFFAIRS

**Fanfare on Jubilee of Merger,
Crimea Cession and Major
Role of Party Men Cited**

By HARRISON E. SALISBURY
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MOSCOW, Feb. 28 — Sixty prominent officials and public citizens were named by the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic today to a committee that will prepare the jubilee marking the 300th anniversary of the union of the Ukraine with Russia. The Russian Republic is the largest and most important of the sixteen constituent republics that make up the Soviet Union.

The announcement of this committee and the preparations for the great celebration later this year are only some of the almost daily signs marking an increase in the influence and importance of the Ukraine in the general Soviet scene.

Only yesterday the Crimean peninsula was transferred from the composition of the Russian Republic to that of the Ukraine, an action undertaken partly at least as a demonstration of the "brotherly" affection of Russia for the Ukraine.

It was not always thus. In the past, relations between the Ukraine and Russia have often been marked by suspicions.

Various Ukrainians have been charged with "Ukrainian nationalism." Ukrainians, on the other hand, have bitterly complained that the Russians were guilty of "Great Russian chauvinism."

At present it would seem that major efforts are being made by the Soviet Government to demonstrate that grounds exist for a warm and friendly relationship between these two large branches of the Slavic family.

Petrovsky Named Anew

Not a few Ukrainian figures have been given public signs of Moscow's confidence. Grigory I. Petrovsky, veteran Ukrainian leader, is listed by the latest volume of the Soviet Encyclopedia as one of the outstanding Red Army political chiefs, along with Lenin, Stalin and other old Bolshevik leaders, and the works of the Ukrainian poet Maxim Rylsky are now praised by Pravda.

[Mr. Petrovsky was purged in 1938, but reappeared in May, 1953, when he was awarded a high Soviet decoration.]

It seems unlikely that at any time since the overthrow of the Czarist regime have the Ukraine and the Ukrainians bulked larger in Soviet affairs than now. The growing eminence of men who have won their spurs in the Ukraine is evident throughout the country. High Communist party posts in no fewer than three republics, in addition to the Ukraine, are held by men who "graduated" from the Ukrainian party organization.

One of them is Leonid I. Brezhnev, who as recently as 1950 was party secretary of Dnepropetrovsk Oblast (province) in the Ukraine. He went on to become party secretary of Moldavia and in the autumn of 1952 was named to the secretariat of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. Last spring Mr. Brezhnev went into the Navy Department as political worker and by summer had attained the rank of lieutenant general. Now he has gone to Kazakhstan as second secretary of the Kazakh Communist party.

Ukrainians Hold High Posts

The Moldavian Communist party is also headed by a Ukrainian party veteran—Zinovy T. Serduyuk, former secretary of the Lvov Oblast party committee and candidate member of the Ukrainian party bureau. Messrs. Brezhnev and Serduyuk are Ukrainians.

The third republic where a man from the Ukraine now holds an executive role is Georgia, where V. P. Mzhavanadze, former member of the organization bureau of

the Ukrainian party, became first secretary of the Georgian party last September.

This by no means exhausts the list of important posts held by persons once prominent in the Ukraine. The present first secretary of the Communist party of the Soviet Union is Nikita S. Khrushchev, who for many years before coming to Moscow in 1950 had headed the Ukrainian party.

A. I. Kirichenko, who is now the first secretary of the Ukrainian party, has succeeded to the post on the Presidium of the all-Soviet Central Committee of the party, formerly held by Leonid G. Melnikov, who was Mr. Kirichenko's predecessor as party chief in the Ukraine. Mr. Melnikov lost his post in the course of machinations inspired by Beria, executed Minister of Internal Affairs, but was subsequently given the job of Ambassador to Rumania.

It is not only in the field of party activity that members of the Ukrainian Central Committee have become prominent in the national sphere. Marshal Ivan S. Konev, member of the Ukrainian Central Committee, and, according to a biography just published in the Soviet Encyclopedia, a commander of a military district, headed the special tribunal of the Soviet Supreme Court that tried the Beria case.

Roman A. Rudenko, formerly state prosecutor for the Ukraine, has become prosecutor of the Soviet Union, and Col. Gen. Andrei A. Grechko, formerly a member of the Ukrainian Bureau and commander of the Kiev Military District, is now Soviet Commander in Chief in Germany.