

JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING.

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### EDITORIAL

The Scandinavians have made a very excellent appointment in their list of Civil Servants; his official title is 'Ombudsman', and his job is to investigate grievances.

Citizens who feel that they have a legitimate grievance are entitled to pour out their tale to the Ombudsman, who will examine the reasons for certain Government policies and actions, and present the reasons and complaints to the appropriate department.

This is no idle appointment. His position is taken very seriously by both government and people, and his results have been extremely fruitful.

Reading of this, it occurs to me that it might be a wise venture for the B.I.F.D. to appoint an Ombudsman onto their Committee. It is a fact that in any group or society, certain policies and decisions will always cause some degree of dissatisfaction to a proportion of the people. The tragedy of this is that these persons are, with the odd exception, well-meaning people with the good of the Society at heart, and in their attempt at discovering reasons for actions, they are all too soon listening to that odd exception with a chip on his shoulder. Possibly more harm has been caused to any society by the under-the-breath remarks, the dressing room whispers, and the long telephone calls, than by any amount of bad organisation.

The Ombudsman could defeat these whispers. It would be a difficult job, possibly involving a great deal of time and work. It might even, on occasion, be thankless; but it would be worthwhile, and of great help to the spirit of the Group. The News Sheet is willing to help, by providing space in its pages when necessary. The idea is placed before you, and your comments are requested.

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### A FOLK COSTUME FROM RUSSIA.

In almost every country, costume differs from area to area in a small or large extent. With some it may be only a difference in colour or ornament, whilst with others the style may be completely different. Russia is one of these latter countries, and this article describes the costume of the women of North and Central Russia only.

The main garment is a dress reaching to the ankles, usually sleeveless and made with a square neck and a full skirt of unpressed pleats. Beneath this is worn a blouse of white or golden colour, with long full sleeves gathered into a frilled cuff, and with a high,

round, plain neckline. The married woman usually wears a long sleeved jacket over her blouse, buttoned from neck to waist. The jacket which has a peplum, is often trimmed at the cuffs and yoke-line with lace or embroidered braid. The cuffs of the blouse may be pulled out from under the jacket cuffs in order that they may be seen. The dress and jacket should be a plain colour, deep but not bright. Wine, bottle green, purple, gold, or blue are very suitable. The material should be fairly heavy - satin is not authentic and is used only for show presentation.

The unmarried girl's skirt may be decorated with a band of fairly wide bright ribbon, sewn about 4" from the hemline. The married woman usually decorates her skirt with one or two rows of lace or embroidered braid.

The unmarried girl winds a long woven belt around her waist, leaving two long ends hanging down at the back. Her head-dress is rather like a crown, four inches deep at the centre front, tapering to a rounded end of about two inches in depth at the back. This ties at the back of the head in a large bow, with long wide ribbons which hang down, reaching nearly to the calf. The front of the 'crown' is covered with a rich band of material, bright in colour and texture.

The married woman wears a similar 'crown' but embroidered with sequins, and beads, with often a fringe of beads hanging on the forehead. Over the head, and resting on the 'crown' is worn a handkerchief which ties under the chin, covering the hair.

Both wear shoes or short, fitting boots, buttoned at the sides. No apron or heavy jewellery is worn, although the unmarried girl may occasionally wear a long chain or necklace twisted around the neck.

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#### SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE UKRAINES.

The national emblem is a trident, and it is an important and very ancient symbol to the Ukrainian people. Samples have been found dating back to the 10th Century, on coins, bricks, seals etc. The trident, with its three sharp prongs, varies from the extremely simple to the elaborate and finely executed. During the period of Ukrainian independence in 1918, the trident was proclaimed a national emblem, and was incorporated on their postage stamp.

The cross, used for religious purposes, is a three barred cross. It is unknown when this type of cross first came into existence, but it has been found in very early prayer books, and is the regular symbol in all Russo-Ukraine churches.

The music of the Ukraine is simple, melancholy, and tender, breaking into gaiety and brightness. Very many of the songs deal with historic subjects, and relate the events, changes, and customs of the country. It is a national habit for choirs to sing under the windows of the foremost people at Christmas and on New Year's Eve. Easter is very rich with songs, the music of which was originally, in many cases, the accompaniment to fertility dances. The folk songs of the Ukraine are considered to be some of the oldest in existence, and range from little dancing songs to musical plays.

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#### THE CARPATHO-UKRAINE.

The Carpatho-Ukraine is a small rugged country bounded by Czechoslovakia on the west, Poland on the north, Rumania in the east, and bordered by Hungary on the South. It has now become incorporated in the Soviet Union.

Dense forests cover nearly half its area, and above tower ranges of almost virgin mountains. As in most alpine countries, the people live in the valleys, or in lonely huts tucked among the sides of the mountains.

These are an isolated people, and civilisation is still only slowly reaching them. Many are unable to read or write, but they are highly skilled in the peasant art of spinning, weaving, carving, embroidery, and pottery making.

In the southwest area among the lush valleys and plains, the people have an easier life, and their outlook has broadened considerably. The tempo of their life has quickened, and there are several industries which augment their economic life. These are, in the main, tobacco growing, timber, the distilling of alcohol, the manufacture of bricks, and the mining of salt.

The house of the poor peasant is in fact little more than a hut, with an open fireplace in one corner. There is rarely a chimney, and a haze of smoke hangs continuously in the air. Plank beds, covered with rugs are placed around the walls, with a plank bench under the single window space, against which is a rough table. There is seldom much else in the way of furniture,

other than a large chest, usually of plain wood, which serves as wardrobe, store closet, and additional seat. Straw covers the floor.

The slightly better-off peasant has a neater house. The thatch, which reaches to about four feet from the ground, will be in good condition; the walls and doors are painted in bright colours, and a low verandah may be built along the front of the cottage.

The wealthier farmer will probably have a real house built of wood with a wooden roof. It will have four or more rooms and will possess a chimney. The outer walls may be ornately carved and painted, and the interior walls are smoothly planed. The rooms will contain chairs as well as benches, possibly a wooden dresser for crockery, and a proper stove will be installed on which, in cold weather, the whole family will sleep. The windows will have glass panes, and there will be a neatly kept verandah along the whole front of the house. There will be real beds, with feather mattresses, pillows, and quilts.

In the mountain valleys, winter is a quiet season. Little work can be done on the land, and the time is spent mainly indoors. The men mend their working tools and possibly make new shoes for the household. The women sew, embroider, spin, and weave. It is during this period of inactivity that the beautiful embroideries on the folk costumes are worked. Few of the people can afford to keep using new material for embroidery, so out come the existing garments, and more embroidery is worked among the existing patterns. Thus an embroidered costume may never be truly finished, for each year more stitches and patterns may be added to it.

On the eastwest tip dwell the Hutzel people, who, claim to be an independant people, and, like the Polish Gorals are a race who never recognised serfdom, and are characterised by their racial individuality and their fierce pride.

They live mainly by lumbering, but they are also good builders. Their homes are usually solid, two-roomed houses made from well cut logs. Their handmade furniture is very beautiful, and the floors are covered with woollen rugs. Ornamental pottery is much in evidence, and carved wooden racks for the kitchen utensils or for eating implements decorate the walls. The biggest insult one Hutzel can cast upon another is to liken him to a valley or plain dweller. It is to the Hutzels that we are indebted to Kolomeyka.

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THE GOURMET

UKRAINIAN BABKA.

5 eggs	4 cups flour
1 gill milk	1 knob butter about size of a walnut
1oz. powdered yeast	½ cup raisins (seedless)
½ teaspoon salt	1 tablespoon sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla	Grated rind of half lemon.

Mix flour, sugar and yeast in the milk. Leave to rise. Beat eggs and add to the previous mixture. Add the salt and vanilla and beat in the melted butter. Leave again until the mixture has risen to twice its original size. Add the raisins and lemon rind and knead well. Shape into small loaves and place in a well-greased tin. Place in a warm place for further rising. Bake in a medium oven for 30 minutes, then reduce heat and bake until cooked through to centre. Approximately 15 minutes.

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The Poles also have a similar sweet bread; the ingredients differ slightly, but the name is the same.

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LETTERS

Many letters have been received expressing appreciation of the Albert Hall show. The following extracts are typical -

Dear —

I would like to congratulate you on the success of the Albert Hall 'Dance Festival'.

To produce a show with so many teams involved and with such variety and colour is a grand achievement, and we were all delighted by the entertainment

Yours sincerely,  
S.L. Perkins,  
Senior Inspector of Physical Education(Women).

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Dear —

— We were delighted to see what immense progress has been made by the Society in the assimilation of the different national traditions, and the very greatly increased capacity of the performers to portray these.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas Kennedy,  
The English Folk Dance and Song Society.

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Dear —

The Folk Dancing Festival at the Albert Hall has now passed, and I should like to say that all the Latvians who were there, including those who came from outside London, as well as I and my family, were delighted with everything.

We all look forward to there being Latvian participation on future occasions also. I beg you to accept our Latvian thanks to all those of the Society for International Folk Dancing concerned.

With all good wishes for the success of your work,

Yours sincerely,

Charles Farrini.  
Latvian Legation, London.

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Dear —

Please accept my grateful thanks for the two tickets you so kindly forwarded to me for the performance at the Albert Hall.

We felt that the whole performance was stimulating, colourful, and quite delightful, and from an aesthetic point of view, it was most satisfying.

I was sad to think that the Polish Group were not included, but perhaps another year we may have the pleasure of seeing them at Albert Hall.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
G. Cuthbertson,  
Principal, Waterloo and Stockwell General Institute.

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## NOTICES

The Committee has been fortunate in persuading Mr. George Orloff to start a Russo-Ukraine class at the Hugh Myddelton School, starting with the new term. The classes are held on Tuesday evenings, 7.30-9.30 p.m. and members are cordially invited to join in this new venture.

The Society has never had many Russian dances up its sleeve. Those few which it did have, have always been regarded with suspicion by those who 'should know'; their kindest criticism being, 'Well, perhaps they are ballroom versions of folk dances'. Now we have a wonderful opportunity to learn new and authentic ones.

The Ukrainian Hopak (or Gopak) and Kolomeyka have always been hot favourites with the Society, but it must be stressed that we know only one version of each dance. There is no set dance called Hopak or Kolomeyka, only music, with a large variety of steps which may be fitted together as the dancer wishes, or by the instructor for demonstration purposes. Consequently it is an exaggeration for any member of the S.I.F.D. to state that he or she 'knows' either or both of these dances.

Another point which may well be emphasised is that we were first taught these two versions of the dances by Eugene Jablonski in 1950 or thereabouts, and since then, with the exception of one short class by the leader of the Manchester Ukraines, we have had no 'polishing up' of the steps which we learnt some nine years ago. This is not a good thing; obviously we need some lessons, not only to learn new dances, but also to ensure that our existing steps have not suffered through the years.

All members who are at all interested in these dances are urged to pick up their brand new 1959 diaries, and to make an entry on the Tuesday spaces for Russo-Ukraine classes.

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## MY QUERY OF THE MONTH

Christmas and the New Year with its host of parties and dances has given me ample opportunity for watching the teenagers dance. The question which has been bothering me throughout is this. If they knew that their second and third most popular dances - the Cha,cha,cha, and the Samba, are folk dances pure and simple, would they continue to dance them so frequently, or would they spurn them for evermore?

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All correspondence to the Editor should be clearly marked either 'Private' or 'News Sheet'. If unmarked it will be assumed that the letter contents are for News Sheet and will be inserted accordingly.

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SUNDAY DANCES IN FEBRUARY.

Inns of Court, Drury Lane. 7 p.m. 9.30 p.m.

February 1 M.C. Roly Minton

8 M.C. Mourrie Pfeffer

15 M.C. Dorothy Sloan.

Cecil Sharp House. 6.30 p.m. 9.30 p.m.

February 22 M.C. Lawrence Howell.

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11/11/11