

A Ukrainian Intellectual in the US: The Dilemmas of Yurii Kosach's Homecoming in the 1960s-1970s

Olha Poliukhovych

In my presentation I reflect on the role of the US archives in the research the life and works of Yurii Kosach (1908–1990), a nephew of Lesia Ukrainka who gained a reputation of talented writer, though a “controversial” figure in Ukrainian literature. The life of Kosach is more or less explored until 1949 (when he comes to the USA) due to the works of Serhii Romanov, Marko Robert Stech, Rostyslav Radyshevskyyi, Vira Aheieva among others as well as the memoirs of Yurii Sherekh-Shevelov and Hryhorii Kostiuk. Since the 1950s he was ostracized by the Ukrainian community in the US and after the publication of his journal *Za synim okeanom* (Behind the Blue Ocean; 1959–1963) he finally gained the fame of betrayer (*zradnyk*) among the Ukrainian-American community. Doing my research in the USA, I've found Kosach's letter to Shevelov (The Bakhmeteff Archive at Columbia University), in which he clarifies his situation. This was the first time I've seen his explanation of post-1949 period when Kosach speaks for himself. Subsequent research led me to the Ukrainian archives in which I was surprised to learn that in the 1970s–1980s Kosach very often did two copies of his own letters – one was sent to his addressee and another was preserved for his own archive (i.e., for his future reader). Living alone in NY, Kosach definitely felt the necessity to speak for himself and witnessing through the archival documents was a means. In my presentation I demonstrate how the archival documents undermine the image of Yurii Kosach as a “controversial” writer.