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# UKRAINIAN STATEHOOD IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT, 1917–1921

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# INTRODUCTION

In December 1917, one of the key leaders of the Ukrainian national movement and head of the Ukrainian Central Rada, Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934), insightfully observed:

> Our Ukrainian Revolution, unfortunately, did not develop independently; it had to march constantly in step with the convulsive movements and upheavals of the Russian Revolution – chaotic and terrible. The Russian Revolution dragged us through blood, through ruins, through fire.[1]

A similar perspective was offered by a Kyiv-born representative of the Polish democratic camp, Roman Knoll (1888–1946), who served as Deputy Secretary General for Polish Affairs in 1917. In early December of that year, he noted:

> After the fall of the Russian Tsar, among the 'living forces' of the Russian Revolution, the Ukrainian movement appeared to play no role whatsoever. It took no part in the distribution of power – neither at the central nor the local level – and did not even indirectly influence the establishment of a new order in the territory inhabited by the Ukrainian people. That territory was simply another arena for the unfolding of events, much like other regions of the former empire.[2]

However, the dramatic developments that followed the fall of 1917 led Knoll to a more profound conclusion:

> The Ukrainian Revolution became a phenomenon distinct from the Russian Revolution. Initially more advanced in social terms, it reached its culmination at the same time as the Bolshevik coup. Later, while Russia continued down the path of internal destruction, Ukraine embarked on one of constructive nation-building.[3]

1 Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, 'V ohni j buri', in *Na porozi novoji Ukrajiny: hadki i mriji*, ed. by Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj (Kyjiv: Drukars'ke akcionerno tovarystvo "Petro Bars'kyj u Kyjevi", 1918), pp. 80–82 (pp. 80–81).
2 Jan Jacek Brus'kyj, Mariuš Kožen'ovs'kyj, and Olja Hnatjuk, 'Roman Knol'. Zapysky z pryvodu ukrajins'koho pytannja, 1(14) hrudnja 1917 r.', in *Praci Ukrajins'ko-Pol's'koji komisiji doslidžennja vzajemyn 1917–1921 rr.*, ed. by Vladyslav Verstjuk and Jan Jacek Brus'kyj (Kyjiv: Instytut istoriji Ukrajiny, 2019), I, pp. 256–76 (p. 259).
3 Ibid., p. 261.

Both Hrushevsky and Knoll recognized the fundamental differences between the revolutionary processes in Ukraine and those in Russia, underscoring their independence and separateness, particularly in the national dimension. But what exactly was the nature of this separateness in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921?

This thematic issue of AREI is the result of the international workshop "Ukrainian Statehood in the European Context, 1917–1921", held at the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) in Regensburg on 15–16 June 2023. The workshop was initiated by Prof. Guido Hausmann and organized by Dr Olena Syniavska and Dr Sabina Kotova. Other scholars were also invited to contribute to this thematic edition, and their texts offer valuable insights into the diverse events and processes that unfolded in revolutionary Ukraine. The contributors seek to reinterpret the experiences and transformations of revolutionary Ukraine during this period.

This is a complex and contested historical issue – not one that can be easily framed in terms of success or failure. The period of war and revolution brought radical changes to Ukrainian society, and although the dream of a national Ukrainian state was not fully realized at the time, the events of 1917–1921 were not a defeat. The accumulated experience, historical memory, and academic research allow us to speak of a heroic – yet deeply traumatic – understanding of these revolutionary years. The articles in this issue reflect diverse historiographical traditions and research perspectives, but they also reveal a notable tension between the heroic and the tragic elements of the era. What unites them is a shared conceptual framework: the history of the struggle for Ukrainian statehood.

Yuki Murata, an associate professor at the University of Tokyo, demonstrates that the Ukrainian authorities established between 1917 and 1919 relied on foreign powers for survival and adapted their constitutional visions according to international alliances. Ukrainian leaders oscillated between federalist solutions and full independence, with their choices shaped less by ideology than by military weakness and diplomatic necessity. Anastasiia Ivanova, senior research fellow at the Institute of State and Law of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, investigates the legal institutionalization of national-personal autonomy in the Ukrainian People's Republic. She convincingly argues that this initiative represented a serious attempt to resolve the complex issue of minority rights during revolutionary upheaval. Rudolf Mark, a professor at the University of Hamburg, provides a comprehensive analysis of the sovereigntization of the Ukrainian People's Republic, emphasizing how the idea of independence evolved under revolutionary conditions. He argues that while the Central Rada and its leaders were instrumental in proclaiming

sovereignty, it was unexpected events and contingencies that ultimately shaped the political trajectory. Ruslan Pyrih, professor at the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, examines the internal policies of the Hetmanate, highlighting its contradictions and ultimately portraying its ambiguous legacy. Olena Syniavska, associate professor at I. Mechnikov Odesa University, explores the Bolshevik policy toward Southern Ukraine, uncovering lesser-known aspects of the Soviet pseudo-republican uprisings. Wiktor Węglewicz analyses the ambivalent and prejudiced stance of the Polish authorities toward the clergy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, arguing that such biases hindered the potential for Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. Tetiana Ostashko, from the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, contributes a thought-provoking essay on the conservative dimension of the Ukrainian Revolution and the role of Viacheslav Lypynskyi, particularly focusing on the Hetmanate of 1918 as a manifestation of conservative political ideals during that time.

In the "Essay" section, Serhy Yekelchyk, a professor at the University of Victoria, argues that Nestor Makhno, long treated as a figure of the "Russian Revolution", should instead be seen as pivotal to understanding Ukraine's distinct revolutionary experience. His essay explores Makhno's complex political views, highlighting how he distanced himself from the Ukrainian national movement yet led a distinctly Ukrainian peasant uprising insurgency.

In this issue, we also publish unique and previously unknown documents from the case of Jerzy Matusiński, the Polish consul in Kyiv, who was kidnapped by the NKVD and whose fate remained unknown for a long time.

The "Reviews" section features two assessments of Joshua Zimmerman's new biography of Józef Piłsudski[4] – the first major biography since Marian Kamil Dziewanowski's landmark 1969 study, published by Stanford University Press.[5] Piłsudski's role in defending the nascent Ukrainian state in 1920 remains a subject of historiographical debate, even as many aspects of his political career have been more thoroughly explored. The extent to which Zimmerman succeeds in revising the legacy of Poland's Chief of State is addressed in the reviews by Jan Pisuliński and Wiktor Węglewicz.

GENNADII KOROLOV

4 Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Founding Father of Modern Poland* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard Business Review Press).
5 Kamil M. Dziewanowski, *Joseph Piłsudski: A European Federalist, 1918–1922* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1969).

# Interview with Dr Serhy Yekelchyk
# AS FOR UKRAINE, THE ENTENTE WOULD NOT EVEN CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS SEPARATION FROM RUSSIA

SERHY YEKELCHYK

Born and educated in Ukraine, Serhy Yekelchyk received a PhD from the University of Alberta in 2000. He is the author of eight books on modern Ukrainian history, Stalinism, and Russo-Ukrainian relations. His monograph, *Stalin's Citizens: Everyday Politics in the Wake of Total War* (Oxford University Press, 2014), was the recipient of the Best Book Award from the American Association for Ukrainian Studies, and its Ukrainian translation in 2019 received a special diploma from the Lviv Book Forum. His survey of Ukrainian history, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford University Press, 2007), was Choice Magazine's Book of the Year and went on to be translated into five languages. Yekelchyk is currently working on the third, considerably expanded, edition of *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2020), his popular book about the Euromaidan revolution and Russian aggression in Ukraine. Yekelchyk has written op-eds for the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Politico*. His interview credits include *BBC History Magazine*, CNN, *The New York Times*, and numerous other international media outlets. Prof. Yekelchyk is current President of the Canadian Association for Ukrainian Studies.

**Yana Prymachenko: Dr Yekelchyk, today Ukraine is once again fighting for its independence, and Russia is once again the aggressor. Why were Ukrainians unable to secure independence during the national liberation struggle of 1917–1921? You're currently working on a book that seeks to answer this question. What conclusions have you reached?**

— I would single out three main reasons. First, it is the level of national mobilization – or more precisely, political mobilization for the national cause. We are talking about the nature of Ukrainian society at the time, and how much it saw itself as a distinctly Ukrainian society. A noticeable difference existed between the events of the Ukrainian Revolution in Eastern Galicia, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the course of the Ukrainian Revolution in the former Russian Empire.

In Galicia, Ukrainians had *Prosvita* (Enlightenment) cultural clubs in the countryside,[1] newspapers and journals were being published freely in Ukrainian, and ordinary people had experience of political activism. Ukrainians were represented in the parliament as well as in local legislatures.[2] All of this fostered an awareness that domestic politics within the Austro–Hungarian Empire were structured along ethnic lines. Whether that was a good or bad thing is another matter, but it contributed to the national mobilization of the population, which by the 1890s began to dentify as Ukrainians (before that, as Rusyns or "Ruthenians"). By the time the First World War began, Galician peasants were already conscious of their national distinctiveness as Rusyns or Ukrainians, as separate from Poles and Austrian Germans.

In the Russian Empire, the political status of Ukrainians was incomparably worse. The imperial authorities insisted that they were "Little Russians" – a regional subgroup of Russian people. The *Prosvita* societies were first established only after the Revolution of 1905, but the majority had already been shut down by 1909–1910. As of 1912, there were practically no functioning organized Ukrainian institutions left in the Russian Empire. The Ukrainian-language newspaper *Rada*, which had been published from 1905 to 1914, was closed with the outbreak of the First World War. By some miracle, only the Katerynoslav *Prosvita* managed to survive until 1916. The vast majority of the population had no experience of political life or national organization whatsoever.

1 *Prosvita* was a cultural and educational organization that emerged in the late nineteenth century in Western Ukraine (particularly in Galicia) with the aim of promoting national self-awareness and education among the Ukrainian people. Over time, *Prosvita*'s activities expanded to other regions of Ukraine, playing a crucial role in the development of national identity.

2 Ukrainians had representatives in the *Reichsrat* (the parliament of the Austrian part of the empire) as well as in the local diets (*sejms*) of Galicia and Bukovina. Ukrainian parliamentarians played an important role in actively defending the rights of the people; among them were Yulian Romanchuk, Ivan Franko, Kost Levytskyi, Yevhen Petrushevych, and others. Their activities had a significant impact on the formation of the Ukrainian political elite and the development of the national movement.

In fact, the first genuine experience of legal political activity for Ukrainians in the Russian Empire began only in 1905. However, this experience was rather limited, as only Ukrainian moderates, represented by the URDP party,[3] managed to gain seats in the First Duma due to their alliance with the all-Russian Cadet (Constitutional-Democratic) Party.

The political mobilization of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire around the idea of Ukrainian statehood truly began during the First World War, thanks to the propaganda efforts of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU).[4] This émigré organization published over a million books, pamphlets, and leaflets advocating for the distinctiveness of Ukraine, which the Germans made available to Russian POWs conscripted from Ukraine. These publications included a map of Ukraine as a hypothetical nation-state created by Stepan Rudnytskyi.[5] It was largely due to the activities of the SVU that the name "Ukraine" gained wider usage. The books and leaflets were distributed among soldiers at the front, who would bring them back to Ukrainian villages when they returned home. These soldiers became the driving force behind the political mobilization of the Ukrainian countryside. However, political developments unfolded so rapidly that there was little time for a modern political Ukrainian national consciousness to take root.

As a result, Ukrainian peasant soldiers from Eastern Galicia, which had been under Habsburg rule, went to war for the national cause in 1918–1919 as a regular army, whereas the Ukrainian peasant soldiers from the former Russian Empire dispersed, being prepared to defend only their own villages and crops.

**So, you essentially believe that one of the contributing factors to the failure was the delayed nation-building processes among Ukrainians living in the Russian Empire, correct?**

— It was not the only one. Unfortunately, Ukrainian politicians of the time did not fully grasp the nature of a peasant revolution. As it happened, the revolutionary wave brought the Ukrainian Social Democrats to the forefront,[6] and they assumed leadership of the Ukrainian national liberation struggle. They kept looking for a Ukrainian working class but

3 The Ukrainian Radical Democratic Party (URDP) was a political party founded in 1905 in the Russian Empire. It represented the liberal-democratic current among the Ukrainian intelligentsia and aimed at national revival and the democratization of political life.

4 The Union for the Liberation of Ukraine was a political organization founded by Ukrainian émigrés in 1914 in Lviv, during the First World War. Its goal was to achieve Ukrainian independence through cooperation with the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary), which were at war with the Russian Empire.

5 Stepan Rudnytskyi (1877–1937) was a Ukrainian geographer, cartographer, and Soviet academician. His works laid the foundation for the study of Ukraine's geography and its geopolitical position in the world.

6 The Ukrainian Social Democratic Labor Party (USDRP) was founded in December 1905 in Kyiv. Its establishment resulted from the unification of several socialist groups operating in different regions of Ukraine. Among its founders were Volodymyr Vynnychenko, Symon Petliura, Mykola Porsh, and Lev Yurkevych.

found practically none. In fact, it was the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries[7] who should have played the leading role as not only were they more numerous, but in 1917 they also had substantial support in the countryside, which formed the social foundation of the Ukrainian Revolution.

The central thesis of my book on the Ukrainian Revolution is that the Ukrainian political elite failed to understand how the peasantry mobilized politically, as well as which forms of armed resistance it was effective at – and which it was not. In the spring of 1917, when hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the Russian army declared themselves Ukrainian and expressed their desire to defend Ukraine by transferring to Ukrainianized military units, these soldiers were not simply unwilling to die in the trenches for the Russian Empire – they did not want to die in the trenches at all. The peasants wanted to get home and participate in the seizures of the crown land and large private estates.

This was an anti-war mobilization. However, Ukrainian politicians rejoiced at the unexpected mass support and organized parades. The "grandfather" of the Ukrainian Revolution, Professor Mykhailo Hrushevsky,[8] who was only in his early fifties, happily reviewed these parades. Only later did Ukrainian politicians realize that this was not a mobilization in defence of Ukraine as a nation, although the peasantry were prepared to defend their native villages. The soldiers had certain expectations: that they would be withdrawn to the rear, where reorganization would take place, where Ukrainian units would be formed and stationed within Ukraine; and that the world war would not continue. There was an expectation that land would be redistributed in favour of the peasantry. It was about a desire to live and serve in Ukraine, but not to fight for Ukraine!

This determined the nature of the Ukrainian Revolution as it featured peasant resistance to all those who came to take produce from them but a failure to build a hardened regular army. The local nature of peasant resistance also produced a specific form of peasant warlordism, *otamanshchyna*, which undermined the efforts to create a regular army and hindered state-building in general.

In contrast, hungry, unemployed workers and former soldiers from Russia eagerly abandoned their homes to march into Ukraine, where they would requisition grain and other produce.

7 The Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries, or the Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (UPSR), was a political party active in Ukraine at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was one of the leading forces of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921, representing the interests of the peasantry and combining socialist ideas with the pursuit of national liberation.

8 Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934) was a Ukrainian historian and political figure, head of the Ukrainian Central Rada from March 1917 to April 1918.

I would go even further: for a long time, even Ukrainian historians failed to understand the nature of this anti-war mobilization among the Ukrainian peasantry in 1917.

**And how do you understand this phenomenon?**

— At some point, I also believed that Ukrainian politicians from the left spectrum wanted to dissolve the army, and that it was precisely because of them that Ukrainian statehood did not survive. But as I delved deeper into the topic, I began to understand that the Ukrainian politicians had no other choice because these so-called Ukrainian regiments were either switching sides to the Bolsheviks or declaring neutrality in the war between the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR). In fact, the Ukrainianization of the army in 1917 occurred during a period of popular anti-war mobilization, which had to run its course. The old army and the Ukrainianized formations needed to be disbanded, and a new Ukrainian army needed to be created.

Incidentally, one of the first to grasp and articulate the dilemma of anti-war mobilization was Symon Petliura, who belonged to the moderate wing of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labor Party. It was he who called things by their proper names, stating that what the republic was dealing with was a deserters' movement presenting itself as a movement for the creation of Ukrainian regiments.

But even he stopped short of embracing the grassroots response of the Ukrainian peasantry to the looting and violence by the Russian soldiers returning from the front lines – the spontaneous movement of the Free Cossacks. It was seen as right-wing – a potential social base for a conservative dictatorship.

**Earlier you mentioned three sets of reasons. What was the third factor?**

— The third one had to do with the formation of the Ukrainian political elite at the time. The ideology of social democracy did not reflect the condition, structure, or expectations of Ukrainian society during the revolution. When Marxist thought began spreading in Ukraine, most of he young Ukrainian intelligentsia viewed it as the most modern theory of political action. Marxism offered a scheme of historical development in which the working class played the leading role – a vision shared by the famous writer Lesia Ukrainka.[9] This created the expectation that the working class should become the leading force of the revolution and of the future.

[9] Lesia Ukrainka (real name: Larysa Petrivna Kosach; 1871–1913) was a Ukrainian writer, poet, playwright, translator, and public activist. She is one of the central figures of Ukrainian literature and a symbol of the struggle for national revival, freedom, and human rights.

Ukrainian Social Democrats were sure that some Ukrainian workers saw their interests as different from those of the Russian and Russified workers in Ukraine's cities. Social Democrats also had a problem with the notion of land as private property, which conditioned their peculiar reading of the Ukrainian peasantry and its interests.

However, the problem was that the working class in Ukraine was either assimilated by the Russians or entirely Russified. As a result, the working class remained within the framework of the Russian colonial discourse, an important element of which was disdain toward the Ukrainian peasantry on account of the language they spoke. The workers considered themselves a higher, more educated Russian caste, while Ukrainian villagers were relegated to the role of uneducated, uncultured natives.

Thus, literal adherence to Marxist doctrine would have pushed Ukrainian politicians down a colonial path, one that was fundamentally unacceptable to them from the outset as it would have equated them with the Bolsheviks. In this context, the most illustrative example among Ukrainian politicians is the writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko. He tested, in practice, how close one could draw near Bolshevik ideology without becoming a Bolshevik, while still remaining an independent Ukrainian political actor. As is well known, Vynnychenko's experience demonstrated that this was impossible.

**What did Ukrainian Social Democrats do to adapt Marxist ideas to Ukrainian realities?**

— In a sense, Ukrainian Social Democrats were ahead of their time in anticipating the emergence of postcolonial studies. Their theoretical solution to the problem – the one developed only during and after the Ukrainian Revolution – lay in proclaiming that an entire nation could be an oppressed, proletarian nation, even if that nation consisted predominantly of peasants. Under conditions of national mobilization, Ukrainian Social Democrats might have secured broad support among the peasantry; for objective reasons, however, this did not work out. As a result, we observed a fundamental split within this political current.

On one side, there was Lesia Ukrainka, who valued Marx's ideas but was above all committed to the Ukrainian national cause. On the other side stood Pavlo Tuchapskyi,[10] who became a leading Marxist figure in Ukraine, one of the founders of the Russian Social Democratic Party, a participant in the First (Minsk) Congress of Russian Social Democracy, and so on.

[10] Pavlo Tuchapskyi (1869–1922) was a Ukrainian social-democratic activist and one of the founders of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDRP).

A similar situation can be observed within the Ukrainian student circle at Saint Petersburg University, where two prominent leaders, Dmytro Doroshenko[11] and Hlib Bokiy,[12] followed radically opposing paths.

Hlib Bokiy became a committed Bolshevik and one of the founders of the Cheka, the Soviet secret police. A steamship that transported political prisoners to the Gulag was named in his honour. And yet he was a Ukrainian student, an activist of the 1900s, who chose the Bolshevik path because that political alignment was identified with the working class concentrated in the cities, in factories, even though it was, at its core, a colonial approach in relation to Ukraine. The Bolsheviks preferred not to speak of this, but they were well aware that in the cities of Ukraine – as well as in Central Asia, which was in fact a textbook example – they were relying on a working class that represented a colonizing group, one that spoke the language of the colonizer and looked down on the local population.

Here, the primary issue is not the ethnic background of the urbanites, but a class-based one. All those Russians, Jews, and Poles belonged to the petty urban bourgeoisie. They looked down on the peasantry. Thus, Ukrainian politicians were faced with a serious dilemma: what to do with the Russified cities, where Ukrainian ideas were not just unpopular but actively rejected?

In essence, Ukrainian politicians tried being Marxists without a working class – the dilemma of many anti-colonial movements during the twentieth century – but that did not work because the working class was very much present yet identified with the colonizers. The Bolshevik capture of Kyiv in February 1918 effectively marked the end of those social-democratic illusions. Tellingly, the last issue of the Ukrainian Social Democratic newspaper before the abandonment of Kyiv published the final, desperate appeal to "Ukrainian workers" *in Russian*. The Ukrainian Social Democracy did not draw proper lessons from this fiasco until after the Revolution, and switching its attention to the peasantry did not help matters either because the party theoreticians could not accept as genuine the peasants' interest in acquiring more land as private owners.

11 Dmytro Doroshenko (1882–1951) was a prominent Ukrainian historian, politician, publicist, and public figure, who served as a Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian State (the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky). He was one of the leading historians of Ukrainian statehood and the author of numerous scholarly works, including the widely known *History of Ukraine*.

12 Hlib Bokiy (1879–1937) was a Soviet political figure, journalist, and member of Cheka. He was an organizer and head of the Cheka in Petrograd, taking part in the development of the GULAG system. Later, he led encryption work in the USSR. Bokiy was repressed during the Great Terror in 1937.

**How would you position the Ukrainian Revolution in a European and global context? More broadly, what did the rest of the world know about Ukraine at the time? What sources did foreign audiences rely on for information about Ukraine?**

— For us, scholars of Ukrainian history, it sometimes seems that the challenging conditions for the national movement in Ukraine were primarily a result of the oppression of Ukrainians by the Russian Empire. Because of this, the Ukrainian Revolution could not fully develop as a national revolution. But what about the crushing weight of unfavourable geopolitical circumstances?

Let us consider a counter-example. Was national mobilization more advanced in those regions of the former Russian Empire that did succeed in establishing national states? I am referring, above all, to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Did Latvia not produce the staunchly pro-Bolshevik Latvian Riflemen?

One of my graduate students conducted research on the establishment of independent Latvia and I learned a lot from his thesis. I had previously assumed there had been strong national mobilization there – language, culture, and a long history of struggle against the German landowners who held the land, and later against the Russians. However, a detailed study of the history of the Latvian revolution showed that the anti-Russian mobilization never really took off. The decisive contribution was made by the British Navy. The key moment was Admiral Henry Cowan's[13] order to open fire on the joint White Russian and German force that was confronting the Latvian and Estonian units. That proved to be the turning point. The Germans and Russians scattered. The battle was subsequently proclaimed a major victory for the Estonian and Latvian armies over the combined Russo-German forces, leading to the emergence of independent states.

A global perspective on the history of the Ukrainian Revolution is important because it allows us to see how much depended on the national movement and how much on the position of the great powers. In the summer of 2022, as I was doing research in the archives of the British Foreign Office, I was struck by the documents concerning the situation in Odesa. According to the division of zones of responsibility, the British were in charge of the northern parts of the former Russian Empire and the Caucasus, whereas the French oversaw Ukraine. The impression of the British

[13] Sir Walter Henry Cowan (1871–1956) was a British admiral and a prominent naval figure who served in the Royal Navy for over 50 years. He took part in many major conflicts, including the First and Second World Wars, and left a significant mark on British military history. In 1919, after the First World War, Cowan was deployed to the Baltic Sea. There he commanded British naval forces supporting the independence of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, successfully conducting operations against Bolshevik forces and defending the Baltic states from the threat of intervention.

diplomats and military attachés was that France itself did not know what it wanted to achieve in Ukraine. The positions of the military and the French government were constantly shifting. The whole situation was not, in their opinion, taken seriously.

As for the fate of the peoples of the Caucasus, there was a well-known dispute between Lord Curzon[14] and Churchill about whom Britain, based on its strategic interests, should support in the Caucasus. Should those be the national republics, or should "Russia" be restored in some form? With regard to Ukraine, the Entente did not even consider the possibility of separating Ukraine from Russia. The West felt that it had certain obligations to Russia as a former ally in the First World War, with whom there had been important agreements, including secret ones. Recognizing that some parts of the former Russian Empire might become independent countries was extremely difficult for Western diplomacy. Poland was recognized as independent, but Ukraine was regarded as part of Russia – the Western diplomats and military officers basically made any assistance to Ukraine conditional on recognizing the authority of the Russian White army. The West procrastinated until after the Bolsheviks had consolidated their power. By that time, it was too late to support Ukraine as the Entente had already lost its military strength.

**Can the loss of military strength that you just mentioned be seen as evidence that the Entente countries had grown weary of war?**

— By 1918, fatigue from the war was beginning to be felt in all the armies of the First World War, which in turn influenced domestic politics in the Entente and Central Powers. Bolsheviks were quite skilful in exploiting these sentiments. They ramped up anti-war propaganda among the Entente forces stationed in Ukraine, especially using the story of Jeanne Labourbe,[15] a French citizen whose execution by the White Army with the approval of the French caused a scandal in the French parliament. The only army that actually attempted to take any real action during the Allied landing in the Ukrainian South was the Greek army.

14 George Nathaniel Curzon (1859–1925) was a British statesman, diplomat, historian, and one of the most influential British politicians at the turn of the twentieth century. Curzon served as Viceroy of India, Foreign Secretary, and is renowned for his role in international affairs following the First World War.

15 Jeanne-Marie Labourbe (1877–1919) was a French revolutionary, an active participant in the revolutionary movement in the Russian Empire and Bolshevik Russia, and an organizer of the French Communist group in Moscow. She was one of the leaders of the Foreign Collegium attached to the Odesa underground committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, actively engaging in propaganda among French soldiers and sailors, urging them to cease their intervention against the Bolsheviks. On 1 March 1919, she was arrested by the French counterintelligence service along with other members of the Foreign Collegium. On 2 March 1919, they were executed without trial. Their bodies were later discovered in Odesa. This event provoked significant public outcry in France.

**Can one say that the Greek interest in the territory was linked to the history of Greek colonization of the Northern Black Sea coast and the Azov region?**

— Firstly, the Greeks were late to claim their share of the territories that had become available as a result of the First World War. Secondly, yes, of course the Greeks had their own national interests in the region, including the ethnic Greeks living there, in connection with the notion of the Greater Greece (the Megali idea). I'm referring to the Azov Greeks – the Urums[16] and the Romaioi living in southern Ukraine.[17] The Greek soldiers were prepared to fight, and they could win some battles but they could not win the war, as the Bolshevik-led resistance was becoming framed in terms of a "Russian" struggle against foreign intervention. This resonated with the Russian nationalist (perhaps 'imperial' would be a better term) sentiment. In December 1919, Stalin wrote in his article "On the Military Situation in the South" that the interventionists and the nationalist governments on the periphery had tried to suppress the Russian revolution but failed because the Russian working class, and thus all of what he called "inner Russia", supported the Bolsheviks. Of course, he was deceiving himself because there was no longer a working class – they were all unemployed. But from a pragmatic standpoint, Stalin was right. Unemployed Russian workers eagerly joined the food procurement expeditions to Ukraine and took administrative positions in what they called Southern Russia. Objectively, they represented the empire, the colonizing power.

But that is not all. There is another small but noteworthy nuance. When the Russian Civil War started in the spring of 1918, the Entente put its hopes in the Whites – although it would eventually settle on profitable trade with Bolshevik "Russia" in the 1920s. The only time the Entente was genuinely interested in Ukraine was in the summer and fall of 1917, when it appeared that the Central Rada had strong support among the soldiers of the disintegrating Russian army. The Ukrainian politicians did not yet have a clear position on foreign policy because that was seen as the prerogative of the all-Russian Provisional Government, and also because there were no easy solutions for Ukraine that would not come with serious political liabilities. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian politicians informally cast

16 The *Urum* Greeks are an ethnic group of Greeks who predominantly reside in Ukraine, particularly in the Donetsk region. The Urums originate from Crimea. In 1778, following the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire, they were resettled by Catherine II to the Azov Sea region. The name *Urum* derives from the word *Rum*, which, in Muslim countries, was used to refer to Greeks, the heirs of the Byzantine Empire. Having lived for an extended period under the rule of the Crimean Khanate, the Greeks of Crimea adopted a Turkic language as their primary means of everyday communication, although they preserved their Greek Orthodox faith and elements of Greek culture.

17 The Romaios Greeks are an ethnic group who have preserved the Greek language and culture. They are also descendants of the population of the Byzantine Empire, which was often referred to as *Romaios* (from Latin *Romaioi* – Romans). This term was used to denote Greeks not only during the medieval period but also later, into the modern era, particularly among the Greek communities of the Azov Sea region in Ukraine.

their lot with the Entente – either by inertia, because such was the position of the Provisional Government, or because that was a more progressive, democratic choice than the conservative empires constituting the Central Powers. The Ukrainian government tried to consolidate the Southwestern and Romanian "Fronts" (the Russian term for groups of armies) of the Russian army with the addition of the Ukrainianized military formations into a single "Ukrainian Front" that would hold the front line. Privately and in some interviews, Ukrainian politicians assured the Entente representatives that the Ukrainian army then being created would hold the front. When the Rada finally made an official statement about the First World War in its Third Universal, it expressed a wish for a just peace, but also for holding the front until that peace was achieved. This did not sit well with the soldiers.

From the very beginning, the Bolshevik policy was centred around satisfying the desires of the soldiers. Want to end the war? Go ahead, end it now, you will not be punished if you desert. Lenin had no intention of negotiating with the Entente. From the outset, his focus was on reaching an agreement with Germany. That is why it was so easy for him to propose an immediate ceasefire and the start of peace negotiations over the radio in December 1917. The Ukrainian side was caught unprepared. After hearing about the ceasefire, the Rada debated the Ukrainian position. As Vynnychenko explained it, the greatest problem was losing the support of the masses who wanted an end to the war. The Rada had no other option but to join the negotiations with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk. It did so after making the last rhetorical gesture toward the Entente – calling for the freed German troops not to be transferred to the Western Front. However, the circumstances at Brest-Litovsk favoured the Ukrainian delegation. Trotsky headed the Russian delegation, carrying clear instructions from Lenin to drag out the negotiations. He wrote about this in his memoir *My Life*, at the beginning of the chapter 'Brest-Litovsk'.[18] The plan for world revolution was simple at first: keep the negotiations going until revolutions start happening in other belligerent countries. During this impasse, the Germans discovered they could use Ukraine as leverage against Russia, and the Ukrainians realized that they could use Germany to extract concessions from Austria-Hungary.

This would mean invalidating the promise made informally to the Entente, but the UNR could not deliver on this promise in any case. The Entente itself was cynical in its policy toward Ukraine. It deployed

18 Leon Trotsky, *My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography* (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1930).

special representatives with no clear mandate, like John Picton Bagge.[19] Some Ukrainian contemporaries claimed that he was an ambassador to the Ukrainian government and equated his appointment with the Entente's formal recognition of the Ukrainian government. In reality, these special representatives were there to monitor and probe the situation; they would often make statements they were not authorized to make.

**Would you say this was a deliberate provocation on the part of the Entente representatives to see how Ukraine would react?**

— In a way, yes. It was about testing the limits of what was possible without promising too much in exchange, especially in writing. In the Foreign Office documents I worked with, there were cryptic references to funding a trip to Ukraine by a senior British officer, although the purpose of his mission was never clearly defined. British intelligence was operating in the region as well. Ukrainian contemporaries saw the arrival of the British and French representatives as a form of diplomatic recognition. Some Ukrainian history textbooks even claim that the Entente recognized the UNR. However, in their reports the diplomats wrote that the Ukrainian government seemed very cooperative yet lacked the support of its own army and, therefore, the conversations would not have resulted in anything concrete. Promises of military supplies made no sense because the army was disintegrating. If not holding the front, these representatives asked to at least not sign a separate peace with the Central Powers, but the UNR had no choice at that point but to follow the example of the Bolsheviks and send a delegation to Brest-Litovsk. Bagge stayed in Kyiv and sought to establish contact with Bolshevik dignitaries instead. Meanwhile, a French agent without any written mandate, Emile Henno, provided funds for the Russian nationalist circle in Kyiv that formed around Vasily Shulgin. Then, in 1918, Henno and an unnamed British representative in Ukraine funded the Azbuka, Shulgin's private intelligence agency, which was working for the Whites. This comes up in Fabian Baumann's fascinating book about the Shulgin family.

[19] John Picton Bagge (1877–1967) was a British diplomat who represented the interests of Great Britain in the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921. From 5 December 1917 to 25 bJanuary 1918, he resided in Kyiv, maintaining constant contact with the UNR government. He collaborated with the French representative, General Georges Tabouis, seeking to secure support from the Ukrainian government for the continuation of the Entente's war against Germany and its allies. Bagge criticized the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between the UNR and the Central Powers on 9 February 1918. After Kyiv was captured by Russian forces under the command of Mikhail Muravyov, he remained in the city and established contacts with the Bolshevik command. He left Kyiv shortly before the entry of German troops on 22 February 1918.

**So, when did the UNR miss the window of opportunity for developing a successful foreign and domestic policy?**

This is a great question. I think the tragedy of the Ukrainian Revolution was that the national elites were not yet prepared to put forward the slogan of national independence in 1917, when their public support was at the highest. They were reluctant to break ties with Russian "revolutionary democracy". The leading Ukrainian politicians also, as we discussed earlier, misunderstood the reasons for their public support and the desires of the Ukrainian peasantry.

In general, September 1917 was a crucial turning point. At this time, soldiers from the front began returning home *en masse*: some deserted, while others made use of the army's nationalization program by joining Ukrainianized military formations (quite a few of those regiments were also self-proclaimed). The flight of soldiers from the front triggered a wave of violence in the countryside. At first, the peasants might have seen it as an opportunity to seize land. At that point, it appeared that the Bolsheviks were gaining more sympathy among the peasantry. As Yevhen Chykalenko,[20] who owned an estate in Kherson region, recalled in his memoirs, peasants pointed out quite openly that the Bolsheviks "had better slogans".[21] The Bolsheviks simply told them to take all the land they could seize. It was not land reform, but permission to plunder.

The Ukrainian authorities did not have a clear message for the peasants indicating they also supported immediate and radical land reform. Of course, the Socialist Revolutionaries' belief that Ukrainian peasants wanted the land to be socialized played no small role in this situation. As Vladyslav Verstiuk and other researchers rightly indicated, this reveals a complete misunderstanding of the peasants' actual desires. Ukrainian villages had a different social structure from Russian ones, with practically no communal ownership. The Bolshevik gamble paid off at first: let the peasants seize all the land they want and portray it as a wonderful Bolshevik policy. However, things changed quickly when Bolshevik grain-requisitioning detachments began arriving in the countryside. It is just that they started arriving later in Ukraine than elsewhere, which kept the peasants fooled about the Bolsheviks for longer.

20 Yevhen Chykalenko (1861–1929) was a Ukrainian public figure, philanthropist, publicist, agronomist, and publisher. He was a member of the *Old hromada*, the Ukrainian Democratic Party, and one of the founders of the Society of Ukrainian Progressives (TUP). Chykalenko financed the publication of the Ukrainian newspapers *Hromadska dumka* and *Rada* and supported the journal *Nova hromada*. He was one of the initiators of the convocation of the Ukrainian Central Rada. After the defeat of the Ukrainian struggle for independence, he emigrated first to Austria and later to Czechoslovakia.

21 Jevhen Cykalenko, *Spohady 1861–1907* (N'ju-Jork: Ukrajins'ka Vil'na Akademija Nauk, 1955).

**Are we talking about some form of national consciousness among Ukrainians during that time, particularly among the peasantry? Did the First World War act as a catalyst? And did the peasants have any real alternative in 1917–1918?**

— I believe that the peasantry had an awareness of its cultural distinctiveness, and this awareness held political value for them. In 1905, Ukrainian political parties were demanding Ukrainian-language schools, which was positively received in the countryside. The peasants made this one of their demands, so there was an awareness of linguistic distinctiveness. But whether that awareness was enough to lead the peasantry to support this or that political party is a different question.

The peasants decisively turned against the Bolsheviks in 1920–1921, when all the Ukrainian governments were in exile, the UNR army had already been disbanded, and its former soldiers were in Polish internment camps. Under the Bolshevik policy of war communism,[22] the colonial nature of the new regime became clearly visible, and that is when the peasants began to perceive themselves as part of Ukraine. They begin to see it as a political alternative to the Bolshevik rule. At the same time, from a theoretical standpoint some Ukrainian Marxists denounced Bolshevik policies in Ukraine as colonialist policies – the subject of Stephen Velychenko's interesting book.

One can track this shift through the stories of the peasant *otamans* in such famous loci of resistance as Chornyi Lis (Black Forest) and Kholodnyi Yar (Cold Ravine),[23] whom the peasantry began to glorify in the early 1920s. These otamans hearkened back to the UNR. They received emissaries from the UNR structures in Europe and spoke about continuing the struggle. By then, however, it was too late. The UNR had already lost.

The peasant memory held on to this Ukrainian project. It came back as a political alternative with pre-existing political language because the Bolsheviks had looted the countryside, executed those who resisted, used starvation as a political tool, and so on. The Bolshevik pressure on Ukrainian peasants persisted all the way until the Holodomor.

22 The policy of war communism (1918–1921) was an economic and political strategy implemented by the Bolshevik government during the Russian Civil War, characterized by radical methods of managing the economy and society. Its primary aim was to secure control over resources to support the Red Army and to maintain Bolshevik power. Ukrainian villages were particularly targeted under this policy: the Bolsheviks introduced a system of food requisitioning – the forced seizure of grain and other agricultural products from peasants to supply cities and the army. The confiscations were carried out by special food requisition detachments that often resorted to violence.

23 The Kholodnyi Yar insurgents were participants of the partisan movement in the Kholodnyi Yar region of Cherkasy during the Ukrainian Revolution. They fought for Ukraine's independence against various occupying regimes, including the Bolsheviks and the White Guards. The Kholodnyi Yar Republic was a self-proclaimed state that existed from 1919 to 1922 in the territory of Kholodnyi Yar. Its centre was Motronyn Monastery, which served as the headquarters of the insurgents. The Kholodnyi Yar forces established their own administration, judicial system, and military formations.

By the way, one of the key theses in the final chapter of my book is that the Holodomor represents, in essence, the social conclusion of the Ukrainian Revolution. Politically, the revolution ended in the fall of 1920, when the UNR leadership and the army crossed into Poland. The final attempt to change its course was the Second Winter Campaign of the UNR Army in 1921[24] – a partisan raid that ended in disaster, for which the UNR leadership in Poland would later reproach themselves. However, it was the attempt to join forces with the very same otamans in Ukraine who now saw the UNR banner as valuable.

The idea of the UNR lived on in peasant memory all the way through the Second World War, when some peasants asked whether Petliura was coming back with the Germans.

**What was the memory of the Ukrainian People's Republic among the Ukrainian peasantry?**

— In *Dnipro* Ukraine (Mykhailo Drahomanov popularized this wonderful term to avoid referring to the Russian-ruled Ukraine as Russian, tsarist, or imperial), the Ukrainian Revolution was a powerful social movement that ultimately failed to be channelled into a Ukrainian political project, therefore it was effectively lost. This anti-war and peasant-insurgent mobilization potential might have worked if combined with something like the First Winter Campaign,[25] when soldiers of the UNR army were warmly welcomed by the peasants. Had it happened earlier... In truth, I cannot imagine a politician in Ukraine at the time who could have united these movements. That would have required a decisive rejection of the prevailing political standpoints of the era. In early 1919, Petliura did move in this direction for strategic reasons (to placate the Entente, which did not care anyway), but it was too late. Moreover, he lacked the necessary strength of character. Contemporaries, including his close collaborator and one-time Prime Minister Isaak Mazepa, explicitly noted that Petliura (as well as, incidentally, Skoropadsky) had a habit of listening to all his political advisers without expressing his own opinion, thus bringing the meeting to an inconclusive end. Such a style of leadership had unfortunate consequences.

24 The Second Winter Campaign, or the November Raid of the UNR Army, was a military operation that took place in November–December 1921. Its objective was to incite an anti-Bolshevik uprising in Ukraine and to restore the independence of the UNR. The campaign ended in defeat due to insufficient coordination, lack of support, and scarce military resources. The Bolsheviks organized mass purges against participants and supporters of the UNR within Ukraine. This campaign marked the final elimination of organized UNR Army resistance in the territories controlled by the Bolsheviks.

25 The First Winter Campaign of the UNR Army (6 December 1919 to 6 May 1920) was a raid by UNR forces into the rear of Bolshevik and Denikinite lines during the Ukrainian-Soviet War. The campaign aimed to preserve the combat effectiveness of the UNR Army, support the insurgent movement within Ukraine, and demonstrate the continuity of the struggle for Ukrainian independence. On 6 May 1920, the First Winter Campaign concluded with the unification of the UNR Army with the Polish forces of Józef Piłsudski during the offensive on Kyiv. The UNR Army maintained its combat capacity and was able to participate in subsequent military operations.

**Why did the awareness of cultural distinctiveness become such an important factor in the Ukrainian Revolution?**

— In general, Ukrainians succeeded in preserving their identity in the era of modern politics. Moreover, this national identity became the foundation for the right to self-determination. Even Lenin could not deny it. In 1919, upon seeing the statistics from the elections to the Constituent Assembly held in the autumn of 1917 (and taking into account the subsequent resistance in Ukraine), he was forced to admit that Ukrainian parties were backed by the Ukrainian peasantry, which had to be reckoned with. Therefore, in order for the Bolsheviks to govern Ukraine, it was necessary, at least formally, to allow the free development of the Ukrainian language and culture.

**Our discussion of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 revolves around the issues of the army and language. Allow me then to ask about religion and faith. What mattered more for the idea of Ukrainian distinctiveness – language or religion? If we draw comparisons, is the Ukrainian national project more akin to the Yugoslav model or to the pan-national Belgian one? Can we differentiate between Orthodox Ukrainians and Greek Catholics of Western Ukraine in the same way as Serbs and Croats can be differentiated?**

— The presence of a secularist, anti-religious vision of Ukrainian identity among the leaders of the Ukrainian Revolution was connected to the understanding that the Russian Orthodox Church, imposed by the tsarist empire, was so thoroughly permeated with an imperial spirit that it compromised the notion of any state religion and religion as such. Being a socialist politician also meant not caring much about a national church. Remember Volodymyr Vynnychenko's quarrel with Petliura about not holding a religious ceremony during the Directory's entrance in Kyiv in December 1918? In addition, it was simply impossible to create a powerful, independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church during revolutionary times. The creation of a separate Ukrainian Orthodox Church was declared as a goal, but it became a significant component of the national project already in exile. By the way, Skoropadsky also refused to support a separate Ukrainian church, and he did not endorse the proposal to lift the church anathema on Hetman Mazepa.

Metropolitan Sheptytsky's contemporary project to unite all Ukrainians in the bosom of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was equally unrealistic. In general, during the Ukrainian Revolution in Dnipro Ukraine and Western Ukraine, we are speaking of two revolutions. Galician politicians generally avoided the term "revolution" altogether, viewing the process

instead as a political transformation legitimized by the imperial decree and aimed at developing the autonomous foundations of national and imperial life. We are dealing with two different political systems that found it difficult to understand one another. The Act of Unification,[26] in essence, did not take place, although we continue to celebrate it annually.[27]

Moreover, there was an unofficial agreement that the unification would not be carried out and the territories of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) would remain fully autonomous. There was no intent even to unify the two governments. This was politically complicated as the government of the UNR was predominantly composed of Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries (although Petliura formally withdrew from the party), whereas the ZUNR government was made up of much more moderate National Democrats. This generated political tensions. There are many episodes that reveal mutual scepticism. Consider, for example, the instances when military aid was sent to Galicia, but the Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA) rejected these unreliable detachments. Or the episode when Petliura warned the Galicians that delaying land reform would result in a social catastrophe.

**Thus, had the Ukrainian Revolution succeeded, the Ukrainian national project might have resembled either the Yugoslav model or the pan-national Belgian one?**

— No, I think the revolution could not succeed, in part for the same reasons that would also have prevented the establishment of a dual state structure. The relationship between Serbia and Croatia lends itself more readily to comparison with that of Russia and Ukraine. A comparison with Belgium would have worked for Piłsudski's idealistic vision of a federation of several Eastern European nations led by Poland. But of course, the reality on the ground was the Polish colonial reconquest of Vilnius and Lviv. Such a federation would also get attacked by Hitler and Stalin in 1939. Belgium also springs to mind in another respect. For decades, history textbooks on the First World War in the West began with the so-called "rape of Belgium". The German army invaded Belgium, and Europeans had to go to war in order to stop it. Yet present-day historians begin to recognize that Ukraine's role in the First World War was significantly greater, although Ukraine's struggle for its national identity has never been recognized as part of that war. Historians also need to show just how vital Ukraine, as the "breadbasket of Europe", was in the Great War.

26 The Act of Unification (Act of Reunion) was a historical document that proclaimed the unification of the UNR and the ZUNR into a single sovereign Ukrainian state. The official proclamation took place on 22 January 1919, at St. Sophia Square in Kyiv.

27 The Day of Unity of Ukraine has been celebrated annually on 22 January since 1999.

**In his book *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*,[28] the British historian Dominic Lieven wrote that the First World War was essentially about the fate of Ukraine and the possession of its land and resources. Would you say that Ukraine is the "powder keg" of Europe?**

— I teach a course on the history of the Eastern Front in the First and Second World Wars. I developed it myself and have been teaching it for a very long time. So, when I came across this claim in Lieven's work, I could only note that this has long been the central theme of my course. But it is good that he has finally come to see it. Clearly, Ukraine plays a significant, albeit entirely unrecognized and overlooked by Western historians, role in twentieth-century European history. That role is now coming into focus, as a growing number of books are being prepared and published about Ukraine.

**You've already mentioned Russian colonial policy and the challenges of national mobilization within Ukrainian society during the time of the Ukrainian Revolution. In contemporary Ukrainian historiography, there is an ongoing debate about whether Ukraine was a colony of the Kremlin. Do you believe that the colonial framework is an appropriate analytical lens for examining the Russian-Ukrainian or Polish-Ukrainian past?**

— In the summer of 2023 at a conference in Edmonton,[29] I presented a paper precisely on this topic.[30] In my paper, I argued that decolonial methods and approaches are indeed quite relevant for analysing the Ukrainian situation. They help to uncover existing cultural hierarchies, the nature of economic exploitation and the roots of social inequality. Concepts such as class and race do not always apply to the Ukrainian context in a straightforward way. In the case of Ukraine, imperial superiority takes on a very specific form. The empire's open hostility toward Ukrainians becomes apparent the moment they begin to define themselves as a distinct political nation. In the Russo-Ukrainian case, this can be clearly observed in the history of attempts to establish a Ukrainian state. Ukrainians immediately become "the other" to the Russian Empire when the question of statehood is raised. In the Polish-Ukrainian case, things are somewhat more complex, given the presence of a religious barrier.

28 Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia* (London: Penguin Books, 2016).

29 'The Unpredictable Past: Revisiting European, Russian, and Ukrainian Historical Studies' (11–13 May 2022, Edmonton and Banff, Alberta, Canada). The title of the presentation: 'Toward Epistemic Sovereignty: Decolonization and Ukrainian History'.

30 Serhy Yekelchyk, 'Toward Epistemic Sovereignty: Decolonization and Ukrainian History', in *The Unpredictable Past? Reshaping Russian, Ukrainian, and East European Studies*, ed. by Volodymyr Kravchenko and Marko Robert Stech (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2024), pp. 386–401.

Incidentally, the Russian case is not entirely straightforward either. On the mental maps of tsarist Russia and Stalin-era Soviet Union, there existed a traditional triad of the Orthodox East Slavic peoples: Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. This triad never disappeared. The Soviet Union inherited and incorporated it into the official framework of the "friendship of peoples".[31] Moreover, Georgia was added to this grouping within the USSR as it was also considered an Orthodox country. In addition, it is the homeland of Comrade Stalin. Claire Kaiser wrote a good book on Georgia being a special case.[32] Thus, a familiar and traditional understanding rooted in a religious-imperial tradition continued to be employed.

Ukrainians were incorporated into the Russian imperial project by default. That is to say, unless one explicitly said "no", it was assumed one agreed to assimilate and serve the empire. There are numerous examples of ethnic Ukrainians rising to the highest ranks of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. For example, Bezborod'ko,[33] who began his career as a Cossack officer in the Hetmanate, ended up a Chancellor of the Russian Empire. In other words, individual integration into the project was always possible. However, when an ethnic group begins to define itself as a distinct community, the empire starts to perceive it as "the other". The Ukrainian case is far more complex than the classical model of colonial dependency. Therefore, it requires new categories, a new language of analysis.

In my article,[34] I propose that the term *epistemic sovereignty* be used within the field of historical scholarship as a means of understanding this process of mental emancipation.

For Ukraine, liberation from the Russian imperial project involves a conscious choice in favour of an alternative path of development. At some point in their history, Ukrainians must reject the concept of the East Slavic triad and the idea of religious unity, as well as the tradition of advancing their careers in Moscow, and so forth. For centuries, Ukrainians had the opportunity to pursue advancement within the imperial centre, and shedding that habit was no simple task. Paradoxically, genocidal attitudes toward "the other" often stem from profound cultural proximity. I am not an expert on the Polish-Ukrainian case, but it, too, seems to have permitted the possibility of assimilation.

31 "Friendship of the Peoples" was a Soviet ideological concept asserting that all nationalities within the USSR were equal and lived in harmony, cooperating for the common good. This term was widely used in official propaganda to promote an image of unity and stability in the multinational state. For further reading, see: Vitalij Jaremčuk, *Mynule Ukrajiny v istoryčnij nauci URSR pisljastalins'koji doby* (Ostroh: Ostroz'ka akademija, 2009).

32 Claire P. Kaiser, *Georgian and Soviet: Entitled Nationhood and the Specter of Stalin in the Caucasus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023).

33 Count Aleksandr Bezborod'ko (1747–1799), originally from the Ukrainian Cossack nobility, was a Russian statesman, diplomat, and Chancellor of the Russian Empire.

34 Yekelchyk, 'Toward Epistemic Sovereignty'.

**Overall, Russian aggression in Ukraine has intensified anti-colonial discourse. In your view, is it justified that some historians in the West use an overly simplified model of Ukrainian history to mobilize Western public opinion in support of Ukraine?**

— I am not aware of many such cases, fortunately. Western scholarship – and, indeed, the Ukrainian diaspora – have changed fundamentally. This, incidentally, is the central thesis of my book *Writing the Nation*. Our habitual thinking sometimes assumes that the diaspora consists of politically motivated individuals stuck in the realities of the 1940s. In fact, it is now a new generation, one that has received an excellent Western education and has become professionals in their respective fields. A new generation of Ukrainian historians raised in the diaspora joined the profession in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was they who brought attention to the fact that the concept of nation is complex and multidimensional; that the process of national mobilization is not linear; that national mobilization requires access to the masses; and that international politics can rewrite accomplishments or compensate for shortcomings in the process of nation-building. All of this was introduced into Ukrainian historiography by Western scholars, primarily representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora.

Currently, a second edition of my book *Ukraine: Birth of A Modern Nation* is being prepared for publication. The book's central argument is that modern Ukraine emerged from the Ukrainian national project, which, in essence, was based on the principle of ethnic mobilization and the right of an ethnic nation to statehood. However, from the very beginning of imperial collapse, that is since the spring of 1917, Ukraine was a multiethnic state on the mental map of Ukrainian intellectuals. The inclusion of minorities is clear in Hrushevsky's collection *On the Threshold of a New Ukraine*, published during the Ukrainian Revolution. Many decades later, near the end of the Soviet Union, the same inclusive vision of Ukraine appears in the protocols of the *Narodnyi rukh* (People's Movement, a Ukrainian popular front). This understanding of Ukraine became further entrenched during the Revolution of Dignity and in the ongoing war against Russian invaders.

**Thank you for this engaging conversation.**

Interview conducted by YANA PRYMACHENKO

Yuki Murata

# BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE AND FEDERATION: THE INTERPLAY OF FOREIGN POLICY AND STATEHOOD IN UKRAINE, 1917–1919*


## ABSTRACT

This article revisits Ukrainian political history from 1917–1919, a period of turmoil during which three different states arose in Kyiv in succession: the Ukrainian People's Republic, the Ukrainian State (Hetmanate), and the Direactorate. Previous studies have generally discussed this period as part of the broader history of the Ukrainian national movement, portraying it in terms of the struggle to defend the independence proclaimed by the Fourth Universal (declaration) of January 1918 against foreign intervention. In contrast, this article argues that Ukraine's political status was still undecided in January 1918. Even after the Fourth Universal, the prospect of Ukraine as an autonomous part of a Russian or East European federation or confederation remained one of the goals pursued by Ukrainian activists. Importantly, the evolution of visions for Ukraine's state system was shaped to a considerable degree by the interests of foreign actors. Because they lacked sufficient military strength, all Ukrainian states established during this period depended on outside assistance for their survival. This study examines the close interrelationship between Ukraine's choices regarding its future political status (independence or federation) and its ongoing foreign policy.



KEYWORDS:

Ukraine, Russia, Civil War, foreign policy, federalism, First World War



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## INTRODUCTION

In 1977, the Canadian-Ukrainian historian Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky published an article titled 'The Fourth Universal and Its Ideological Antecedents'. He described the declaration of the sovereignty and independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic by the Central Rada's Fourth Universal as a triumph of the separatist current over the federalist current in the history of Ukrainian political thought. According to him, the federalist tendencies developed by nineteenth-century Ukrainian intellectuals were – amid the radical political changes in Russia and Ukraine – overtaken by the separatist tendencies of Mykola Mikhnovs'kyi and Dmytro Dontsov, which enjoyed only a limited following until 1917. While acknowledging that both currents left an important intellectual legacy in modern Ukrainian history, Lysiak-Rudnytsky warned of the nationalist and at times militant nature of pure separatism and instead advocated a synthesis of demands for national sovereignty with international cooperation.[1]

The purpose of this article is to examine the oscillation in Ukrainian ideas of state formation between independentism and federalism, and to trace the persistence of the latter after 1917. In other words, among Ukrainian political figures between 1917–1919, the (re)creation of a federation with other nations of the former imperial territory remained a realistic alternative to independence. In this sense, the synthesis proposed by Lysiak-Rudnytsky was in fact pursued during that period. Moreover, I argue that the persistence of federalist orientations among Ukrainian leaders was closely connected with Ukraine's military weakness and its reliance on foreign support, such that choices regarding diplomatic alignment were inseparable from constitutional visions. Whether Ukraine should pursue independence or federation was determined less by the personal convictions of politicians than by the strategic interests of whichever belligerent power in the ongoing First World War seemed most favourable to Ukraine. This article traces the dynamics of this interrelation between state-building projects and foreign policy, focusing on three critical moments of diplomatic realignment in 1917–1919: (1) from the establishment of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; (2) the final phase of the Hetmanate, when Germany's defeat in the European war had become inevitable; and (3) the early period of the Directorate regime.

1 Ivan L. Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 389–416.

## ROAD TO BREST-LITOVSK: THE UNR, OCTOBER 1917 – FEBRUARY 1918

Federalism constitutes one of the most significant concepts in the history of Ukrainian political thought. Its origins are commonly traced to the mid-nineteenth century, when the historian Mykola Kostomarov articulated federalist ideas as a symbolic expression of Slavic solidarity and the equality of Great Russians and Ukrainians, rather than as a concrete constitutional project. The first specific proposal for the federalization of the empire advanced by a Ukrainian was Mykhailo Drahomanov's de facto draft constitution of Russia, published in 1884 under the title *Free Union*. Federalism was subsequently taken up by the historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky and, during the Revolution of 1905, redefined as a political goal of Ukrainian parties and activists to transform Russia into a "federation of autonomous national territories". From then until the February Revolution of 1917, Ukrainian political movements pursued the realization of national territorial autonomy and federalism. They demanded the introduction of regional autonomy with elected assemblies, and the recognition of Ukrainian as the official language in educational, administrative, and judicial institutions within the autonomous region. They further criticized the existing administrative system that fragmented Ukrainian-inhabited lands among several imperial provinces. At the same time, they remained careful not to advocate full independence from Russia. Several factors underpinned this position. First, in Europe in the long nineteenth century, the prospects for successful independence movements and for the survival of newly created states were assumed to be very weak. Second, theorists influenced by Mikhail Bakunin and the Narodnik tradition considered a federation of nations a higher political form than a mere collection of independent states. Third, part of the Ukrainian intellectual circle maintained a sense of Eastern Slavic kinship, or of fraternal bonds with Russians through Orthodoxy and a shared history and culture. Even without achieving independence, the creation of an autonomous unit within a federal state and the institutionalization of Ukrainian as an official language within it were regarded as sufficient foundations for the survival and development of the Ukrainian nation.[2]

[2] On the federalism in Ukrainian and Russian intellectual history, see Hennadii Korol'ov, *Ukrains'kyi federalizm v istorychnomu dyskursi: XIX – pochatok XX stolittia* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy NANU, 2010); Hennadii Korol'ov, *Federatyvni proekty v Tsentral'no-Skhidnii Ievropi: vid ideolohichnoi utopii do real'noi polityky (1815–1921 pp.)* (Kyiv: K.I.S., 2019); Dimitri Sergius Von Mohrenschildt, *Toward a United States of Russia: Plans and Projects of Federal Reconstruction of Russia in the Nineteenth Century* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981); Mark von Hagen, 'Federalisms and Pan-movements: Re-Imagining Empire', in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, ed. by Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 494–510. See also the translation of the texts by Kostomarov, Drahomanov, and Hrushevsky in *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian thought from 1710 to 1995*, ed. by Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

After the February Revolution, the Central Rada – the self-proclaimed representative body of Ukrainians established in Kyiv – demanded from the Provisional Government in Petrograd the granting of national-territorial autonomy to Ukraine on the premise of Russia's federalization. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, who had already emerged as the principal advocate of federalism during the Revolution of 1905, assumed the chairmanship of the Central Rada and, in September 1917, convened the "Congress of the Peoples", a gathering of representatives of Russia's various nationalities and regions. The political parties participating in the Central Rada likewise endorsed federalism in their respective platforms. Moreover, unlike the political leaders at the Russian centre who regarded the unitary state as an ideal, many members of the Kiev Committee of the Kadets also supported federalism. Serving as intermediaries between the Ukrainian movement and the Kadet Central Committee even before the revolution, the Kiev Committee frequently endorsed the former's demand for a federal system of national-territorial autonomy. Under pressure, the Provisional Government recognized the de facto autonomy of Ukraine by its agreement with the Central Rada in July 1917.[3]

By the autumn of 1917, however, a shift in the interpretation of federalism had emerged within the Central Rada. Initially, the introduction of a federal system had been envisaged as a decision to be taken by the All-Russian Constituent Assembly – namely, by a central body representing all of Russia. Yet, amid repeated postponements of the Constituent Assembly by the Provisional Government and its reluctance to implement the agreed Ukrainian autonomy, the radical faction, which had gained the majority within the Central Rada and was led by the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary Party, argued that the initiative for introducing federalism did not belong to the central authority but rather to the individual nationalities and regions. In their view, a federal state ought to be constructed "from below" rather than "from above", and sovereignty resided precisely in those nationalities and regions that would spearhead this "bottom-up" movement. This interpretation was concretized in proposals raised and debated within the Rada in October to convene an All-Ukrainian Constituent Assembly that was independent of Russia and was endowed with sovereign authority.[4] Such a reinterpretation of

3 On the development of Ukrainian autonomy-building in 1917, see Johannes Remy, '"It Is Unknown where the Little Russians Are Heading to": The Autonomy Dispute between the Ukrainian Central Rada and the All-Russian Provisional Government in 1917', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 95.4 (2017), 691–719; Yuki Murata, 'Multiple Paths to Autonomy: Moderate Ukrainians in Revolutionary Petrograd', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 22.2 (2021), 255–84. For the Kadet Kiev Committee, see Mariya Melentyeva, 'Liberals and the Ukrainian Question in Imperial Russia, 1905–1917', *Revolutionary Russia*, 33.2 (2020), 151–71.

4 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada: Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Vladyslav Verstjuk and others, 2 vols (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1996), I, pp. 334–38.

federalism, moreover, provided the theoretical foundation for Ukrainian leaders to continue entertaining federalist ideas even after the collapse of the central government in the October Revolution and the forcible dissolution of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviks. It was believed that a federal Russia could once again be created through the initiative of sovereign nationalities and regions at the local level. In practice, despite the contemporary use of the term *federatsiia* (Federation), the concept bore closer resemblance to a confederation of sovereign national republics. This idea – federalism conceived as a "confederation of sovereign republics" – can be referred to as "confederal federalism".

The fact that federalism remained the dominant orientation within the Central Rada even after the collapse of the central government is evident from documents issued in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution. On 7 November (Old Style, hereafter until February 1918), the Third Universal of the Rada not only proclaimed the establishment of the Ukrainian People's Republic but also explicitly declared that the new republic would remain within the framework of Russia's unity.[5] Furthermore, the General Secretariat – the executive authority of the Rada and the de facto UNR government – dispatched memoranda to other governments that had emerged within the former territory of the Russian Empire, calling upon them to form a new federation. According to notes preserved in the Ukrainian state archives, between 25 and 26 November such memoranda were sent to Petrograd, Novocherkassk, Omsk, Tbilisi, Simferopol', Minsk, and Chișinău. A follow-up letter was sent again on 4 December.[6] The formation of a central government of Russia likewise remained a constant item on the agenda of the Central Rada's sessions.

In the Third Universal, the Central Rada pledged that the Ukrainian People's Republic would bring about peace. Accordingly, it dispatched envoys to the High Command of the Russian Army, to the front, and to Brest-Litovsk to explore the possibility of an armistice. The subsequent deterioration of relations with the Bolsheviks, however, compelled the pursuit of a more active foreign policy. On 17 November, Mykola Porsh of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party held a telephone conversation with Iosif Stalin through the mediation of the Kyiv Bolsheviks, indicating that the Bolshevik Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) was initially regarded as one of the negotiating partners for the reorganization of central authority.[7] On 25 November, the aforementioned memorandum

5 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, I, pp. 399–402.
6 Tsentral'nyj deržavnyj archiv vyščych orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnja Ukrajiny (Central State Archives of the Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine, hereafter TsDAVO), f. 2592, op. 2, spr. 23, ark. 2–4, 10.
7 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, I, 455–59.

was also sent to the Sovnarkom.[8] Yet, on 4 December, the Bolshevik government issued an ultimatum to the Ukrainian People's Republic, citing its alleged support for the Don Cossack government as "counterrevolutionary"; when the ultimatum was rejected, it declared war. The newly born Ukrainian People's Republic lacked the military strength to resist the much larger Red Army, and this confrontation brought to the forefront the fundamental premise that constitutional projects could not be realized by Ukrainian efforts alone and therefore presupposed military assistance from foreign powers.

The rationale for continuing the federalist course while simultaneously exercising diplomatic authority to seek foreign support was articulated in a memorandum of 11 December addressed to all belligerent and neutral states. It declared that "the Ukrainian People's Republic aspires to the formation of a federal union of the republics established within the former territory of the Russian Empire. At present, however, no all-Russian federal authority has been constituted, nor has any division of international representation between the Ukrainian Republic and a future federal government been realized; therefore, the General Secretariat is compelled to embark upon an independent path of international relations".[9] On the same day, the Central Rada resolved to send representatives to the forthcoming peace conference in Brest-Litovsk. As indicated in the statement of Oleksandr Shul'hyn, head of the International Secretariat (equivalent to foreign minister), this decision did not constitute a declaration of alignment with the Central Powers but rather reflected the UNR's all-encompassing diplomacy, which urgently required external support. "Peace", Shul'hyn asserted, "can be concluded only by representatives of all regions and nationalities of Russia; the People's Commissars do not possess the right to conclude peace on behalf of all Russia. Moreover, whereas the Bolsheviks are attempting to reach a separate peace with the Central Powers, Ukraine insists on a general peace".[10]

That the dispatch of representatives to Brest did not signify a definitive alignment with the Central Powers is evident from the fact that negotiations with the Entente powers intensified immediately thereafter. Since Ukraine had been under the rule of Russia – a member of the Entente – until the October Revolution, numerous consuls of the Allied states continued to reside in Kyiv and Odesa even after the upheaval. In addition, British and French military officers and diplomats were stationed in Romania, monitoring the situation in southwestern Russia after the revolution.

8 TsDAVO, f. 2592, op. 1, spr. 23, ark. 2.
9 Ibid., ark. 11.
10 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, II, p. 16.

For the Entente, two objectives were paramount: first, to prevent Ukraine from falling under the influence of the Central Powers; second, to organize a common front against the Bolsheviks. In pursuit of both aims, Britain, France, and the United States recognized Ukraine as a temporary negotiating partner, offering promises of financial and military assistance, yet at the same time urging Ukraine to cooperate with other regional authorities in former Russia and adopting a cautious stance toward formal recognition of Ukrainian independence. The fear was that granting independence too readily to unstable regional governments would result in the complete disintegration of Russia and create a dangerous power vacuum that could strengthen both the Central Powers and the Bolsheviks.[11] This position did not contradict the diplomatic orientation of the UNR leaders, who sought not complete independence but the future creation of a federation. Ukrainian representatives could thus pursue the strategy of requesting provisional recognition of statehood while presenting the goal of a future reunified Russia under federal principles. Oleksandr Shul'hyn, known to be pro-Entente, cultivated cordial relations with representatives of the Allied powers.[12]

Among Britain, the United States, and France, the country most proactive in supporting Ukraine was France. General Georges Tabouis, who came to serve as France's principal representative of interests, had originally been stationed with the Russian army in Kam'ianets'-Podil's'kyi and occasionally visited Kyiv; he had even met with Symon Petliura in September 1917.[13] On 18 November, Tabouis held a meeting with Shul'hyn, offering immediate promises of financial and military assistance.[14] On 5 December, he visited several members of the General Secretariat, including its head, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, and declared that although the Entente had not yet formally recognized Ukraine, it would assuredly provide support for the sake of victory over its enemy.[15] On 16 December, the French government, acting through General Henri Berthelot, commander of the French military mission in Romania, appointed Tabouis as "commissar to the Ukrainian government".[16] Tabouis was vested with authority to grant provisional recognition of Ukrainian independence,

11 The British representatives dispatched to Ukraine often described the recognition of Ukrainian statehood as a "gamble". Proposed Autonomy of Ukraine; Ukraine Question; Parliamentary Question on Ukraine; Attitude of Ukraine, 7 December 1917, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), London, Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371, vol. 3012. See also, David Saunders, 'Britain and the Ukrainian Question (1912–1920)', *English Historical Review*, 103.406 (1988), 40–68 (pp. 62–64).

12 Silver Shipped to Vladivostok; Recognition of Ukraine Government; Situation in Caucasus; Message from Military Attache for O. M. I., 25–26 December 1917, TNA, FO 371, vol. 3019.

13 Georges Tabouis, 'Comment je devins Commissaire de la République Française en Ukraine', in *Praci Ukrajins'koho naukovoho instytutu*, ed. by Roman Smal'-Stoc'kyj, 53 vols (Varšava: Ukrajins'kyj naukovyj instytut, 1930–1939), VIII (1932), pp. 142–61 (pp. 142–44).

14 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, I, p. 459.

15 TsDAVO, f. 4404, op. 1, spr. 1, ark. 15.

16 TsDAVO, f. 2592, op. 3, spr. 3, ark. 8.

yet he himself adopted a cautious stance toward immediate recognition after observing conditions in Kyiv. Moreover, the formal recognition of Ukraine would have required coordination with both Great Britain and the United States.

On 13 December, Picton Bagge, the British consul in Odesa, was dispatched to Kyiv as an "unofficial agent" representing British interests. Earlier that month, Britain and France had reached an understanding regarding their respective spheres of influence in southwestern Russia, under which Ukraine was placed within the French sphere, and Bagge was instructed to follow the lead of Tabouis in dealings with the People's Republic.[17] Upon learning that the French government had vested Tabouis with the authority to recognize Ukrainian independence, Robert Cecil of the British Foreign Office instructed Bagge that, should Tabouis issue such a declaration, Britain was to follow suit.[18] While Britain and France were thus prepared to extend recognition to Ukraine, the United States remained reluctant to intervene. Washington limited its involvement to sending Carl Jenkins, the former consul in Riga, to Kyiv as an "observer", while restricting his direct contacts with the UNR leaders. On 25 December, the French ambassador to Washington, Jean Jules Jusserand, informed the State Department that Tabouis, as commissar to the Ukrainian government, had been dispatched for the purpose of recognition, and requested clarification of the American position.[19] In response, Acting Secretary of State Frank Polk stated that while the United States was carefully monitoring the situation, it had "not reached a decision to recognize individual governments of Russia".[20] On 2 January 1918, Secretary of State Robert Lansing likewise wrote to Ambassador David R. Francis in Petrograd that "no independent state will be recognized until the will of the Russian people is more clearly expressed", reflecting the United States' overall reluctance to intervene in Russian affairs at this juncture.[21] Jenkins, for his part, reported through the Consul General in Moscow that prompt Allied support was necessary to shield Ukraine from the Central Powers; yet the report, dated 3 January, did not reach Washington until 2 March (New Style).[22] In short, although the embryonic stage of diplomatic relations had been reached, Tabouis's caution and America's hesitancy prevented negotiations in Kyiv from bearing immediate fruit.

17 British Representatives in South Russia; Financial Assistance to Bessarabian Government; Rewards for Russian Troops, 25–26 December 1917, TNA, FO 371, vol. 3019.
18 Financial Support for General Alexieff; Ukraine; Consular Assistance in Russia; Financing of Caucasus Movement, 8–9 January 1918, TNA, FO 371, vol. 3283.
19 'Jusserand to the Secretary of State, 7 January 1918', in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Russia* (hereafter *Foreign Relations*), ed. by Joseph V. Fuller (Washington DC: US Govt. Print. Off., 1932), II, p. 655.
20 'Polk to Jusserand, 11 January 1918', in ibid.
21 'The Secretary of State to Francis, 15 January 1918', in ibid., p. 743.
22 'The Consul General at Moscow to the Secretary of State, 16 January 1918', in ibid., pp. 657–60.

At the same time that the Allied powers dispatched envoys to Kyiv, Ukraine likewise sent a mission to Iași, the provisional capital of Romania. On 4 January the mission's head visited the representatives of Britain, the United States, France, and Italy stationed in Iași. He explained that while Ukraine's ultimate goal was the creation of a federal Russia, the government – realizing the difficulty of realizing this immediately – sought the temporary recognition of Ukrainian independence by the Entente and the establishment of official diplomatic relations. The Allied envoys, however, were already aware that Ukraine had dispatched representatives to Brest-Litovsk and entered into negotiations with the Central Powers. On the following day, the Allied representatives demanded, as a condition for recognition of independence and provision of military aid, that Ukraine refrain from concluding a separate peace with their enemy.[23] The Ukrainian mission could not provide such an assurance because – as he explicitly informed the Allied mission – the Ukrainian delegation at Brest had been vested with full powers, including the authority to conclude a peace treaty.[24] Thus, in Iași as well, Ukraine failed to secure immediate recognition from the Entente powers.

Meanwhile, the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk proceeded favourably. Although the Ukrainian delegation – dispatched in early December to participate in the armistice talks – arrived only after the negotiations had already concluded, it nevertheless held an informal meeting with General Max Hoffmann, Chief of Staff of the German Eastern Front (Ober Ost). At the meeting, the delegation declared that "the Ukrainian People's Republic does not recognize the authority of the Council of People's Commissars to conclude peace on behalf of all Russia", to which Hoffmann responded that if Germany were to receive an official statement from the Ukrainian government refusing to recognize the Sovnarkom as the government of all Russia, then Germany would refrain from discussing the Ukrainian question with the Bolshevik representatives. From this meeting, the Ukrainian envoys gained the expectation of obtaining German recognition of statehood.[25] At the same time, the German side also began to seriously consider the potential utility of employing Ukraine for its own purposes. The peace negotiations at the end of December thus commenced on the basis of the favourable impressions established in this initial encounter.

23 'Sharp to the Secretary of State, 22 January 1918', in *Foreign Relations*, II, pp. 660–63; Banquet for Ukrainian Delegates at Jassy; Financial Assistance for Ukraine; Visit of Ukraine Delegates to Jassy, 18–21 January 1918, TNA, FO 371, vol. 3283.
24 'Sharp to the Secretary of State, 26 January 1918', in *Foreign Relations*, II, pp. 663–64.
25 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, I, pp. 521–23, 525–26.

For a time during the peace negotiations with the Central Powers, the People's Republic continued to adhere to its established course: the eventual creation of a federal Russia, with the construction of a Ukrainian state and its autonomous participation in diplomacy as a preliminary stage. Prior to its departure for Brest, the People's Republic called upon the other regional governments of former Russia to represent their respective interests at Brest as constituent parts of a future federal Russia.[26] At the first session held in Brest on 4 January Oleksandr Sevriuk likewise declared that Ukraine was part of a federal Russian republic but that Ukraine would conduct diplomacy as an independent state for as long as the Sovnarkom obstructed its formation.[27]

Germany, the leading power among the Central Powers, pursued interests in Ukraine that diverged fundamentally from those of the Entente. Above all, famine-stricken Germany and Austria-Hungary sought to obtain grain from Ukraine's fertile lands and aimed to incorporate Ukraine into their sphere of economic influence. While the weakening of the Bolsheviks was important to Germany as well, Berlin was equally unwilling to see Russia's various forces coalesce into a revived enemy state. Consequently, the formation of a group of national states as buffer zones between the Central Powers and Russia appeared to be the optimal solution. In such a scenario, Ukraine needed to exist as an independent state.[28] Germany did not regard the Third Universal, which emphasized the preservation of Russia's unity, as a document sufficient to establish Ukraine as a subject of international law, therefore demanding the drafting of a new memorandum. In response, on 10 January Vsevolod Holubovych declared in a memorandum that "the Ukrainian People's Republic, until such time as a common federal government is constituted in Russia and the question of the division of international legal representation between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the future federal government is settled, shall embark upon the construction of self-standing international legal relations". Thus, while still reserving the possibility of an all-Russian or Eastern European federation, the UNR publicly proclaimed itself a subject of international law.[29] With this memorandum, Ukraine was recognized as an equal participant and entered into concrete peace negotiations.

26 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, II, p. 43.

27 'Minutes of the preliminary meeting, 4 January 1918', in *Ereignisse in der Ukraine 1914–1922: deren Bedeutung und historische Hintergründe*, ed. by Theophil Hornykiewicz, 4 vols (Philadelphia: W. K. Lypynsky East European Research Institute, 1966–1969), II (1966), pp. 50–51, 53.

28 On Germany's Ukrainian policy during the First World War, see Winfried Baumgart, *Deutsche Ostpolitik, 1918: von Brest-Litowsk bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1966); Claus Remer, *Die Ukraine im Blickfeld deutscher Interessen: ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1917/18* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997); Oleh Fedyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971); Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer, 1914–1939* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010).

29 'Minutes of the Plenary Meeting of the Peace Conference, 10 January 1918', in *Ereignisse*, II, pp. 66–67.

The Fourth Universal, or "Declaration of Independence", was issued under the circumstances described above: Ukraine continued to seek recognition from the Entente while negotiations with the Central Powers at Brest were proceeding favourably. Its provisions concerning the structure of the state closely corresponded to the memorandum presented at Brest. The Universal proclaimed that the Ukrainian People's Republic was to become an independent and sovereign state; that the General Secretariat was to be renamed the Council of People's Ministers; and that the institutional foundations of statehood were to be consolidated. At the same time, however, the Universal explicitly affirmed that Ukraine would in the future establish federal relations with the other republics of the former Russian territories. The Fourth Universal should therefore not be regarded as a simple shift in the Ukrainian national movement from federalism to separatist independence. Rather, it was simultaneously a declaration of sovereignty – a condition required by the Central Powers for peace – and an articulation of the prospect of Russian reunification in federal form, as the Entente would have desired.[30]

As outlined above, Ukraine sought to secure support from both camps wherever possible, pursuing an all-encompassing diplomatic strategy. Yet, the more smoothly negotiations at Brest advanced, the more reluctant the Entente became to extend formal recognition to Ukraine. Three days before the conclusion of peace, Shul'hyn visited the French representative Tabouis and the British representative Bagge to inquire as to the conditions under which Ukraine might avoid a rupture with the Entente, even if it signed the peace treaty with the Central Powers. According to Tabouis's memoirs, however, it was already too late.[31] The British Foreign Office had instructed Bagge to inform Kyiv that if Ukraine were to deliver grain to the Central Powers, Britain would provide no financial assistance whatsoever.[32] Nevertheless, with the Red Army advancing on Kyiv, Ukraine urgently required military support and could not afford to interrupt the negotiations at Brest. The signing of the peace treaty on 27 January – followed on the same day by the Bolshevik capture of Kyiv – prompted the Entente representatives to entrust the protection of their nationals to the Spanish consul as a representative of a neutral state, and to depart the city.[33] On 9 March, German forces entered Kyiv together with the leaders of the People's Republic. In this way, the conflicts surrounding

30 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, II, pp. 102–04. For the context, see also Borislav Chernev, *Twilight of Empire: The Brest-Litovsk Conference and the Remaking of East-Central Europe, 1917–1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).
31 Tabouis, 'Comment je devins Commissaire de la République Française en Ukraine', pp. 159–60.
32 Germany and the Ukraine; Ukraine Peace Negotiations at Brest-Litovsk; Situation in South Russia, 9–29 January 1918, TNA, FO 371, vol. 3309.
33 TsDAVO, f. 2592, op. 4, spr. 32, ark. 60.

constitutional visions and diplomatic orientations since the October Revolution reached a provisional resolution in the form of alignment with the Central Powers and the path of independence.

## GERMAN OCCUPATION AND DEFEAT: THE HETMANATE, APRIL–DECEMBER 1918

As seen in the previous section, amid the turmoil following the October Revolution, leaders of the Ukrainian movement shifted flexibly between independence and federalism in accordance with diplomatic circumstances. The more significant axis of political division was not the form of statehood but the question of socialism. In this respect, the UNR leaders were resolute socialists. In a country where the agrarian countryside predominated, Ukrainian socialism was rooted in land redistribution and bore the character of an SR-type socialism. This, however, proved fundamentally incompatible with the principal clause of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, namely the obligation to deliver grain to Germany and Austria-Hungary. The German army, bypassing the Ukrainian government, issued a directive demanding the treaty's implementation, but the Rada persisted in its own land policy. On 23 April Wilhelm Groener, the German chief of staff, together with Ambassador Alfons Mumm and Austrian Ambassador János Forgách, concluded that the establishment of a more compliant government was necessary.[34] Local landowners and middle peasants, resentful of having their estates expropriated, shared this view. Before long, the name of Pavlo Skoropadsky (Skoropads'kyi) – descendant of a Hetman of the early modern Cossack state and a general in the Russian Imperial Army – emerged as a candidate to head the new government. Skoropadsky met with Groener and accepted the conditions presented to him. On 29 April with the open cooperation of the German army and conservative Ukrainians, a coup d'état brought the Hetmanate, with Skoropadsky as the Hetman, into being.

The Hetmanate, established under these circumstances, was long regarded by contemporaries aligned with the Rada – as well as by historians sympathetic to their position – as a reactionary regime divorced from the will of the nation. One of the principal reasons for the Hetmanate's unpopularity among Ukrainian nationalists was the alleged prevalence of Russians within its bureaucracy and military. Certainly, the government of the Hetmanate was from the outset a non-socialist regime, in sharp contrast to the policies of the Rada. Yet a closer examination of

34 *Die Deutsche Okkupation der Ukraine: Geheimdokumente* (Strasbourg: Editions Prométhée, 1937), p. 56.

the backgrounds and activities of its leaders makes it difficult to characterize the Hetmanate as simply a Russian regime. Contrary to the image of Pavlo Skoropadsky as a German puppet harbouring a Great Russian heart, his memoirs reveal both an understanding of and an affection for Ukrainian culture, and he was viewed favourably by contemporary moderate Ukrainian nationalists.[35] Among the most significant figures in the first cabinet, serving as deputy prime minister and minister of education, was Mykola Vasylenko, a Kadet and a member of the Society of Ukrainian Progressives, who represented the moderate wing of Ukrainian nationalism. Until the February Revolution, Vasylenko had led the Kiev committee of the Kadet Party and had sided with Hrushevsky in pressing for decentralization against the central party committee, which refused to recognize Ukrainian territorial autonomy. As minister of education, he promoted the establishment of Ukrainian universities and cultural and artistic institutions. His successor in the ministry, Petro Stebnyts'kyi, a former leader of the Ukrainian community in Petrograd, became the driving force of the Hetmanate's "Ukrainianization" policy. Likewise, Borys Butenko, the Kadet minister of transportation, advanced the Ukrainization of his ministry.[36]

Following the establishment of the Hetmanate, the Kadet Kiev Committee convened a "Ukrainian Kadet Party Congress", at which it adopted a platform endorsing the line of Ukrainian independence through alignment with the Central Powers.[37] The decision of Kadet members from Ukraine to cooperate with the Skoropadsky's regime and to accept ministerial posts in the government of the independent Ukrainian state demonstrates that it is misleading to classify the Kadets simply as a "Russian party". Local Kadets in Ukraine included not only self-identified Ukrainians such as Vasylenko and Butenko, but also nationally ambiguous intellectuals who felt a sense of belonging to both Ukrainian and Russian language and culture. As Dmytro Doroshenko, the Hetmanate's Foreign Minister, observed, those who assumed ministerial office did so on the basis of accepting the existence of a Ukrainian state; regardless of whether their origin or self-identity was that of a Great Russian, they were committed to the construction of Ukraine as a territorial state.[38]

35 Pavlo Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady. Kinec' 1917 – hruden' 1918*, 2nd edn (Kyiv: Nash format, 2016).
36 *Ukrajins'ka deržava (kviten'–hruden' 1918 roku): dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Ruslan Pyrih, 2 vols (Kyiv: Tempora, 2015), II, p. 85. For diverse backgrounds of Hetmanate ministers, see Ruslan Pyrih, *Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho: miž Nimeččynoju i Rosijeju* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy NANU, 2008); Mikhail Akulov, 'The Third Path or An Imperial Roundabout? Skoropadsky's Ukraine, Technocrats, and the "Great Russian Lobby"', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 69.4 (2021), 593–627.
37 *S"ezdy i konferencii konstitucionno-demokratičeskoj partii. 1905–1920 gg.*, ed. by Valentin Šelochaev, 3 vols (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000), III, bk. 2: *1918–1920 gg.*, pp. 152–74.
38 Dmytro Došenko, *Moji spomyny pro davnje mynule (1901–1914 rr.)* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2007), p. 254.

The Hetmanate promptly recognized the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk concluded by the People's Republic, thereby continuing the independentist policy through alignment with the Central Powers pursued by the previous government. Until the autumn of 1918, its foreign policy aimed primarily at securing international recognition of Ukrainian independence. Ambassadors were dispatched to Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire, while the government also sought to establish diplomatic relations with neutral states. Fearing secret contacts with the Entente, Germany restricted the official dispatch of Ukrainian diplomats to neutral countries until October.[39] Even so, Ambassador Fedor Steingel' in Berlin maintained contacts with the Spanish and Finnish ambassadors, while in Switzerland the local Ukrainian leader Ievmen Lukashevych acted in practice as a diplomat.[40] The Hetmanate also conducted relations with other successor states of the former Russian Empire as independent states: on 7 August it concluded a preliminary treaty with the Don, whereby both sides recognized each other's sovereignty.[41] Armenia and Georgia, for their part, requested that the Hetmanate recognize their independence.[42] In accordance with the treaty signed in March between the Central Powers and Soviet Russia, Ukraine and Russia likewise entered into peace negotiations as independent states.

By the autumn, however, as the defeat of the Central Powers in the war became more probable, a reorientation of diplomatic policy toward the Entente began to be considered. On 15 October Dmytro Doroshenko delivered an important address before the Council of Ministers regarding the future direction of foreign policy. He argued that Ukraine must "dispel the false rumours circulating among the Entente concerning Ukraine and its relations with the Central Powers and Great Russia, for the sake of our country's future interests" and proposed the dispatch of special diplomatic missions to Britain, the United States, and France. The rumour in question, which was widely spread among the Entente after Brest, was that "Ukraine" was merely a fiction of the Central Powers' eastern policy and that, geographically and ethnically, it was in fact part of Great Russia. Doroshenko's proposal was adopted, and it was further decided that an extraordinary meeting would be held on 17 October to deliberate on the broader course of foreign policy.[43]

39 *Ukrajins'ka deržava*, II, p. 306.
40 Dorošenko, *Moji spomyny*, p. 273; *Ukrajins'ki dyplomatyčni predstavnyctva v Nimeččyni (1918—1922). Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Vasyl' Danylenko and Natalija Kryvec' (Kyjiv: Smoloskyp, 2012), p. 66.
41 TsDAVO, f. 3766, op. 1, spr. 126, ark. 3.
42 TsDAVO, f. 3766, op. 1, spr. 125, ark. 18–19; spr. 134, ark. 9–17.
43 *Ukrajins'ka deržava*, I, p. 333.

At the 17 October session, however, nine ministers issued a statement opposing Doroshenko's basic line of maintaining an independent orientation while simultaneously seeking closer ties with the Entente, and they demanded the signatures of the remaining ministers. While affirming that Ukraine's distinctiveness and national culture were "great objectives", the statement argued that "through integration with the other states of Russia, Ukraine would attain greater autonomy and authority in its relations with foreign powers than if it remained isolated and alone". In other words, the statement maintained that if foreign policy was to shift toward the Entente, then state-building should likewise be redirected from independence toward a federalist path.[44] Thus, federalism was advanced as a constitutional arrangement capable of satisfying both the Entente's anticipated desire for Russian reunification and Ukraine's own aspiration to preserve its autonomy.

In the end, Hetman Skoropadsky, still dependent on German forces, postponed any sweeping shift in foreign policy at this juncture. Instead, a new cabinet was formed that reinforced the independence-oriented course. Many of those who signed the 17 October declaration were excluded from ministerial office. The Armistice of 11 November on the Western Front, however, brought the German orientation to an end. With a turn toward the Entente thus rendered unavoidable, on 14 November Skoropadsky issued a proclamation to all citizens of Ukraine, declaring the restoration of the unity of the Russian state on the basis of federal principles. Pro-Rada historians once claimed that this proclamation revealed Skoropadsky's "Great Russian" orientation. Yet, closer examination of its content reveals that it, too, envisioned a confederal model of federalism in which Ukraine was to occupy an autonomous status.[45] In his memoirs, Skoropadsky himself recalled: "I wanted the continued existence of Ukraine and the Ukrainian nation. I wished Ukraine to occupy its rightful place within this closely bound union of regions and states in which all regions and states would be united as equals into a powerful organic whole".[46] Thus, one month after the memorandum of the Nine Ministers, the Hetman himself sanctioned the turn toward an Entente-aligned federalist course. This shift was immediately conveyed in practice when Skoropadsky instructed his representatives in Iași to circulate the proclamation among the Entente powers.[47] The reorientation was also reflected in personnel changes, most notably the replacement of Doroshenko as

44 Ibid., pp. 326–29.
45 Ibid., pp. 68–69.
46 Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady*, p. 271.
47 'Sharp to the Secretary of State, 26 November 1918', in *Foreign Relations*, II, p. 700.

foreign minister with Georgii Afanasiev, one of the signatories of the Nine Ministers' memorandum.

Once the federalist course had been adopted, the Ukrainian State – just as the Central Rada had done a year earlier – proposed the formation of a federation to the regional governments that had emerged in Russia. On 20 November Foreign Minister Afanasiev dispatched telegrams to the Don, Kuban, and Terek governments, to Georgia, and to the Volunteer Army led by Anton Denikin, proposing that a congress be convened in Kyiv "to discuss the question of restoring the unity of Russia".[48] During the earlier period of independence under the Central Powers, the Don and Georgia had sought reciprocal recognition of sovereignty from Ukraine; now, however, they were regarded as partners in the project of creating a federal Russia. According to a subsequent telegram, the date of the proposed congress was set for 18 December.[49]

Within the Hetmanate, optimism grew regarding the possibility of securing support from the Entente. Shul'hyn, who had served as a UNR Foreign Minister and was now ambassador to Bulgaria, argued that since the Entente did not wish to see Bolshevik expansion either, Ukraine could adopt the attitude of "wishing for protectors from Germany's brutal domination" and thereby solicit Entente assistance while leaving the maintenance of order to German troops until the arrival of Entente forces.[50] Steingel', the ambassador to Germany, likewise predicted in a letter of 26 November that "before long, the Hetman government will be recognized by the Entente. The Entente troops are stationed in Novorossiia and Sevastopol'. In the near future, they will begin their advance into the interior of the country".[51] Skoropadsky's federalist declaration itself was based on reports from "a few reliable persons" who claimed that the Entente would be prepared to negotiate if Ukraine abandoned the path of independence. His plan was simple: if the French representative who was responsible for Ukraine as part of France's sphere of influence came to Kyiv, negotiated with the Hetmanate, and proclaimed recognition on behalf of the Entente, matters could quickly be settled.[52] In fact, Emile Henno, who represented France in the region, also supported the continuation of the Skoropadsky's regime, believing that combating the Bolsheviks required the cooperation of all forces of the former Russian Empire. The Entente mission in Iași presented Henno's position as the collective

48 TsDAVO, f. 3766, op. 1, spr. 146, ark. 9.
49 Ibid., ark. 12–13.
50 TsDAVO, f. 3766, op. 3, spr. 2, ark. 51.
51 *Ukrajins'ki dyplomatyčni predstavnyctva*, p. 85.
52 Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady*, p. 314.

stance of the Entente as a whole.[53] Moreover, Germany, too, considered it more advantageous not to abandon Skoropadsky's regime and hand Ukraine over to the Bolsheviks, but rather to maintain its military presence even after the armistice and, at the appropriate moment, transfer military authority to the Entente. Thus, a temporary situation arose in which the Ukrainian State was, for a time, acknowledged by both wartime coalitions. The collusion of the Central Powers, the Entente, and local forces for the purpose of combating the Bolsheviks was also realized in the Baltic region and was therefore by no means an unrealistic prospect.

However, Denikin's Volunteer Army, which was regarded as both a partner in federal formation and a cornerstone of the Entente's anti-Bolshevik policy, pursued the goal of a "one and indivisible Russia", that is, the restoration of a unitary state, and thus refused to tolerate federalism. Many of the former Imperial Russian Army officers leading the Volunteer Army inherited the imperial-era view that the Ukrainian people were simply a part of the Russian nation. Furthermore, the political influence of Russian nationalists, centred around Vasilii Shul'gin, prevented the Volunteer Army from conceding, even temporarily, to Ukrainian autonomy or independence. Skoropadsky's federalist declaration, in which Ukraine was granted an autonomous position, was equally unacceptable to the Volunteer Army. They regarded Skoropadsky as "a traitor who had exploited foreign powers hostile to Russia in order to create an independent Ukrainian state" and had no intention of entering into cooperation with him.[54] In their insistence on a unitary state, the Volunteer Army was uncompromising even toward the Entente: from their perspective, the Entente should only support the reconstitution of Russia under a centralized unitary government and had to oppose any movement toward autonomy by local authorities. In the end, Henno, who prioritized cooperation with the Volunteer Army, never left Odesa, and negotiations in Kyiv like those of late 1917 never took place.[55] Moreover, in forming a united front against the Bolsheviks, the Hetmanate refused to recognize Denikin as supreme commander and sought instead to have the Ukrainian army participate as an independent force, while Denikin remained adamant about his own sole command.[56]

53 'Sharp to the Secretary of State, 10 December 1918', in *Foreign Relations*, II, p. 701. Despite his frequent appearance in local documents, Henno's competence and the status conferred on him by the Paris government remained unclear. Pascal Fieschi, 'L'intervention française à Odessa (décembre 1918 – mars 1919) vue à travers l'action du "Consul de France", Emile Henno', *Cahiers slaves*, 14 (2016), 161–72.

54 Anna Procyk, *Russian Nationalism and Ukraine: The Nationality Policy of the Volunteer Army during the Civil War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1995), p. 55; *Kratkaja zapiska istorii vzaimootnošenij Dobrovol'českoj Armii s Ukrainoj* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1919).

55 Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady*, pp. 321–22.

56 *Ukrajins'ka deržava*, I, p. 403.

Thus, as the Entente-oriented policy yielded no concrete results due to conflicts among the anti-Bolshevik forces, the uprising of the Directorate, representing the pro-Rada faction opposed to the Hetmanate, rapidly expanded. Rising up on 15 November, the insurgents, who promised the restoration of the Rada's land policy, gained the support of peasants weary of the Hetmanate's landlord-favouring policies and soon achieved superiority across wide swathes of Ukraine. Although the German army initially acted to suppress the uprising, the revolution in Germany made large-scale intervention in Ukraine unfeasible, and the troops gradually assumed a neutral stance. The Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian State criticized this neutrality on the grounds that it contradicted the Entente's desire to maintain order,[57] but German forces withdrew before the Entente could mount any effective intervention to sustain the Skoropadsky's regime. On 14 December, Kyiv fell to the Directorate, Skoropadsky abdicated on the same day, and the federal formation congress scheduled for 18 December was never convened.

## THE SEARCH FOR AN ANTI-BOLSHEVIK FRONT: THE DIRECTORATE, DECEMBER 1918 – FEBRUARY 1919

The transition from the Hetmanate to the Directorate mirrored the earlier shift from the UNR to the Hetmanate in that it was defined less by differences over diplomatic orientation or constitutional vision than by the divide in land policy. The Directorate annulled the laws of the Hetmanate and proclaimed the restoration of the socialist policies of the UNR. Upon seizing power, Directorate chairman Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Prime Minister Volodymyr Chekhivs'kyi advanced policies that were virtually Bolshevik in nature, rallying under the banner of proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie. At the outset, the Directorate also adopted an explicitly anti-Hetman position on state formation. In other words, it cast Skoropadsky's declaration of federal formation as a proclamation of Ukraine's Russification, while presenting itself as the force that restored Ukrainian independence.

In December 1918, the Directorate issued an "Appeal to All Nations and Their Governments", portraying the First UNR under the Central Rada as a victim of German imperialism, which had imposed an unfavourable peace through military force. Germany, it declared, had handed Ukraine over to a reactionary state headed by the "Russian general"

57 Ibid.

Skoropadsky, but through their uprising the Ukrainian people had once again chosen a free and independent democratic People's Republic. The appeal expressed the hope that those countries which had endorsed US President Woodrow Wilson's principle of national self-determination would recognize the UNR in the sphere of international relations.[58] Thus, while the appeal clearly reflected an Entente orientation through its denunciation of Germany and invocation of Wilson, it nevertheless premised the UNR's state form on the foundation of full independence. From December into January, the Directorate government appointed diplomatic missions to the various Entente powers, as well as to Odesa, where Allied intervention forces were stationed. The initial aim was to pursue the independentist path, with envoys directly negotiating with the Entente to secure recognition and military support. In practice, however, the Directorate shared with the Hetmanate the same structural constraint – namely, the way diplomatic alignments imposed limits on state formation. Since the postwar order was already being shaped under Entente leadership, the Directorate's leaders too were compelled to pursue a federalist course that the Allies preferred.

While the Entente had supported the maintenance of the Skoropadsky's regime, it was initially highly negative toward the Directorate. In fact, the Allies possessed little information about the forces within Ukraine, and at times even reported that the Directorate's military commander, Symon Petliura, was a Bolshevik leader.[59] The identification of the Directorate with the Bolsheviks was also a perspective actively promoted by the Volunteer Army, which recognized only a "one and indivisible Russia". The Volunteer Army naturally refused to acknowledge the Directorate government and instead requested that the Allied forces suppress it as a bandit force, no different from the Bolsheviks. However, once the Directorate had established its authority in Ukraine and its representatives arrived in Odesa, the Entente began to regard it as a power that could play a role within the anti-Bolshevik front, and concrete negotiations were initiated.

A key figure in the negotiations with the Entente was Arnold Margolin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Directorate, who headed the diplomatic mission to Odesa. Arriving there in late January 1919, Margolin held frequent meetings with Henry Freydenberg, the Chief of Staff of the French garrison. As a result, he secured from France a promise of military and financial support under conditions that included temporary French control

58 TsDAVO, f. 3696, op. 1, spr. 66, ark. 2–4.
59 'Minister in Romania (Vopicka) to the Secretary of State, 19 December 1918', in *Foreign Relations*, II, pp. 703–04.

over Ukraine's railways and finances, the removal of the most left-leaning leaders in the government, namely Vynnychenko and Chekhivs'kyi, the subordination of the Ukrainian army to the command of Allied officers, and Ukraine's eventual incorporation into a federal Russia. Margolin agreed to all of these terms, and a finalized text awaited only his signature.[60]

Margolin also held discussions on the future formation of a federation with the representatives of the Don, Kuban, and Belarusian governments, who, like himself, had come to Odesa seeking Entente support. Together they adopted a resolution addressed to the Allies. Drafted by Margolin, the resolution presented an alternative vision for the reconstitution of Russia, opposing the Volunteer Army's call for a "one and indivisible Russia" with a federation composed of states representing distinct nationalities and regions. "At present, a federation imposed from above can be conceived only through foreign assistance and intervention, by means of coercion. Aside from this path of a federation from above, the only remaining course is that of a federation from below, based on voluntary agreement among equal state entities formed on the ruins of the former Russia".[61] The memorandum was published in Odesan newspapers, attracting the attention of Entente representatives.[62]

Thus, like the Hetmanate in its final days, the Directorate government also shifted toward an Entente-federalist course and, in practice, entered negotiations on federation with the regional governments of the former Russian Empire. However, the Volunteer Army, which sought to position itself at the centre of the anti-Bolshevik front, stubbornly refused to allow the realization of the Franco-Ukrainian agreement, insisting instead on presenting itself as the sole representative of a "one and indivisible Russia". The Volunteer Army would accept no concessions toward federalism. As a result, the agreement remained unsigned and in suspension when, on 5 February the Red Army entered Kyiv, and Entente intervention forces from France and Greece were successively routed in southern Ukraine by a peasant insurgent army led by Ataman Nykyfor Hryhor'iev. By the end of March, the French intervention troops decided to withdraw from Odesa, and by the end of April they had also withdrawn from Sevastopol.[63]

60 George A. Brinkley, 'Allied Policy and French Intervention in the Ukraine, 1917–1920', in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. by Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 323–51 (pp. 339–40); Arnol'd Margolin, *Ukraina i politika Antanty: Zapiski evreia i grazhdanina* (Berlin: S. Efron, 1922), pp. 123–24.

61 TsDAVO, f. 3766, op. 1, spr. 146, ark. 17–19.

62 Margolin, *Ukraina i politika Antanty*, pp. 112–19.

63 John Kim Munholland, 'The French Army and Intervention in Southern Russia: 1918–1919', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 22.1 (1981), 43–66.

Even after the Directorate fled Kyiv for Vinnytsia in southwestern Ukraine, Margolin and other diplomatic envoys continued their activities in the Entente capitals, but the rift with the White forces remained unbridged.[64] By the end of 1919, as Denikin's and Kolchak's armies suffered a series of defeats against the Reds, the Entente itself grew reluctant to intervene further in Russian affairs. The alliance concluded between Ukraine and Poland in 1920 also ended in collapse once both Poland and Soviet Russia moved toward peace negotiations. In the Treaty of Riga of 1921, Poland recognized Ukraine's sovereignty not in the Directorate but in Soviet Ukraine. Having lost all external support, the Directorate government, along with its military defeat, lost its territorial base within Ukraine and survived only as a government-in-exile, continuing its activity in interwar Europe.

## CONCLUSION

The view that the political objectives of the Ukrainian national liberation movement after 1917 developed in a linear progression from autonomism, to federalism, and ultimately to independence rests on a simplified evolutionary stage theory of the movement. It is true that Ukrainian independence was only rarely mentioned until the summer of 1917; however, after the October Revolution, it became a realistic political goal. Yet the orientation toward independence never entirely eliminated the prospect of federalism; whenever cooperation with the Entente became necessary, the formation of a federation was always put back on the table. Indeed, what most leaders of the Ukrainian movement sought was to secure political autonomy in which the Ukrainian language would be used as the official language in educational, administrative, and judicial institutions, and in which a regional assembly would represent Ukrainian interests. That goal could be achieved through either independence or federalism. Any personal leaning by individual politicians toward independence or federalism was never strong enough to define or restrict the constitutional vision of the Ukrainian movement as a whole.

Furthermore, the analysis in this study of the close interrelationship between diplomatic orientation and constitutional vision can also be applied to the pro-Soviet choices made by segments of the Ukrainian intelligentsia after 1919. Left-leaning Ukrainians who criticized Petliura's highly militarized Directorate regime, including Vynnychenko and Hrushevsky,

64 On Ukrainian–White–Entente relations after 1919, see Procyk, *Russian Nationalism*, pp. 93–164.

increasingly turned toward cooperation with the Soviet authorities in Moscow and Kharkiv. With the official proclamation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, closely tied to Soviet Russia, the Bolsheviks came to be regarded as a third belligerent force with whom rapprochement on a basis of "confederal federalism" appeared feasible. As Christopher Gilley argues, the Soviet sympathies of some Ukrainian national activists should be attributed not only to pragmatism, but also to ideological affinities and compromises that had been shaped by the wartime experience of shifting flexibly between federalist and independent paths.[65] More broadly, the persistence of federalist alternatives can also be observed in the former Habsburg lands, where plans existed for a loose union of Central European states. It may be said that interwar Central and Eastern Europe was a world in which the principle of self-determination – understood as the alignment of national communities with political units – was widely accepted as a norm, yet its application did not preclude incorporation into larger federative structures. In this respect, the Soviet Union, composed of national republics formally endowed with the right of secession, can likewise be seen as part of the "new Europe" that emerged from the Great War.

65 Christopher Gilley, 'The "Change of Signposts" in the Ukrainian emigration: Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi and the Foreign Delegation of the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 54.3 (2006), 345–74; Chris Gilley, 'Volodymyr Vynnychenko's Mission to Moscow and Kharkov', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 84.3 (2006), 508–37.

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# Anastasiia Ivanova
# National Personal Autonomy in the Ukrainian People's Republic as legislative and constitutional practice: Jewish Community Experience*


## ABSTRACT

The article presents an overview of the participation of Jewish national personal autonomy institutions in legislative activity and constitution-making in Ukraine 1917–1918. The author recognises the leading role they played in drafting the law on national personal autonomy as well as in its further incorporation into the Constitutional text of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Therefore, the author assesses Ukrainian state-building and constitution-making in 1917–1918 as significantly determined by cooperation between Ukrainian democrats and national minorities, which undoubtedly influenced the constitution-making of the period. How agreement was sought on every particular subject of debate, as well as the heated discussions on the draft law between national minorities and Ukrainian democrats, gives us another argument for more broadly analysing law-making and constitution-making as part of social consensus building. The latter, in turn, became part of the basis and guarantees of the sovereignty of the Ukrainian People's Republic as a whole.



KEYWORDS:

National personal autonomy, Jewish, Ukrainian People's Republic, legislation, Constitution of Ukrainian People's Republic 1918



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Following the First World War and the February Revolution of 1917, which led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the establishment of the All-Russian Provisional Government, the Ukrainian national movement gained unprecedented momentum. On 17 March 1917,[1] the Ukrainian Central Rada was established in Kyiv as a representative body composed of political parties, cultural organizations, and civic groups. Under the leadership of historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the Central Rada evolved from a coalition of cultural and social activists into a political institution advocating for Ukrainian autonomy within a future federative Russian state. This demand for self-determination resonated widely across Ukraine, as evidenced by the overwhelming support for Ukrainian parties during the elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly in November 1917.

The relationship between the Central Rada and the Provisional Government in Petrograd was fraught with tension. The Central Rada's First Universal, issued on 23 June 1917, unilaterally proclaimed Ukraine's autonomy. However, this move was met with resistance from the Provisional Government under Alexander Kerensky, which rejected the declaration as separatist. The ensuing political crisis led to negotiations, culminating in the Second Universal on 16 July 1917. The Central Rada's General Secretariat was recognised as an administrative body for Ukraine and the question of autonomy for Ukraine was postponed until the All-Russian Constituent Assembly decided on federalism for Russia. Nevertheless, these compromises unravelled following the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd in October 1917.

On 20 November 1917, in response to growing instability and Bolshevik aggression, the Central Rada issued its Third Universal, proclaiming the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) as an autonomous entity within a future federative Russia. However, escalating tensions with Bolshevik forces culminated in Ukraine's declaration of full independence and national sovereignty through the Fourth Universal on 2 January 1918. This shift from autonomy to sovereignty was driven by both political aspirations and practical concerns over defending Ukraine's territorial integrity against Bolshevik incursions.

National personal autonomy in Ukraine is noteworthy as the very first and promising experience of resolving the national minorities issue within a newly established or restored national state on the ruins

[1] In accordance with the calendar reform enacted by the Ukrainian government in early 1918, which replaced the Julian calendar with the Gregorian system, all dates in this article referring to events in Ukraine during the transitional period of 1917–1918 are presented in the New Style (Gregorian) format. Where relevant, the Old Style (Julian) dates are provided in parentheses to preserve historical accuracy and reflect the dual chronology used in contemporary Ukrainian documents of the time.

of the Russian Empire. The success of this venture can be attributed to the fact that the political interests of Ukrainians as a titular nation and those of national minorities at that critical juncture in history coincided. Another major factor is the very theory of national personal autonomy, which is primarily associated with the achievements of the Austro-Marxists. The conceptual similarity of this theory to the Ukrainian tradition of decentralization and self-governance as well as a respectful attitude to national rights – a philosophy developed by Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895) and partially realized by the nobility parliamentarians at the Galician Sejm in the Habsburg Empire – played a crucial role in the effective adaptation and practical implementation of this idea within Ukrainian, particularly Western Ukrainian, political and cultural contexts.

Traditional historiography, especially Ukrainian, mostly delineates Ukrainian democrats and national minorities in 1917–1918 as primarily distinct political actors who were either antagonistic or collaborative in their interactions throughout the process of Ukrainian state-building.[2] Such a perspective is warranted, given the sometimes profound disparities in their political objectives or the specific strategies they used to achieve them, which significantly complicated the process of communication and cooperation between these actors. Notably, this encompasses, on the one hand, the generally adverse or equivocal stance of minority groups towards the declaration of Ukrainian state sovereignty and independence and, on the other hand, the unconcealable intention of the Ukrainian authorities to resolve the national minorities issue without any significant curtailing of their own powers and authority. Henry Abramson's *In a Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (1999) presents a novel approach, foregrounding the dynamics of cooperation between Ukrainian and Jewish statesmen. Abramson's work elucidates instances of collaboration across diverse political and societal spheres, though such alliances were often transient and achieved varying degrees of success. In our research, both in this study and prior works,[3] we have sought to highlight the crucial contributions of Jewish activists to the formulation of the Ukrainian legislation regarding non-territorial autonomy for national minorities, especially the Law on National Personal Autonomy and the Constitution of the Ukrainian People's Republic. This interpretive framework initially encountered criticism from some Ukrainian

2 George Liber, 'Ukrainian Nationalism and the 1918 Law on National Personal Autonomy', *Nationalities Papers*, 15.1 (1987), 22–42, ff.

3 Anastasija Ivanova, 'Zakon UNR "Pro nacional'no-personal'nu avtonomiju" jak častyna Konstytuciji UNR: do istoriji stvorennja', *Pravova deržava*, 31 (2020), 144–52.

historians but has since garnered support and undergone further development, particularly in Börries Kuzmany's recent fundamental research.[4]

Shifting the reference point to Ukrainian state-building and constitution-making makes it abundantly clear that, despite different political priorities and preferences, the Ukrainian Peoples's Republic was proclaimed and established due to cooperation with national minorities as full-fledged political and legislative actors. Representatives of the latter made a significant contribution to the text of the Constitution of the Ukrainian Republic, although Ukrainian sources still mention neither their authorship nor their participation in the constitution-making and legislative process of 1917–1918 as a whole. Hence, Ukrainian governmental bodies, together with structures of national autonomy, acted as a unified political entity – the governmental body.

Such political practice contributed considerably to the newly formed national identity of *Ukraine as a political nation* and simultaneously influenced much legal tradition, determining its development towards national diversity, traditions of mutual communication, cooperation and collaboration with national minorities living in Ukraine.

It should be emphasized that the subject of this research is mostly Jews who managed to legalize and implement their right to national personal autonomy; when referring to national personal autonomy in this article, we first and foremost mean Jewish national personal autonomy. This choice of research subject can be explained by the factors illustrated below. It was the Jews who demonstrated exceptional dedication and preparedness in asserting their rights, surpassing other national minorities in Ukraine in 1917–1918. Namely, they were skilled and experienced in their self-organization through communities (kehiles or Ukr. *hromady*); they desired to reform their communities in light of revolutionary changes and to legitimize their self-governing *with respect* to Ukrainian state-building; and they had educated and proactive elites that possessed exceptional proficiency in jurisprudence and, therefore, were capable of ensuring legal (normative) and practical implementation of national minorities' rights.

4 Börries Kuzmany, *Vom Umgang mit nationaler Vielfalt. Eine Geschichte der nicht-territorialen Autonomie in Europa* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024).

## I. INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE SECRETARIAT /MINISTRY FOR JEWISH AFFAIRS[5]

A few words are needed about the organization of the Secretariat (later – Ministry) for Nationality Affairs (Ukr. Sekretariat natsional'nykh sprav).[6] The discussion within the Ukrainian Central Rada regarding augmentation of Ukrainian governmental bodies with delegates from national minorities commenced as early in March 1917. In accordance with the *principle of national proportional representation*, this replenishment would ensure that representatives of national minorities made up 30% of all the highest state authorities in Ukraine. The figure of 30% was presented by Ukrainian leaders based on their interpretation of existing statistics, such as the 1897 imperial census. The discussion resulted in determining this proportion of 30%, which generally corresponded with interpretations of existing statistics, such as the 1897 imperial census presented by historian professor Myron Korduba and Ukrainian politician, publisher, and sociologist Mykyta Shapoval. Namely, 46,012,000 people lived on the territory of *ethnographical Ukraine*, and 39,604,200 people lived on the territory of the Ukrainian guberniyas at that time, with Ukrainians accounting for 71% of the population in both regions.[7] The data on the proportion of national minorities among the Ukrainian population of ethnographic Ukraine and that of the Ukrainian guberniyas show slight discrepancies. However, the overall ratio remains consistent: approximately 30% of the Ukrainian population consisted of non-Ukrainians. Thus, data are provided on the residence in Ukraine of 5,376,800 Russians (11.7%), 3,795,760 Jews (8.2%), 2,079,500 Poles (4.5%), 871,270 Germans (1.9%), 435,540 Vlachs (0.9%), 104,780 Greeks (0.2%), and 39,400 Armenians (0.1%).[8]

Subsequently, the official establishment of the post of Vice-Secretary for Jewish affairs was conclusively resolved during the convening of a special Parliamentary Commission on 27 July (14 July old style) 1917. Moisei

5 The institution was initially established as the Vice-Secretariat for Jewish Affairs, later reformed into the Secretariat General for Jewish Affairs, and subsequently into the Ministry of Jewish Affairs. In this publication, for the sake of consistency, we use the generalized name "Secretariat/Ministry of Jewish Affairs", although it officially received this title at a later stage.

6 Translating the name of the institution responsible for defining and implementing the Central Rada's ethnic and national policy presents certain challenges. The body was officially known as the Secretariat (later – Ministry) for Nationality Affairs (Ukr. Sekretariat natsional'nykh sprav), though other variants such as Secretariat (later – Ministry) for Nationalities' Affairs also appear in historiography. While these formulations may sound unusual in modern English, they reflect the conceptual framework of the time, namely the understanding of various national and ethnic groups not as minorities, but as equal national partners within the state structure of 1917. Although a contemporary equivalent might be Secretary for National Minorities' Affairs, period sources consistently refer to the institution as Secretary (General) for Nationality Affairs (see, for example, Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine, hosted by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Abramson's *A Prayer for the Government*, Magocsi's *Ukraina Redux: On Statehood and National Identity*, and *Ukrainian Jewish Encounter*). This terminology more accurately conveys the political and ideological nuances of the era.

7 Myron Korduba, *Terytorija i naselennja Ukrajiny* (Viden': Vydannja 'Vistnyka polityky, literatury j žyttja', 1918), p. 22.

8 Mykyta Šapoval, *Velyka Revoljucija i Ukrajins'ka vyzvol'na Programa* (Praha, 1928), pp. 6–7.

Zilberfarb (Silberfarb) (1876–1934), United Jewish Socialist Workers Party, became the supported candidate for the position.

The Statute of the General Secretariat of 29 July (16 July old style), 1917,[9] unofficially referred to as the first Constitution of Ukraine,[10] instituted three Vice-Secretary positions within the Secretariat for Nationality Affairs, representing Russians, Jews, and Poles, i.e., the three largest national minorities in revolutionary Ukraine, each of which had the right to cast the deciding vote on national issues at meetings of the General Secretary. Salomon Goldelman assessed this as "the birthday of Jewish national autonomy in Ukraine".[11] Subsequently, in November 1917, the Vice-Secretariat underwent reform and became the Secretariat General, which, as of mid-January 1918, was redesignated as the Ministry of Jewish Affairs. The entire competence and work of the Secretariat/Ministry of Jewish Affairs was divided among three departments: Education (headed by Abraham Strashun, Bund); Community and National Self-Government Affairs, which would deal with community affairs, except for those related to education (headed by Abraham Revusky [Revutsky], Poale Zion); and General Affairs, which would deal with the protection of Jewish rights and all other matters that were not included in the activities of the first two departments (headed by Isai Khurgin, 'Farejnikte'). The Secretariat/Ministry also had an Economic and Statistical subdepartment, whose staff was constantly expanding and numbered about 100 people at the end of April 1918.[12]

However, before this, on 2 October 1917, the Provisional Jewish National Council (PJNC) was established.[13] Although initially instituted as an advisory entity under the Vice-Secretariat, in practice the PJNC was integral to the decision-making process, with all major resolutions, including the draft laws of the Vice-Secretariat, requiring its concurrence. With the exception of Orthodox-conservative Jews, the PJNC included five representatives from each of the Jewish political factions in Ukraine: the Zionists, Volkspartei, the Jewish Social Democratic Party, Poale Zion, the United Jewish Socialist Party, and Bund.[14]

The national personal autonomy concept envisaged the establishment of a mini-state model. Therefore, alongside the executive body, an institution similar to a legislative representative body was deemed necessary. The Jewish National Assembly, as such a representative body, was

9 *Nova Rada*, 90 (18 July 1917).
10 Dmytro Doroshenko, *Istorija Ukrajiny 1917–1923 rr.*, I (1923), p. 105.
11 Solomon Gol'del'man, 'Žydivs'ka nacional'na avtonomija v Ukrajini 1917–20', *Zapysky* NTŠ, 182 (Mjunchen–Paryž–Jerusalym, 1967).
12 Tetjana Batanova, 'Do istoriji jevrejs'koho predstavnyctva v Ukrajins'kij Central'nij Radi: dekil'ka dokumentiv Ministerstva z jevrejs'kych sprav', *Pam'jatky: archeobrafičnyj ščoričnyk*, 11 (2010), 175–84 (p. 181).
13 Tsentral'nyj deržavnyj archiv vyščych orhaniv vlady i upravlinnja Ukrajiny (Central State Archives of the Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine, hereafter TsDAVO), f. 1748, op. 1, spr. 1, ark. 7–8.
14 Ibid., ark. 7–9.

to be elected by a Jewish Constituent Assembly. Due to Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky's coup on 29 April 1918, the full Assembly never gathered. Instead, the Small Jewish National Assembly[15] was elected and acted from 30 December, 1918, as a provisional Jewish representative body in Ukraine. In correspondence with public organizations, it was referred to as the 'Vor-parlament' (pre-parliament),[16] and, referring to the aforementioned mini-state model, it was functionally similar to the Ukrainian Little Rada.

The first documents developed by the Secretariat were its own Instruction (Regulations), which defined its powers and main principles of activity. At the first meetings of the Secretariat General for Nationality Affairs, Zilberfarb proposed the Instruction for the Vice-Secretary for Nationality Affairs, which was approved by Oleksandr Shul'hyn (1889–1960), the Secretary General for Nationality Affairs, on 22 July 1917. The Instruction encompassed nine salient points, specifically mandating that the Vice-Secretary's responsibilities included protecting the rights of Ukraine's national minorities and endorsing the autonomous development of their domestic cultural life. The Vice-Secretary was obligated to formulate and present legislative proposals and administrative drafts to the Secretary General for Nationality Affairs. The Secretary was an integral participant in the legislative process, possessing the right of legislative initiative. Moreover, no regulatory decision or order pertaining to the internal affairs of any national minority could be enacted without prior enhancement. The Vice-Secretary was required to communicate with various institutions representing national minorities exclusively in the respective minority's language. This linguistic protocol extended to ministerial documentation, as stipulated by the Instruction. Furthermore, each Vice-Secretary was responsible for establishing a National Council, tasked with addressing the most urgent and significant issues concerning the internal affairs of national minorities.

Minority representatives endeavoured to increase their powers, a development articulated by Shul'hyn during a Governmental Meeting and reflected in the aforementioned Instruction. Thus, the Statute of the General Secretariat established the position of Vice-Secretary for Nationality Affairs. Concurrently, the Instruction established not merely a post (position) but also the Vice-Secretariats for Nationality Affairs – a whole governmental organ created through the apportionment of the Secretariat General for Nationality Affairs. The Instruction further stipulated the maintenance of secretariat documentation in the minority language and necessitated an obligatory countersignature by the pertinent Vice-Secretary regarding laws of the Ukrainian People's Republic that affected the internal affairs of

15 TsDAVO, f. 1748, op. 1, spr. 8, ark. 63–65.
16 TsDAVO, f. 3295, op. 1, spr. 2; *Nova Rada*, 38 (21 March 1918).

national minorities. Procedurally, the Instruction required approvement by the General Secretariat. However, given that matters of language and countersignature exceeded its purview and demanded legal regulation, the General Secretariat, on 29 July 1917, refrained from endorsing the Instruction, opting instead to "take it into consideration". Instead, the same day the Commission of the Little Rada adopted a Resolution on replenishing the composition of the Central Rada with representatives of national minorities, in accordance with the principle of national proportional representation.[17]

The political situation and the diminution of the General Secretariat's authority by the Provisional Government in Petrograd led to two months of inattention to these issues. The competencies of the national Vice-Secretariats were broached again on 29 September 1917, when the Declaration of the General Secretariat enumerated the responsibilities of the Vice-Secretariats for Nationality Affairs. Representatives of national minority groups played a notable role in drafting the Declaration, with particular emphasis placed on the protection of their rights. The Declaration was deliberated upon at a session of the Little Rada on the same date, culminating in a vote of confidence in the General Secretariat.

Nonetheless, the governmental Declaration lacked legislative force and, as such, could not adjudicate the contentious issues of language and the requisite coordination of legislative acts of the Central Rada with the Secretariat, which necessitated legislative intervention.

Therefore, adhering to the Instructions issued by the Provisional Government, the Secretariat General for National Affairs crafted a Statute in an effort to augment the authority of the Vice-Secretariat. Its last editions were drawn up in the latter part of October 1917, after the October putsch in Petrograd that overthrew the Provisional Government and established Bolshevik rule in Russia. Interestingly, at the same time the Secretariat General of Internal Affairs justified the establishment of the position of Vice-Secretariat for Jewish Affairs by referring to the Provisional Government's Instruction of 4 August 1917, indirectly acknowledging and legitimizing its validity in this way. They instructed regional (Ukr. *huberns'kyj*) and district (Ukr. *povitovyj*) commissioners, as well as regional administrations and municipal authorities in Ukraine, to follow the guidance of the Vice-Secretary for Jewish Affairs regarding matters related to Jewish religious life, namely concerning box taxes (Ukr. *korobkovyj zbir*) and rabbis, and to seek their advice when relevant questions arose.[18] Meanwhile, the political changes after the October putsch in Petrograd precipitated

17 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada: Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, Vladyslav Verstjuk, and others, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 1996), II, p. 207.
18 Batanova, 'Do istoriji jevrejs'koho predstavnyctva', p. 181.

a shift in the political and legal landscape, making approval of the Statute irrelevant for some time.

## II. MAKING OF THE NATIONAL PERSONAL AUTONOMY LAW

Undoubtedly, the most prominent draft formulated by the Secretariat was the Law on National Personal Autonomy, a pioneering law of its kind globally.[19] A specialized Law Commission, informally referred to as The Jewish Commission or Zilberfarb's Commission, was responsible for its preparation. The commission comprised Moisei Zilberfarb, his deputy Isai Khurgin (1887–1925), and the Secretariat's legal adviser Maks Shats-Anin (1885–1975). Its endeavours are predominantly documented through memoir sources and selected governmental minutes. In the few preserved sources in which the constitutional efforts of the Ukrainian Social Democrats are highlighted, this Law is referred to exclusively with reference to its development by the Ministry of Nationality Affairs or by the Special Commission and without detailed information on the future draft. Furthermore, despite its apparent integrity the draft Constitution, presented by Mykhailo Hrushevsky in December 1917 for a public discussion in *Narodna Volia*, did not contain the concept of national personal autonomy or any provisions on the protection of national minorities, while mentioning this idea overall.[20] The fact that the Ukrainian democrats simply did not have comprehensive knowledge of the draft, since they were not involved in its drafting, seems to be the only logical explanation for such secrecy and lack of transparency.

As Zilberfarb recalls, the law was drafted from scratch. The authors were challenged to turn blurred political demands and emotional party slogans into precise and strict legal terms, as well as to delineate the legal framework that would underpin the organization of national minorities, legal relationships between national organizations, and their interactions with the state apparatus.[21]

The complexity of the situation was exacerbated by its urgency. According to the Third Universal, declared on 7 (20) November 1917, the draft law on national personal autonomy was to be submitted to the Central Rada as a legislative proposal "in the nearest future". However, the parliament's jurisdiction was constrained to a mere few weeks,

19 Kuzmany, *Vom Umgang mit nationaler Vielfalt*, p. 390.
20 Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, 'Proekt Ukrajins'koji Konstituciji', in *Hruševs'kyy M.S. Tvory*, ed. by Pavlo Sochan' and others, 50 vols (Lviv: Svit, 2002–), IV, bk. 1 (2007), pp. 69–73 (p. 69); *Narodna volia*, 154 7/20 November 1917), 1–2.
21 Moses Silberfarb, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine. Kiev, 1918/19*, trans. by David H. Lincoln (New York: Aleph Press, 1993), pp. 65–66.

pending the Ukrainian Constituent Assembly, whose elections were slated for 27 December 1917, and the convocation was scheduled on 9 January 1918. The law draft was supposed to be submitted to the Constituent Assembly, alongside pivotal matters such as land reform and the Constitution of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Consequently, the initiators, cognizant of the significance and priority of these issues within the Ukrainian political agenda, endeavoured to articulate the legal norms in such a manner as to prevent or minimize potential deliberations that might impede or delay the adoption of this law. Meanwhile the establishment of non-territorial autonomies for national minorities had already incited significant contention within the Jewish community, not to mention at the national level.

It should be recalled that national personal autonomy in its classical Austro-Marxist understanding entails the establishment by national minorities of an autonomous system of self-governing entities, which are acknowledged by state authorities and integrated into the national governance framework and the state apparatus. This model resembles a mini-state within the state, complete with its own representative and executive bodies, local authorities, the right to collect taxes, and even a kind of symbolic substitute of the territory, namely the national cadastre.[22] Thus, national representatives and national self-governing bodies are vested with an extensive array of mutual rights and responsibilities, transitioning their legal relationships from a private level to the public domain. It is crucial that the minority self-government undergoes transformation into public administration. According to one of the authors of the concept, Otto Bauer, this was to guarantee national and personal autonomy from the arbitrariness of the state because, in this case, the state would destroy itself by destroying national self-government:

> We can protect the nations without abandoning the advantages of the personality principle if we place public administration in their hands. The administrative apparatus is the living reality of the state. Without an administrative apparatus the modern state cannot exist, can neither summon its soldiers nor collect its taxes. The organic regulation of national relations makes the nations dependent on the instruments of power of the state, upon whose power their legal independence is based. However, if the state places administration in the hands of the nations, it will become dependent on the nations. The state secures national rights for the nations, and these

22 Anastasiia Ivanova, 'Jevrejs'ka nacional'na avtonomija v Ukrajini: Sproba jurydyčnoho analizu', in *Jevreji Ukrajiny: Revoljucija j pisljarevoljucijna modernizacija. Polityka. Kul'tura. Suspil'stvo: Zbirka statej*, ed. by Serhij Hirik (Kyjiv: Laurus, 2018), pp. 27–36 (pp. 28–29).

> rights are guaranteed on a continual basis and cannot be retracted, since if the state destroys national self-administration, it destroys its own administrative system and thus annihilates itself.[23]

The draft law was traditionally considered firstly by the Provisional Jewish National Council, then, on 19 December 1917, by the General Secretariat. The Ukrainian Central Rada began considering the law on 30 December 1917 (12 January 1918), continued on 2 (15) January 1918, and finally adopted it on 9 (22) January.[24]

Immediate opposition emerged at the meeting of the Jewish National Council. Strong objection was expressed by the Bundists against the point that "the scope of affairs within the competence of the National Union" should be determined by the Constituent Assembly of this nation and approved by the Constituent Assembly of the Ukrainian People's Republic or the Parliament (Article 7 of the draft). The Bund insisted on the elimination of the Jewish Constituent Assembly from this issue, adhering to its political Party Platform and its vision of national autonomy as exclusively cultural. The rejection of their proposal concerning the scope of competence and powers (sovereignty) of the National Union and its individual bodies meant the Bundists had to declare their opposition to the National Council's decision and to reserve their right to speak publicly against this decision in both the General Secretariat and the Central Rada. Later, they exercised this right repeatedly.

The issue of the extent of authority granted to the National Union, initially broached by the Bundists, emerged as a contentious topic in subsequent deliberations within the Ukrainian government. A compromise was reached by amending Article 7 of the Law on National-Personal Autonomy with a provision that disagreements concerning the jurisdictional boundaries between national minorities' institutions and Ukraine's national oneswould be adjudicated by a bespoke Conciliation Commission, which would be composed of an equitable representation from both the concerned institutions. Nevertheless, there was no unity here either. The Ukrainian Social Democrats, who, according to Zilberfarb, opposed the concept of national autonomy and favoured a reduction in the purview of autonomous entities, advocated for a Conciliation Commission dominated by Ukrainian members rather than minority representatives. Ultimately, they acquiesced to a balanced representation from both sides.

23 Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 284.
24 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada: Dokumenty i materialy*, II: 10 December 1917 – 29 April 1918.

The Ukrainian Social Democrats vehemently contested Article 6, which endowed the National Unions with the right to collect taxes, thereby diminishing the fiscal capacity of the Ukrainian state. National Unions were expected to be content with allocations from state and municipal budgets. Minority representatives deemed this stipulation completely unsatisfactory because state funding provided the state with a potent instrument for coercion, 'manual' management, and direct control over the National Unions. Nonetheless, it was crucial that the state's financial reserves remained unaffected by the National Unions, a stance Zilberfarb successfully advocated to the Central Rada and ultimately persuaded it to adopt.

A controversial issue turned out to be the right of free withdrawal from the National Unions. The Mensheviks challenged this provision, perceiving it as an avenue to form new parallel unions within the same nationality, potentially leading to further fragmentation upon the emergence of substantial ideological rifts or the imposition of additional taxes. This quandary was addressed by complicating the formal requirements associated with the withdrawal process from the National Union.[25]

Besides, there was opposition to conferring legislative powers upon the National Unions, with a proposition that they be restricted to promulgating solely administrative directives. Proponents of autonomy argued that such a limitation would transform the very national autonomy into mere self-governance.

Eventually the law was adopted with minor amendments in the wording proposed by the Jewish Secretariat, excluding the only provision unconditionally rejected by the Central Rada. This provision sought to incorporate the Secretaries General, who represented the nations organized into unions, into the governmental Cabinet, thereby granting full Cabinet membership to emissaries of the Russian, Jewish, and Polish national minorities (Article 10).

Although certain provisions of the law led to intense debates among the factions, and memoirs contain references to the Central Rada members' profoundly adverse emotional reactions to the law's first formal presentation in the parliament,[26] not a single 'against' or 'abstained' vote were recorded when the law was voted on.[27]

Multiple drafts of the law have been preserved. According to various sources the complete draft initially consisted of 12 or 13 articles. Ultimately, the law was adopted with 11 articles and officially published

25 Silberfarb, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, pp. 70–71.
26 Iosef Šechtman, 'Evrejskaja obščestvennost' na Ukraine (1917–1919 g.g.)', in *Kniga o russkom evrejstve: 1917–1967: Sb.*, ed. by Jakov Frumkin, Grigorij Aronson, and Aleksej Gol'denvejzer (N'ju Jork: Sojuz russkich evreev, 1968), pp. 22–43 (p. 25).
27 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, II, p. 98.

with 10.[28] During the Central Rada's session, the aforementioned Article 10 was excluded; upon the law's promulgation, the article enabling the National Unions to affiliate with their counterparts within the Russian Federal Republic was omitted. Noteworthily, the Law adopted on 9 January was published nearly three months later, on 2 April 1918. Thus, it was adopted before and published after the adoption of the Fourth Universal, which engendered a procedural legal collision. Specifically, the then Ministry of Justice Mykhailo Tkachenko (1879–1920) believed that the law should be changed by general legislative means, while his successor, Serhii Shelukhin (Sheluhyn) (1864–1938), emphasized that the General Secretary lacked the authority to delay official publication of the law. This conflict was resolved by discarding the article that regulated the legal link with federal Russia, which the Fourth Universal had nullified.[29]

The comprehensive text of the Law was subsequently incorporated, verbatim, into the Constitution of the Ukrainian People's Republic, adopted on 29 April 1918. Comparison of the Law's texts with the relevant section of the 1918 Constitution reveals its near-identical content, barring a few editorial amendments. Consequently, we believe that there is a compelling case for replenishing the authorship of the 1918 Constitution with the names of the authors of the Law on National Personal Autonomy.

In the minutes of the Central Council and the General Assembly, no further references to work on the text of the Constitution were found until it was submitted to the Central Rada for consideration. According to periodicals, Arkadiy Stepanenko (a member of the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary Party) reported after closed meetings of the Rada factions on the evening of 27 April that the commission was concluding its deliberations on the draft Constitution of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Stepanenko proposed expeditious discussion, leading to an emergency meeting scheduled for Monday, 29 April at 11.30 am. On the same day, Deputy-Minister of Jewish Affairs Khurgin's proposal to submit the draft law 'On the Jewish National Constituent Assembly', developed by the Ministry, was approved. Moreover, Dmitrii Odinets proposed submitting a draft prepared by the Ministry of Great Russian Affairs 'On the Convocation of the Great Russian Constituent Assembly', which was also approved. Urgently, Vsevolod Holubovych, Chairman of the Rada of People's Ministers, submitted a draft law on Ukrainian citizenship (to replace the current flawed law), requesting prompt consideration. Ultimately, only the Constitution was discussed and adopted during the Central Rada meeting on 29 April 1918.

28 Ibid., p. 234.
29 Ibid.

## III. OTHER LEGISLATION BY THE SECRETARIAT/MINISTRY FOR JEWISH AFFAIRS

Among the laws drafted by the Secretariat, the Law on National Personal Autonomy was obviously the most resonant for Ukrainian democrats and most well known in modern historiographical discourse. Nevertheless, this law was not singular in its impact. The vigorous activity of the Ministry, concerning many spheres of Jewish life, accelerated the implementation of the right to autonomy prior to its actual proclamation and, in turn, necessitated effective and comprehensive normative regulation.

The Secretariat drafted a number of laws and regulations that affected legal relationships, as listed below:

- organizational and legal support for Jewish personal autonomy institutions at all levels (from the complex reorganization of Jewish communities to the Jewish National Council and the convening of the Provisional National Assembly);
- establishment of a network of educational institutions (Jewish teacher seminaries, new primary and secondary schools) the struggle for the rights of the Jewish language (starting with maintaining all the secretariat's documentation in Yiddish);
- the reform of the Jewish communities, namely kehiles, which were to become a foundation of the very Jewish national autonomy.

Thus, according to the archival documents, the following laws were drafted and submitted by the Ministry: a Provisional Law on Jewish Territorial Communities, a Law on Teachers' Seminaries, on the Management of Schools, on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, on the Provisional National Assembly, on the National Secretariat, on the Jewish National Register (kadaster), on the Jewish National Union in Ukraine and others.

In fact, the Codes on the Statute of the Jewish Community[30] and on Elections to the Jewish Public Self-government[31] were elaborated. The latter encompassed the Law and Regulations on Community Governance, comprising seven chapters with 85 articles. These Acts appeared to be competently constructed in terms of legislative technique as they exhaustively regulated the management of community life, its bodies and institutions, legal status and powers, income and spending, issues of inheritance and legal responsibility, and many others. All this additionally testifies to the high degree of professionalism and expertise in the legislative practice of the Secretary/Ministry's and Commission's members.

30 TsDAVO, f. 3295, op. 1, spr. 1, ark. 15.
31 Tsentral'nyj deržavnyj archiv hromads'kych ob'jednan' ta ukrajiniky, f. 41, spr. 9, l. 20–25.

The Jewish community was designated to become the foundational pillar of Jewish self-government. The reform of the kehiles centred around two key principles: 1) secularization of the community and education, and 2) modernization of the taxation system – a shift from a fixed 'box tax' (Ukr. *korobkovij podatok*) to a progressive income tax.

It was anticipated that implementation of the reform would not flow seamlessly, given both the decline of the communities themselves and different political forces' divergent visions of their future. This situation kept the Secretariat and the Jewish National Council, operating under its purview, from taking responsibility for addressing essential reform issues. Instead, these matters were left to the discretion of the Jewish National Assembly, which intended to become the constituent body of national non-territorial autonomy. Simultaneously, an urgent reset of the communities through elections necessitated a concise draft law. The draft law on the Formation of Jewish Councils and Elections to Them[32] consisted of only seven articles and an appendix: Temporary Regulations on the Elections of Members of Jewish Public Councils. The primary focus of this draft was procedural guidelines for elections, while broader council reform was deferred until 1918. Finally, the Law on the Establishment of Jewish Public Councils and the Elections of Members of These Councils was discussed at the Little Rada session on 2 December 1917, and published in the official gazette.[33] The discussion was sketched in its minutes: "Again a very interesting meeting. The enormous gathering overflowed into the galleries. Among them were almost the majority of Zionists, who were brought here by a summons to discuss the Law on Jewish Public Council".[34]

Despite its temporality, this Law provided a legal foundation for holding elections to the councils (Ukr. *rady*) of modern democratic Jewish communities. Nevertheless, the peculiarities of wartime predestined the elections to be held not simultaneously and everywhere. The Decree of the Ministry of Jewish Affairs on the Term of Elections stipulated elections to Jewish communities to be held before 1 February 1918. The Temporary Regulations on the Elections of Members of Jewish Community Councils of 2 December 1917, referring to the future Statute of the Jewish Community, stated the right to participate in these elections to citizens of Jewish nationality over the age of 20, regardless of sex.

Some numbers should be mentioned when talking about the elections. The Census of 1897 recorded 472 Jewish communities in Ukraine; the apparatus of the Ministry of Jewish Affairs noted 600 communities

32 TsDAVO, f. 1854, op.1, spr. 20, ark. 12.
33 *Visnyk Heneral'noho Sekretariatu UNR*, 6 (1917), p. 1.
34 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na rada*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, Vladyslav Verstjuk, and others (Kyjiv: Nauk. dumka, 1996), I.

in 1917. At the same time, according to the same ministry, elections were held in 250 communities: in the Poltava province, elections were held in 114 communities; in the Kyiv guberniya, in 106 communities; in the Taurida guberniya, in 10 communities, including Berdiansk, Melitopol, Orikhiv, Kakhovka. However, before the liquidation of the Ministry, it managed to process and approve election results in 194 communities.[35]

The elections to the Kyiv 'metropolitan' Jewish community, which took place on 31 December 1917, and 1 January 1918, are recalled by the jurist, writer, publisher, public figure, and member of the Ukrainian Central Rada (April 1918) Aleksei Goldenveiser (1890–1979) in his memoirs:

> The proportional system again appeared in them [elections] in all its specific features. As a result, as expected, the Zionists received the greatest representation in the new community. Together with the Orthodox factions, they had a guaranteed majority. Socialist parties gained about 30% of the votes. The leader of the Zionists, N.S. Sirkin, was elected Chairman of the Community Council; the community administration was composed of representatives of Zionism and Orthodoxy. For the first time since the revolution, the socialist wing was in the opposition minority.[36]

Instead, the socialists adopted a separate Resolution on the Community (March 1918) in which they called for "vigorous struggle against all attempts to turn the modern community into the old-fashioned 'economic government' and set out their own vision of the basic principles of the organization of such a modern reformed community".

The main document determining the legal status of Jewish communities and regulating the principles of their activities was to be the abovementioned Law on Jewish Community Administration[37] (another name Statute of the Jewish Community), the complete draft of which is preserved in the archives.

Under the Law, community councils and boards were responsible for local Jewish communities. These local authorities were legally defined as public legal bodies of Jewish national self-government that were entrusted with overseeing all economic and administrative matters within their respective communities. Specifically, the community council served as the elected decision-making body, addressing substantive issues, while

35 Tamara Makarenko, 'Polityka Ukrajins'koji Central'noji Rady ščodo nacional'nych menšyn (berezen' 1917 – kviten' 1918 rr.)' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Berdjans'kyj deržavnyj pedahohičnyj universitet, 2008).

36 Aleksej Gol'denvejzer, 'Iz kievskich vospominanij (1917–1920 gg)', in *Archiv russkoj revoljucii, izdavaemyj I.V. Gessenom* (Berlin, 1922–1937), V (1922), pp. 161–303 (p. 200).

37 TsDAVO, f. 3295, op. 1, spr. 1, ark. 15.

the community administration acted as the executive branch. The formation of the community council followed a proportional representation principle according to the population size of the relevant territorial community. For instance, in communities with over 10,000 inhabitants (such as Odesa, Kyiv, and Ekaterinoslav), approximately 38 council members were planned, adhering to the ratio of one council member for every 2,000 residents. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian government did not manage to adopt this bill, which was crucial for the Jewish community, leaving it unrealized due to following shifts in the state's overarching policy on national autonomies.[38]

Another significant legislative development was the enactment of the bill concerning the Jewish Teachers' Seminary in Kyiv. Adopted during the Little Rada session on 11 April 1918, the Statute of the Kyiv Jewish Teachers' Seminary focused on education reform that transferred the seminary to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Jewish Affairs.[39] The seminary was established in order to educate and prepare 'teachers' for primary Jewish schools in the Ukrainian People's Republic and was expected to open on 1 July 1918. Additionally, discussions revolved around establishing ten similar full Jewish teacher seminaries and teacher institutes across Ukraine. The same legislative initiative included funding proposals for various educational programs, namely 5-week summer courses for teachers at Jewish public schools in Kyiv, Odesa, and Yekaterinoslav, 3-month courses for secondary school teachers etc. As with all projects requiring state budget financing, the Committee of Legislative Amendments submitted this draft law to the Central Rada, along with the course program, cost estimates, and a proposal for funding the publication of textbooks. Notably, the Kyiv Seminary's situation was somewhat exceptional as educational matters typically fell under the competence of local self-government, and seminaries were generally financed by local self-governing bodies. Initially it was planned that the establishment of a seminary in Kyiv would serve as a certain guidepost for the regions. However, the priority decision to establish the Jewish Teachers' Seminary in Zhytomyr was made by Volhynia Provincial Council (Ukr. *Zemstvo*).[40]

Language considerations received significant attention during this period. Teaching in Russian was closely associated with Russification policies and met with disapproval from pro-Ukrainian circles. On the other hand, Ukrainian, while less known and less popular among Jewish communities, did not emerge as a viable language of instruction. Consequently,

38 Ibid.
39 *Vistnyk Rady Narodnych Ministriv UNR*, 26 (1918), p. 1.
40 Silberfarb, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, p. 49.

Yiddish took over the role previously held by Russian, driven by not only cultural and national factors but also political considerations.[41]

The language of instruction at the Jewish teachers' seminary became a subject of parliamentary debate. The central question was which authority would decide between Yiddish and Hebrew as the seminary's language – the Jewish National Council as the governing body of national autonomy, or the Little Rada through a special law. Noteworthily, during these discussions, Deputy Minister Khurgin made history by speaking Ukrainian – an unprecedented occurrence in the Central Rada that is sketched in the minutes as "the first time in the Central Rada when a Jew spoke Ukrainian". Subsequently, efforts were made to resolve the language issue through legislation. A proposed law titled On the Use of Languages of National Minorities sought to regulate language policy; however, despite discussions, the matter never advanced beyond the planning stage.

Moreover, the Jewish Vice-Secretariat drafted several laws to define institutional and organizational frameworks for national personal autonomy. These drafts addressed key issues, including On the Provisional National Assembly, On the National Secretariat, On the Jewish National Register, On the Jewish National Union in Ukraine.

## IV. HUMAN DIMENSION OF THE AUTONOMY

This vigorous legislative effort was led by highly professional lawyers serving on the special Law Commission of the Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs. We have already mentioned three of them who were responsible for the Law on National Personal Autonomy drafting. Vice-Secretary and later Minister Zilberfarb held a law degree and obtained his doctorate in law from the University of Bern in 1911.[42] His inaugural dissertation, titled *Die Verwaltung der jüdischen Gemeinden in Russland, historisch und dogmatisch dargestellt* (The Administration of Jewish Communities in Russia: Historical and Dogmatic Perspectives),[43] was published in 1911 in Pressburg (modern Bratislava).

Another key legal advisor of the Jewish Ministry was Maks Urievich Shats-Anin (1885–1975), who also possessed a doctorate in law. His

41 Ibid.

42 In certain instances, Zilberfarb's doctorate is erroneously attributed to earlier dates, along with the assertion that he held a medical degree (as seen, for instance, in the German National Library catalogue). However, this confusion likely arises from the fact that his sister, Malka Zilberfarb, obtained her medical doctorate in Bern one year prior.

43 Moses Silberfarb, *Die Verwaltung der Jüdischen Gemeinden in Rußland. Historisch und Dogmatisch dargestellt. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der hohen Juristischen Fakultät der Universität Bern* (Preßburg: Adolf Alkaly & Sohn, 1911).

dissertation, 'Zur Nationalitaetenfrage' (On the National Question), was completed at the University of Bern in 1910 and resulted in a monograph called 'Die Nationalitätenproblem der Gegenwart: eine staatsrechtlich-politische Studie' (The nationalities problem of the present: a study in constitutional law and politics), published in Riga in 1910 under the name Maxim Anin.[44] In his memoirs, Shats-Anin recalls defending his dissertation again in 1913 at the Demidov Lyceum in Yaroslavl in the Russian empire, focusing on 'The Solution of the National Question in Austria-Hungary', and subsequently receiving the degree of 'Candidate of Laws' (equivalent Master of Law) – this degree was required in the Russian empire for the practice of law.[45]

Khurgin, another key member of the Law Commission responsible for drafting legislation on national-personal autonomy, also contributed to this field. However, detailed information about his activities remains scarce.

There is also evidence of other highly qualified professionals being members of the Law Commission of the Jewish Ministry. This refers to prominent Kyivan attorneys Semen Ratner (1880–1938) and Stanislav Korngold (1884–1938), both of whom were later were repressed and executed by the Bolshevik regime, and other legal practitioners, namely Moisei Mazor, Moisei Yudin, Elisaveta Weinstein, as well as politicians and public figures, namely Marin Gindes, Iakov Aleshkovskyi, David Levin and some others.

Specialists within the Secretariat also worked to enhance legal education. For instance, another Law Commission member, Vice-Director Iosef Khersonskyi, had access to the Law Seminary at St. Vladimir Kiev University (an analogue of modern doctoral studies) and utilized university library resources for the Secretariat's needs.[46]

Thus, human resources were instrumental in defining the normative framework of the principle of national-personal autonomy. The Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs' rule-making and legislative activities were integral to the broader Ukrainian constitutional process in the early twentieth century, particularly in shaping Jewish non-territorial autonomy in Ukraine.

* * *

To summarize, firstly, modern Ukrainian historiography traditionally attributes the adoption of the Law on National Personal Autonomy exclusively to Ukrainian democratic and socialist circles. Indeed, one can agree that

44 Maxim Anin, *Die Nationalitätenproblem der Gegenwart: eine staatsrechtlich-politische Studie* (Riga: Schnackenburg, 1910).
45 Ruta Šac-Mar'jaš, *Byl', jav' i mečta: kniga ob otce* (Riga, 1995), p. 63.
46 TsDAVO, f. 1748, op. 1, spr. 5, ark. 8.

the decentralization of power and the protection of the rights of national minorities are prominent features that distinguish the Ukrainian legal tradition from the Russian Imperial one, which for the most part nurtured ethnocentricity and intolerance.[47] Simultaneously, there are various forms of protection of national minorities and their cultural rights. The institution of national personal autonomy is a specific form and an acknowledged intellectual achievement of the Austro-Marxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner. Ukrainian politicians preferred *national territorial autonomy* in 1917 for themselves, when they as a national minority fought with Petrograd for their rights and for national territorial autonomy for Ukrainians. Later, in the role of authorities they considered a non-territorial approach and *national proportional representation* sufficient for protection of non-Ukrainian minorities' rights. Without diminishing the role of the Ukrainian socialists and democrats in voting and final approval of the law during the legislative process, I note that this law – as well as the very idea of organizing the life of national minorities in Ukraine as *national personal autonomy*, which is distinctly different from other non-territorial forms – was a major result of the Jewish community's activities. They gradually brought the Law to the highest legislative level due to 1) a coincidence of political interests and 2) instrumentally ensured national proportional representation of national minorities in public authorities – in the Ukrainian Central Rada as the parliamentary body, and in the General Secretariat as the governmental body.

Secondly, the members of the Law Commission of the Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs who were involved in the Law On National Personal Autonomy drafting may be considered architects and co-authors of the Constitution of Ukraine, since this law was fully incorporated into its final text as a separate integral section with minor changes of a purely editorial nature. This is one more argument in a favour of if not a lack of interest in the national personal autonomy, then loyalty to it (this idea was more tolerated than promoted by the Ukrainian authorities) and trust in national minorities, alongside a tendency to delegate and decentralize power as a whole.

47 George Liber, 'Ukrainian Nationalism and the 1918 Law on National-Personal Autonomy', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 15 (1987), 22–44.

Thirdly, national personal autonomy in the Ukrainian People's Republic was not only a pioneering approach to resolving the national minorities issue, but also one of the first such efforts among the states that were restored or emerged from the ruins of the Russian Empire. It was also a unique case of combining two progressive concepts of that time: *national personal autonomy* and *national proportional representation*. This synthesis made it possible to enact comprehensive legislation for the protection of minority rights and to establish local autonomous authorities tasked with ensuring that protection. Incorporation of these authorities' bodies into the state apparatus, where the Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs simultaneously represented both Jewish personal autonomy and the Ukrainian state apparatus, was aimed to safeguard Jewish autonomy from undesirable state interference.

Thus, the Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs as a Ukrainian governmental body implemented this autonomy for national communities in Ukraine. Moisei Zilberfarb recalls that during his term of office, "in fact, the minister himself represented the missing institutions: he performed the functions of the executive body simultaneously with the representation of the nation". Later, the institutions of autonomy were also marked by the transitional and temporary nature of their legally defined forms, as well as the vigorous legislative and other activities of autonomous bodies. Thus, the Ministry of Jewish Affairs, the Provisional National Assembly, and the Little National Council took over the functions associated with national-personal autonomy and energetically worked to implement it while facing many practical challenges along the way. During the following period of the Directory, the functions of the Parliament or National Assembly were performed by the Provisional National Assembly, and, in the period between sessions, by the Small National Assembly, a body similar to the Ukrainian Little Rada. The dominance of such temporary and provisional forms and institutions reflects a common pattern in contexts of weak institutional development – an inherent feature of transitional nation-states, such as Ukrainian statehood in 1917–1921.

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# THE IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE PROCESS OF SOVEREIGNIZATION OF THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, 1917–1918


## ABSTRACT

This article examines the political, socio-economic, and military foundations of Ukraine's first modern bid for statehood during the years 19a14–1921, focusing particularly on the role of Symon Petliura and the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR). It argues that Ukraine's drive toward independence emerged not from an early separatist consensus but from the radicalization of the Russian Revolution, the collapse of imperial authority, and the Bolshevik coup of October 1917, which constituted a decisive breach of loyalty between Ukraine and the disintegrating Russian Empire. The analysis highlights three key dimensions of the Ukrainian revolutionary project: the evolution of political programs from autonomy to sovereignty; the centrality and unresolved nature of the agrarian question; and the attempted nationalization (Ukrainization) of the armed forces as a substitute for absent state structures. Particular attention is paid to the political thought and actions of Petliura, Vynnychenko, and Hrushevsky, whose differing ideological commitments shaped both the possibilities and limitations of the Ukrainian struggle for self-determination. While external powers viewed an independent Ukraine as incompatible with their strategic interests, and internal divisions undermined the consolidation of state institutions, the revolutionary experience forged a durable idea of Ukrainian statehood. The article concludes that although the UNR ultimately failed, its legacy – especially the political agency embodied by Petliura – created a foundational narrative that resurfaced in 1991 with the successful realization of Ukrainian independence.



KEYWORDS:

Ukrainian People's Republic, Symon Petliura, Ukrainian Revolution 1917–1921, independence, autonomy, agrarian question, Ukrainization



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The military defeat and disintegration of the Russian Empire and the Habsburg Dual Monarchy in the First World War put Ukraine on the path of state and national self-determination. On 25 January 1918, the Ukrainian People's Republic (Ukrajins'ka Narodna Respublika; UNR) made its first historical attempt to proclaim its independence; this initially failed, but at the same time it marked the beginning of a development that culminated in the declaration of independence of 24 August 1991 and the referendum of 1 December 1991.

Loyalty to the Soviet Union had exhausted itself in a prolonged process of erosion, with the catastrophe of Chernobyl in 1986 and its consequences, or their cynical disregard by the Moscow leadership, contributing decisively to the delegitimization of the communist regime. There is a parallel here in that the Declaration of Independence of the Central Rada (Central'na Rada) in 1918 can also be seen as the result of renounced loyalty and changing notions of legitimacy. In addition, the UNR of the Central Rada and the Directory under the leadership of Symon V. Petliura (1879–1926)[1] is one of those chapters of Ukrainian history that are used to legitimize state and nation-building as well as to establish the identity of independent Ukraine. The use of nation-state symbols such as the tryzub (trident) as emblems, coats of arms and flags express this in a very vivid way.[2] They refer to the period of Ukrainian history that was constitutive for the emergence of modern Ukrainian statehood[3] in the field of tension between the postulates of the right to self-determination and the striving for nation-state separation.

In the following, I try to identify the ideas which underpinned the concepts of autonomy and attempts at separation in Ukraine between 1914 and 1921 and the peculiarities they showed, but I also want to look at how the national revolutionary actions of the actors were understood and how the breach of loyalty to the disintegrating Russian Empire was legitimized. Petliura's role in the UNR's war against internal and external opponents of its independence is also critically examined; not only because Petliura as a Social Democrat became the founder of modern Ukraine as a pioneer of national self-determination and as a recognized

1 For a biography, see Rudolf A. Mark, *Symon V. Petljura. Begründer der modernen Ukraine* (Paderborn: Brill/Schöningh, 2023); *Symon Petliura. Przywódca niepodległej Ukrainy*, ed. by Mirosław Szumila, 3 vols (Warszawa: Prace Polsko-Ukraińskiej Komisji dla Badania Relacji Wzajemnych w latach 1917–1921), III (2021).

2 See Wilfried Jilge, 'Exklusion oder Inklusion? Geschichtspolitik und Staatssymbolik in der Ukraine', *Osteuropa*, 53.7 (2003), 984–94.

3 See Andreas Kappeler, *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine*, 2nd edn (München: C.H. Beck, 2000), pp. 183–86; Rudolf A. Mark, 'Die ukrainischen Gebiete 1914–1922: Krieg, Revolution, gescheiterte Staatsbildung', in *Ukraine: Geographie – Ethnische Struktur – Geschichte – Sprache und Literatur – Kultur – Politik – Bildung – Wirtschaft – Recht*, ed. by Peter Jordan, Andreas Kappeler, Walter Lukan, and Josef Vogl (Wien – Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford: Österreichische Osthefte, Sonderband 15, 2001) pp. 279–92; Jaroslav Hrycak, *Narys istoriji Ukrajiny. Formuvannja modernoji ukrajins'koji naciji XIX–XX stolittja* (Kyjiv: Geneza, 1996), pp. 164–65; interesting aspects and assessments of the struggle for independence, see *Ucraina Magna*, vol. 3: *Do 100-richchja Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1923* rr., ed. by Valentyna Piskun (Kyjiv: Ukrajinoznavstvo. Institut Ukrajinskoji archeohrafiji ta dzhereloznavstva im. M. Hrushevskoho, 2020).

revolutionary leader, but also because he was an exceptional phenomenon among the actors and rulers in the Russian Civil War. Without Petliura and his political stamina, there would be no independent Ukraine today as a member of the European family of nations.

The analysis is limited to the following areas of activities and developments:

1. Political Programs and Political Action;
2. Socio-economic contexts;
3. Nationalization: The Ukrainization of the Armed Forces as a substitute for missing state structures.

The reasons why the Ukrainian 'sovereignization process' failed at that time and why the idea of an independent Ukrainian state could not be realized will be discussed only insofar as they are of interest for the course of the events. The developments in the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR), which was formed from the Austrian crown lands of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, are not a subject of my attention here.[4]

## 1. POLITICAL PROGRAMS AND POLITICAL ACTION

The modern Ukrainian national movement is hardly conceivable without the petty-bourgeois son from Poltava and a Social Democrat, Symon Petliura, who served as Secretary General for Military Affairs (or Military Secretary) of the Central Rada in 1917 and who later fought as Supreme Otaman for the independence of Ukraine until his assassination in exile in 1926. He is the embodiment of the struggle for the national self-determination of his country; like many historical figures, he attracts both admiration and rejection, even hatred. However, Ukraine's actual independence in 1991 seems to have legitimized his aspirations and struggles in retrospect. This is why critics have become quieter and Petliura has now been admitted to the circle of Ukrainian national heroes. Especially in the 1990s, a time of difficult reorientation, his rehabilitation was pursued by historians who characterized him as an extraordinary "figure of the new Ukrainian history" and as a "symbol of the Ukrainian struggle for freedom

4 For more details see Torsten Wehrhahn, *Die Westukrainische Volksrepublik. Zu den polnisch-ukrainischen Beziehungen und dem Problem der ukrainischen Staatlichkeit in den Jahren 1918 bis 1923* (Berlin: WeißSensee, 2004); Borys Tyshchyk and Oleh A. Vivcharenko, *Zachidnoukrajinska Narodna Respublika* (Kolomyja: Svit, 1993); Grzegorz Łukomski, Czesław Partacz and others, *Wojna polska-ukraińska 1918–1919. Działania bojowe – Aspekty polityczne – Kalendarium*, (Koszalin,Warszawa 1994); Maciej Kozłowski, *Między Sanem a Zbruczem. Walki o Lwów i Galicję Wschodnią 1918–1919* (Kraków, 1990); Vasyl Rasevych, 'The Western Ukrainian Peoples Republic of 1918–1919', in *The Emergence of Ukraine. Self-Determination, Occupation and War in Ukraine, 1917–1922*, ed. by Wolfram Dornik, Georgiy Kasianov and others, (Edmonton–Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), pp. 132–54.

and independence".[5] Moreover, since he devoted his whole life to fighting for the unity and independence of the Ukrainian people, his followers allot him a prominent place in the history of not only Ukraine but also world history.[6] At the same time, the complex historical figure Petliura is *a bête noir* – if not worse – for many Jewish people all over the world,[7] and his politics are far from being beyond criticism. To be sure, Petliura's aim was the achievement of Ukraine's national self-determination, but whether he was in favour of separation from the Russian Empire from the very beginning of his political activities is an open question.

In Ukraine's political discourse, such ideas were ventilated before the First World War but apparently did not achieve a broad effect. For instance, demands for state independence had already been discussed at the founding congress of the first modern Ukrainian party, the Ruthenian-Ukrainian Radical Party (Rus'ko-Ukrajins'ka Radikal'na Partija), in Lviv in October 1890, but they were soon replaced in the party program by the postulate for autonomy within the framework of Austria.[8] Later Julian Bachyns'kyj (1870–1940) made autonomy and independence ideas the subject of a more detailed discussion. In his work *Ukrajina irredenta*, published in the Galician capital in 1895, he examined the possibilities and development prospects of the "Ukrainian nation" and came to the conclusion that without state independence, the economic and cultural liberation of the Ukrainian people was not possible.[9] However, this also meant that – contrary to what is often portrayed in the literature – national independence was considered and conceptualized by Bachyns'kyj as a phase of transformation and not as the ultimate goal of a national teleology.[10]

A little later, Ivan Franko (1856–1916) similarly placed the aspect of liberation from external foreign economic coercion at the heart of his analysis – not least as a deliberate distancing from the federalist Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895). In his article 'Beyond the Possible's, published in 1900, he states unequivocally: "The struggle for the elimination of economic exploitation must eo ipso become a struggle against the exploiters, one's own and those of others, and – if the choice is given – certainly first

5 'Vstup', in *Symon Petljura ta ukrains'ka nacional'na revoljucia. Zbirnyk prac' druhoho konkursu petljuroznavciv Ukrainy*. ed. by Vasyl' Mychal'chuk and Dmytro Stepovyk (Kyjiv: NAN, 1995), p. 8.

6 Ihor Sribnjak, 'Symon Petljura – na choli derzhavy ta vijska. Do pytannja pro pol's'ko-ukrajins'ki vzajemny 1919–1920 roki', in *Symon Petljura ta ukrains'ka nacional'na revoljucia*, p. 162; see also Volodymyr Serhijchuk, *Symon Petljura ta joho rodyna. Do 70-richchja jobo trabichnoji zahybeli. Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv, 1996), pp. 16–18.

7 Cf. Vasyl' Ivanys, *Symon Petlyura – Prezident Ukrayiny, druhe vydannja* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993), pp. 35–39, the first edition was published in Toronto in 1952.

8 'Prohrama Rus'ko-Ukrajins'koji Radikal'noji Partiji', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti. Dokumenty i materijali*, ed. by Taras Hunchak and Roman Sol'chanyk (N'ju-Jork: Sučasnist', 1983), I, pp. 11–12; Kerstin S. Jobst, 'Marxism and Nationalism: Julijan Bachyns'kyj and the Reception of His "Ukrajina irredenta" (1895/96) as a Concept of Ukrainian Independence?', in *Yearbooks for the History of Eastern Europe*, 45.1 (1997), p. 34.

9 Cf. Yulian Bachyns'kyj, '*Ukrajina irredenta*', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, pp. 26–33.

10 Kerstin Jobst was the first to point out the social-democratic concept of the "Ukrajina irredenta", cf. Jobst, 'Marxism and Nationalism', pp. 38–39.

against the foreign, then against one's own [...] i.e., the question of national economics of its own accord impels every nation with iron consistency to gain political independence, and in the opposite case the inevitable prospect of economic unfreedom, dwindling, pauperization, cultural stagnation and decline opens up before it".[11]

The question of national independence was discussed by the Ukrainian national activists both in the Habsburg and the Russian Empires. When the first Ukrainian party in the Tsarist Empire, the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party/RUP (Revoljucijna Ukrajins'ka Partija) was founded in 1900, in the party program Mykola Mikhnovs'kyi (1873–1924) stated the goal of an "indivisible, free and independent Ukraine from the Carpathians to the Caucasus",[12] but his postulate did not endure. With the transformation and renaming of the RUP as the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Ukrajins'ka Social-Demokratychna Robitnychna Partija; USDRP), this program item was abolished just three years later[13] and – as with almost all national movements in the Russian Empire – replaced by demands for autonomy rights. Mutatis mutandis, this also applied to the program of the Ukrainian parties in Galicia until the First World War.

To illustrate the dimension of the national shift of paradigm in 1917, it is helpful to look at the Ukrainian national movement on the eve of the First World War. In Ukraine, which was still dominated by agriculture under tsarist rule, the traditional upper class, the nobility, was not represented in the national movement because it was not prepared to "renounce loyalty to the state and to the Russian or Polish value system in favour of a commitment to the Ukrainian cause".[14] On the other hand, from about 1900, social climbers from Ukrainian villages made up half of the activists within the movement. This meant that the Ukrainian peasants, who identified not yet nationally but regionally in terms of landscape, were the only large social group whose primary interests were in obvious opposition to the (Russian) state and the Russian or Polish ruling class but were now gradually being included in the Ukrainian national movement.[15] However, most Ukrainian elites remained faithful to a double, even triple – namely a Russian, Ukrainian and Polish, i.e., multiple – loyalty. They were united by a loyalty to the empire underpinned by Russia, as was particularly evident

11 Ivan Franko, 'Po za mezhamy mozhlyvoho', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, p. 83.
12 Mykola Michnovs'kyj, *Samostiyna Ukraine. Prohrama Revolcijni Ukraine's party from 1900. Vstupne slovo V. Shajana* (London: Bibliotheka and Museum im. T. Shevchenko, 1967), p. 27.
13 George Y. Boshyk, 'The Rise of Ukrainian Political Parties in Russia, 1900–1907: With Special Reference to Social Democracy' (PhD Dissertation Thesis, University of Oxford, 1981), p. 68.
14 Andreas Kappeler, Der schwierige Weg zur Nation: Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte der Ukraine (Wiener Archiv für die Geschichte des Slawentums und Osteuropas, Bd. XX), (Wien–Köln–Weimar: Böhlau, 2003), p. 112.
15 Ibid. pp. 113–14; Christine D. Worobec, 'Conceptual Observations on the Russian and Ukrainian Peasantries', in *Culture, Nation, and Identity. The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*, ed. by Andreas Kappeler and others (Edmonton–Toronto, 2003), p. 267.

among the non-Russian functional elites from Finland to the Baltic provinces to the Caucasus and Central Asia.[16] Names such as Carl Gustav Emil von Mannerheim (1867–1951), Pavlo Petrovych Skoropadsky (1873–1945) or Mufti Muchamediar Sultanov (1886–1915)[17] are examples of numerous others.

The leaders and ideologues of the Ukrainian movement, on the other hand, came from the urban and rural intelligentsia, a narrow layer of graduates of middle or higher educational institutions who found their livelihood mainly in the liberal professions as employees and middle civil servants.[18] Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1880–1951) and Petliura – the most prominent representatives of the Ukrainian national movement – represent this social group in an almost typical way. Before the outbreak of war, they embodied a rudimentary movement, numbering a few thousand supporters or members.[19] Among these, ideas of autonomy and federalism prevailed, i.e., of a transformation of the Russian Empire into a democratic Russian Republic that would guarantee the national right of self-determination of non-Russian peoples.[20]

Symon Petliura was not initially a Ukrainian separatist who pursued secession from the Tsarist Empire at all costs. At the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, he joined the chorus of the Russian intelligentsia, which initially regarded the world war as a "war of hope"[21] that united all subjects around the tsar's throne. After the expected victory over the Central Powers, it was assumed that constitutional reforms and far-reaching modernizations would renew Russia's political and social life and bring about the desired change. The manifesto promulgated on 14 August 1914 by the commander-in-chief of the tsarist troops, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, promised reunification and autonomy to the Poles, but it was also interpreted as a promise for the other peoples and nationalities of the tsarist empire. In other words, the rebirth of Russia and her political modernisation were seen in a close context with the national emancipation of the peoples of the entire empire, who would therefore fight for a common goal.[22]

16 Cf. Andreas Kappeler, *Russia as a MultiEthnic Empire: Origin – History – Decay* (Munich, 1992), pp. 262–64.
17 Cf. Arkadij Tichonov, *Katoliki, musul'mane i iudei Rossijskoj Imperii v poslednye chetverti XVIII – nachala XX v., 2 pererabot i dop.* (S.-Petersburg: Izd. S-Peterburgskogo univ. 2008), pp. 232–33.
18 Kappeler, *Der schwierige Weg*, pp. 110–11.
19 *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nakanune XX-go veka*, ed. L. Martov and A. Potresov, vol. 3, bk. 5: *Partii – ich sostav, razvitie i projavlenie v massovom dvizhenii, na vyborach i v Dume* (St. Peterburg, 1914), p. 298.
20 See Tetjana Horban', 'Ideja sobornosti v ukrains'kij dumci pershoi chetverti XX st.', in *Ukrains'kyj Istorychnyj Žhurnal*, 6 (465) (2005), 95–102 (p. 98); Oleksandr Rejent and Bohdan Janyšyn, 'Ukrajina v period Peršoji svitovoji vijny: istoriohrafičnyj analiz', *Ukrains'kyj Istorychnyj Žhurnal*, 4 (2004), 3–37 (p. 17); Mark fon Chagen, 'Velikaja vojna i iskusstvennoe usilenie ėtnicheskogo samouznanie v Rossijskoj imperii', in *Rossija i pervaja mirovaja vojna: (materialy mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo kollokviuma)*, ed. by Nikolaj Smirnov (St. Petersburg: Bulanin, 1999), pp. 385–405 (p. 388); Ivan L. Rudnytsky, 'The Fourth Universal and Its Ideological Antecedants', in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. by Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 191–92.
21 Vladimir Noskov, '"Vojna, v kotoruju my verim": nachalo pervoj mirovoj vojny v vosprijatii dukhovnoj ėlity Rossii', in *Rossiya i pervaja mirovaja vojna*, pp. 326–39 (p. 335); Józef Chlebowczyk, *Między dyktatem, realiami a prawem do samostanowienia: prawo do samookreślenia i problem granic we wschodniej Europie Środkowej w pierwszej wojnie światowej oraz po jej zakończeniu* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1988), p. 186.
22 See Noskov, '"Vojna, v kotoruju my verim"', p. 336.

Petliura, then editor of the Russian-language journal *Ukrainskaya zhizn'*, the official press organ of the organized Ukrainians of the tsarist empire, published in Moscow since 1912, sounded the same horn. In a special edition of this journal on the outbreak of war, he expressed the opinion that, in view of the prevailing truce and the declarations of loyalty of all peoples subject to the tsar, the Ukrainians remaining silent or standing aside would harm their national interests. He defended them against insinuations that they were inclined towards an 'Austrian orientation' and rejected accusations that they represented an uncertain element. The Ukrainians, he argued, had always oriented their national development within the borders of the Tsarist Empire and in a close alliance with its peoples. They would not deviate from this even in war and would not seek to achieve a solution to their national question by means of adventurous actions. Although the war appeared particularly tragic for the Ukrainians as they lived on both sides of the fronts, Petliura emphasized that "at the moment of the extraordinarily severe test to which our national feeling is now subjected, we must, including in our responsibility towards our national development, show understanding of current events, sound political sense, and an organized will of the nation, which is connected with a thousand ties – blood, kinship, economic and historical – to the country that now stands against Germany and Austria-Hungary [...] The Ukrainians [...] fulfil their civic duty to Russia [...] not only on the battlefield [...] but also as citizens who do everything within the measure of their strength and ability [...]". He did not conceal the longer-term benefit of such an attitude on the part of the Ukrainians because, he continued, it would change the attitude of Russians towards Ukrainian affairs and "in the perspective of solving the national question in Russia, the Ukrainian question will also be put on the agenda". He made similar statements elsewhere, expressing his conviction that the Central Powers would lose the war and that the Ukrainians should therefore focus their hopes and plans on Russia and its Western allies.[23]

Petliura himself played his part in proving the loyalty of the Ukrainians towards the Russian empire. Until 1917, he had a not insignificant career in the front aid organization of the Zemstva Union, for which he finally served as deputy plenipotentiary of this support institution on the Western Front.

Loyal to their state, the Dual Monarchy, the Ukrainians were also loyal to the Austrian crown land of Galicia. Just as their compatriots on the other side of the Zbruch regarded Vienna and Budapest as enemies, so

23 'Vijna i Ukrajinci', in *Symon Petljura. Statti, lysty, dokumenty. Vydano v trydcjatu richnicju z dnja smerty Symona Petljury 1926–1956*, ed. by Ljubov Draževs'ka and others (New York: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the US, 1956), pp. 184–87; see also Rudolf A. Mark, *Symon Petljura,und die UNR. Vom Sturz des Hetmans Skoropads'kyj bis zum Exil in Polen* (Berlin, 1988), pp. 20–23.

the Galicians apostrophized Russia and the Tsars as enemies of the Ukrainians and their national rights. Unlike the Ukrainians of Russia, most of them wanted the separation, which Petliura and others could not publicly demand. In an official declaration of the Supreme Ukrainian Council (Holovna Ukrajins'ka Rada) on 3 August 1914 in Lviv, they invoked history and justified their postulate of independence: "The Russian tsars broke the Treaty of Perejaslav,[24] by which they committed themselves to respect the independence of Ukraine, and enslaved free Ukraine. For three hundred years, the policy of the Tsarist Empire pursued the goal of robbing subjugated Ukraine of its national soul and making the Ukrainian people part of the Russian people. An ukaz of the tsar deprived the Ukrainian people of their most sacred right – the right of the mother tongue. In today's Tsarist Russia, Ukrainians are the most oppressed people... And that is why our path is clear [...] The victory of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy will be our victory. And the greater Russia's defeat, the faster the hour of Ukraine's liberation will strike [...] May the sun of free Ukraine rise over the ruins of the Tsarist Empire".[25] No wonder, then, that the Council enjoyed the support of Vienna and, not least, Berlin – similar to the League for the Liberation of Ukraine (Sojuz vyzvolennja Ukrajiny), which was also founded a little later in the Galician capital by emigrants from Russia.[26] As allies, they wanted to support the Central Powers' plans to decompose the Russian Empire by revolutionizing Ukraine.[27]

The break with Russia, the separation of Ukraine in 1918, was, however, the result of not a systematically pursued policy but of the radically changing internal and external situation of the crumbling empire with the October coup of the Bolsheviki. The Central Rada, which was constituted after the February Revolution of 1917, had no other option. Its most prominent politicians and ideological masterminds, the left-wing social democrat Vynnychenko and, above all, the renowned historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934), did not pursue a policy of independence, despite continuous disputes over the demarcation of powers between the Rada in Kyiv and the Provisional Government in Petrograd. They could and wanted to imagine a self-determined Ukraine only as an autonomous republic in a federally organized democratic Russian republic, or as Hrushevsky put it in September 1917 at the Congress of Peoples in Kyiv: For the Ukrainians, it could be about not independence but about becoming a member

24 An argument already put forward in Michnovs'kyj's 'Samostijna Ukrajina', cf. also Horban', 'Ideja sobornosti', p. 97.
25 'Polityčni zasady Holovnoji Ukrains'koji Rady', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, pp. 211–15 (pp. 212–13); cf. Horban', 'Ideja sobornosti', p. 99.
26 'Our pljatforma', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, pp. 217–18.
27 Cf. Claus Remer, *Die Ukraine im Blickfeld Deutscher Interessen. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1917/18*, (Frankfurt: European University Publications, 1997), passim; Mark, 'Die ukrainischen Gebiete', pp. 280–81.

of a federation that would lead to a federation of Europe and eventually one of the whole world.[28] In the founding documents of the Central Rada and also in the Third Universal of 7 November 1917, by which the UNR was proclaimed, there are corresponding stipulations: The All-Russian Constituent Assembly, which was yet to be convened, was to determine the final form of the democratic republic.

With the overthrow of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, the breaking of the promise made at the Congress of Nationalities in November 1917 to grant national self-determination, and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918 by the communists, there seemed to be no alternative to separation. Consequently, the independence of the UNR was proclaimed with the Fourth Universal on 12/25 January 1918. At the same time, the Ukrainian revolutionaries turned to the Central Powers, with whom a peace and cooperation treaty was signed in Brest-Litovsk on 9 February 1918, by which the UNR became a subject of international law recognized by the Central Powers.[29]

What reasons, factors, perception and developments determined and legitimized this national paradigm shift?

1. The previous recipient of loyalty, the Empire and the Provisional Government, had been eliminated by a revolution or coup d'état.
2. Even less than the Provisional Government, which, as the Kornilov putsch showed, could always be sure of the loyalty of the Rada,[30] the Bolsheviks were prepared to limit their claim to power in favour of the UNR's autonomy rights. Shortly after the October Revolution, they tried to overthrow the Rada and occupy Ukraine militarily. Since December 1917, a Soviet counter-government had been in office in Kharkiv.
3. Since the states of the Entente, France and Great Britain considered Ukraine's independence to be incompatible with the interests of their Russian partner, they were not prepared to recognize the UNR under international law.[31] Therefore, the UNR turned to the Central Powers, which were also able to offer support against the Bolsheviks.

28 'Promova Mykhajla Khrushevs'koho na z'ijzdi narodiv u Kyjevi', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, pp. 326–30; 'Stattja M. Hrushevs'koho "Proekt ukrains'koji constituciji", 07.11.1917', in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch berezen' – lystopad 1917 roku. Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Vladyslav Verstjuk and others, (Kyjiv: 2003), pp. 925–30 (pp. 926–27); 'Stattja P. Fedenko "Od centralizmu do federaciji"', in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 90–96 (p. 95); Rudolf A. Mark, 'Social Questions and National Revolution', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 14 (1990), 113–31 (pp. 125–27); Thomas M. Prymak, *Mykhajlo Hrushevs'ky: The Politics of National Culture* (Toronto–Buffalo–London: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 177.

29 Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), pp. 240–44; Guido Hausmann, 'Brest-Litovsk 1918. Zwei Friedensschlüsse und zwei Historiographien', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 70 (2019), 271–77.

30 Cf. Documents nos. 395 and 396, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, p. 712.

31 Caroline Milow, *Die ukrainische Frage 1917–1923 im Spannungsfeld der europäischen Diplomatie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), pp. 74–91; Hrycak, *Narys istoriji*, p. 122; David Saunders, 'Britain and the Ukrainian Question (1912 – 1920)', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), 40–68 (pp. 64–65); Wolodymyr Kosyk, *La Politique de la France à l'Ukraine: Mars 1917 – Février, 1918* (Paris: Université Paris-I, 1981), p. 114.

4. The war with its cataclysmic developments, with the political and social mobilization of almost the entire population of the Empire as far as Central Asia and the Far East, the experience of occupation and military regime, the displacement and resettlement of population groups, their classification, enlistment and obligation to perform state services depending on their ethnicity and presumed national reliability, the encounter with compatriots on both sides of the fronts and other things promoted and strengthened a growing ethnic and national sense of special consciousness among peoples and ethnic groups, which called into question the legitimacy of the regime and loyalty to the Reich, or as Mark von Hagen put it: The war not only intensified many sources of tension that were already present in the pre-war society of the Reich but also provoked significant qualitative changes in the relations between the peoples living in it.[32]

The demand for "a new order in our country" or order in "this time of disorder and great chaos", which the Provisional Government has never really been able to master from the Ukrainian point of view, has been a frequently cited argument for legitimizing state structures since the constitution of the Rada. In October 1917, it was increasingly often heard that the Rada should "take all power in Ukraine into its hands".[33] Fears of anarchy and civil war were added to this, and finally even die-hard autonomists and federalists like Hrushevsky sought Ukraine's salvation in independence. The Ukrainization of the armed forces was also justified not least by the demand for better discipline and order.[34]

The February Revolution and the resulting decentralization, federalization, and democratization of power structures politicized the growing Ukrainian movement, which saw itself not only as fighting for Ukrainian language and culture, but also as a democratization agency and guarantor of the irreversibility of the revolution and the civil rights it fought for, as corresponding appeals and demands show.[35] And after the October overthrow of the Bolsheviks in 1917, the UNR leadership also legitimized the declaration of independence by arguing that this was the only way to preserve the achievements of the revolution, the free republic and peace. The human and civil rights already guaranteed in the Third Universal were expressly reaffirmed and the early adoption of a democratic constitution

32 Chagen, 'Velikaja vojna', p. 387; Rejent and Janyšyn, 'Ukrajina v period Peršoji svitovoji vijny', pp. 28–29; cf. Hrycak, *Narys Istoriji*, pp. 105–06.
33 Document no. 464, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, p. 831.
34 Documents nos. 307, 464, 478, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 584, 831, 853; see also Prymak, *Mykhajlo Hrushevs'ky*, pp. 148–57.
35 Cf. Documents nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 91, 244, 525, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 41–48, 230–33, 478, 925.

was urged. This was then also to determine the nature of the federal connection with the other national republics of the Russian state.[36]

Since the February Revolution, in addition to the numerous advocates of a federal solution to the Ukrainian question, there have also been voices that regard the country's state independence as a prerequisite for the yet to be started cultural and socio-economic revolution. Thus, as early as the beginning of March 1917, one of the first appeals of the Petrograd Provisional Ukrainian Revolutionary Committee, which united mainly students, had emphasized that "the most complete expression of the idea of national liberation is national independence, and that only a sovereign state organism of its own can ensure the widest possible cultural development of the Ukrainian people".[37] A few days later, the Social Democrat Yevhen Neronovych argued that, for him, the idea of Ukraine's independence was strongly linked to the social struggle of its workers, and that, for a space such as that represented by Ukraine, the highest development of its productive forces and the highest form of organization of the working class associated with it, which offers the possibility of transition to the socialist order, is only possible in an independent Ukrainian state.[38] Even if these views may have expressed the opinion of a minority among the representatives of the national movement in the immediate aftermath of the February Revolution, they were present in the discourse and could gain new virulence at any time. The October Revolution provided the necessary occasion.

## 2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

One does not have to go as far as Yaroslav Hrycak, who accuses the politicians and masterminds of the Ukrainian movement, especially those of the Central Rada, of having been caught up in "great social utopias, by 'projects'" that "had nothing to do with normal life",[39] but his assessment is by no means entirely unjustified, as further developments in Ukraine should show. Accordingly, populist agrarian socialist ideas determined both the program of the Central Rada and that of the Directory.

What moved the peasant population and how they imagined the future agrarian constitution of Ukraine was declared by the resolutions of the First All-Ukrainian Peasant Congress on 2 June 1917. It stated that

36 'Četvertyj Universal Ukrajins'koji Central'noji Rady', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, pp. 371–74.
37 Document no. 1, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, p. 36.
38 Document no. 16, ibid., p. 52.
39 Hrycak, *Narys istorijj*, p. 117.

only the "realization of the socialist ideal [...] the wishes of the toiling peasants and the proletariat" would calm the unrest of those groups. Therefore, private ownership of land should be abolished and all land should be transferred to a Ukrainian land fund without ransom. This would be disposed of by the people themselves by means of a Ukrainian parliament and corresponding democratically elected land committees at the subordinate levels. From this fund, everyone would receive as much land as they could work with their own hands. Large model estates were to be left to peasant collectives as centres and "crystallization points of future socialist economies".[40]

For the legitimization of the national revolution and to mobilize the mass peasant Ukrainian population, a clear program for the solution of the agrarian question in Ukraine was indispensable. In 1917, about 15% of the population engaged in agriculture in Ukraine had no arable land, and 42% of the farmers worked no more than five desjatins of land.[41] However, all political parties, as well as those responsible for the Rada and its institutions, found it difficult to react adequately to this. As a rule, the parties did not have coordinated party programmes. Of the two ruling parties that supported the Rada, USDRP and UPSR (Ukrajins'ka partija socialistiv-revoljucioneriv), only the latter had concrete ideas. All in all, they corresponded to the demands of the Peasants' Congress outlined above, which were determined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries in terms of personnel and content. The Social Democrats basically followed the SR program; however, they rejected their demands for the socialization of land in favour of nationalization, as could be seen from an USDRP resolution passed in early October 1917.[42] The Rada as such did not promulgate guidelines on the agrarian question until its Third Universal, i.e., after the October Revolution of 1917. In doing so, it more or less followed the postulates of the Peasants' Congress and the wishes of the rural population as they were aired in those days. Thus, all private property, including that of churches and monasteries, was abolished and declared "the property of the entire working people". A law regulating the activities of the land committees was to follow before the land allocations could be started.[43]

40 'Rezoljuciji I Vseukrajins'koho seljans'koho z'jizdy', in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, p. 349–50; cf. documents nos. 465, 529, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 831–32, 936.

41 Illja Vytanovych, 'Agrarnaja polityka ukrajins'kych urjadiv rokiv revoljuciji i vyzvol'nych zmahan (1917–20)', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryk*, 4.3–4 (15–16) (1967), 9–15 (p. 9).

42 Dmytro Doroshenko, *Narys istoriji Ukrajiny 1917–1923*, vol. 1 (Uzhhorod, 1932; repr. New York, 1954), p. 86; Pavlo Chrystjuk, *Zamitky i materijaly do historiji ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1920 r.*, vol. 2 (Vienna, 1922), p. 59; 'Rezoljuciji chetvertoho z'jizdy Ukrajins'koji sotsial-demokratichnoji robitnichnoji partiji', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, p. 333.

43 'Universal Ukrain'skoji Central'noji Rady', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, p. 341.

However, this did not happen because the law that finally passed on 18 January 1918, which was still to be confirmed by the pending Ukrainian Constituent Assembly, came too late. In the meantime, units of the Red Army had invaded Ukraine, established a Soviet controlled government and brought the Central Rada to the brink of its demise, from which it could only be saved by cooperation with the Central Powers. After they had occupied Ukraine and expelled the Bolsheviks, the Rada itself became a victim of the Germans and Austrians standing in the country. This was triggered by the policy of the occupying power to exploit Ukraine economically, which is why the democratic UNR was replaced by the regime of hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, controlled by Berlin and Vienna. At the same time, neither the hetman, who was one of the large landowners, nor his foreign patrons showed the slightest inclination to adopt the agrarian structures planned by the Rada. For them, it was unacceptable for both political and selfish interests.[44] At the same time, however, the uprisings against the landlords and soon also the uprisings against the agrarian policy of the occupying power made it clear how urgently the peasant population's hunger for land had to be remedied. The massive influx of peasant supporters that the Directory under the leadership of Vynnychenko and Petliura received when Skoropadsky was overthrown in November/December 1918 also speaks for itself. [45]

The Central Rada and the Hetmanate were unable to find a satisfactory solution to the agrarian question, and the Directory, which was restored at the end of 1918, was also unable to do so. Laws of 8 and 18 January 1919 limited the ownership of land to a maximum of 15 desiatins. In addition, as announced in the Declaration of the Directory of 26 December 1918, members of the UNR armed forces were to receive two more desiatins and an interest-free loan of 2,000 hryvna. Landless peasants were to be allocated no less than five desiatins of nationalized arable land, which, if they had the appropriate fertility, were considered sufficient to feed a family.[46]

These laws and regulations also came too late. The UNR's board of directors and government institutions no longer had the opportunity to implement their agrarian program in practice because they had to evacuate Kyiv from the advancing divisions of Antonov-Ovseenko at the beginning of February 1919 and retreat to the west of Ukraine. This was, so to speak,

44 For more details, see Frank Grelka, *The Ukrainian National Movement under German Occupation 1918 and 1941/42* (Wiesbaden: Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa Univ. Dortmund, 2005), pp. 328–56.

45 Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History* (Toronto–Buffalo–London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 357–58; Mark, *Symon Petljura und die UNR*, pp. 33–39; Mark, 'Social Questions and National Revolution', pp. 127–28.

46 'Deklaratsiia Direktoriji Ukrains:koji Narodnoji Respubliky', in *Ukrajins'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka v 20 stolitti*, p. 408; Iliya Vytanovych, *Agrarian Politics of Ukrainian Governments in 1917–1920* (München–Chicago, 1968), p. 50; Mark, 'Social Questions and National Revolution', p. 119.

the beginning of the end of the UNR, because the chaos and cataclysms of the civil war prevented its establishment in Ukraine. It should be noted here that the Bolsheviks also had immense problems in winning over the peasant population for their socialist project. They succeeded in doing so only when all ideological and political competitors had been defeated and parts of the USDRP and the Ukrainian Social Revolutionaries facilitated the communist regime's access to the Ukrainian peasants.[47] Only then did the mass of the rural population turn to the Bolsheviks, who propagated the more attractive land program because it radically changed property relations in favour of the peasants.

## 3. NATIONALIZATION: THE UKRAINIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE STATE

Neither the Central Rada formed in Ukraine after the February Revolution, nor the state of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, who was at the mercy of the Central Powers, were anything more than ephemeral attempts to create an autonomous Ukraine in the alliance of a democratic Russian Republic or as a vassal state of Germany and Austria.

In accordance with the loyalty to the Empire proclaimed by the spokesmen of the Ukrainian national movement at the outbreak of the war, the mass of Ukrainians had served in the ranks of the Russian armed forces. The end of tsarist rule, the disintegration of the fronts, and the desertion of hundreds of thousands of soldiers were accompanied by an attempt to form national units. However, at no time were attempts successful to create a Ukrainian army that was able to serve as an instrument for enforcing Ukraine's political independence. The troops at the UNR's disposal, their combat strength and equipment, were just as inadequate as their organization and, not infrequently, their loyalty to the political leadership. Despite these shortcomings, however, the more reliable sections of the army were the only national institution that enabled the UNR to survive until the end of the civil war as allies of Poland's Marshall Józef Piłsudski. In other words, only a few units of the Directory were strong enough to continue to display the blue and yellow colours even after the evacuation of Kyiv at the beginning of 1919 and to keep them high in Ukraine until 1920 – and in some cases even beyond.[48]

47 James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation. National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

48 For more detail see Jan Jacek Bruski, *Petliurowcy. Centrum państwowe Ukraińskiej Respubliki Ludowej na wychodźstwie (1919–1924)* (Kraków: Arcana, 2004).

To this day, some Ukrainian historians see the main reasons for the defeat of the Ukrainian revolution in a lack of ideology. In their view it was the "weak leadership, the lack of a clear, strong and bellicose ideology, that would have produced and consolidated a corresponding national character".[49]

But the reality was more complicated. According to relevant accounts, in 1917 hundreds of thousands of soldiers of Ukrainian origin were organized into national units and formations under the flag of Ukrainization – an act of revolutionary spontaneity. To this day, it is not clear how many soldiers were affected by Ukrainization. Corresponding figures range from "105,000 bayonets and sabres" to even four million soldiers.[50] What is clear, however, is that the UNR benefited little from Ukrainization, as Dmytro Doroshenko points out with a certain sarcasm in his account of the Rada period: "The soldiers dispersed, did not want to go to the front, and did nothing in their own barracks except hold 'meetings'; and when they were needed, they did not want to lift a finger to help Ukraine. However, this notwithstanding, even the outward signs of the 'Ukrainization' of the troops made an impression on the broad masses of citizens and increased the authority of the national movement".[51]

There are many reasons for the deficits described here. The following are likely to have played a significant role:

1. The bulk of the soldiers were war-weary after three years of service at the front. The mass desertions gave amble proof. The soldiers wanted to survive and, in view of the hoped-for socio-economic changes on the ground, did not want to miss out on their villages and farms. True, immediately after the February Revolution, hundreds of thousands of soldiers spontaneously demanded the nationalization of units and the creation of a Ukrainian army in numerous councils and congresses,[52] but at the same time most troops were not ready to return to the front, as reports prove.[53]

2. Ukrainization was not least an attempt to secure or increase the discipline and operational readiness of the units and formations at the front. This is evident, for example, from the reports of the Secretary General for Military Affairs, Symon Petliura.[54]

49 Ivan Drobot, 'Transformaciji nacionalistychnoji ideologiji v pershij polovyni XX st.', *Ukrains'kyj Istorychnyj Žhurnal*, 6 (2001), 110–22 (p. 111).
50 Jaroslav Tynčenko, 'Dijal'nist' Symona Petliury za chasiv peršoji ukrains'ko-radjans'koji vijny: hruden' 1917 – ljutij 1918 rokiv', in *Symon Petljura ta ukrainians'ka nacional'na revoljcija*, p. 92; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, p. 347; *Politychna istorija Ukrajiny. XX stolittja u shesti tomach*, vol. 2, ed. by Ivan Kuras and others (Kyjiv, 2003), pp. 94–95.
51 Doroshenko, *Istorija Ukrajiny*, p. 62.
52 Cf. Documents nos. 117, 174, 279, 404, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 280 et seq., 356, 539, 732; Subtelny, *Ukraine*, p. 347.
53 *Politychna istorija Ukrajiny*, p. 77; Pavlo Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady. Kinec' 1917 – Hruden' 1918*, ed. by Jaroslav Pelens'kyj (Kyjiv–Filadel'fija, 1995), pp. 86–87.
54 Documents nos. 307, 403, 478, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 584, 731, 853.

In the eyes of the soldiers, however, Ukrainization was not so much a necessary prerequisite for the formation of national armed forces but rather meant removal from the front and transfer to the homeland, as well as the hope of desertion or dismissal.[55] Thus, for example, in May 1917, the Ukrainian Military Council in Odesa demanded that the Rada "induce the Provisional Government to transfer the Ukrainians, first from the depths of Russia and then also from the fronts, as soon as possible to the southwestern and Romanian fronts, to the military districts of Kyiv and Odesa, and to the Black Sea Fleet" and "that in the military parts, stationed on the territory of Ukraine, only residents of Ukraine remained". Similar demands were made by other units of the armed forces.[56]

Ukrainization as a project to build a disciplined, centrally led national army was in competition with ideas about the restitution of Cossackdom as a free association based on elected hierarchies and voluntariness, which many soldiers had in mind and which was not free of romanticization and arbitrary actions,[57] including anti-Semitism and the pogroms committed by UNR soldiers during the War of Independence in 1919. However, vigorous countermeasures, including summary executions of pogrom perpetrators, has not prevented recriminations from distorting Petliura's image in the international public sphere to this day.[58] This was also fuelled by the Soviet leadership to discredit their most obstinate enemy – and in order to obscure the Red army's deeds of violence in the Civil War.

The demands for Ukrainization had no nationally affirmative anti-Russian impetus. Ukrainization and demands for autonomy were also understood as a contribution to the struggle and service "for our common fatherland, the renewed Russian state", "for the benefit of a free Russia", to the "defence of the common mother, a renewed Russia" and alike.[59]

The fact that the nationalization of military units had little success was also due to the very ambivalent and distanced attitude of leading politicians and ideologues of the Central Rada towards everything military. The chairman of the General Secretariat of the Ukrainian Central Rada, i.e., the Ukrainian government, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, was an outspoken pacifist, a left-wing social democrat with considerable reservations about traditional military structures. He considered the "regular, drilled army" to be "ruined by the spirit of its bloody profession". He argued that it was not

55 Document no. 406, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 733–34; Hrycak, *Narys istoriji*, p. 118.
56 Cf. document no. 174, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, p. 356, see also documents nos. 105, 136, 168, 176, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 263–64, 316, 344, 358.
57 Cf. documents nos. 153, 186, 424, 459 in Ibid., pp. 335–36, 370–71, 765–66, 825–26.
58 D Mark, *Symon V. Petljura*; Volodymyr Serhijchuk, *Symon Petliura i evrejstvo* (Kyjiv: Centrum, 2006).
59 See documents nos. 13, 135, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 49, 315, 296; also 457, 459, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 823, 824.

the army but the people who would bring about the revolution. Moreover, in his mind no military institution but only the people and democracy could bring salvation to Ukraine. Social Democrats, and "all true democrats" in general, did not need any armed forces, still less their glorification, "but the destruction of all standing armies". Ukrainian troops can only be accepted if they act in the interest of the people and do not represent an instrument of the ruling classes.[60] Hrushevsky, the president of the Rada and the UNR, was also anything but a militarist. Not only did he reject war on principle, but he also could not really imagine having to wage war and defend the UNR militarily until the very end.[61] Only Petliura seemed to feel at home in the "sea of grey soldiers' coats"; unlike Hrushevsky and Vynnychenko, he seemed convinced of the need for national forces.

As 'Minister of War' of the Rada, however, he could hardly succeed under the prevailing circumstances. The fact that he was labelled a 'right-winger' and a 'nationalist' and did not always show a lucky hand in his administration certainly played a role. He was also accused by his critics of being more interested in formalities and appearances than in his actual task, i.e., the formation of a sufficient number of reliable UNR forces, in which he failed, thus there was a lack of reliable military in Kyiv at the end of 1917.[62]

Due to such sensitivities, neither a political consensus on the need for a national army nor a coordinated military or security strategy of the UNR could be reached. Nationalization or Ukrainization was more of a stopgap measure to control the dissolution process of the regular army than a concerted demand for a political program. Therefore, coincidences and imponderables played a decisive role from the very beginning. Added to this was the fact that the mass of war-weary soldiers could not yet be mobilized for a national revolution and separation from Russia. There was no real anti-Russian impetus that could have been instrumentalized for this end. Obviously, it was only the October revolution and the experience of the Soviet occupation during the civil war in Ukraine that promoted and strengthened the national awareness among the Ukrainian population and fostered attitudes of change.

60 Stattja V. Vynnychenko, 'Ukrains'kyi militaryzm', 12.4.1917, in *Ukrains'kyj natsional'no-vyzvol'nj ruch*, pp. 190–93 (pp. 191–92); cf. Doroshenko, *Istorija Ukrainy*, pp. 351–52.
61 Prymak, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky*, pp. 177–78.
62 See Volodymyr Vynnychenko, *Vidrodzhennja naciji*, 3 vols (Kyjiv, Viden', 1920) II, pp. 115, 159; Mark, *Symon Petljura und die UNR*, p. 27; Tynčenko, 'Dijal'nist' Symona Petliury', pp. 61–63.

## CONCLUSION

Demands that Ukraine should be separated from Russia developed in close interaction with the radicalization of the Russian Revolution in 1917. After the October Revolution, the solution of the Ukrainian question in the form of national-territorial autonomy within the democratic Russian republic became irrelevant for the Ukrainian authorities, so the national paradigm shifted towards the proclamation of independence. Prior to that, separation from Russia had not been an option considered by leaders of the national movement. Against this background, the coup d'état of the Bolsheviks represented a breach of loyalty and at the same time provided the historical legitimacy of the Ukrainian decision to separate.

With the Declaration of Independence and the war against the Bolsheviks, the ideas and objectives of the political protagonists of the UNR, based on internationalism and pacifism, had become obsolete – their political possibilities exhausted. The subsequent dissolution of the UNR and its replacement by the Hetmanate was the logical consequence. Since then, it has been mainly external forces and powers that have determined the fate of Ukraine.

The political actions of the leading politicians of the UNR, above all Petliura, Hrushevsky and Vynnychenko, supported by parts of the population in Ukraine were proof of this. However, opponents in the decaying empire and even more in the international sphere were not likely to accept an independent Ukraine that would restrict their imperialist designs in Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, the idea of Ukraine's independence persisted and gave the revolutionary events in Ukraine their special character. The last chapter was the attempt of Symon Petliura and the UNR in 1919 and 1920 to restore the UNR with a small force devoted to the Ukrainian idea – and with Polish help. They failed for obvious reasons. However, the newly established Soviet power had to legitimize its rule in Ukraine by establishing and promoting Ukrainian statehood. This was the first step towards the independence that was finally achieved in 1991.

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# THE UKRAINIAN HETMANATE STATE OF 1918: RESTORATIONIST TENDENCIES IN DOMESTIC POLICY


## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to study the main directions of the domestic policy of the Ukrainian Hetmanate State, which were characterized by tendencies toward the restoration of the pre-revolutionary order in the formation of constitutional foundations, the creation of the judicial system, the implementation of land reform, and the reorganization of local self-government. The methodological basis consists of the principles of historicism, scientific rigor, and objectivity. Methods of logical, textual, and comparative analysis are applied. The scientific novelty lies in the systematic coverage of the inhibitory influence of using the Russian imperial legacy on the process of building Ukrainian statehood, consolidating its independence, and shaping the national identity of the ruling elite. The Hetmanate arose as a result of a coup d'état organized by the German and Austro-Hungarian allies of the Ukrainian People's Republic in order to secure guaranteed supplies of food and raw materials stipulated by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Instead of the socialist Central Rada, power passed to a conservative regime, whose legal foundations were formed on the basis of Russian imperial legislation, both in its direct and adapted forms. This applied, in particular, to the constitutional foundations of the state-political model, the judicial system, the restoration of property rights, the introduction of the state language, and changes in the democratic principles of *zemstvo* and duma self-government.



KEYWORDS:

Ukrainian State, Hetmanate, Pavlo Skoropadsky, restoration, judicial system, land reform, local self-government



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## INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND TERMINOLOGICAL REMARKS

After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the states of the Central Powers in February 1918, the advance of the allied troops made it possible to liberate most of Ukraine's territory from Bolshevik forces. However, the very first contacts between German military and diplomats with representatives of the UNR (Ukrains'ka Narodna Respublika; Ukrainian People's Republic) government revealed the inability of the Ukrainian authorities to fulfil their obligations regarding the supply of food and raw materials as stipulated by the treaty. In this situation, Berlin and Vienna reached the decision to replace the socialist Central Rada with a conservative Ukrainian government. On 29 April 1918, at the All-Ukrainian Congress of Grain Growers in Kyiv, General Pavlo Skoropadsky, a Russian aristocrat and descendant of an old Ukrainian Cossack-hetman lineage, was proclaimed Hetman of all Ukraine.

Thus began the history of the Ukrainian Hetmanate State, which has received several names in historiography: the Hetmanate of 1918, the Modern Hetmanate, and the Ukrainian State (in accordance with its official name). This was one of the most significant stages of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, reflecting an attempt to build statehood on the foundation of conservative-liberal and monarchist ideologies. The new polity assumed the form of a hetmanate, characteristic of Ukrainian history and the political tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This state formation, however, acquired only certain external features of the old Hetmanate, while the main foundations of its internal policy were shaped according to the immediately accessible political and legal templates of the Russian imperial tradition.

This article examines the specific directions of the internal policy of Pavlo Skoropadsky's Ukrainian State, in which tendencies toward the restoration of institutions from the Russian imperial legacy were manifested most clearly. Above all, this concerns the formation of the constitutional principles of the Hetman regime; the construction of the state-political model; the implementation of land reform; and the reorganization of local self-government.

Contemporaries of the revolutionary events who belonged to socialist and nationalist (independence-oriented) circles generally assessed Hetmanate Ukraine and Pavlo Skoropadsky himself with considerable scepticism. In their writings, leaders of Ukrainian socialist parties and prominent figures of the Central Rada characterized the Hetmanate regime as anti-Ukrainian, counterrevolutionary, and reactionary.[1]

1 For more details, see: Gennadij Korolov, 'Ukrainskaja revoljucija 1917–1921 gg.: mify sovremennikov, obrazy i predstavlenija istoriografii', *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2011), 357–75.

In particular, former head of the General Secretariat of the Central Rada, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, called the "Hetmanate of 1918" a "national counterrevolution" in comparison with the UNR.[2] Another contemporary of those events, the future Prime Minister of the UNR, Isaak Mazepa, noted, "This was a decisive and ruthless restoration of the old pre-revolutionary order, in both the social and the national sense".[3] Mazepa employed the notion "restoration" in regards to the internal policies of the Ukrainian State more frequently than others.[4] Yet another ideological opponent of the Hetmanate, member of the Central Rada Mykola Halahan, postulated, "What was restored was essentially the 'old regime', just named differently".[5]

Soviet historiography interpreted the Hetmanate of 1918 as a "counterrevolutionary" formation, viewing it as "a bourgeois-landowner dictatorship embodied by a puppet government headed by the former tsarist general P. P. Skoropadsky".[6] In Ukrainian émigré historiography, Hetmanate Ukraine and Pavlo Skoropadsky were assessed more pragmatically. Historians argued that he sought to restore stability by reintroducing the pre-revolutionary socio-economic order, as well as by emulating the system that had existed under the Tsarist regime.[7]

Contemporary Ukrainian scholars point to the anti-revolutionary orientation of the establishment of the Hetmanate of 1918. Some qualify it as a state coup, an attempt by conservative political forces to extinguish the flames of revolution,[8] while others argue that it was a counterrevolutionary coup that interrupted the revolution's development along a democratic path and took on an anti-democratic character.[9] Notably, in recent scholarship the term "counterrevolutionary" is no longer used to characterize Hetmanate Ukraine.

Moreover, Pavlo Skoropadsky's Hetmanate has gained broad recognition in historical literature as one of the stages of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, with its own distinctive model of governance.[10] The Hetman's state-building project can formally also be qualified as a revolution because it dismantled the previous socio-political system established by

2 Volodymyr Vynnyčenko, *Vidrodžennja naciji*, 3 vols (Kyjiv-Viden': Vydavnyctvo "Dzvin", 1920), III, p. 61.
3 Isaak Mazepa, *Ukrajina v ohni i buri revoljuciji (1917–1921)* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2003), p. 63.
4 Ibid., pp. 60–61.
5 Mykola Halahan, *Z mojich spomyniv, 1880–1920 rr.* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2005), p. 378.
6 *Velykyj Žovten' i hromadjans'ka vijna na Ukrajini*. Encyklopedyčnyj dovidnyk (Kyjiv: Hol. red. URE, 1987), p. 135.
7 Orest Subtel'nyj, *Ukrajina. Istorija* (Kyjiv: Lybid', 1993), p. 442; Arkadij Žukovs'kyj and Orest Subtel'nyj, *Narys istoriji Ukrajiny* (L'viv: Vyd-vo NTŠ, 1991), p. 148; Taras Hunčak, *Ukrajina: perša polovyna XX st. Narysy polityčnoji istoriji* (Kyjiv: Lybid', 1993), pp. 141–54.
8 *Istorija Ukrajiny: nove bačennja*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Vyd-vo «Ukrajina», 1996), II, p. 54.
9 Valerij Soldatenko, *Ukrajina v revoljucijnu dobu. Istoryčni ese-chroniky*, 4 vols (Kyjiv: Svitohljad, 2009), II, p. 189; Volodymyr Lytvyn, *Ukrajina: dobavijn i revoljucij (1914–1920)* (Kyjiv: Al'ternatyvy, 2003), p. 264.
10 *Narysy istoriji Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1921 rokiv*, ed. by Valerij Smolija, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 2011), I, p. 371.

the socialist Central Rada. It is in this sense that Yurii Tereshchenko interprets the history of the Hetmanate of 1918 as a "conservative revolution".[11]

It is worth clarifying the terminological apparatus of this study. Generally speaking, the lexicon of Hetmanate acts and governmental documents does not contain the notion of restoration. The terms most often used are "reconstruction", "renewal", and "revival". Notions such as "Ukrainian State", "Hetmanate of 1918", and "Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky" are employed as fully synonymous. Nevertheless, the latter two are more frequently used, since the official name of the Hetmanate – "Ukrainian State" – coincides with the broader concept of "Ukrainian state", which also includes the UNR and the ZUNR (Zakhidnoukrains'ka Narodna Respublika; West Ukrainian People's Republic). The events under study took place within 1918, therefore only day and month are indicated.

The notion of "restoration" (from the Latin *restauratio* – renewal, reconstruction) has several meanings. The first and most common pertains to the fields of art, architecture, and construction. In the realm of political relations, restoration is regarded as the re-establishment of order and relations overthrown during periods of great socio-political upheaval.[12] Many political and socio-economic processes in world history can be qualified as "restorations". Some examples include the Medici Restoration in Italy, the Bourbon Restoration in France, the Stuart Restoration in England, and the Meiji Restoration in Japan.

By restorationist tendencies within the internal policy of the Hetmanate in 1918, we refer to the phenomena and processes of that time connected with the partial revival of political, social, and legal attributes of the pre-revolutionary order. We do not assess them as negative. On the contrary, we regard them as the objective product that was determined by the nature of the Hetman's rule, the character of planned conservative reforms, and the influence of the German-Austrian allies.

The Hetmanate emerged as an alternative to the UNR, interrupting the national-democratic stage of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921.[13] The question of the nature of the new authority arose immediately after General Pavlo Skoropadsky was proclaimed Hetman. The Bolshevik leadership, forced by the conditions of the separate peace treaty with the states of the Central Powers to conclude an armistice with the UNR, closely monitored developments in Ukraine.

11 Jurij Tereščenko, 'Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho jak projav konservatyvnoji revoljuciji', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal*, 3 (2008), 19–37.
12 *Polityčna encyklopedija*, ed. by Jurij Levenec' (Kyjiv: Parlaments'ke vydavnyctvo, 2011), p. 636.
13 The history of the Ukrainian Hetmanate of 1918 has already been examined in detail by the author in several publications, see: Ruslan Pyrih, *Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho: miž Nimeččynoju i Rosijeju* (Kyjiv:id.,Instytut istoriji Ukrajiny NANU, 2008); id., *Ukrajins'ka het'mans'ka deržava 1918 roku: Istoryčni narysy* (Kyjiv:id.,Instytut istoriji Ukrajiny NANU, 2011); id., *Vidnosyny Ukrajiny i Central'nych deržav: netypova okupacija 1918id.,roku* (Kyjiv: Instytutistoriji Ukrajiny NANU, 2018), etc.

Having examined the content of the Hetman's first public acts and the composition of his government, Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin assessed the political situation in Ukraine as a "restoration of bourgeois-landlord monarchism in Ukraine with the support of the Cadet-Octobrist elements of the All-Russian bourgeoisie and with the help of German troops".[14] He emphasized the restoration of private property rights, which returned industrial and agrarian bourgeois elites to power, and the predominance of Russian Cadets in the Hetman government. Equally evident to him was the role of the German military command in carrying out the state coup.

Russian liberal periodicals also responded to the change of power in Ukraine in April 1918. In the newspaper *Nash vek* (formerly *Rech'*) it was noted that the Ukrainian Hetman was a figure acceptable from the standpoint of Great Russian interests. Another newspaper, *Den'*, considered the Tsarist aristocrat Pavlo Skoropadsky more of a Russian than a Ukrainian candidate.[15] The German official press generally evaluated the Hetman positively, attempting to convince the public of the German command's non-involvement in the coup. At the same time, the German Social Democratic newspaper *Vorwärts* published an essay about the change of power in Ukraine under the headline 'Counterrevolution'. According to that paper, the elements who came to power with German help would, with raised banner, pass over to Russia's side when a new bourgeois government came to govern in Moscow.[16] Another influential paper, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, wrote that Ukrainian socialists had remained outside the government, while people not entirely free of Russophile and Tsarist sympathies had joined the Hetman.[17]

The Ukrainian socialist parties, excluded from power and having failed to secure positions within the system of state authority from either the German command or Skoropadsky, moved into opposition to the Hetman regime. On 21 May, they issued a memorandum containing stinging assessments of the government's first steps. The memorandum stressed,

> The new Council of Ministers included Russian Cadets, Octobrists, and, in general, representatives of those non-Ukrainian groups that had always been hostile to the Ukrainian movement and Ukrainian statehood and fought against them with all their strength in the name of a "united, indivisible Russia".[18]

14 V.I. *Lenin pro Ukrajinu*, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Politvydav, 1969), I, p. 137.
15 *Krach germanskoj okkupacii na Ukraine (po dokumentam okkupantov)*, ed. by Maksim Gor'kij and Isaak Izrailevič Minc (Moskva: Gosizdat., 1936), pp. 123–24.
16 *Vorwärts*, 23 May 1918.
17 *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20 May 1918.
18 Jevhen Čykalenko, *Ščodennyk*, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2004), II, p. 38.

The government was also reproached for banning *zemstvo* (workers', and peasants' congresses), while assemblies of representatives of capital, trade, and large agrarian property were held with the participation of ministers. The document further emphasized the "replacement of the Ukrainian element in all ministries with a non-Ukrainian one, chiefly Great Russian", the "domination of the Russian language in the courts", and the "restoration of censitary *dumas* and *zemstvos*".[19]

At the same time, the leadership of the All-Ukrainian *Zemstvo* Union, headed by Symon Petliura, the former General Secretary of Military Affairs in 1917, stated in a declaration sent to the ambassadors of Germany and Austria-Hungary that,

> [The new government] with its policy of ruthless reaction and restoration of the old order, has provoked new waves of anarchy, uprisings, armed rebellion, and spontaneous agrarian terror, has drawn upon itself complete mistrust and bitter hostility from broad circles of the population, and has shaken the very foundations of Ukrainian statehood.[20]

The Hetmanate of 1918 emerged as an alternative to the authority of the Central Rada and the dominance of socialist parties. It rested upon conservative-liberal foundations and the support of the German Empire. The restoration of private property rights, the strengthening of Russian political influence, and the orientation toward imperial legacies provoked resistance among opposition political circles and the wider population. The Hetmanate of 1918 was perceived not only by Ukrainian opposition forces but also by ideological opponents in Germany and in the former Russian Empire as an attempt to restore the pre-revolutionary order.

## MAJOR TENDENCIES OF THE HETMANATE'S RESTORATION

The two fundamental documents of the new head of state – the *Manifesto to the Entire Ukrainian People* and the *Laws concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine* – were dated 29 April 1918, the day the coup d'état took place and the Central Rada lost its power.[21]

According to the text of the *Manifesto*, Pavlo Skoropadsky proclaimed himself Hetman of all Ukraine, explaining that he was compelled to take such a step by the threat of a new catastrophe for Ukraine and by

19 Ibid., pp. 38–39.
20 Pavlo Chrystjuk, *Zamitky i materijaly do istoriji Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1920 rr.*, 4 vols (Viden': Ukrajins'kyj Sociol'ogyčnyj Instytut, 1921), III, p. 83.
21 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 16 May 1918.

the categorical demands of the working masses to "immediately establish such a State Authority that would be capable of ensuring peace, law, and the possibility of creative labour for the population".[22] The main purpose of the *Manifesto* was to inform the Ukrainian people about the reasons for the change of political system and to declare the programmatic principles of the new government.

The *Laws concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine* consisted of seven acts: 'On Hetman Authority', 'On Faith', 'On the Rights and Duties of Ukrainian Cossacks and Citizens', 'On Laws', 'On the Council of Ministers and on the Ministers', 'On the Financial Council', and 'On the General Court'. The preamble emphasized that these laws would remain in force only until the election of the Sejm and the beginning of its work.[23] Throughout the existence of the Ukrainian State, this set of laws de facto functioned as its constitution. Taken as a whole, these legal acts were intended to ensure the maximum concentration of power in the hands of a single person – the Hetman.

The preparation of the first state acts of the 1918 Hetmanate is associated with the jurist Aleksandr Paltov – a native of St. Petersburg and a graduate of the Faculty of Law at the local university. During the First World War, he served as legal adviser to the Directorate of the Halychyna-Bukovyna Railway. In the spring of 1918, he joined Pavlo Skoropadsky's oriented political organization, the Ukrainian National Hromada.

In his memoirs, Skoropadsky recalled the important role played by Paltov in drafting the Hetman's address to the Ukrainian people. On 25 April after noting down the general's ideas, Paltov prepared an almost complete draft of the *Charter* in just an hour and a half. Skoropadsky was struck by Paltov's "clarity of mind and speed of work in such a complex matter".[24]

Some scholars argue that it was in fact Paltov who authored the *Laws concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine*, since he held pronounced monarchist convictions and, throughout the existence of the Ukrainian State in 1918, never abandoned hope of transforming it into one or another form of monarchy.[25] Only a committed monarchist and an expert in Russian imperial law could prepare the draft of the *Laws concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine* so swiftly. Immediately after the *Laws* was published, contemporaries admitted that they were modelled on the text

22 *Ukrajins'ka Deržava (kviten' – hruden' 1918 roku). Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Ruslan Pyrih, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2015), II, p. 38; ibid., p. 39.
23 Ibid., p. 39.
24 Pavlo Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady. Kinec' 1917 – hruden' 1918* (Kyjiv–Filadel'fija, 1995), p. 149.
25 Pavlo Haj-Nyžnyk, 'Oleksandr Paltov – zastupnyk ministra zakordonnych sprav Ukrajins'koji Deržavy (1918 r.)', *Ukrajina dyplomatyčna*, 12 (2011), 869–81.

of the *Code of Laws of the Russian Empire* in its 1906 edition. The Kyivan jurist Aleksei Goldenveyzer recalled:

> When they began to read aloud, article by article, this hastily baked constitution, it struck me as suspiciously familiar. I took from the shelf Volume 1, Part 1 of the *Code of Laws* and began comparing what I heard with the Fundamental Laws from 1906. It turned out that, with exception of a few digressions, the Hetman's constitution reproduced these Fundamental Laws.[26]

In his article 'The Central Powers and Ukraine', the famous German scholar Professor Otto Hötzsch also noted that the Hetman's proposed Constitution was derived from the *Fundamental Law of the Russian Empire* of 1906.[27]

The *Fundamental State Laws of the Russian Empire* constituted the code of laws outlining the general state system of the Russian Empire. Under the guidance of Russian (statemen and) jurist Mikhail Speranskii, they were codified and went into effect in 1833. In April 1906, in light of the revolutionary crisis of 1905, the Fundamental Laws were amended in connection with the establishment of the State Duma and the reorganization of the State Council. The amended laws now consisted of two sections, 17 chapters, and 223 articles.[28]

A comparison of the articles in the *Code of Laws of the Russian Empire* and the *Laws concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine* shows that out of 24 articles in the first chapter of the *Code*, only eight were incorporated into the legislation of the Hetmanate Ukraine. The technique used in drafting these articles was quite superficial: the phrase "His Imperial Majesty" or "Emperor of All Russia" was replaced with "Hetman", and the text was translated into Ukrainian language. It is evident that the phrase "Russian State", present in the original text, was used as a model for the official name of the Hetmanate of 1918 – the "Ukrainian State".

The first law declared the Hetman's exclusive authority over the entire Ukrainian State. He appointed the head of government, confirmed and dismissed its members, and retained the right to appoint and dismiss other government officials. The Hetman exercised general leadership over foreign policy, served as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, had the power to grant amnesty, and so on. All orders and decrees

26 Aleksei Gol'denvejzer, 'Iz kievskich vospominanij', in *Revoljucija na Ukraine po memuaram belych*, ed. by Sergej Alekseev (Moskva–Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930), p. 37.
27 *Neue Freie Presse*, 14 August 1918.
28 'Svod osnovnych gosudarstvennych zakonov (1906 g.)', *Biblioteka Gumer – istorija*, [n.d.] <http://www.gumer.info/Bibliotek_Buks/History/Article/svod_zak.php> [accessed 20 April 2025].

of the Hetman were to be countersigned by the head of government or the relevant minister.

Nearly all of the articles of the Hetmanate's *Laws concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine* were "written" in such a manner. Unsurprisingly, the provisions of the relevant Russian law concerning the State Council and the State Duma as institutions meant to restrain the emperor's power were omitted. In the political system of the Hetmanate, representative bodies were absent altogether, and the functions of representation were concentrated in the hands of the head of state. At the same time, within the socio-political situation of 1918, the Hetman's political and military dependence on the German military command and diplomacy significantly curtailed his actual authority.

The Council of Ministers, functioning as the highest legislative and executive body, was supported by the State Chancellery, headed by the State Secretary. The Ukrainian State Chancellery was established on the model of the State Chancellery of the Russian Empire, largely replicating its structure. The State Chancellery served as the supreme executive institution in the sphere of public administration. Its responsibilities, among other tasks, included drafting legislation, maintaining registries of state authorities and civil service appointments, and compiling formal personnel records.[29]

It's worth mentioning that Pavlo Skoropadsky's first choice for the post of State Secretary – Mykhailo Hizhytskyi, a member of the Ukrainian National Hromada – was unsuccessful. By contrast, his successors, a lawyer Ihor Kistiakovskyi and Serhiy Zavadskyi, Deputy Ober-Prosecutor of the Russian Senate, distinguished themselves not only as talented jurists but also as effective administrators.

Among the urgent measures to establish a centralized vertical of power, a special role was assigned to local administrative bodies. By decree of the Hetman, the positions of gubernia commissioners of the Central Rada and their assistants were abolished, and the office of gubernia *starostas* was introduced. By order of the Minister of Internal Affairs from 14 May all county commissioners were dismissed, being replaced by county *starostas*.[30] The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian State rejected the project of the administrative-territorial reform planned by the Central Rada, which had envisioned dividing Ukraine into lands, and retained the old structure: gubernia–county–*volost*.

29 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 22 June 1918.
30 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 26 May 1918.

The following individuals were appointed as gubernia *starostas*:

- Volhynia: Dmytro Andro, landowner;
- Katerynoslav: Ivan Chernikov, general and landowner;
- Kyiv: Ivan Chartoryzhskyi, former tsarist governor;
- Poltava: Serhiy Ivanenko, *zemstvo* activist and landowner;
- Podillia: Serhiy Kysilyov, landowner;
- Kharkiv: Petro Zaleskyi, general and landowner;
- Kherson: Semen Pyshchevych, landowner;
- Chernihiv: Mykola Savytskyi, *zemstvo* movement activist and landowner.

To enforce "peace and order" locally, they were granted powers exceeding those of the former Tsarist governors: conducting searches, making arrests, and carrying out deportations of up to two years, including beyond the borders of Ukraine.

The Deputy State Secretary of the Ukrainian State, Mykola Mohylianskyi, recalled the difficulties of assembling the local administrative apparatus, when "with fatal inevitability we had to return to power and recruit for the new administration those with experience from the old regime, who were, moreover, deeply angered by all preceding actions".[31] Consequently, the actual transfer of power in the provinces to the landowners was one of the Hetman's fundamental mistakes. On the one hand, it was thanks to their support that he became head of state and should have continued to seek their backing. On the other, these very landowners, through their "reparative" campaigns and punitive expeditions against the peasantry, provoked a powerful insurgent movement and further intensified the widespread discontent with the domestic policies of the Hetman's government.

In governing the largest cities, the Hetman's government effectively reverted to a pre-revolutionary model. In particular, by the Law of 1 August 1918, the Kyiv City Governorate was established under the authority of a Chief *Otaman*, modelling the former Russian *gradonachalstvo* (city governorate).[32] The law referred explicitly to the relevant articles of the *General Provincial Statute* (*Code of Laws*, vol. 2, ed. 1892).

Following Kyiv, administrative units of *otamanstvo* were also created in Odesa and Mykolaiv. The heads of these administrations were General Oleksandr Khanukov in Kyiv, General Edward de Bondy in Mykolaiv, and General Volodymyr Mustafin in Odesa. As Russian political activist Venedikt Myakotin recalled,

31 Nikolaj Mogiljanskij, 'Tragedija Ukrajny', in *Revoljucija na Ukraine po memuaram belych*, pp. 115–35 (p. 130).
32 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 8 August 1918.

> In Odesa, V. Mustafin attempted to reinstate the practices of the pre-revolutionary era. This city governor succeeded in closing the Odesa City Duma, elected in 1917, and transferring the city's administration back to the pre-revolutionary governing body.[33]

Thus, the Hetman's government deliberately employed the administrative, legal, and managerial experience of the imperial period to improve the functioning of state institutions. However, this policy encountered misunderstanding and resistance not only from political opponents and the opposition, but also from the majority of the peasantry and urban population.

The aforementioned *Manifesto* by Pavlo Skoropadsky from 29 April 1918, which many scholars consider his inaugural decree, provides an exceptionally important and now canonical statement:

> The right to private property, as the foundation of culture and civilization, is hereby fully restored, and all decrees of the former Ukrainian government, as well as those of the Russian Provisional Government, are repealed and nullified. Full freedom to draw up contracts for the purchase and sale of land is reinstated.[34]

This provision is key to understanding the ideology behind Pavlo Skoropadsky's conservative-liberal reforms. It is most clearly reflected in the implementation of land reform, whose idea was entirely progressive: to provide land to smallholding peasants, thus creating a stable socio-political base for the state authority.

The reform was designed to progress through three stages. The first was the return of land seized by peasants to its former owners. The second was the redemption of that land from those owners through a special state bank. The third, through the bank's mediation, was the sale of plots to smallholding peasants. However, the reform never advanced beyond the first stage, i.e., the restoration of landlords' estates.[35]

By adopting the *Law on Land Liquidation Commissions* on 6 July, the Council of Ministers created a legal foundation for the landowners' unrestricted "reparative" campaigns against the peasantry. A six-month period was established for satisfying the claims of landowners, and, crucially, approximate calculations of their losses were permitted. The government also restored the legal force of the *Regulation on Land Management* of 1912 from the Russian Empire.[36]

33 Venedikt Mjakotin, 'Iz nedalekogo prošlogo', in *Revoljucija na Ukraine po memuaram belych*, pp. 222–38 (p. 233).
34 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 16 May 1918.
35 For information on attempts at land reform during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, including the Hetmanate Ukraine period, see: Ruslan Pyrih and Roman Tymčenko, *Zemel'na reforma het'mana Pavla Skoropads'koho: istoryčni narysy, dokumenty j materialy* (Kyjiv: Instytuti storiji Ukrajiny NANU, 2025).
36 *Ukrajins'ka Deržava*, II, p. 157.

In the summer, this "restorative" practice by the landowners became widespread and provoked a counter-reaction from the peasantry, which escalated into large-scale armed insurgent resistance, directed not only against the landowners but also against the state authority embodied by the Hetman. In August, the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ihor Kistiakovskyi, was compelled to send a circular to the gubernia *starostas* aimed at restraining landowners' arbitrariness. The document emphasizes, "In many areas, privately funded punitive detachments are still operating, committing acts of violence. I deem it necessary to halt such activities by these punitive detachments, for they needlessly provoke the population".[37]

It was only in September that a Land Bank was finally established; however, it practically never engaged in land transactions. At the time, Dmytro Dontsov, director of the Ukrainian Telegraph Agency, noted in his diary,

> We receive nothing from the land banks. No one is selling or buying anything. And when sales do occur, it is large landowners selling to other large landowners. The form of sale is a mortgage.[38]

Under revolutionary conditions, the principle of the inviolability of private property rights (while being reasonable from a theoretical standpoint) resulted in nothing more than a restoration of large landownership. This principle failed to bring about the parcelling of agricultural estates and their sale to smallholding peasants.

The achievements of the Ministry of Land Policies, led by Vasilii Kolokoltsov and Volodymyr Leontovych, laid the foundation for the legislative framework necessary for carrying out liberal land reform. This gave Pavlo Skoropadsky grounds to later claim, "Never before has the agrarian question been so close to a reasonable resolution as it was in November 1918 in Ukraine".[39]

However, Hetman's assessment of the situation was too optimistic. In reality, by November, both old and new obstacles remained on the path to implementing the reform. The legally defined term for settling land and property disputes between peasants and landowners was nearing its expiration at the end of the year, after which land sales to peasants were expected to begin.

At that time, Pavlo Skoropadsky was unable to overcome resistance on the agrarian question from such powerful corporate landowning organizations as the Union of Landowners and PROTOFIS.[40] The defeat of

37 *Nova Rada*, 14 September 1918.
38 Dmytro Doncov, *Rik 1918, Kyjiv* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2002), p. 111.
39 Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady*, p. 287.
40 PROTOFIS, the Union of Industry, Trade, Finance, and Agriculture: a pro-Russian political organization in Hetmanate Ukraine, founded in Kyiv in May 1918.

the Central Powers in the First World War had become inevitable. Landowners were anticipating the arrival of Entente troops and their Russian allies, hoping they would bury the very idea of Hetman Skoropadsky's reform. Moreover, the Ukrainian peasantry, spoiled by the lure of free "socialization" of land, was unwilling to pay for it. The almost apocryphal nature of the Hetman's regime carried the threat of a sudden change in power and, consequently, the possible expropriation of lands purchased.

Commenting on the meagre results of the land reform, the director of the Land Bank, Roman Budberg, wrote in his memoirs:

> During the existence of the State Land Bank, about 40,000 tithes of land were purchased, but only two estates had their deeds notarized: one in the Kyiv Governorate and one in the Kharkiv Governorate. All other agreements could not be finalized as senior notaries, estate owners, and even the Bank's branches themselves had become inaccessible.[41]

The unfinished land reform resulted in a restoration of large landownerships and widespread discontent among the peasantry. The peasantry, in turn, formed the backbone of the Directory's insurgent army, therefore sealing the fate of the Hetmanate Ukraine. It is no coincidence that in one passage of his memoirs Skoropadsky expressed himself quite emotionally, referring to "that cursed land question".[42]

Another sphere where the processes of reverting to imperial practices manifested most fully was the judicial branch. It underwent substantial changes compared to the times of the UNR, evolving toward the restoration of the Russian imperial judicial system. The laws on the provisional state system of Ukraine envisioned the creation of the General Court as "the highest guardian and protector of the law, and the Supreme Court of Ukraine in judicial and administrative matters".

The General Court was the highest judicial institution of the Hetmanate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as of the UNR. However, in early July 1918 the government adopted a law establishing, after the model of the *Ruling Senate of the Russian Empire*, the highest judicial authority of the state – the State Senate of the Ukrainian State.[43] Its activities were regulated by acts of the Russian Empire: the *Establishment of the Ruling Senate of Russia*, the *Establishment of Judicial Institutions*, and the *Statutes*

41 *Getman P.P. Skoropadskij. Ukraina na perelome. 1918 god*, ed. by Olga Ivantsova (Moskva: ROSSPÈN, 2014), p. 425.
42 Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady*, p. 283.
43 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 4 August 1918; *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 6 August 1918.

*of Criminal and Civil Procedures*. The State Senate comprised three general courts: civil, criminal, and administrative.[44]

Hetman Skoropadsky appointed Mykola Vasylenko, Minister of Education and Vice-Premier, as the President of the Senate. As in Tsarist Russia, so too in the Ukrainian State, senators could be appointed from among statesmen who lacked formal legal education or professional experience. Skoropadsky, in particular, appointed the following figures to the General Assembly of the State Senate: Prime Minister Fedir Lyzohub, former Kyiv Mayor Ippolit Dyakov, Ukrainian public activist Petro Stebnytskyi, and others.

The orientation toward the judicial system of the Tsarist era was also evident in the abolition of the Central Rada's law on appellate courts and the reinstatement, as before, of three Judicial Chambers in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa. To ensure their functioning, the Russian law of 3 July 1914, was reinstated.[45]

Lacking the ability to quickly draft its own criminal procedure legislation, the state authorities were forced to widely use the *Code of Punishments of Criminal and Correctional Law* of 1885, with its amendments from 1912. In the realm of combating speculation, the Ministry of Finance was granted the authority to interpret relevant articles and issue instructions. As a rule, in this manner the former Russian legislation was adapted to Ukrainian realities. The aforementioned *Code* effectively extended to all types of offenses.

The shortage of local legal professionals forced the government to keep office personnel from former Russian judicial institutions who had been deployed to Ukraine during the war. This circumstance created further obstacles to introducing the Ukrainian language in courts. These were necessary but temporary measures, prompted by the shortage of professional jurists and the underdevelopment of Ukraine's own legislative base. Their overly broad implementation was also exacerbated by the conditions of foreign occupation and the jurisdiction exercised by German and Austrian military field courts over Ukrainian people.

Among the law enforcement bodies, the State Guard – a network of armed units combining the functions of the pre-revolutionary police and gendarmerie – became one of the most influential. Already in May, the government passed a resolution that annulled the decisions of the Provisional Government and the Ukrainian Central Rada regarding the creation of militia formations. Municipal and district militia forces were reorganized into the State Guard, subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Work on drafting the statute of this institution continued for some time,

44 *Ukrajins'ka Deržava*, II, p. 147.
45 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 5 July 1918.

drawing from the legislation of the Russian state, particularly the *Code of Criminal Procedure*.[46]

The personnel of the State Guard units consisted of former policemen, gendarmes, city constables, wardens, officers, and non-commissioned officers. Upon returning to service, they brought with them the experience of the imperial security apparatus and reinstated the operation of the old network of informants. Prosecutorial oversight of the activities of State Guard officers remained largely formal.

Local self-governing bodies had undergone substantial changes during the revolution. The *zemstvo* assemblies and local city councils, elected under the Provisional Government's legislation, had become highly politicized; their composition included numerous representatives of left-wing parties, members lacking professional expertise, even those with no real ties to local communities. Both Prime Minister Fedir Lyzohub, one of the most prominent *zemstvo* leaders of the Russian Empire, and Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky perceived this state of self-governing bodies as a threat to the implementation of planned reforms. It is evident that another contributing factor was the leadership of the All-Ukrainian *Zemstvo* Union, which at the time was headed by the aforementioned Symon Petliura.

From the very outset, *zemstvo* bodies were subjected to pressure from the local administration. The dissolution of *zemstvo* assemblies and boards was widely practised. Frequently, in their place, the operation of old property-qualifying (*tsenzovyi*) institutions was reinstated. The persecution of local self-government reached such proportions that it compelled Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, Fedir Lyzohub, to urgently dispatch circulars to the gubernia *starostas*, prohibiting the dissolution of *zemstvo* and municipal councils while permitting the suspension of their activities only in cases of overt revolutionary agitation against the existing order.[47]

In May, a commission was established to draft a new law on *zemstvo* elections, headed by Prince Aleksandr Golitsyn – a Russian landowner, chairman of PROTOFIS, and former member of the Russian State Duma. The commission submitted a bill copied directly from an imperial text, based on the curial system. Most Kadet ministers recognized that it "deepened the divide between individual classes" and was undemocratic, yet they deemed it "politically expedient" to limit access to *zemstvo* elections for "elements dangerous from a political standpoint".[48]

On this matter, the Kadet ministers significantly deviated from the party's programmatic provisions, which had stipulated that elections

46 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 29 August 1918.
47 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 29 July 1918.
48 *Ukrajins'ka Deržava*, I, p. 243.

to *zemstvo* and municipal assemblies were to be "based on universal, equal, direct, and secret vote, without distinction of sex, religion, or nationality".[49] The government also approved new electoral legislation, which annulled the Provisional Government's law of 21 May 1917, on *zemstvo* elections, introducing instead substantial curial restrictions based on the following:

- property requirements: only individuals owning property subject to *zemstvo* taxation were allowed to participate in the vote for *zemstvo* deputies (*zemskiye glasnyie*);
- residence requirements: at least one year;
- age requirements: 25 years old;
- gender restrictions: only female property owners;
- socio-professional restrictions: military personnel, students, monks, and other categories were not allowed to participate.[50]

A similar law on elections to municipal dumas, drafted by Ippolit Dyakov's commission, was also adopted. After these laws were ratified by the Hetman in September 1918, the activities of local self-government bodies were entirely suspended until the new elections scheduled for November–December of that same year. The fall of the Hetman regime prevented these elections from taking place.

The analysis of internal policy of the Ukrainian State allows us to conclude that it was marked by restorationist tendencies. The provisional and extraordinary nature of the Hetmanate served as a certain imperative for the state leadership to draw upon elements of the Russian imperial legal tradition, which was familiar and accessible to the local ruling elite.

The constitution, state institutions, and judicial bodies were formed and functioned based on the imperial Russian legislation, only slightly adapted to Ukrainian realities. The shortage of national personnel and specialists was offset by the extensive involvement of Russian lawyers in the judiciary and prosecution services, which undermined the foundations of the 1918 Hetmanate not only as a legal state but also as a national one.

In the sphere of economic policy, the restoration of the primacy of private property rights and intentions to implement a liberal agrarian reform led to the return of land to landlords, inspiring a social backlash against the peasantry. The participation of law enforcement agencies and occupation forces on the side of landowners in this process turned the largest social class – smallholding and landless peasants – against the Hetman's rule.

49 'Programma konstitucionno-demokratičeskoj partii. [1905 g.]', in *Sbornik programm političeskich partij v Rossii*, ed. by Vasilij Vodovozov (Sankt-Peterburg, 1905–1906), I (1905), pp. 34–49.
50 *Deržavnyj vistnyk*, 21 September 1918.

The government's declared goals of restoring order, peace, and social partnership among all classes effectively resulted in the restriction of democratic freedoms, the abolition of local self-government institutions, and the strengthening of the state's repressive functions. This led to an acute social conflict between two elements of the political system – local self-government and the executive branch – which culminated in the practical elimination of democratic organs of local governance and the directive reinstatement of pre-revolutionary *zemstvo* boards and city *dumas*.

The restorationist tendencies dominated the domestic policy of the Ukrainian Hetmanate of 1918. At the same time, another process was taking place – a project of national and cultural development initiated by the Central Rada. Ukrainian gymnasiums were opened, Ukrainian textbooks were published in large print runs, and courses in Ukrainian Studies for teachers were organized. Two Ukrainian universities were established, as well as departments of Ukrainian Studies in higher educational institutions, the Academy of Sciences, a number of cultural institutions, and a National Archive.

This ideological and political duality of the Hetmanate's domestic policy reflected the ambivalent Russian-Ukrainian loyalties of the head of state and the ruling elite. It is precisely these features that led contemporary researchers to interpret the Hetmanate of 1918 as being "neither Ukrainian nor Russian statehood", or as a "Little Russian project".[51]

The defeat of the Central Powers – the Hetmanate's allies – in the First World War confronted Pavlo Skoropadsky with the urgent challenge of preserving Ukrainian statehood. He was compelled to make a dramatic shift in political course, effectively renouncing state independence in pursuit of the favour of the victorious Entente powers. In this respect, the Hetman's *Federative Charter* of 14 November 1918, was a product of a critical convergence of adverse circumstances. To a great extent, it was enabled by Herman's double identity, in which Ukrainian and Russian mentality coexisted. In the geopolitical context of the time, the latter prevailed and even imbued the Hetman with confidence that "Greater Russia would be restored on federative principles, with all nationalities entering into a great state as equals among equals...".[52] It was only in emigration, under the influence of Viacheslav Lypynskyi, the founder of Ukrainian conservatism, and other leaders of the Hetmanate movement, that Skoropadsky

51 Jaroslav Hrycak, *Narys istoriji Ukrajiny: formuvannja modernoji ukrajins'koji naciji XIX–XX stolittja* (Kyjiv: Heneza, 1996), p. 129; Vladyslav Verstjuk, Viktor Horobec', and Oleksij Toločko, *Ukrajina i Rosija v istoryčnij retrospektyvi: Narysy*, 3 vols (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 2004), I, p. 454.

52 Skoropads'kyj, *Spohady*, p. 325; Hennadij Korol'ov, 'Reheneracija ideji federalizmu v Ukrajins'kij het'mans'kij deržavi 1918 r.: heopolityčni ta nacional'no-identyfikacijni čynnyky', *Problemy vyvčennja istoriji Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1921 rokiv*, 8 (2012), 212–25.

abandoned his visions of a Greater Russia. Yet he turned instead to another equally illusory project – a Ukrainian hereditary labour monarchy.

## CONCLUSION

The key contradiction in the history of Hetmanate Ukraine in 1918 lay in the attempt to reconcile modernization and national objectives with a reliance on imperial legal and political traditions. One of the fundamental aspects of this restoration course was the formation of the constitutional foundations of the Hetman regime. In essence, the *Laws Concerning the Provisional State System of Ukraine* largely reproduced the *Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire* from 1906, merely substituting the terminology. This ensured the concentration of power in the hands of the Hetman and his government, creating a strong vertical of authority, but overall stripping the political system of democratic substance. Such an approach, on the one hand, allowed decisions to be made swiftly in a context of war and foreign presence or atypical occupation; on the other hand, it laid the groundwork for mistrust from the peasantry and resistance from democratic and socialist factions.

Restorationist elements in domestic policy were also evident in the system of local governance. The introduction of the institution of gubernia and county *starostas*, whose powers exceeded those of pre-revolutionary governors, demonstrated a course toward centralization of authority and strengthening of administrative control. The transfer of real power in the localities into the hands of landlords and former officials of the imperial administration provoked particular resentment among the peasantry, since landlords were seen as the embodiment of the old social oppression. As a result, instead of bringing social stability, this policy contributed to the spread of the insurgent movement.

The most painful sphere for the Hetman regime was agrarian policy. The proclaimed idea of a liberal land reform, which envisioned the purchase of land by a state bank and its transfer to smallholding peasants, in practice devolved into a restoration of landlord ownership. The return of estates seized during the revolutionary period to their former owners triggered bitter conflicts. Peasants, who had already experienced "socialization" of land, had no wish to once again become dependent on their landlords. Punitive actions by the Hetman's guard, coupled with the intervention of German and Austrian troops, only exacerbated tensions.

The judicial system of the Ukrainian State was likewise built on Russian imperial models. The creation of a State Senate modelled after

the Senate of the Russian Empire, the reinstatement of old procedural norms, and the involvement of former Russian jurists – all this made the judiciary branch far removed from national and democratic aspirations. The shortage of national personnel and the practical impossibility of introducing the Ukrainian language in courts further eroded public trust. Thus, in the field of justice, restorationist tendencies became especially pronounced as they almost entirely reproduced imperial practices.

In the sphere of local self-government, the Hetman's authority openly curtailed democratic freedoms. The dissolution of *zemstvo* assemblies and municipal *dumas*, the return to the property-qualifying principles of elections, the introduction of age and social restrictions – all these measures confirmed the intention to eliminate "dangerous" political elements from influencing those in power. Rather than stabilizing the situation, such policies further alienated Ukrainian political forces from the Hetman's government and fuelled opposition sentiment. At the same time, we should emphasize that the restorative policy was not the sole defining feature of the Hetmanate of 1918. In parallel, the trajectory initiated by the Ukrainian Central Rada toward the national and cultural development was also pursued.

The contradictory character of the Hetmanate of 1918 can also be explained by the personality of Pavlo Skoropadsky. His dual identity of a Ukrainian Hetman and a Russian general was reflected in all his policies. On the one hand, he sought to stabilize the situation, build an effective state, and implement cultural and educational initiatives. On the other, he leaned toward imperial traditions, relying on Russian Kadets and landlords, which ran counter to the national revolutionary expectations of the time. This ambivalence, compounded by dependence on German and Austro-Hungarian allies, rendered the regime ideologically vulnerable and politically unstable.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the Hetmanate of 1918 was an attempt to reconcile diverse political traditions and respond to the challenges of its time. Its restorationist tendencies, such as the use of imperial legislation, the reinstatement of landlord estates, and the dismantling of democratic institutions, proved dominant, ultimately shaping the social conflict that became one of the key reasons for the regime's downfall. Thus, the domestic policy of the Ukrainian State was both a lesson and an experiment. While its restorationist features led to the fall of Hetman authority, its national and cultural achievements demonstrated that efforts to lay the foundations of a modern Ukrainian statehood were possible even in the most difficult conditions of war and revolution.

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# BOLSHEVIK POLICY IN SOUTHERN UKRAINE IN 1918: ESSENCE, IMPLEMENTATION, AND CONSEQUENCES


## ABSTRACT

Based on an analysis of primary sources and historical literature, this article brings to light the policy of the Bolshevik government in the southern region of Ukraine during the final stage of the First World War. Against the backdrop of the political, social, and national changes in Ukraine during the period of the Central Rada, we explore the goals and methods of establishing Bolshevik control over key southern infrastructure objects, along with the attitudes of local elites toward this control and the reasons for the end of the Bolshevik occupation in 1918. We provide evidence for the idea that territorial issues were a cornerstone in both the communication between the Central Rada and the Provisional Government, as well as in the relations between the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) and Bolshevik Russia. Despite the completely opposing trends in Russia's political development during the Provisional Government and after the October Revolution, neither government – Provisional nor Bolshevik – considered Ukraine a unified political and economic entity and regarded the southern region as an integral part of ethnic Russia. In this matter the Bolsheviks essentially continued the policy of the Provisional Government regarding Ukraine's southern region as, in November 1917, the Russian Council of Peoples Commissars, or the Sovnarkom, did not recognize the jurisdiction of the Central Rada over the southeastern territories, which, according to the Provisional Government's Instruction to the General Secretariat, were not included in autonomous Ukraine in July 1917. One manifestation of this policy was the attempt to create Bolshevik republics referred to as "Soviet republics": Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih, Odesa, and Taurida. The establishment of these republics followed different scenarios but had a common characteristic: the Bolshevik governments of these quasi-republics did not formally consider themselves Ukrainian. The main goal of Bolshevik Russia was to maintain control over the Donetsk industrial basin and the Black Sea ports.



KEYWORDS:

regional history, Central Rada, Bolsheviks, southern Ukraine, 1918



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Reflecting on the two types of power at the turn of 1917–1918, Serhiy Yefremov, the Deputy Chairman of the Central Rada of Ukraine (Ukrainska Tsentralna Rada; UTsR), a literary scholar and publicist, observed, "One serves people, the other forces people to serve it; one is grounded on moral authority, the other seeks support at the tips of bayonets".[1] Yefremov classified Bolshevik power under the latter category, equating it with autocracy, as he believed that Bolshevism shared its roots with the old tsarist regime. The common historiographical view holds that the Bolsheviks were unwilling to recognize the will of the majority of the Ukrainian people, who supported the UTsR and the Ukrainian People's Republic (hereafter referred to as UNR). Some modern historians challenge this position, arguing that one should speak cautiously about the national consciousness of Ukrainians at that time, and that the UTsR was not ready for state-building.[2] Clearly, the Bolsheviks' goal at the time was reintegration of Ukraine into the newly proclaimed Soviet state. To this end, an assault on the newly declared UNR began. In early December 1917, Russian leaders Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky explicitly stated in the *Manifesto to the Ukrainian People with an Ultimatum to the Central Rada* that their aim was to fight against the UTsR, which "under the guise of national slogans has long been pursuing a truly bourgeois policy... not recognizing the soviets and Soviet power in Ukraine".[3]

The first step toward this goal was the formation of Bolshevik governing bodies to legitimize their authority in Ukraine. In December 1917, an alternative All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets was held in Kharkiv, where Ukraine was declared a Republic of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, and the Central Executive Committee (Tsentralnyi Vykonavchyi Komitet; TsVK) was elected. The TsVK consisted of 41 members, of whom 35 were Bolsheviks, with an additional 20 seats reserved for peasant delegates. In effect, the Bolsheviks seized power on the UNR territory, legitimizing it through the resolutions of the Kharkiv All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets.

The Bolsheviks in Ukraine were not an isolated group; they maintained connections with the leadership in Petrograd and received and carried out directives from the central organs of Soviet power. The TsVK was formed by representatives from a limited number of Ukrainian soviets and did not gain broad support within Ukrainian society. It began its

1 Serhij Jefremov, 'Na vistrjach štykiv', *Nova Rada*, 16 (1918), p. 1.
2 Vladyslav Verstjuk and Tetjana Ostaško, *Dijači Ukrajins'koji Central'noji Rady. Biohrafičnyj dovidnyk* (Kyjiv, 1998), p. 9. For a historiographical discussion of the reasons for the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, see: Gennadij Korolov, 'Ukrainskaja revoljucija 1917–1921 gg.: mify sovremennikov, obrazy i predstavlenija istoriografii', *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2011), 357–72.
3 For the text of this Manifesto and the response by the General Secretariat, see: 'Vijna z bil'šovykamy', *Nova Rada*, 202 (1917), p. 2.

activities by reporting to the Bolshevik Council of People's Commissars, or Sovnarkom, sending a telegram announcing the takeover of full power in Ukraine. The telegram also emphasized that, "if fraternal blood is shed in Ukraine, it will not be in a struggle between Ukrainians and Great Russians, but in a class struggle between the Ukrainian working masses and the Rada, which has seized all power".[4]

This article will examine the development of Bolshevik strategy toward Ukraine, partially analysing the Bolshevik attempts to internally legitimize their authority. Also, it will describe the overall state of Ukrainian national power in 1918. In addition, it will analyse the policy of the Russian Sovnarkom in the southern region of Ukraine in order to identify the objectives and means of establishing Bolshevik control over the key objects of infrastructure and explore the reasons for the end of the Bolshevik occupation in 1918. The conceptual basis of the article is the vision of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, according to which the Ukrainian national movement was activated following the collapse of the Russian Empire, after which it began implementing its own state project.[5] One of the reasons for its failure is generally considered to be the wars with the Bolsheviks.

The subject of relations between the UTsR and Russian governments during the events of 1917–1921 has been covered in both Ukrainian and foreign historiography. Most studies focus on the territory of the Upper Dnipro Ukraine and the Kharkiv-Kyiv line, while events in the southern region of Ukraine are often addressed only briefly. A notable exception is the works of Ukrainian researchers Vladyslav Verstiuk, Petro Lavriv, and Halyna Turchenko.[6] A collective study on the interwar period in Ukraine by scholars from the Institute of History of Ukraine at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine stands out for its innovative methodological approaches, including sections on Bolshevik activities in the southern region.[7]

In the context of the full-scale war Russia is waging against Ukraine, there is a growing interest in the issue of the Bolshevik invasion and occupation of large parts of Ukraine during the years of the Ukrainian Revolution. The majority of scholars analyse current events using the principles

4 'Sovetskaja vlast' na Ukraine', *Izvestija Central'nogo ispolnitel'nogo komiteta*, 252 (1917), 2.

5 *Narysy istoriji ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1921 rokiv*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, Hennadij Borjak, Vladyslav Verstjuk and others, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 2011–2012).

6 Vladyslav Verstiuk, 'The Bolshevik Expansion and Occupation of Ukraine (December 1917 – February 1918)', *AREI*, 2 (2023), 118–45; Petro Lavriv, *Istorija pivdenno-dchidn'oji Ukrajiny* (Kyjiv: Spilka, 1996); Halyna Turčenko, 'Impers'kyj projekt "Novorosija": bil'šovyc'kyj variant', *Naukovi praci istoryčnoho fakul'tetu Zaporiz'koho nacional'noho universytetu*, 39 (2014), 75–83.

7 Hennadij Jefimenko, 'Radjans'ki deržavy v Ukrajini (1917–1920)', in *Ukrajina j ukrajinci v postimpers'ku dobu. 1917–1939* (Kyjiv: Akademperiodyka, 2021), 154–82; Stanislav Kul'čyc'kyj, 'Krym u period revoljuciji ta hromadjans'koji vijny: 1917–1920', in *Ukrajina j ukrajinci v postimpers'ku dobu. 1917–1939* (Kyjiv: Akademperiodyka, 2021), 182–98.

of historical comparison, tracing the roots of Russian military aggression against the UNR in 1917–1921.[8]

In foreign historiography, the history of Ukraine's southern region in 1917–1918 is considered mainly within the context of the German and Austro-Hungarian occupation of 1918. Particular attention is given to the relationships between Ukrainian authorities, such as the UTsR and the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky, and the Central Powers, as well as the policies of the German military administration in southern cities. Important contributions to this area have been made by the researchers Andreas Kappeler and Włodzimierz Mędrzecki.[9] The collective historical study *Die Ukraine zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Fremdherrschaft 1917–1922*,[10] edited by Wolfram Dornik, provides a general analysis of Bolshevik policies in Ukraine up to the arrival of Allied forces in 1918.

While studying the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine in early 1918, Ukrainian historian Hennadii Yefimenko noted that despite the opposition between the Russian Bolsheviks and representatives of the Ukrainian movement, their primary goals were not initially contradictory. The Ukrainian liberation movement sought to protect the national and cultural rights of Ukrainians, while the Bolsheviks agreed – initially, at least – to the creation of a formally national but in essence Soviet Ukraine. Interestingly, in their efforts to gain control over Ukraine, the Bolsheviks employed slogans almost identical to those of the Ukrainian liberation movement.[11]

Another Ukrainian historian, Vladyslav Verstiuk, noted that the conflict between the Central Rada and the Bolsheviks was inevitable. However, it so happened that Lenin was not particularly focused on Ukraine in early November 1917, as the primary task for Petrograd was establishing control over the army. Once the UTsR shifted from merely declaring its principles to attempting to implement them, the Bolsheviks recognized it as a genuine competitor in the struggle for power.[12] Initially, an ideological war against the Rada began, and the Russian Sovnarkom – through the mouthpiece of the People's Commissar for Nationalities in Russia,

8 A telling example in this regard is the collective monograph presented in the format of an imagined dialogue between scholars of the Institute of History of Ukraine at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and its readers. See: *Perelom: Vijna Rosiji proty Ukrajiny u* časovych *plastach i prostorach mynuvšyny: dialohy z istorykamy*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Instytut istoriji Ukrajiny, 2022).

9 Andreas Kappeler, *Ungleiche Brüder: Russen und Ukrainer vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (München: C.H. Beck, 2017); Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, 'Bayerische Truppenteile in der Ukraine im Jahr 1918', in *Bayern und Osteuropa. Aus der Geschichte der Beziehungen Bayerns, Frankens und Schwabens mit Rußland, der Ukraine und Weißrußland* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), pp. 441–60.

10 Wolfram Dornik and others, *Die Ukraine zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Fremdherrschaft 1917–1922* (Graz: Leykam, 2011). In Ukrainian translation: *Ukrajina miž samovyznačennjam ta okupacijeju: 1917–1922 roky*, ed. by Vol'fram Dornik and others (Kyjiv: Nika-Centr, 2015).

11 Hennadij Jefimenko, 'Radjans'ki deržavy v Ukrajini: 1917–1920', in *Ukrajina j ukrajinci v postimpers'ku dobu: 1917–1939* (Kyjiv: Akademperiodyka, 2021), p. 155.

12 Vladyslav Verstjuk, 'Ukrajins'ka narodna hespublika: vid prohološennja do padinnja', in *Narysy istoriji ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1921 rokiv* (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 2011), I, pp. 218–19.

Joseph Stalin – demanded a referendum in Ukraine on the issue of self-determination.[13] This was followed by an ultimatum. Since the ultimatum did not gain the expected support from the Bolsheviks and, on the contrary, sparked a wave of protests within the Ukrainian society, Petrograd decided to change tactics. The creation of the TsVK, the People's Secretariat, and the proclamation of Bolshevik power in Ukraine indicated that Russian Sovnarkom was shifting to more active measures.[14]

From the very beginning of the UTsR's formation, Ukrainian political leaders had to defend the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination. The territorial issue was especially pressing. In the early stages of the Ukrainian Revolution, the UTsR proclaimed national-territorial autonomy within the boundaries of the nine Ukrainian guberniyas of the former Romanov Empire. However, according to the Provisional Government's *Instruction* to the UTsR in July 1917, the powers and authority of the Ukrainian General Secretariat were significantly limited. In fact, the Russian government's version of autonomous Ukraine did not include the Kherson, Taurida, Katerynoslav, or Kharkiv guberniyas. Attempting to influence the situation, the UTsR organized the Congress of the Peoples of Russia in Kyiv in September 1917. The final resolution of this congress clearly articulated the idea of creating a federal democratic state, but this goal could not be accomplished.

After the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd in October 1917, the situation worsened. With the Third Universal of 7 November 1917, the UTsR declared the creation of the UNR, which it envisioned as part of the democratic federal Russia – a state that, in reality, no longer existed.[15] Seeking to extend its jurisdiction over Ukrainian territory, the Russian Sovnarkom launched an anti-Ukrainian propaganda campaign, which culminated in the ultimatum and then the start of military actions.

In relations between the Central Rada and the Provisional Government, as well as those between the UNR and Bolshevik Russia, the territorial issue remained one of the key concerns. Despite the entirely opposite political trends during the existence of the Provisional Government and after the October Revolution, both Russian governments – the Provisional and the Bolshevik – could not envision the future Russian state without the southern and eastern Ukrainian lands. In this matter the Bolsheviks

13 This is in reference to an interview that Stalin gave to the newspaper *Izvestia VTsIK* on 24 November 1917. In this interview, which was dedicated to Ukraine, Stalin stated that the Sovnarkom would only recognize a government established based on the results of a referendum. He called for the convocation of an All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets and declared that power in Ukraine should belong to soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies.

14 For detailed analysis of the course of events in Ukraine from December 1917 to February 1918, see: Verstiuk, 'The Bolshevik Expansion', pp. 118–45.

15 'Tretij Universal Ukrajins'koji Central'noji Rady', in *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada: dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Vladyslav Verstiuk and others, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 1996), I, p. 398.

essentially continued the Provisional Government's policy toward Ukraine's southern region. In November 1917, the Russian Sovnarkom did not recognize the UTsR's jurisdiction over the southeastern territories.

After the proclamation of the Third Universal (7 November 1917), Joseph Stalin accused the UTsR of annexing new guberniyas, even though as early as March 1917 he had called for the immediate declaration of political autonomy for the Caucasus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan – those areas of Russia that represented "integrated economic territories with distinct ways of life and national populations, with local administrative practices and education in their native languages".[16] Evidently, he envisioned the borders of autonomous Ukraine in a very different format.

The issue of the status of Donbas – a region with a developed industrial complex and significant mineral resources – was particularly contentious. The Bolsheviks of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Basin considered this region part of Greater Russia. In November 1917, the leader of the Regional Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (Bolsheviks), or RSDLP(b), Fyodor Sergeev (Artem), proposed transforming the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Basin into an independent administrative-territorial unit which would be incorporated into Bolshevik Russia with its own self-governance.[17]

As we know, there was no consensus on this issue among the members of the first Bolshevik government of Soviet Ukraine. In his memoirs, Georgiy Lapchynskyi, a member of the first Soviet Ukrainian government, noted that local Bolsheviks were convinced that Donbas, Kryvyi Rih, and Kharkiv had no connection to Ukraine and should either be annexed to Russia or granted autonomy. Meanwhile, representatives from Kyiv – Mykola Skrypnyk and Yevgeniya Bosch – argued that it was in the interest of the revolution to keep the industrial regions tied to the agrarian territories of Ukraine.[18]

At the All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets in Kharkiv, a separate resolution was passed: *On the Self-Determination of the Donetsk and Kryyi Rih Basins*. This resolution paved the way for the Congress of Workers' Deputies of the Donetsk and Kryvyi Rih Basins in early February 1918.[19] Following heated debates between Mykola Skrypnyk, who advocated for the autonomous status of Donbas region within the Soviet Ukraine as part of the All-Russian Federation of Soviet Republics, and the supporters of regional separatism led by Semen Vasylchenko, the majority voted in favour of establishing

16 Iosif Stalin, 'Vojna i revoljucija', *Pravda*, 17 (1917), 3.
17 Petro Lavriv, Istorija *pivdenno-schidn'oji Ukrajiny* (Kyjiv: Spilka, 1996), p. 140.
18 Heorhij Lapčyns'kyj, 'Peršyj period Radjans'koji vlady na Ukrajini. CVKU ta Narodnyj Sekretariat: spohady', in *Litopys revoljuciji*, 1 (1928), 159–75 (p. 162).
19 'Materialy ta dokumenty pro Donec'ko-Kryvoriz'ku respubliku', in *Litopys revoljuciji*, 3 (1928), 250–88 (pp. 258–59).

the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic. Skrypnyk, who supported the idea of a global proletarian revolution as the means to justly resolve all political, economic, social, and national issues, withdrew his proposal from consideration. His goal was to build a Bolshevik yet simultaneously national Ukraine.

Reflecting on the events of 1918, Skrypnyk later wrote,

> Our tragedy in Ukraine was precisely that we sought, with the help of the working class – ethnically Russian or Russified, which often treated even the slightest mention of the Ukrainian language and culture with disdain – to win over the peasantry and rural proletariat, which, being predominantly Ukrainian in composition, had historically developed a mistrust and prejudice toward all things Russian, 'Muscovite'.[20]

The resolution on the creation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic emphasized that it was a separate administrative entity within the "free federation of free Soviet republics of Russia".[21] Overall, this entity was a separatist quasi-state formation created by the Bolsheviks. Alongside its proclamation, a local Sovnarkom was elected, which nevertheless maintained constant contact with the Russian Sovnarkom, and the decrees of the latter were considered mandatory for implementation within the republic. Skrypnyk argued that among the Donetsk Bolsheviks there was a notion to allow Upper Dnipro Ukraine to independently purge itself of "petty-bourgeois nationalism". However, the VTsK of the Ukrainian Soviets gave its consent to the creation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic, aiming to establish a strong ground for proletarian dictatorship in the Basin, which could become a "striking force" in the struggle against the UTsR. As for the government of the UNR of the Soviets and the VTsK of the Ukrainian Soviets, they were perceived by the leadership of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic only as simultaneously functioning bodies in regard to the Republic's own respective governing structures.

In his turn, Volodymyr Zatonskyi, analysing the relationship between the People's Secretariat and the Council of People's Commissars of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic, highlighted contradictions within the interpretation of the national question,

> This is where the difference lay between the People's Secretariat and Comrade Artem's group in Kharkiv, the Katerynoslavites, and our

20 Mykola Skrypnyk, 'Donbas i Ukrajina', in *Statti i promovy z nacional'noho pytannja* (München: Sučasnist', 1974), p. 11.
21 See the Resolution on the separation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic (Rezoljucija o vydelenii Donecko-Krivorožskoj respubliki): 'Materialy ta dokumenty pro Donec'ko-Kryvoriz'ku respubliku', *Litopys revoljuciji*, 3 (1928), pp. 258–59.

> people from Kryvyi Rih and Donbas: the latter tried to isolate themselves from Ukraine that was governed by Central Rada, while we tried to create a national Ukrainian Soviet centre for the entire Ukrain.[22]

Within Soviet historiography, the creation of Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic was interpreted in two ways: on one hand, as a mistake by the local Bolsheviks due to their lack of political experience; on the other, as an attempt to prevent the occupation of Ukraine's developed regions by German and Austrian troops.[23] This ambiguity stemmed from the evaluations given to this republic by the central Bolshevik authorities. The Russian Sovnarkom did not recognize the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic either as an independent state or as part of Russia. According to some evidence, a meeting took place between Artem and Lenin during which the former unsuccessfully tried to obtain Lenin's consent to the creation of a separate republic. The harmful nature of separatist sentiments and secession was directly stated by the head of the All-Russian VTsK of the Soviets, Yakov Sverdlov.[24] The situation briefly changed later when, under pressure from German and Austrian troops in March 1918, the Bolsheviks attempted to use the self-proclaimed Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic as a means to retain control over Ukraine's eastern region. However, representatives of the forces allied with the UNR were unwilling to recognize any artificial entities, regardless of whether they were independent or subordinate to Russia, so this idea did not find practical implementation.

The territorial issue remained unresolved. The leadership of the separatist republic claimed territories that, in their opinion, had never been part of Ukraine – lands belonging to the Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, and parts of Kherson and Taurida guberniyas. The borders of this republic aligned with those outlined for Ukraine by the Provisional Government in August 1917 but were never enforced.[25] In early 1918, the eastern territories of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic became part of the newly established Don Soviet Republic, with its own Sovnarkom, while two other separate Soviet republics appeared in the south: the Odesa and Taurida republics. The former was established in late January 1918 within the territories of Kherson and Besarabia guberniyas, where power was held by the self-proclaimed

22 Volodymyr Zatonsky, 'Z spohadiv pro ukrayins'ku revolyutsiyu', in *Litopys revoljuciji*, 4 (1929), 139–72 (pp. 168–69).

23 See: Jurij Gamreckij and others, *Triumfal'noe* šestvie *Sovetskoj vlasti na Ukraine* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1987). The analysis of Soviet historiography is provided in the following study: Halyna Turčenko and Fedir Turčenko, *Proekt «Novorosija» 1764–2014 rr: juvilej na krovi* (Zaporiž̌ža: ZNU, 2015).

24 *Bol'ševistskie organizacii Ukrainy v period ustanovlenija i ukreplenija Sovetskoj vlasti (nojabr' 1917 – aprel' 1918 gg.): sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kiev: GosPolitIzdat, 1962), p. 113.

25 To support their arguments, the leadership of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic directly referred to the *Temporary Instruction to the General Secretariat*: "The Kyiv Rada, in its agreement with Prince Lvov and Tereshchenko, established the eastern regions of Ukraine along a line that was, and still is, the western border of our Republic". Quoted from: Halyna Turčenko, 'Impers'kyj projekt "Novorosija": bil'šovyc'kyj variant', in *Naukovi praci istoryčnoho fakul'tetu Zaporiz'koho nacional'noho universytetu*, 39 (2014), p. 77.

Council of People's Commissars, led by Volodymyr Yudovskyi. The Council functioned in Crimea during March–April 1918, with Jan Miller [real name: Janis Šepte] serving as the head of its VTsK.

In Odesa, the issue of power came to the fore after the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd. Local members of the RSDLP(b) sought to seize power in Odesa and its environs in parallel with their Petrograd counterparts, but they lacked sufficient military and popular support in both the city and the region. The Odesa Guberniya Council strongly opposed the Bolshevik attempts to seize power.[26] In this context, the Bolsheviks resorted to provocations, which exacerbated tensions between the local authorities and Ukrainian *Haidamak* forces. To stabilize the situation and prevent the escalation of conflict between various political groups, Lieutenant Colonel Viktor Poplavko[27] was dispatched to Odesa as the military commissar of the General Secretariat of the Ukrainian Central Rada. With significant authority from the Ukrainian military ministry, Poplavko undertook active efforts to strengthen the UTsR's authority in Odesa and prevent armed clashes in the city and surrounding areas. His attempts to establish contact with the Workers Deputies' Council, however, sparked a negative reaction from some of his allies, who accused him of secretly sympathizing with the Bolsheviks.[28] Nonetheless, following the proclamation of the Third Universal, a joint meeting of all socialist groups, including representatives of the Revolutionary Committee and the Military Council, was held in Odesa. The meeting supported the creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic within the federative democratic Russian republic.[29]

The spread of anti-Ukrainian sentiments in the city was fuelled by Bolshevik provocations as they did not recognize the Kherson gubernia's jurisdiction under the UTsR. At the end of November, under the pretext of sending units to the Don to fight General Aleksei Kaledin's forces, and to a greater extent to establish a military dictatorship in Odesa, the Bolsheviks instigated clashes between the Red Guards and the Haidamaks, which lasted from 30 November to 2 December 1917.[30] After three days of confrontation, the better-organized Ukrainian forces emerged victorious.

26 The decision to support the UTsR was made during a joint meeting of Odesa's political organizations, held on 27 October/9 November 1917. The decisive role in this decision was played by Volodymyr Chekhivskyi, the leader of the local Ukrainian Social Democrats. He announced that the Kherson Ukrainian Provincial Council, which he headed, and which represented the interests of the Central Rada, would not pursue "forcible Ukrainization" but would instead work in cooperation with all political organizations in Odesa.

27 Taras Vinckovs'kyj, 'Viktor Poplavko v hornyli revoljuciji: miž svojimy i čužymy', in *Černomors'ka chvylja Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji: providnyky nacional'noho ruchu v Odesi u 1917–1920 rr.*, ed. by Vadym Chmars'kyi and others (Odesa: TES, 2011), pp. 132–41.

28 The head of the Odesa Military Council, Hryhoriy Hryshko, noted in his memoirs: "As it later turned out, he was not working for the benefit of Ukraine, but to its detriment. Unfortunately, we realized this too late. He was an operative working for the Bolsheviks".

29 Vinckovs'kyj, 'Viktor Poplavko v hornyli revoljuciji', p. 141.

30 For detailed account of the power struggle in Odesa in December 1917, see: Mychajlo Koval'čuk, 'Ukrajins'ki vijs'kovi častyny v Odesi za Central'noji rady: formuvannja, orhanizacija, bojovyj šljach', in *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal*, 3 (2017), 46–66.

As a result, both sides were forced to agree to the creation of a unified governing body consisting of representatives from Ukrainian organizations and the Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks and their supporters effectively maintained their own independence in the city's political life.[31]

Under these circumstances, the idea of declaring Odesa a free city within the UNR gained significant popularity.[32] To pursue this idea, an Odesa delegation even travelled to Kyiv and received preliminary approval from Volodymyr Vynnychenko, the head of the General Secretariat. By mid-December, the city obtained approval from the central Ukrainian authorities to establish its own electoral district. Two separate commissions were formed – one by the city council and the other by the Council of Workers', Soldiers', Sailors', and Peasants' Deputies. Legal frameworks for the functioning of the free city were developed, along with two urban development programs. However, due to the growing activity of Bolshevik forces, these plans were never fully implemented.

The next attempt by the Bolsheviks to seize power in Odesa occurred after the Military Council declared its rejection of the ultimatum from the Council of People's Commissars to the Central Rada and the start of the war between Bolshevik Russia and the UNR. Both the local and national leadership underestimated the Bolsheviks' ability to significantly influence the course of events and the ability to conduct active military operations. The uprising against the Central Rada in Odesa was organized by the Military-Revolutionary Committee, which initiated a conference of factory committees on 4–5 January 1918, held at the plant of the Russian Shipping and Trade Society. The conference decided to transfer all power in Odesa to the Soviets. A Temporary Revolutionary Workers' Committee was elected to coordinate the actions and implement the plans.

Bolshevik propaganda proved effective, garnering support from workers of the Odesa railway workshops, naval personnel, crew members of ships anchored in Odesa, and the Soldiers' Committee. However, hopes for a peaceful seizure of power did not materialize. Odesa housed Haidamak units loyal to the UTsR. Clashes between pro-Ukrainian Haidamaks and the Bolsheviks lasted for a week, and it was only on 18/31 January 1918, that Odesa newspapers reported the establishment of Soviet power. The day before, on the evening of 17 January a joint meeting

31 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada: dokumenty i materialy*, p. 577.

32 The idea of proclaiming Odesa a free port, *porto franco*, had been circulating in the city long before the events described. In 1913, Odesa port engineer Wilhelm Ekerle developed a project for an Odesa "free harbour", which later formed the basis of the plans to declare Odesa a free city in 1918. Interestingly, this idea was discussed both during the period of the Central Rada and the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky. Wilhelm Eckerle's project, along with reflections on the advantages of a free harbour in Odesa for Ukraine's economy, was published in the Odesa newspaper *Vilne zhyttia*, 83 (16 July 1918).

of the presidiums of the Soviets was held to address the issue of organizing the government; a list of commissariats was approved, and D. Guryev, an anarchist, was appointed a city commissar. A few days later, the executive authority – the Odesa Council of People's Commissars – was formed, headed by the Bolshevik Volodymyr Yudovskyi, who was replaced by Petro Starostin in February.[33]

The Odesa Soviet Republic encompassed parts of the Kherson and Besarabia guberniyas. The Bolsheviks considered the republic an autonomous part of Soviet Russia, unrelated to the UNR. A local newspaper even published an article claiming that Odesa had never been a national Ukrainian territory. However, it soon became evident that maintaining control over a city in turmoil, with various political factions operating, was far more difficult than merely proclaiming Soviet power. Sovnarkom, led by Yudovskyi, was unable to restore order in the city. Moreover, according to the memoirs of the head of the Odesa Soviet government, neither he nor his subordinates had any real power in the city.[34]

The situation was further complicated by an external threat from Romania, which supported the Entente in the First World War. In early January 1918, Romania began the occupation of Besarabia, posing a danger to Odesa. Alongside the failures of internal policy and financial difficulties, the new government was also unable to organize a capable military force to defend the city from the Romanians. It turned out that Odesa's workers were not prepared to shed blood, neither for the global revolution (despite the declaration of 18 January) nor for Odesa itself.

To assist Odesa in organizing its defence, Christian Rakovskii, a representative of the Bolshevik government, arrived from Petrograd, while Kyiv sent Bolshevik units led by Mikhail Muravyov. Power in the city was handed over to the latter. However, after the January 1917 terror in Kyiv, orchestrated by Muravyov, his promises to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in Odesa were seen more as a threat than an opportunity for Bolshevik authority. Reports appeared in Kyiv and Odesa newspapers, featuring his speech in which he threatened retaliation against anyone opposing his policies.[35] The head of Odesa's Sovnarkom, Volodymyr Yudovskyi, wrote that Muravyov arrived in Odesa "illuminated by the glory of his

33 Oleksandr Šyško, 'Odes'ka Radjans'ka respublika: vid uzurpaciji vlady do jiji krachu', in *Pivden' Ukrajiny: etnoistoryčnyj, movnyj, kul'turnyj ta relihijnyj vymiry: zbirka naukovych prac'* (Odesa: VMV, 2011), p. 173.

34 Similar to Volodymyr Zatonskyi's remarks about the Kharkiv Soviet People's Commissariat, the head of the Odesa government, Volodymyr Yudovskyi, recalled that at that time there was no organized government with full authority in Odesa. Each of the commissariats operated at its own risk, and joint meetings resembled more of an improvised gathering than sessions of an executive authority.

35 'Promovy Muravjova v Odesi', *Nova Rada*, 22 (1918), p. 2; *Odesskie novosti*, 14 (1918), p. 3.

victorious campaign against Ukraine", but his arrival was a severe blow to "even the meagre progress we were making at the time".[36]

In late February 1918, under the rule of Muravyov, who had a full control of the city (he imposed censorship, banned rallies and gatherings, introduced curfews, and collected contributions), internal struggles among Odesa's representatives of power intensified. As a result, the Odesa Soviet of People's Commissars came under the leadership of Petro Starostin. The news of the peace treaty signed between the Bolshevik Russia and the Central Powers on 3 March 1918, triggered anti-Bolshevik sentiment in Odesa. Muravyov declared forced mobilization and martial law; still, Bolshevik forces were defeated in battle by Austro-Hungarian troops near the Slobodka and Birzula stations. Consequently, an anti-Bolshevik uprising erupted in Odesa, with workers' assemblies passing resolutions to transfer power to the City Duma and to support the Constituent Assembly. Muravyov was denounced as a "former Black Hundred member and a servant of autocracy".[37] The Odesa Soviet Republic ceased to exist, and power in the city effectively passed into the hands of the City Duma, whose representatives negotiated with the Austro-Hungarian military command to transfer authority in Odesa to their military command and representatives of the UNR, while preserving local Soviets and trade unions. On the morning of 13 March 1918, Austro-Hungarian troops entered Odesa without a fight.

A different scenario unfolded in the Taurida guberniya. The Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd led to a political crisis: anticipating the threat of Bolshevik dictatorship and the formation of an alliance with Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar national movements, local moderate socialist parties consolidated on the issue of governance. On 20 November 1917, they formed a regional multiparty government – the Council of People's Representatives, which was supported by the majority of the population in Crimea and Northern Taurida. However, the moderate socialists were unable to secure their political success, as cooperation between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar forces intensified. Both centres claimed that their primary goal was to organize a regional constituent assembly, and both actively collaborated to achieve this objective. On 13/26 December 1917, the Crimean Tatar *kurultai* declared the formation of the Crimean People's Republic and a national government, the Council of Directors (Directorate),[38] representing the Crimean Tatar population. On 19 December 1917

36 Vladimir Judovskij, 'Dejatel'nost' odesskogo SovNarKoma', in *Oktjabr' na Odeščine* (Odessa: Izvestija, 1927), 138–45 (p. 141).
37 A. Kirov, 'Rumčerod i RadNarKom Odes'koji oblasty v borot'bi za Žovten'', in *Litopys revoljuciji*, 1 (1928), 86–114 (pp. 112–13).
38 Dmytro Hordijenko, 'Krym u ta poza mežamy Ukrajiny', in *Naš Krym: do 100-riččja Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji (1917–1923)*, 7 (2019), pp. 5–49.

(1 January 1918) the Council of People's Representatives of the Taurida guberniya officially recognized the Crimean Tatar government, confirming the existence of a coalition between moderate socialist forces and Crimean Tatar national self-governing bodies. This coalition exhibited some overlap in functions related to regional governance, with the first centre primarily focusing on economic and political issues, while the second dealt mainly with political and military matters.

The newly established Crimean People's Republic lasted just over a month, marking an attempt by the Crimean Tatars to restore their own statehood in Crimea, which ultimately failed. By the end of January 1918, Crimea was occupied by Bolshevik forces. The Bolsheviks quickly restructured the governance system of the peninsula. From 28 to 30 January 1918, an Extraordinary Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was held, with 44 delegates in attendance (27 of whom were Bolsheviks). The congress confirmed the dissolution of both the Council of People's Representatives and the kurultai, replacing them with the Taurida Central Executive Committee, headed by Jan Miller, leader of the RSDLP(b) in Simferopol. The new government consisted of commissariats for agriculture, finance, transport, justice, postal and telegraph services, labour, public education, social welfare, and national affairs.[39]

The political regime of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks, whose leadership was radically leftist, suppressed the Crimean Tatar self-government bodies and halted the publication of local newspapers. Some members of the Directorate and kurultai were arrested, some deputies fled Crimea, while others hid in mountain or steppe villages where government control was weak. Some kurultai members remained legally active,[40] and a few left-leaning deputies even cooperated with the new authorities. However, the Bolshevik dictatorship was largely alien to the majority of the Crimean Tatar population.[41]

Thanks to the sailors of the Black Sea Fleet and military forces sent from Russia, Bolshevik power had been established in Feodosia, Kerch, Yalta, Simferopol, and Yevpatoria by the second half of January. The process was overseen by detachments of sailors dispatched from Sevastopol to support local Bolshevik organizations. In February, headquarters were organized for the regular Crimean Red Army. However, in reality, the Bolsheviks held influence primarily in urban areas: for instance, the largest party organization

39 Tetjana Bykova, 'Radjans'ka socialistyčna respublika Tavrydy', in *Storinky istoriji: zbirnyk naukovych prac'* (Kyjiv: Politechnika, 2011), pp. 117–38.

40 *Kryms'kotatars'kyj nacional'nyj ruch u 1917–1920 rr. za archivamy komunistyčnych specslužb*, ed. by Andrij Ivanec' and Andrij Kohut (Kyjiv: K.I.S., 2019), p. 127.

41 Contemporaries of those events openly acknowledged that what was actually taking place was a struggle between Russians and Tatars. For example, General Pyotr Wrangel, one of the leaders of the White movement, recalled that at the beginning of 1918, during a search of his residence in Yalta, sailors from Sevastopol reassured him that he had nothing to fear as they were only fighting the Tatars.

in Sevastopol numbered only 400 members, while in Simferopol, Yevpatoria, and other cities the numbers were twice or even three times lower. In rural areas, the Bolsheviks formed a small group, and they were entirely absent in some regions. The Soviets continued to function largely due to the support of sailors from the Black Sea Fleet, among whom left-wing socialist revolutionaries (*esers*) and anarchists predominated, as well as Red Army soldiers. Crimean Tatar villages in the mountainous areas of Crimea and German colonies in the steppes were entirely outside the control of the new authorities. The dictatorship of the Bolsheviks and left esers was alien to the majority of the Crimean Tatar population. As later acknowledged by representatives of the Bolshevik government, from its inception to its demise under the German pressure, Soviet power in Crimea remained Russian.[42]

The actions of the Bolsheviks immediately provoked a response from Ukrainian society. In February 1918, the Kyiv newspaper *Nova Rada* published an editorial eloquently titled 'They Are Fleeing'.[43] The article described the establishment of Soviet republics as part of the Great Russian Bolshevik policy, which from the outset had no intention of relinquishing control over Ukrainian lands,

> What is most noteworthy here is that this is a primarily political fact… the separation stems from circles that neither think of nor desire a sharp economic division between the federative parts of the former Russia.[44]

This sentiment was later echoed by Volodymyr Vynnychenko, who pointed to both political and economic reasons behind Bolshevik policy in Ukraine in early 1918. In his view, the economic reasons were rooted in Russia's need for Ukrainian coal, iron, and grain, while the political motivations were focused on restoring a "one and indivisible" Russian state. The fragmentation of all of Ukraine into separate "federative Soviet republics" was the primary means of destroying Ukrainian national statehood.[45]

The socio-political situation was another important factor that played a significant role in the formation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih, Odesa, and other Soviet republics in Ukraine. Between late 1917 and early 1918, Soviet power in Russia was unstable, and there was no certainty that the Bolsheviks would be able to secure victory in Ukraine. As a result, the creation of Soviet quasi-republics was one of the strategies employed

42 *Kryms'kotatars'kyj nacional'nyj ruch*, p. 127.
43 'Tikajut'', *Nova Rada*, 15 (1918), p. 1.
44 Ibid., p. 1
45 Volodymyr Vynnyčenko, *Vidrodžennja naciji: istorija ukrajins'koji revoljuciji (marec' 1917 r. – bruden' 1919 r.)* (Kyjiv; Viden': Dzvin, 1920), pp. 269–70.

to protect Russia against losing strategically important Black Sea ports in the event of a Bolshevik defeat in Ukraine.[46] The loss of the Donetsk coal and metallurgical region that was critical to Russian industry would also have been catastrophic.

Lacking sufficient military strength to resist Bolshevik aggression, the Ukrainian government sought to improve its situation through political measures. In January 1918, the *Mala Rada* (Small Council) passed the law on national-personal autonomy, as well as the Fourth Universal, which proclaimed the independence of the UNR. At this stage, the international factor also played a crucial role, as UNR diplomats engaged in negotiations with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk. Following the declaration of independence, the UNR delegation, led by Prime Minister Vsevolod Holubovych, participated in these negotiations as representatives of a sovereign state. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik delegation, led by Leon Trotsky, insisted that power in Ukraine belonged to the Bolsheviks and that the Russian delegation included representatives from the Ukrainian Soviet government. However, with the support of Germany and Austria-Hungary, the UNR representatives won this diplomatic contest, and the negotiations concluded with the signing of a peace treaty.[47]

The treaty established the conditions for peace and cessation of hostilities, which, in turn, provided an opportunity to address a wide range of internal issues facing the country. However, the most significant aspect was that the UTsR was recognized as a legitimate authority within the UNR. Additionally, the republic itself was partially recognized as a subject of international legal relations.[48] As a result of this treaty, the UNR also gained military assistance from Germany and Austria-Hungary, but in return it had to fulfil certain obligations regarding the delivery of grain and food products.[49]

On 3 March 1918, a separate peace treaty was signed between Bolshevik Russia on one side, and Germany and its allies on the other. Russia committed to recognizing the treaty between the UTsR and Germany, as well as signing a subsequent agreement with the UNR. One of the provisions of the treaty included the recognition of UNR's independence,

46 Halyna Turčenko, 'Impers'kyj projekt "Novorosija": bil'šovyc'kyj variant', *Naukovi praci istoryčnoho fakul'tetu Zaporiz'koho nacional'noho universytetu*, 39 (2014), p. 81.

47 Contemporary historians are generally unanimous in their positive assessment of the foreign policy activities of Ukrainian diplomats during the negotiations. The role of Ukraine and the Ukrainian question in international relations in 1918 is described in Wolfram Dornik's study: Dornik, *Die Ukraine zwischen Selbstbestimmung*.

48 On the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, together with detailed historiography, see: Guido Hausmann, 'Brest-Litowsk 1918: zwei Friedensschlüsse und zwei Historiographien', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 70 (2019), 271–90 (p. 271).

49 See: Ruslan Pyrih, *Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho: miž Nimeččynoju i Rosijeju* (Kyjiv: Institute of the History of Ukraine, 2008).

the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the Red Guard from its territory, as well as the cessation of anti-Ukrainian propaganda.[50]

De jure, the Bolsheviks lost control over Ukraine's territory under the terms of the peace treaty with the Central Powers. De facto, this occurred with the advance of German and Austro-Hungarian forces. However, Lenin's government sought to maintain its influence over the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine. The existence of separate Soviet republics, which did not consider themselves part of Ukraine, gave Soviet diplomats grounds to hope that German forces would not enter these territories. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs attempted to use the creation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Soviet Republic as the means to halt the advance of the Central Rada's allies. However, when it became evident that German forces were adhering to the borders outlined in Vynnychenko's "geography",[51] the Russian Bolsheviks issued a clear directive to formally incorporate the republic into Soviet Ukraine. This decision was ratified at the Second All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, held 17–19 March 1918, in Katerynoslav (present-day Dnipro, Ukraine).

Quite a different situation was unfolding in the south. In March, Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ukrainian forces occupied Ukraine's Black Sea coastline, including Odesa, Mykolayiv, and Kherson, and were approaching Crimea. These developments shifted the so-called Crimean question. Back in 1917, its resolution depended on national and ethno-national interests; by 1918, it had acquired strategic significance in the context of interstate interests of Ukraine and Russia concerning influence in the region. In February 1918, the UNR Council of Ministers decided on the terms of a peace treaty with Russia, under which Crimea would fall under Ukraine's sphere of influence, and the Black Sea Fleet would belong solely to Ukraine.[52]

Bolshevik Russia, however, considered Crimea as a territory under its sovereignty. On 19 March 1918, the Taurida Soviet Socialist Republic was declared by decree of the Taurida TsVK, which lasted until 30 April 1918. The Bolsheviks' plan was to create a buffer Soviet republic, which would serve as a tool for armed struggle against the UTsR and German-Austrian

50 Friedensvertrag zwischen Deutschland, Österreich-Ungarn, Bulgarien und der Türkei einerseits und RuIsland andererseits [Der Friedensvertrag von Brest-Litovsk], 3 März 1918, *1000dokumente.de* <https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument_de&dokument=0011_bre&object=facsimile&trefferanzeige=&suchmodus=&suchbegriff=&t=&l=de> [accessed 10 March 2025].

51 This is the exact term Vladimir Lenin used in a telegram to Sergo Ordzhonikidze when analysing the activities of the Donetsk Bolsheviks, "no matter how much they try to separate their region from Ukraine, according to Vynnychenko's geography, it will still be included in Ukraine, and the Germans will conquer it", Vladimir Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, 55 vols (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo političeskoj literatury, 1967–1975), L, p. 50. According to "Vynnychenko's geography", the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic was defined within the borders of nine Ukrainian guberniyas: Kyiv, Podillia, Volyn, Chernihiv, Poltava, Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, Kherson, and the mainland part of the Taurida guberniya.

52 *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada: dokumenty i materialy*, p. 167.

forces without violating the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. However, the implementation of this plan faced numerous obstacles. According to the terms of the Brest peace, the mainland of the Taurida guberniya remained outside the Taurida Republic, and Soviet troops were required to withdraw from it. The inclusion of these counties in Taurida could have created additional grounds for conflict with the German occupation command and the UTsR. Therefore, on 21 March, under the directive of the Sovnarkom of the Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), to which the Taurida government was subordinate, a decree was issued limiting the territory of the newly created Soviet republic to the Crimean Peninsula. The decree made no mention of incorporating Taurida into the Soviet Russia's territory, although up until the end of April 1918 the Soviet government still retained de facto control over the northern counties and utilized their human and food resources.[53]

All these developments provided a formal pretext for Germany to engage in the struggle for Crimea as a sphere of its influence. Strengthening its position in Crimea would offer Germany future opportunities for expansion into the Middle East. On 29 March 1918, the German and Habsburg Empires reached an agreement on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, as a result of which Crimea and Northern Taurida became part of the German sphere of influence. The German military leadership announced the necessity of occupying Crimea based on military, political, and economic grounds. On 18 April 1918, Austrian troops captured Perekop and began advancing deeper into Crimea. A few days later, the Crimean military group of the UNR Army broke through the fortifications at Chonhar and entered Dzhankoi[54]. The appearance of German and Ukrainian troops in Crimea triggered a Crimean Tatar uprising and the flight of the leadership of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Taurida from Simferopol, marking the end of the Republic's existence.[55]

The first Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine came to an end. In 1918, the full annexation of Ukrainian lands, which the UTsR considered its national territory, did not occur primarily due to military support from Germany and Austria-Hungary. By the end of December 1918, however, Bolshevik Russia would begin its second war against the UNR, which would result in the establishment of a Bolshevik regime on Ukrainian territory.

53 Iryna Krasnodems'ka, 'Stvorennja radjans'kych marionetkovych respublik na pivdennomu schodi Ukrajiny jak inctrument bil'šovyc'koji ekspansiji na počatku 1918 r.', *Ukrajinoznavstvo*, 4 (2019), 25–48 (pp. 36–37).

54 On the campaign of the Crimean group of troops of the UNR Army, led by Colonel Petro Bolbochan, see: Volodymmyr Sidak, Tetjana Ostaško and Tetjana Vrons'ka, *Polkovnyk Petro Bolbočan: trahedija ukrajins'koho deržavnyka* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2009).

55 *Kryms'kotatars'kyj nacional'nyj ruch u 1917–1920 rr. za archivamy komunistyčnych specslužb*, ed. by Andrij Ivanec' and Andrij Kohut (Kyjiv: K.I.S., 2019), p. 136.

Thus, the Bolsheviks were consistent in their struggle against Ukrainian statehood. However, it is important to emphasize that their rule in Ukraine was not organic; rather, it was experienced as an occupation. The Bolshevik leaders did not consider Ukraine a coherent political and economic entity but viewed the southern region as an integral part of ethnic Russia. Overall, the territorial issue played a significant role in the relations both between the UTsR and the Provisional Government, and between the UNR and Bolshevik Russia. Both Russian governments – the Provisional and Bolshevik – did not entertain the possibility of losing the southern and eastern Ukrainian lands. Therefore, the Bolsheviks essentially continued the policy of the Provisional Government regarding these regions, as shown by the fact that in November 1917 the Sovnarkom refused to recognize the UTsR's jurisdiction over the southeastern territories that had not been included in Ukraine's national-territorial autonomy in July 1917. One manifestation of this policy was the attempt to create several Bolshevik republics, referred to as "Soviet republics". The creation of these Soviet quasi-republics followed various scenarios but shared a common feature: Bolshevik governments did not consider themselves formally Ukrainian and did not intend to take the national factor into account in their policies. The main goal of Bolshevik Russia was to retain control over the economically attractive region of the Donetsk industrial basin and the Black Sea ports. The Bolsheviks' efforts to divide southern Ukraine into separate republics ultimately failed. On the one hand, the local population, unlike the Bolshevik leadership of these quasi-republics, did not support the dictatorship of the proletariat; on the other, the conditions of the Brest-Litovsk peace and the advance of allied UNR troops left the Bolsheviks with no chance of maintaining dominance in the southern region. By March–April 1918, these artificial entities had been dismantled.

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# INTERNMENT OF GREEK CATHOLIC CLERGY BY POLISH AUTHORITIES IN 1918–1921


## ABSTRACT

The history of relations between the Polish state and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church during the wars of independence fought by Poland and the West Ukrainian People's Republic remains under-researched. These relations were difficult due to the unsolvable conflict over the ownership of Eastern Galicia. As the national Ukrainian Church, the Greek Catholic Church's position was unequivocally in favour of building the nation's statehood, which inevitably prompted a response from the Polish side following Ukraine's loss in the Polish-Ukrainian War and finding itself within the borders of the Polish state. One of the controversial issues that is important to research and explain in this field is the internment of Greek Catholic priests by the Polish authorities in 1918 and 1919. Existing literature has not explored this topic thoroughly, and the figure of several hundred interned priests continues to circulate. In this article, I will therefore analyse this subject and answer the following research questions: Why did the Polish authorities decide to intern Greek Catholic priests? How many priests indeed ended up behind camp fences, and what was the timeframe of their imprisonment? What efforts, if any, were made to free them from captivity? The stories of several Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) priests will also be used to illustrate the topic.



KEYWORDS:
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, internees, POW camps, Polish-Ukrainian War, Eastern Galicia



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In late 1918, both the UGCC hierarchy, headed by Metropolitan Archbishop Andrey Sheptytsky, and parish clergy enthusiastically welcomed the creation of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, actively participating in its construction. Priests were part of its administrative authorities (for example, as district commissioners); they joined the propaganda campaign for Ukrainian statehood and supported the newly formed state and army from the pulpit (for example, urging congregations to join the Ukrainian Galician Army (UGA) and the fight against Poles).[1]

In 1918, the Greek Catholic Church in Galicia administratively separated into the Lwów (today Lviv) archdiocese and the Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk) and Przemyśl (Ukr.: Peremyshl) dioceses. At the top of the hierarchy was Metropolitan Sheptytsky, who enjoyed absolute authority among Ukrainians; the bishops of these dioceses were Hryhoriy Khomyshyn and Yosafat Kotsylovsky, respectively. It is important to remember that the Church emerged weakened from the war: Metropolitan Sheptytsky returned to Lwów only in 1917, while the authorities of the Przemyśl eparchy also returned the same year, having been refugees in Moravia.[2] Since many parishes had been devastated, with buildings destroyed or dismantled by the marching armies, the priests' first task was reconstruction, yet most chose a different course, prioritising their obligations to the nation.

The Polish authorities responded to this stance adopted by the Greek Catholic clergy with reprisals in the form of arrests and, subsequently, internment of some priests in camps or confinement.[3] The Polish authorities had used internment against the opposition since the beginning of the conflict, starting with members of the Ukrainian National Council in Przemyśl (Dr Teofil Kormosh, Dr Volodymyr Zahaikevych and others), arrested by Polish troops on 11 November 1918 following the capture of left-bank Przemyśl and from 18 November incarcerated in a camp in Dąbie, outside Krakow.[4] Although the majority of the tens of thousands of Ukrainian nationals held in Polish camps in 1918–1921 were UGA soldiers, the civilians, numbering a few thousand, represented a cross-section of Galician society – from top politicians, national leaders (such as Prof. Kyrylo Studynsky and Dr Volodomyr Starosolsky), through clerical and lay intelligentsia, to workers and

1 Adam Szczupak, 'Polityka państwa polskiego wobec kościoła greckokatolickiego w latach 1918–1919 na przykładzie eparchii przemyskiej', *Rocznik Przemyski. Historia*, 55.4(24) (2019), 89–108 (pp. 91–92).
2 Adam Szczupak, *Greckokatolicka diecezja przemyska w latach I wojny światowej* (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2015), p. 217.
3 In Austro-Hungarian law, and subsequently in Poland in 1918–1921, confinement was a prohibition on leaving the designated place of stay – in other words, detention in a designated place.
4 For more, see: Wiktor Węglewicz, 'Wspomnienia Teofila Kormosza z działalności w Ukraińskiej Rady Narodowej w Przemyślu i pobytu w obozie internowanych w Dąbiu (październik 1918 – styczeń 1919 r.)', *Rocznik Przemyski. Historia*, 55.4(24) (2019), 243–78 (pp. 254–58).

even simple peasants. They were interned in several camps, the main one being Internee Camp No. I in Dąbie, near Krakow (today part of the city); some civilians also ended up in Prison Camp No. 1 Strzałkowo (in Greater Poland), as well as in camps in Wadowice, Brześć-Litewski, Tuchola, Modlin and Dęblin.

The internments were conducted by the Polish Army (specifically the military police). The reasons given in documents can be divided into several categories. Priests were often accused of participating in the construction of the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR); such charges were levelled, for example, at Fr Hryhoriy Muzychko, a catechist in Żurawno (Zhuravno). Under Ukrainian rule, he was the commissioner for the town and allegedly "caused acute trouble to the Polish population" by harassing them, especially in terms of food supplies.[5] The priest did not confess to the charges against him, but this did not prevent him from being interned in Strzałków, where he spent several months in summer and autumn of 1919. A hostile approach to Poland and Poles was a common accusation. This was the pretext for the detention of Fr Ilya Klyvak (on whom more below) as well as Fr Petro Petrytsky from the parish of Kołokolin (Kolokolyn) in the Rohatyn municipal district, who was interned in Lwów as a result of refusing to issue the birth certificates of Greek Catholic conscripts and ignoring government decrees concerning use of language.[6] Clergy were also accused of agitation for the Bolshevik cause – as in the case of Fr Amvrosiy Tumanovych – or the Ukrainian cause. Fr Natal (Aital) Kovalsky was charged with the latter after singing the song *Mnohaya lita* during a church service, for which he was arrested.[7] Adam Szczupak correctly notes that the Polish authorities justified the mass internment of UGCC priests by arguing that it was essential to remove the most ardent political activists and anti-Polish agitators,[8] as is evident in the cited examples.

It is valid at this point to ask about the scale of the Polish authorities' internments of Greek Catholic priests. Information disseminated by Ukrainians in 1919 gave a figure of as many as 600 interned clergy.[9] Meanwhile, the Polish foreign ministry, in a memorandum from January 1920 addressed to the Holy See and based on lists presented by the dioceses,

5 Application for internment of Fr Hryhoriy Muzychko, 28 June 1919, Central Military Archive (hereafter CMA), ref. I.310.1.36.

6 Letter of the Rohatyn District Authority Office in Rohatyn to the PASC Liasion Officer, 8 October 1919, on the internment of Fr Petrytsky, Tsentral'nyj deržavnyj istoryčnyj archiv Ukrajiny u misti L'vovi (Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv, hereafter TsDIAL), f. 214, op. 1, spr. 620, l. 64.

7 Case of Fr Kovalsky from Nowosiółki (Novosilky), September–October 1919, TsDIAL, f. 214, op. 1, spr. 620, l. 24–28.

8 Szczupak, 'Polityka państwa polskiego', p. 92.

9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter MFA) information for Polish envoy to the Holy See, 9 January 1920, No. 738/D.169/I/20, with a response to two Ukrainian memoranda from 1919, Central Archives of Modern Records (hereafter AAN), Polish Embassy in London, ref. 447, p. 3.

stated that only 24 priests were interned in the Stanisławów eparchy and 36 in the Lwów jurisdiction, giving a total of 60. The Przemyśl diocese did not submit a list, but the figure was apparently "significantly lower".[10] Yet this data is dubious – it probably refers to the figure at the time, corresponding to the end of 1919 and beginning of 1920, by which time the majority of people had either been released or were confined. This is corroborated by a Foreign Office letter to the liaison officer from 19 December 1919 requesting data concerning those interned, priests in particular.[11] The Polish authorities therefore presented the minimum number of people in captivity, which was not an accurate figure. At this time, Ukrainians were preparing lists of the victims of persecution, one of which was included in the *Bloody Book* (*Кривава Книга*) and subsequently reprinted in Fr Ivan Lebedovych's monograph *Полеві духовники УГА*, published after his emigration.[12] This directory gave the names of 372 priests interned or arrested by the Polish authorities, along with 44 Basilian monks, six clerics, and 43 nuns, noting that there were more internees. Is this list credible? Many of the priests named were indeed sent to camps, but they are conflated with those who were in prison or only confined in their hometowns or in Lwów. Meanwhile, Liliana Hentosz writes that in autumn 1919 there were around 500 Greek Catholic priests in Polish camps and prisons, and according to the Przemyśl diocese itself there were 165 priests.[13]

The only solution is therefore to examine the cases of individual priests, counting those documented as having spent time in prison camps. The matter is additionally complicated by the fact that not all interned priests ended up in camps. Many were arrested and immediately confined in a place other than their own parish, without later incarceration. One such case was that of Fr Vasyl Yaremkevych, the parish priest in Wowcze (Vovche), interned on 14 July 1919 and then confined in Sambor (Sambir) until 2 August, before returning, still confined, to his parish.[14]

After counting all the people for whom I found documents confirming their imprisonment in camps or internment in Lwów or other places, I can put their number at no fewer than 170 members of the Greek Catholic clergy (120 diocesan priests and 42 Basilian monks). To this figure we must add 24 clerics from the Red Ukrainian Galician Army, disarmed by the Polish Army in Greater Ukraine in April–May 1920 and interned in the Tuchola

10 MFA information for the Polish ambassador in Rome, 9 January 1920, No. 738/D.169/I/20, with a response to two Ukrainian memoranda from 1919, AAN, Polish Embassy in London, ref. 447, p. 3.
11 MFA letter to PASC Liaison Officer No. D.15332/V/19, 19 December 1919, on provision of data concerning interned Ukrainians, TsDIAL, f. 214, op. 1, spr. 618, l. 58.
12 O. Ivan Lebedovyč, *Polevi duchovnyky UHA* (Vinnipeh, 1963), pp. 237–42.
13 Liliana Hentoš, *Vatykan i vyklyky modernosti. Schidnojevropejs'ka polityka papy Benedykta XV ta ukrajins'ko-pol's'kyj konflikt u Halyčyni (1914–1923)* (L'viv: Klasyka, 2006), pp. 253–54.
14 Letter of Fr Vilchansky to Episcopal Consistory in Przemyśl, 4 August 1919, on the internment of Fr Yaremkevych, Przemyśl State Archive (hereafter AP Przemyśl), Greek Catholic Bishops Archive (hereafter ABGK), ref. 4721, p. 123.

camp.[15] The actual figure is probably higher: according to the calculations of UGCC historian Adam Szczupak, during the Polish-Ukrainian War, i.e., between November 1918 and July 1999, the number of interned, arrested or confined Greek Catholic clergy amounted to around 400 people. Not all of them, however, had internee status.[16] More research is needed on this subject.

All Church personnel were sent to camps: from lecturers at theological colleges and chapter canons such as Dr Constantine Bohachevsky, Przemyśl cathedral parish priest, to parish clergy, Basilian fathers, and seminarians. Most priests were imprisoned at the camp in Dąbie as well as the separation station at the Brygidki prison in Lwów, while others were sent to Wadowice and Strzałków, and in smaller numbers also to Modlin, Pikulice, Brześć, Jałowiec and Tuchola. Two UGA military chaplains were incarcerated in Tuchola (Fr Ivan Luchynsky from Lwów, probably from the St George's Cathedral chapter, and Dr Teofil Chaikivsky from Wolostków (Volostkiv[17]), as well as the aforementioned clerics. In late November 1920, Prime Minister Wincenty Witos demanded their release; this ensued two months later, and the clerics were allowed to return home and continue their studies.[18]

From the beginning of the Greek Catholic priests' imprisonment, efforts were made to secure their release. Metropolitan Sheptytsky and Bishop Kotsylovsky intervened with the Polish authorities in this matter in early 1919. The West Ukrainian authorities also took action. In March and April 1919, the ZUNR National Foreign Affairs Secretariat informed their Polish counterparts that they had released all interned Roman Catholic priests and expected the Poles to follow suit with Greek Catholic priests.[19] And indeed they did: on 14 April 1919, most of the priests behind the fences of Dąbie and Wadowice were freed to allow them to spend Greek Catholic Easter in their parishes. In summer 1919, the Vatican joined the fray. Papal Nuncio Achille Ratti endeavoured through both official and private channels to improve the situation of the captive Greek Catholic priests. On 20 July 1919, he wrote to General Haller, highlighting the difficult situation of the interned Greek Catholic priests as

15 Calculations based on documents from disparate sources, including a list of internees in Dąbie (containing information about the date of their arrival in the camp and sometimes the release date), release requests made to the PASC Liaison Officer to the General Polish Government Delegate in Eastern Galicia, materials of the Greek Catholic Episcopate in Przemyśl and others.

16 I thank Dr Adam Szczupak for providing me with this information. Adam Szczupak, 'Polityka państwa polskiego wobec Kościoła greckokatolickiego w latach 1918–1923' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Uniwersytet Jagielloński. Wydział Historyczny, 2020).

17 Ihor Sribnjak, *Encyklopedija polonu: ukrajins'ka Tuchola* (Kyjiv: Mižnarodnyj naukovo-osvitnij konsorcium imeni Ljus'jena Fevra, 2016), pp. 115, 128.

18 E.g. Ministry of Military Affairs (MMA) letter to Presidium of Cabinet, L.8626 .B.P.II, 11 January 1921, on the release of Greek Catholic priests, AAN, PRM, Numerican files, ref. 687/21.

19 Letter from the National Foreign Affairs to Dr Volodymyr Okhrymovych, part 304, 19 March 1919, on the exchange of prisoners-of-war and internees, TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 3043, l. 17–18.

well as the brutal treatment of 42 Basilian monks,[20] and in late July he wrote to General Leśniewski, pointing to the tough living conditions in the camps as well as the situation of the priests held in Lwów. In response, Leśniewski issued an order permitting the interned Greek Catholic clergy to celebrate the liturgy in their places of isolation and civilians to participate.[21] On 19 August 1919, Ratti again brought the matter of arrested and interned Ukrainian priests to the general's attention. Among his requests was the release of those held in camps, especially the Basilians from Dąbie. The papal nuncio argued that the monks were denied the possibility to live their lives in accordance with their calling. Through Ratti, they asked to return to Krechów (Krekhiv) and Żółkiew (Zhokva). In response to their requests, an enquiry began on 24 August.[22] The nuncio returned to these matters in November 1919, when Fr Leontiy Kunytsky travelled from Lwów to Warsaw. He visited both Ratti and Józef Piłsudski, Poland's Chief of State, as well as the minister of religious denominations and public education, Jan Łukasiewicz. According to Kunytsky himself, the nuncio was very prejudiced towards the Ukrainian clergy and blamed the situation on them, but he came around and asked Kunytsky for the relevant materials. Piłsudski, meanwhile, promised to deal with the matter, but stressed that it would be difficult.[23] The Greek Catholic priests still imprisoned in camps repeatedly applied to be released from early autumn of 1919 onwards, and the vast majority left Polish camps in December 1919 and January 1920 after declaration of an amnesty by the cabinet of ministers of the Polish Republic (14 December 1919). In this case, those to be released had to submit standard applications; characteristically, many of them contain the statement that they "do not admit to any guilt" and were requesting to return to their parish.[24] Also in line with this regulation, all the confined priests returned to their parishes, with few exceptions.[25] Their relatively swift releases came as a result of a foreign ministry intervention in response to the aforementioned rumours of 600 imprisoned priests, which made a bad impression in the Holy See (their internment supposedly deprived several tens of thousands of believers of the possibility of religious ministration). The Presidium of the Council of Ministers therefore asked the military affairs ministry to release the priests as soon as possible.[26]

20 Hentoš, *Vatykan i vyklyky modernosti*, p. 272.
21 Ibid., pp. 274. This explains the question in Brygidki of the initial ban and later permission for the priests interned there to lead religious services for their civilian fellow inmates.
22 Ibid., pp. 274–75.
23 Myron Korduba, *Ščodennyk 1918–1925* (L'viv, Ukrajins'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2021), pp. 285–86.
24 Applications of Greek Catholic priests for release from internment, AAN, MFA, ref. 5336, pp. 16–23.
25 MFA information for the Polish envoy to the Holy See, 9 January 1920, No. 738/D.169/I/20, with a reply to two Ukrainian memoranda from summer 1919, AAN, Polish Embassy in London, ref. 447, p. 3.
26 Copy of MFA letter to the Minister [of Internal Affairs] N-D 13276/V/19, 3 November 1919, concerning interned Greek Catholic priests, TsDIAL, f. 214, op. 1, spr. 618, l. 84.

Only in autumn 1920 did the Greek Catholic Metropolitan Ordinariate appeal to the Prime Minister to release the clerics from Tuchola: the request was sent to the Ministry of Military Affairs on 26 November 1920,[27] and on 11 January 1921 the ministry issued an order that they be sent home to be able to complete their theological studies. Those affected were Vasyl Kedrynsky, Ivan Pidzharko, Avhustyn Tsebrovsky, Vasyl Grodzky, Ivan Chekasky, Ostafiy Vesolovsky, Petro Verhun, Volodymyr Hrushkevych, Stanislav Dasho, Mykhailo Vorobiy, Yurko Yuzhvyak, Myron Matinka, Hryhoriy Kulyshyts, Pantaleimon Saluka, Mykola Strelbytsky, Andriy Dorosh, Mykhailo Khuda, Osyp Leshchuk, Osyp Haidukevych, Roman Treshnevsky, Mykhailo Pashkowski, Petro Babyak, Mykhailo Felytsky and Nestor Pohoretsky.

However, not all the priests remained in the camps until their release. On 13 April 1919, Fr Marko Gil, a parish priest from Uhnów (Uhniv), Rawa Ruska (Rava-Ruska) district, escaped from Dąbie. He was four days away from being released with the others. An arrest warrant was issued for Gil, but he evaded capture. In January 1920, the Polish authorities still did not know his whereabouts.[28]

It is important to note that internment and being sent to a camp often meant financial ruin for priests. Once they had left their parish, the diocese consistory had to designate a replacement, meaning that interned or confined priests lost their income – which also applied to their families. For example, Fr Teodor Klish, a parish priest from Wołkowyja, Lesko district, applied in 1920 for the parish of Ustianów in the Ustrzyki decanate, stating that he "had been morally and materially destroyed by the Polish-Ukrainian War, having spent four months in the military court prison in Przemyśl and Dąbie, and having almost all [his] economic possessions taken away".[29] Some priests, following their return from the camps, used their sermons to express their indignation, thereby worsening relations with the Polish population as well as "disturbing public order". As a result, in March 1920, the presidium of the governorship recommended paying special attention to such priests and reporting any conduct of this kind.[30]

27 Summary of letter from the Presidium of the Council of Ministers [December 1920] concerning the release of Greek clergymen from Tuchola, AAN, PRM, Numerical files, ref. 687/21, n.p.

28 Fr Gil ended up in Czechoslovakia, returning to Poland only in the mid-1920s. Arrest warrant for Fr Gil, 24 April 1919, CMA, ref. I.304.1.26; MFA information for Polish envoy to the Holy See, 9 January 1920, No. 738/D.169/I/20, with a response to two Ukrainian memoranda from 1919, AAN, Polish Embassy in London, ref. 447, p. 3.

29 Application of Fr Teodor Klish to the parish of Ustianów, 20 July 1920, AP Przemyśl, ABGK, ref. 4731, pp. 19–20.

30 Letter from the Presidium of the Governorship L. 5626/pr., 6 March 1920, on the agitation of priests released from camps, Ivano-Frankivsk District State Archive (herafter DAIFO), f. 11, op. 1, spr. 3, l. 1.

The imprisonment in camps for interned Greek Catholic priests can also be explored from the perspective of several individual stories. The first case is that of Constantine Bohachevsky. This was a significant figure in Przemyśl's religious life: in 1910, he became a doctor of theology, he was an advisor of the Lwów Metropolitan Consistory, and from June 1918 a priest of the cathedral church, dean and professor of the Przemyśl seminary.[31] On 20 June 2019, he was arrested by the military police in Przemyśl (as well as being searched and having his wallet containing money and prayer book confiscated) and then sent to the prisoner muster station in the Zasanie neighbourhood. Bohachevsky claimed that he was treated very harshly – he was not allowed to go for a walk or to the church to lead a service, nor was he permitted to be given a pillow and blanket brought from home.[32] The priest also said that he had been arrested without cause and without a report being filed. This was not entirely true – he was interned on the orders of the Przemyśl district authority office, which ordered his immediate internment in Zasanie. The Polish authorities claimed that the reason for his arrest was "the priest's radically chauvinist approach". After internment, Bohachevsky twice refused interrogation in Polish, despite speaking and writing the language fluently. The internment was also motivated by his function as Greek Catholic parish priest for Przemyśl and his subsequent extensive connections among Ukrainian residents.[33] The specific reason was the matter of a UGCC priest requesting a change from the Greek Catholic to the Roman Catholic rite, a petition that was submitted to the Polish authorities, bypassing the official Greek Catholic Church channels. Bohachevsky did not agree to the change and was therefore summoned to the district authority. There he indeed spoke in Ukrainian, citing Austro-Hungarian law, to which the official apparently replied that he wouldn't "speak this swine's language". Bohachevsky therefore demanded that a report be filed, but since it was filed in Polish he refused to sign it and left the office.[34] On 27 June, Bochachevsky was escorted to the station and sent to the camp in Modlin.[35] In his application for re-examination of his case, he also complained about how he had been transported: "in Przemyśl, two soldiers led me strongly down the middle of the street at noon, and to Modlin one soldier strongly in

31 Bohdan Paska, 'Kostjatyn Bohačevs'kyj', in *Zachidno-Ukrajins'ka Narodna Respublika. 1918–1923. Encyklopedija*, 4 vols (Ivano-Frankivs'k: Manuskrypt-L'viv, 2018–2021), I (2018), p. 148.
32 Application of Fr Constantine Bohachevsky, 22 July 1919, AAN, KCNP, ref. 285, p. 21.
33 Report of the Prisoner-of-War Muster Station on interns and civilians in Przemyśl for the Justice Officer of the Polish Army Command in Eastern Galicia, 25 June 1919, AAN, KCNP, ref. 285, p. 27.
34 Marta Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Ukrainian Bishop, American Church, Constantine Bohachevsky and the Ukrainian Catholic Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p. 76.
35 Letter of Bp Kotsylovsky to Metropolitan Sheptytsky of 28 June 1919 in response to the metropolitan's letter, TsDIAL, f. 358, op. 1, spr. 171, l. 24.

a third-class carriage".[36] Upon arrival at the camp in Modlin (probably in early July), he was placed in the work house, where he complained at not receiving the books he needed for his academic work as well as receiving the same provisions as privates (he received victuals in line with the "E" meals table, designated for prisoners-of-war), leaving him weakened. This was not true: the Modlin camp commander, Maj. Jerzy Lambach, reported that Bohachevsky had access in the camp to his own religious and academic books, and should he need more there was nothing to prevent them from being provided. The major pointed out that Bohachevsky was hostile to the Polish authorities.[37] Despite this, he wrote to Piłsudski demanding to be released and to be able to return to Przemyśl or permitted to go to Krakow. The Chief of State's civil chancellery interpreted the application in an interesting way, concluding that Bohachevsky had not been interrogated. The response was meticulous: the officials wrote to the Polish Army Supreme Command (PASC) and to the Modlin Fortress command with three questions: 1) For what reason and on whose orders had the applicant been interned? 2) Was it advisable to relocate him in a larger city? 3) Would it be possible to relax the strictness of the applicant's stay in Modlin so that he could receive the books essential for his academic work? In response, letters arrived from the Modlin Prison Camp Command (discussed above) as well as the Ministry of Military Affairs, which sent the priest's application to the internee release review board in Krakow requesting an immediate enquiry into the matter; the civil chancellery was also to be notified of the result.[38] I am not aware of the outcome, but it is likely that the chancellery was satisfied with the explanations sent from Modlin. On Military Affairs Ministry order No. 5947/Mob. from 17 July 1919, Fr Bohaczevsky was sent to Dąbie. It is worth adding that Bp Kotsylovsky intervened regarding his release as early as late June 1919 in Lwów, when he and Abp Sheptytsky lodged a protest against the priest's internment.[39] On the way from Modlin to Dąbie, Bohachevsky secured an audience with the papal nuncio, Achille Ratti, who in a letter to Gen. Haller criticised the Poles for creating a system that "persecutes such heroes" as Bohachevsky.[40] This resulted in an intervention from the Vatican that led to Fr Constantine Bohachevsky's

36 Application of Fr Constantine Bohachevsky of 22 July 1919, AAN, KCNP, ref. 285, pp. 21–22. Strongly = armed and with fixed bayonets.
37 Report of the commander of Modlin prison camp No. 2645, 1 August 1919, AAN, KCNP, ref. 285.
38 Enquiry of the Chief of State's Civil Chancellery No. 2921/19 to the General Staff, 24 July 1919, AAN, KCNP, ref. 285, p. 19; MMA Report Dep. I No. 5947/Mob., 3 August 1919, p. 28.
39 Letter from Bp Kotsylovsky to Metropolitan Sheptytsky, 26 June 1919, on going to Lwów and correspondence, TsDIAL, f. 358, op. 1, spr. 171, l. 23.
40 Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Ukrainian Bishop*, p. 77.

release from Dąbie on 1 September 1919. He returned to Przemyśl 21 days later, ceremoniously welcomed by the city's Ukrainian population.[41]

A further typical example of a priest interned in the early period of the Polish-Ukrainian War was Fr Teodor Yarka. He was arrested on 24 November 1918 in his parish in Boratyn during a service and searched for weapons in the church. Fr Yarka was then taken to a detention centre in Jarosław, from which he was sent to Krakow on 27 November. He was detained there for 24 hours before being transferred as an internee to the Central Hotel on Warszawska Street (where he lived with Dr Teofil Kormosh and other internees from Przemyśl). In his application to the Przemyśl consistory, Yarka stated that the reason given for his arrest had been "incitement of the Ruthenian nation" and insulting Polish state officials.[42] After a few days, he was summoned to the prosecutor's office, where he was charged with insurrection. On the request of the prosecutor, he was sent to a detention centre for 38 days, before being transferred as an internee to Dąbie.[43] The priest was also attacked by the Polish press.[44] On 15 February 1919, parishioners from the three municipalities of the Greek Catholic parish of Boratyn – Boratyn, Dobkowice and Tapina – lodged an appeal for the priest's release from internment. This was motivated by the fact that their parish priest was in the camp "as a victim of social upheaval, not his own fault", which was supposedly proved by the investigation of the military and civilian authorities. Blame was apportioned to a certain Ignatsy Gamratsy, who upon his return from captivity in Russia had come to the presbytery and praised the Bolshevik orders, for which the priest had admonished him. In response, Gamratsy had apparently spread rumours against him. The parishioners insisted that the priest was irreproachable in political terms and treated Poles, Ukrainians and Jews equally. They also emphasised that the people had been left without a "spiritual father" and had nobody to administer sacraments (funeral, christenings), while schoolchildren were unable to learn.[45] The matter was referred elsewhere, as on 15 March 1919 the Jarosław district authority categorically opposed the priest's release due to his "activity after the fall of Austria-Hungary". This was also about

41 'Pol's'ki vlasty vypustyly...', *Ukrajins'kyj Holos*, 22 (7 September 1919); 'Naše hromadjanstvo povitalo...', *Ukrajins'kyj Holos*, 25 (28 September 1919). Judge Roman Dmokhovsky spoke at the ceremony, extolling the priest's martyrdom and presenting him with a valuable trophy from the city's population. Bohachevsky thanked him and replied that he would fulfil his duty as a faithful son of the nation.

42 Application of Fr Yarka to the Greek Catholic Consistory in Przemyśl, 3 December 1918, AP Przemyśl, ABGK, ref. 4417, pp 659–61.

43 Teofil Kormoš, 'Spomyny z ostannych dniv (prodovžennja)', *Republyka*, 19 (23 February 1919); Teofil Kormoš, 'Spomyny z ostannych dniv (prodovžennja)', *Republyka*, 20 (24 February 1919).

44 The Polish press claimed that the reason for Fr Yarka's arrest had been his calls for the slaughter of Poles and handing out weapons to Ukrainian peasants. 'Kronika: za wzywanie do rzezi Polaków', *Kurier Lwowski*, 531 (7 December 1918).

45 Authority application of the municipalities of Boratyn, Dobkowice and Tapina for the release from internment of Fr Yarka, 15 February 1919, CMA, ref. I.304.1.26.

ensuring peace in the operational territory.[46] However, Fr Teodor Yarka was released from Dąbie on 14 April 1919, and a day later he returned to Boratyna. On 10 April 1919, the Przemyśl military district command ordered an investigation from the local military police branch, which on 30 April 1919 referred the case to the Jarosław military police. On 7 May 1919, the Jarosław military police branch office enquired with the Chłopice branch as to whether Fr Yarka had been freed from the camp, and if not, whether there were any obstacles to his release.[47] Evidently the flow of information in the army was deficient as only the lowest authority, the local station, was informed that the priest was free.

A rather typical example of a Greek Catholic clergyman interned in the second half of 1919 was Fr Ilya Klyvak, who arrived in the parish of Jazłowiec (Yazlovets) in October 1918. After the change in government – according to witnesses he was a "confidant" of the Ukrainian government – he can be said to have enjoyed good relations with the district commissioner in Buczacz (Buchach), Ilarion Botsiurkiv. He apparently intervened in the cases of Poles interned in a camp in Jazłowiec, agitated the Ukrainian population against Poles, and was also involved in the matter of the local Raiffeisen credit union, which the Ukrainian authorities wanted to take control of. During the Polish offensive in May 1919, he supposedly encouraged people to join the Ukrainian army.[48] In a letter to the district commissioner, he wrote, "to let the poor rabble go home after strict reprimands and send the fatter Poles to Poland because the town is screaming that our enemies are eating our bread [...] Here is what I offer for consideration".[49] Given this stance and the state of political relations in the Buczacz district (recently liberated from Ukrainian rule), on 1 September 1919 a motion was submitted for Fr Klyvak to be interned in a camp outside of Galicia. This order was carried out.[50] Fr Ilya Klyvak was sent to the camp in Dąbie, returning only after the amnesty in January 1920.

An untypical example of an interned Greek Catholic priest was Fr Mykhailo Kit. Interned in Brest-Litovsk on 14 February 1919, he was then transferred to Szczypiorno. According to his letter, he was arrested solely for being Ukrainian. In fact, however, he settled in Brześć of his own accord, without permission from Metropolitan Sheptytsky, and

46 Letter from the Jarosław District Authority to the Ruling Commission Administration Department L. 4503, 15 March 1919, on the release of Fr Yarka, TsDIAL, f. 212, op. 1, spr. 202, l. 16.
47 Authority application of the municipalities of Boratyn, Dobkowice and Tapina for the release from internment of Fr Jarka, 15 February 1919, CMA, ref. I.304.1.26; Letter of the Polish Army Military Police in Eastern Galicia L.610, 7 May 1919, concerning Fr Yarka.
48 Transcripts of the testimonies of Fr Jan Niedzielski, Józef Harkasheimer, Franciszek Piórecki concerning Fr Klyvak, CMA, ref. I.310.1.41.
49 Copy of letter from Fr Klyvak to District Commissioner Botsiurkiv concerning the Raiffeisen credit union, CMA, ref. I.310.1.41.
50 Application for the internment of Fr Ilya Klyvak, 1 September 1919, CMA, ref. I.310.1.41.

– apart from religious matters – he engaged in pro-Ukrainian and anti-Polish propaganda. Following Nuncio Achille Ratti's intervention with Piłsudski, he was transferred to Warsaw and placed in the Capuchin monastery there. Kit's presence caused big problems: as the monastery was too poor to feed him, the military affairs ministry's economic department had to pay his bills. Furthermore, the priest was given a large amount of freedom, receiving illegal correspondence and contacting his family. In September 1919, he freely went into the city and met whom he wanted as the Capuchin provincial superior believed that "no orders except for those of God and his ecclesiastical authorities apply". As a result, in September 1919 the military affairs ministry wrote to the PASC requesting an investigation of the reasons for his internment and his potential release.[51]

A separate case was that of Fr Volodymyr Lysko. From 1918, he was the administrator of the parish of Gródek Jagielloński (Horodok), where he was arrested on 3 December 1918 and sent to Lwów. According to records from 1919, the priest was sick at the time, and Polish soldiers dragged him out of bed with a fever of 39 degrees. He ended up in Lwów, where he was put in the Krakowski Hotel with a guard stationed outside his room. As Lysko recalled many years later, he was not treated badly in terms of food (with meals brought from the officers' kitchen), yet the stay in a small room had an adverse effect. On 13 December 1918, on the request of Abp Józef Bilczewski (notified by Dean Moczarowski) and the orders of Gen. Rozwadowski, the prisoner was released.[52] Fr Lysko was arrested for a second time on 21 May in Gródek. He was then interned for several months in Dąbie. He escaped captivity thanks to a fortunate coincidence: his father-in-law, the papal chamberlain Mykhailo Tsehelsky, was to have an operation, which was not entirely safe owing to his advanced age, so Fr Lysko requested a temporary release. It so happened that the Dąbie internee camp commander at the time, Lt Col Stefan Galli, had once served in Gródek, which was the priest's explanation for being given eight days' leave. This was then extended thanks to a Polish Army doctor – a Jew who issued him with a certificate stating that he was too ill to travel.[53] Yet this situation continued as Lysko paid visits to the head of the Gródek district authority for permission for confinement there on

51 MMA letter to PASC No. 8521/Mob., 13 September 1919, concerning Fr Kit, CMA, ref. I.301.10.334; 'Agitatorzy i szpiedzy ukraińscy pod kluczem', *Goniec Krakowski*, 75 (20 March 1919); I diari di Achille Ratti, I, Visitatore Apostolico in Polonia (1918–1919), ed. by Sergio Pagano and Gianni Venditti (Citta del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2013), p. 243.

52 'Doc. No. 17, Letter of Col. Sikorski to Abp Bilczewski concerning the release of Fr Lysko', in *Kościół rzymskokatolicki i Polacy w Małopolsce Wschodniej podczas wojny ukraińsko-polskiej 1918–1919. Źródła*, ed. by Józef Wołczański, 2 vols (Lwów–Kraków, 2012), I, pp. 83–84; List of interned Ukrainians in the Dąbie camp outside Krakow, TsDIAL, f. 309, op. 1, spr. 2636, l. 40; *Bez zerna nepravdy: Spomyny otcja-dekana Volodymyra Lyska*, ed. by Lidija Kupčyk (L'viv: Kamenjar, 1999), pp. 58–59.

53 Ibid., pp. 60–61.

the grounds that the stay in Dąbie had ruined him financially. He did not agree at first, and Lysko responded by saying he would demand an investigation from the governorship, for which he was arrested and harassed. The district head then agreed to his confinement, not in the parish but in a rented apartment in Gródek Jagielloński.[54] Fr Lysko therefore never returned to the camp.

A case that sent shockwaves around not only Poland but also the Vatican was the internment of all the residents of the Basilian monasteries in Żółkiew and Krechów. At 5:30 p.m. on 20 May 1919, the monastery in Krechów was entered by military police under the command of Second Lt Mroczkowski. All the monks had their details taken and the monastery was confiscated. They were then taken to a detention centre in Żółkiew, where the monks from the Żółkiew monastery were already being held. Altogether, 44 Basilians were detained (11 from Żółkiew and 32 from Krechów).[55] The internment was carried out on the orders of Col. Minkiewicz. As the garrison command in Rawa Ruska explained, "the Basilian fathers used to be famous for agitation, and today the Ruthenian priests and clerics are still famous for it. By giving boisterous and chauvinistic sermons and calling to 'fight the Poles', and not having, as priests should, a calming influence on the Ruthenian soldiers and not protecting the population from looting".[56] We can therefore conclude that they were arrested for anti-state agitation. Nevertheless, the camp command was unaware of the specific reason for the internment as the Basilians had been sent to Dąbie without any explanations (the above justifications were only given on 9 June, whereas the monks arrived in the camp on 24 May). The information about their hardship in Dąbie is probably somewhat exaggerated: Abp Bilczewski noted that these clergymen wrote in a letter to their superior in Lwów that "things are not too bad" (he asked the archbishop for help in getting them out of the camp).[57] In Dąbie, they immediately embarked on pastoral work, celebrating mass and hearing confession.[58] News of the internment of the Basilian fathers quickly spread – word of the events in the two monasteries reached Przemyśl, where the Church authorities made efforts to secure the monks' release. Metropolitan Sheptytsky wanted Bp Kotsylovsky to travel to Warsaw and resolve the matter with Nuncio Ratti, but

54 Korduba, *Ščodennyk 1918–1925*, p. 291.
55 Chronicle of the Krechów Monastery for 1915–1923, TsDIAL, f. 684, op. 1, spr. 2033, l. 20zv.
56 Letter of the Garrison Command in Rawa Ruska to the Dąbie Camp, 9 June 1919, concerning interned Basilians, CMA, ref. I.301.10.334.
57 'Doc. No. 21, Passage from the diary of the Latin rite Lwów metropolitan, Abp Józef Bilczewski, on the Ukrainian-Polish War of 1918–1919', in *Kościół rzymskokatolicki i Polacy w Małopolsce Wschodniej*, II, p. 439.
58 Chronicle of the Monastery in Krechów for 1915–1923, TsDIAL, f. 684, op. 1, spr. 2033, l. 21.

for various reasons the Przemyśl bishop decided against doing so in person.[59] However, the nuncio received a letter from the internees in Dąbie and decided to act in person. Although his intervention with Bp Sapieha was unsuccessful, his efforts got things moving, and in early August the Basilians left the camp in Dąbie (at a time when an American delegation was visiting).[60] In fact, the military affairs minister had already released the Basilians (order No. 3541/Mob. of 13 June 1919) and ordered that they be confined in the Capuchin monastery in Sędziszów, but for some reason this had not been carried out.[61] On 4 August 1919, the Basilians were divided into four groups: the first was sent to Nowy Sącz (Jesuit monastery, 12 people), the second to Zaliczyn (Reformed monastery, seven people), the third to Kęty (Reformed monastery, 15 people), and the last to Mogiła (Cystersian monastery, 10 people).[62]

On 29 August 1919, the Ministry of Military Affairs asked the PASC to send precise explanations due to the interest of the Apostolic Nunciature. The ministry repeated the request for detailed materials on the Basilians' internment on 13 September 1919, deeming the explanations from 13 August 1919 (letter No. 31608/IV) insufficient. The Quartermaster of the Galician Front Command had reported on 22 August 1919 that the monks' agitation meant that their return was inadvisable. However, the ministry, facing difficulties with placing the Basilians in monasteries in Western Galicia (protests from those in charge), decided that the only solution would be to confine the monks in their own monasteries in Żółkiew and Krechów, and possibly in Ławrów (Lavriv), Stary Sambor (Staryi Sambir) district, under the strict control of state and military police.[63] The PASC replied in September 1919 that, apart from hostile agitation carried out in the district by the Basilians, it had no other information on the reasons for their internment. The Supreme Command accepted the ministry's proposal regarding where to send the monks.[64] The Basilians finally returned to their monasteries in mid-September 1919 (Fr Stepan Reshetylo stated that they were freed on 18 September 1919 and the next day were back in Krechów).[65]

59 Letter of Bp Kotsylovsky to Metropolitan Sheptytsky, 11 June 1919, concerning interned Basilians, TsDIAL, f. 358, op. 1, spr. 171, l. 20–23.
60 Memorandum of the US Envoy in Warsaw, summer 1919, concerning relations in Eastern Galicia, National Archives, Kew, FO 608/59.
61 Order of Krakow Regional Military Command No. IV/50086, 18 June 1919, concerning interned Basilians in Dąbie, CMA, ref. I.310.2.26.
62 Chronicle of the Krechów Monastery for 1915–1923, TsDIAL, f. 684, op. 1, spr. 2033, l. 21.
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65 'Letter № 371, of Fr Stepan Reshetylo to Kyryl Studynsky, 20 November 1919', in *U pivstolitnich zmahannjach. Vybrani lysty do Kyryla Studyns'koho (1891–1941)*, ed. by Oksana Hajova, Uljana Jedlins'ka and Halyna Svarnyk (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 1993), p. 348.

The internments of Greek Catholic priests in Galicia were wide-ranging. The Polish authorities imprisoned at least 170 clergymen for varying lengths of time. The first appeared in camps as soon as December 1918, yet the most extensive operations took place as the Polish armies occupied further areas of Eastern Galicia in May, June and July 1919. From the Polish authorities' point of view, this was dictated by the need to extinguish the harmful agitation that priests were spreading among their parishioners; indeed, most of the arrests were made on genuine grounds. Internment also affected priests who in the ZUNR period participated in the construction of Ukrainian statehood or displayed a negative attitude towards Poles. Nonetheless, there were also cases in which harmless priests were detained, which strained Poland's image in the international arena. Ukrainian propaganda exploited these facts, harming the Polish cause, particularly in Rome (where representatives of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church gave significantly exaggerated data on those interned and confined). The internment of two entire Basilian monasteries in Żółkiew and Krechów had negative repercussions, despite some justifications (it is worth emphasising that the monks in Żółkiew printed sheets of ZUNR documents, UGA newspapers and other such publications). Releases of the internees took place in several stages, first in response to analogous releases of Roman Catholic priests in the ZUNR, then following the intervention of Nuncio Ratti, and finally in autumn and winter 1919/1920 as a result of the Polish government amnesty.

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# CONSERVATISM IN THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES, 1917–1921: PAVLO SKOROPADSKY'S HETMANATE AND VIACHESLAV LYPYNSKYI'S STATEHOOD CONCEPT


## ABSTRACT

The article analyses the key aspects of the formation of Ukrainian conservatism on the eve of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky's rule and in the aftermath of the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921. Its principal ideologist was the eminent Ukrainian historian, diplomat, public and political figure Viacheslav Lypynskyi. The enduring vitality of the Hetmanate tradition in Ukraine provided a foundation for Lypynskyi and other representatives of organized conservatism to seek an alternative to the ideological doctrine of the populist-democratic movement. The article examines Lypynskyi's development of the theory of a hereditary classocratic monarchy in Ukraine, aimed at achieving national consolidation and affirming national-historical traditions within state and political institutions. His concepts of the national elite, territorial patriotism, religious tolerance, and the classocratic structuring of society – together with the project of personifying Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky and his lineage – formed the cornerstones of the modern Ukrainian conservative movement.



KEYWORDS:

conservatism, Ukraine, Ukrainian monarchism, Hetmanate, Viacheslav Lypynskyi, Pavlo Skoropadsky, Ukrainian Democratic Agrarian Party, Ukrainian Union of Landowners-Statists



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The period 1917–1921, known as the Ukrainian Revolution, was marked by intense political struggle among various camps of Ukrainian socio-political forces and movements. The Ukrainian Central Rada, the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), and the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky – the three principal national-political systems of that time – reflect the acute contradictions that existed within the Ukrainian political sphere, demonstrating the social and ideological heterogeneity of Ukrainian society, as well as the fierce confrontation between its various factions. As the contemporary historian Olena Boiko observes,

> throughout the entire Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, starting with the formation of the Central Rada, the national movement lacked 'internal unity'; social and class antagonism divided nationally oriented forces and was one of the factors that led to the defeat of the liberation struggle and the collapse of statehood.[1]

The coup d'état of 29 April 1918, which brought an end to the era of the Ukrainian Central Rada, gave rise to a new socio-political current in Ukrainian thought: organized Ukrainian conservatism. As the Ukrainian historian Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytskyi pointed out, "the weakest and least popular among the masses, it [Ukrainian conservatism – author] nonetheless made the greatest intellectual contribution in the present (twentieth) century".[2] Ultimately, the contradictions within the Ukrainian socio-political movement resulted in profound ideological debates among the Ukrainian émigré community, echoes of which persist even in contemporary Ukrainian historiography.

We can clearly discern two principal conceptual approaches in the study of that revolutionary time. The first is rooted in the ideological foundations of the populist-democratic (republican, UNR-oriented) doctrine, while the second, the statist approach, was shaped by the practices and ideology of the 1918 Hetmanate, which emerged as a manifestation of organized Ukrainian conservatism.

The purpose of this article is to examine the fundamental principles and stages of the formation of Ukrainian conservatism on the eve of Pavlo Skoropadsky's Hetmanate and in the aftermath of the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution (1917–1921). The study analyses the development of Viacheslav Lypynskyi's (1882–1931) theory of a Ukrainian hereditary classocratic monarchy, which aimed to achieve national consolidation

1 Olena Bojko, 'Utvorennja jedynoho nacional'noho frontu ukrajins'kymy polityčnymy sylamy u 1918 r.', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal*, 6 (1997), 14–23 (p. 14).
2 Ivan Lysjak-Rudnyc'kyj, 'Naprjamy ukrajins'koji polityčnoji dumky', *Istoryčni ese*, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Osnovy, 1994), II, pp. 63–73 (p. 73).

and affirm national-historical traditions within the structures of state and political power. His vision of a national elite, territorial patriotism, religious tolerance, and the classocratic structuring of society, combined with the project of personifying Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky and his lineage, formed the foundation of the modern Ukrainian conservative movement.[3]

In the wave of social conflicts in Ukraine after February 1917, politically moderate figures were excluded from the state-building process. Without being a democrat, and above all a socialist, one had no chance of political success. "From the moment of the revolution, all conscious Ukrainians declared themselves socialists, and those who had the courage not to count themselves among the socialists remained outside political life", wrote the Ukrainian historian and contemporary of those events, Dmytro Doroshenko. "It seemed inconceivable to imagine a Ukrainian patriot who was not a socialist".[4] These words referred to the abovementioned Viacheslav Lypynskyi, one of the most prominent Ukrainian historians and political thinkers of the time. Thanks to his work, the populist worldview was revised, depriving it of its dominant role in shaping the ideological foundations of the Ukrainian national movement.

Unlike the Ukrainian liberal-populist and socialist figures who sought to build a future Ukraine without the descendants of the national nobility and the Cossack elite – excluding them from the civic movement – Lypynskyi turned to the traditional moral values created by these very groups. It was amidst these values, he argued, that

> Shevchenko grew, revival grew, we ourselves grew. It was the old faith of the former Cossack *starshina*; it was the individual moral worth of the best people chosen from among the Cossack masses, in war and in labour.[5]

Lypynskyi called for nurturing the national tradition, the foundation of which lay in Christian spiritual values. He contrasted what at first glance might have seemed to be "obsolete" social terminology – monarchism, knighthood, aristocratism, and the like – with the revolutionary romanticism of democracy and socialism. In reality, however, by seeking

3 The history of Ukrainian conservatism, the ideological foundations of Ukrainian monarchism, and the Ukrainian Hetmanate of 1918 have been examined in the author's publications, see: Tetjana Ostaško, *Ukrajina V'jačeslava Lypyns'koho* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2022); ead., 'Vil'hel'm Habsburg i V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj', *Problemy vyvčennja istoriji Ukrajins'koji revoljuciji 1917–1921 rr.*, 17 (2022), 111–46; ead., 'Pavlo Skoropads'kyj – lider ukrajins'koho het'mans'koho ruchu', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal*, 4 (2008), 96–110; ead., 'Do 125-riččja vid dnja narodžennja V.K. Lypyns'koho: V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj: postat' na tli doby', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal*, 2 (2007), 113–30, ff.

4 Mychajlo Zabarevs'kyj [Dmytro Dorošenko], 'V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj i joho dumky pro ukrajins'ku naciju i deržavu', in *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj ta joho doba*, ed. by Jurij Tereščenko, 5 vols (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2010–2017), I (2010), pp. 382–430 (p. 393).

5 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Lysty do brativ-chliborobiv: Pro ideju i orhanizaciju ukrajins'koho monarchizmu (vstup i perša častyna)', *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj ta joho doba*, I, pp. 92–214 (p. 165).

historical parallels in Ukraine's past, he aimed to modernize that past, turning it into an effective instrument for shaping a new national aristocracy – one capable of productive struggle for statehood.

Lypynskyi was interested in the national-political rather than the social aspects of Ukrainian identity (which distinguished him, for example, from Volodymyr Antonovych and other *khlopomany*). Though an ethnic Pole, he felt Ukrainian without breaking with his social milieu – without shame or renunciation of his ethnic identity; nor did he renounce his Catholic faith. To the outside world, he presented himself as a Ukrainian nobleman seeking support from his own social stratum, which connected him to the historical past.

In turn, the conservative-leaning Ukrainian nobility did not embrace the Ukrainian revolutionary movement, largely because of the social radicalism of the majority of its participants. For the most part, the nobility sought ways to preserve itself and to defend its socio-economic interests. Despite their political passivity, representatives of the Ukrainian Cossack-*starshyna* families did not lose their national instinct. It was within this milieu that the worldview of the future Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky (1873–1945) was shaped. Skoropadsky was closely tied by kinship to numerous aristocratic families of the Hetmanate – Kochubei, Myloradovych, Myklashevskyi, Markovych, Tarnavskyi, Apostol, Zakrevskyi, and others. He observed,

> Thanks to my grandfather and father, to family traditions, to Petro Yakovych Doroshenko, Vasyl Petrovych Horlenko, Novytskyi, and others, and despite my service in Petrograd, I was constantly engaged with the history of Little Russia. I always passionately loved Ukraine, not only as a land of fertile fields and a wonderful climate, but also for its glorious historical past, for its people, whose entire outlook differs from that of the Muscovites.[6]

It was precisely in these circles of the Ukrainian aristocracy of Left-Bank Ukraine that the hetman tradition lived on, giving impetus to the revival of the Hetmanate in 1918.

Among the political forces that supported Hetman Skoropadsky's rise to power was the Ukrainian Democratic Agrarian Party (UDKhP), virtually the only political organization in Ukraine at that time to avoid any attachment to the socialist idea. The UDKhP was founded on 29 June 1917, during the Congress of Organized Farmers in Lubny. The gathering brought together some 1,500 peasant farmers and up to 20 landowners.[7] The principal

6 Jurij Tereščenko, 'Deržavnyc'kyj vymir Pavla Skoropads'koho', in *Pavlo Skoropads'kyj, Spomyny: kinec' 1917 – hruden' 1918 roku*, ed. by Jurij Tereščenko (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2010), pp. 11–94 (p. 40).

7 Serhij Šemet, 'Do istoriji Ukrajins'koji demokratyčno-chliborobs'koji partiji', *Chliborobs'ka Ukrajina, Zbirnyk 1* (Viden', 1920), pp. 63–79 (p. 63).

foundations on which the party planned to build its activity were declared as follows: the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people; private property as the cornerstone of the national economy; the parcelling of purchased landed estates to meet the needs of smallholding peasants; and the retention by previous owners of the amount of land determined by the Ukrainian Sejm.[8]

In August 1917, Viacheslav Lypynskyi drafted the party programme on the basis of previously approved principles.[9] In the document published in October 1917, he expanded the political and economic content of the programmatic foundations of UDKhP's work. New provisions included the need to form a leading stratum of society with a strong state-oriented consciousness; the coexistence of leasehold and private ownership forms of landholding; the establishment of state control over the national economy, and other measures.[10]

As Lypynskyi noted, the fact that UDKhP was an agrarian party meant it had to ensure that "the agrarian segment of Ukrainian democracy would take, in the process of shaping political life, a position corresponding to its size (85% of the entire population)". He continued, "Ukraine is a land of farmers, and the Ukrainian state must become a state of farmers".[11]

The first Ukrainian conservative party declared as its priority the interests of the largest social class – the farmers – and intended to "use every means to increase the political, economic, and cultural strength of the Ukrainian peasantry".[12] Lypynskyi emphasized the concept of national sovereignty and the unity of Ukrainian lands. In the section 'The International Position of Ukraine', he advanced a slogan that had previously been voiced by only a handful of Ukrainian independence advocates. Among them was the legal expert and historian Serhiy Shelukhyn, who regarded 28 February 1917 – the date of Nicholas II's abdication of the throne – as the date of Ukraine's restored independence because it meant the automatic annulment of the oath of allegiance to the Tsar and the "return to us of the rights defined by the Pereyaslav Constitution of 1654, with its extension over the entire territory of the Ukrainian people within Russia".[13]

Lypynskyi arrived at the same conclusion as Shelukhyn, arguing that with Nicholas II's abdication Ukraine had acquired the legal grounds for independent statehood. Evidence of this can be found in the UDKhP's program:

8 Ibid.
9 Fedir Turčenko and Natalja Zalis'ka, 'V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj – ideoloh Ukrajins'koji demokratyčnoji chliborobs'koji partiji', in *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj. Istoryko-politolobična spadščyna i sučasna Ukrajina*, ed. by Jaroslav Pelens'kyj (Kyjiv–Filadel'fija, 1994), pp. 171–80 (p. 171).
10 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Materialy do prohramy [Ukrajins'koji demokratyčnoji chliborobs'koji partiji]. Peredmova. Narys prohramy ukrajins'koji demokratyčnoji chliborobs'koji partiji', in *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj. Istoryko-politolobična spadščyna i sučasna Ukrajina*, pp. 253–66.
11 Ibid., p. 257.
12 Ibid., p. 258.
13 Serhij Šeluchin, *Ukrajina – nazva našoji zemli z najdavnišych časiv* (Užhorod, 1929), pp. 73–74.

> At the Ukrainian Constituent Assembly, we shall demand that our relations with the Russian people and its state be reconsidered and reestablished anew, since the Pereyaslav agreement of 1654, upon which our union with Russia had until now rested from a legal standpoint, ceased to have lawful force the moment the Romanov dynasty abdicated the Russian throne.[14]

The provisions recorded by Lypynskyi in UDKhP's program demonstrated that the party was, in fact, one of the first political forces in Ukraine to openly declare the necessity of creating an independent Ukrainian state. He wrote,

> Our history teaches us that our people lived a full national life only when they enjoyed the completeness of their sovereign rights upon their own land (the Kyivan State), or after the loss of statehood, when within the people there awoke, with elemental force, the striving to regain those lost rights [the Cossackdom].

Furthermore, Lypynskyi emphasized,

> The Ukrainian national idea is capable of reviving the Ukrainian ethnographic mass only when it goes hand in hand with the idea of the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people; when it calls for complete national liberation, and in place of slavish service to foreign state organizations it sets forth the striving to create a state of our ow".[15]

Lypynskyi also stated that the intensification of class struggle needed to be overcome, emphasizing that the Ukrainian people had the right to demand from political parties that they "for the sake of their party or class interests, not retreat even a single step from the principle of the free existence of the nation, and that each Ukrainian party draw its strength from the internal forces of its own people, not from 'external protections'".[16]

According to the party program, the UDKhP set as its goal the creation of a Ukrainian Democratic Republic,

> [...] in which the supreme state authority in all internal and international matters shall belong, in the legislative sphere, to the Ukrainian Sejm in Kyiv, elected for four years by citizens aged 20 and above on the basis of equal, universal, and direct election, with secret ballot

14 Lypyns'kyj, 'Materialy do prohramy', p. 258.
15 Ibid., p. 255.
16 Ibid., p. 264.

> according to a proportional system; and in the executive sphere, to the General Secretariat [Council of Ministers], accountable to the Sejm.

Another provision of the UDKhP program defined:

> The Ukrainian state is headed by a President, elected for four years, who holds the right of representation and performs legal and state functions to be established by the Ukrainian Constituent Assembly. For matters of great importance, a referendum shall be introduced, while legislative initiative shall also be permitted.[17]

Scholars have interpreted Lypynskyi's formulation of the institution of the presidency – as elaborated in the UDKhP's party program – in different ways. Some questioned whether he was a conservative and monarchist from the very beginning, or whether he just experienced periods that could be described as "democratic".

For example, Fedir Turchenko and Natalia Zaliska conclude that "in circumstances when favourable conditions had arisen for the creation of a Ukrainian state but the masses were captivated by socialist slogans, Lypynskyi, for the sake of the idea of independence, compromised his monarchist views".[18] In their view, the president, as envisioned by Lypynskyi, was to serve as the representative of the Ukrainian state and to carry out the functions assigned to him by the Constituent Assembly. Thus, the institution of the presidency embodied the link between the forced and the desired forms of Ukraine's state structure.[19]

In our opinion, however, Lypynskyi never changed his public political position and remained a conservative and a monarchist throughout his life. As for the provision on the institution of the presidency that he introduced to UDKhP's party program, this was nothing more than a tactical compromise which took into account the position of the overwhelming majority of the political class in Ukraine. Indeed, in his article "*Dear Friends*", dated 8 November 1919, and addressed to his fellow party members, Lypynskyi commented on the key aspects of UDKhP's activity in the following way:

> In the early days of the revolution, paying tribute to 'the spirit of the time', and to our great regret, we had accepted – as you will recall, after long discussions on the handwritten draft of our party program that I had proposed, on the basis of compromise – 'a republican form

17 Ibid., p. 259–60.
18 Turčenko, Zalis'ka, 'V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj – ideoloh Ukrajins'koji demokratyčnoji chliborobs'koji partiji', p. 175.
19 Ibid., p. 176.

> of government headed by a President'. This is how, finally, the corresponding provision in that program was edited, while the program itself was later printed with the changes made to it in line with our resolutions at the time.[20]

With the entry of Pavlo Skoropadsky into the political struggle and the establishment of the Ukrainian National Hromada, significant shifts took place within the Ukrainian conservative milieu. The Hromada was intended to unite "all property owners, regardless of their shades of affiliation, in the fight against destructive socialist slogans". Contrary to the position of traditional Ukrainian political parties, Skoropadsky set himself the task of implementing a realistic programme of reforms, one free from demagogy and populism and directed toward securing a socio-economic system founded on private property as the very basis of culture and civilization.[21]

The liberal-democratic and socialist reforms in Ukraine, implemented by the Central Rada, provoked resistance from conservative political forces. These forces did not accept their policies, particularly in the areas of agrarian reform and state-building. The hotbeds of this opposition were landowners' unions, which eventually consolidated into the All-Ukrainian Union of Landowners, as well as the Ukrainian Democratic Agrarian Party. The Hetman coup of 29 April 1918, in effect, opened the path for the development of an organized Ukrainian conservatism.

The Ukrainian Hetmanate State arose under unfavourable geopolitical and domestic circumstances. By signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and inviting German and Austro-Hungarian troops to defend the UNR, the leaders of the Ukrainian Central Rada failed to recognize that the state was obliged to fulfil its commitments to its allies. On the contrary, the leaders of Ukrainian socialist parties were preparing for a mass peasant uprising, hoping in this way to force the Germans to withdraw their troops from Ukraine.

Assuming both responsibility and power, Pavlo Skoropadsky strove to secure from the Germans the greatest possible degree of neutrality and laid down his own conditions, which corresponded to the interests of the Ukrainian State. In his memoirs, he wrote:

> Remember that had it not been for my intervention, a few weeks later the Germans would have established an ordinary general-governorship in Ukraine. It would have been based on the general principles of occupation and, of course, would have had nothing in common with the Ukrainian national idea. Consequently, there would not have been

20 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Dorohi druzi', in *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj ta joho doba*, I, pp. 25–28 (p. 28).
21 Tereščenko, 'Deržavnyc'kyj vymir Pavla Skoropads'koho', p. 58.

> a Ukrainian state that truly appeared on the world stage, even if only during this brief period of the Hetmanate. This means that the idea of Ukrainian statehood, in the eyes of both foreigners and our own people, would have still seemed utopian. From the time of the 1918 Hetmanate, Ukrainian statehood became a fact, one with which the world already reckoned and will have to continue to reckon.[22]

Skoropadsky was well acquainted with the practice of state governance. He was convinced that Ukraine's independence could be secured against all destructive forces only if a combat-ready, permanent, and regular army was created, as well as a state-administrative apparatus; if diplomatic relations were established with as many countries as possible; if the economy and transportation were rebuilt; if the financial system was strengthened; and if the state provided material support for the functioning of institutions of education, science, and culture. The Hetman positioned himself as an uncompromising opponent of Bolshevism. This was one of the significant distinctions between him and the leaders of the Ukrainian socialist parties.

Naturally, the proclamation of the Hetmanate was only the beginning of the state-political practice of Ukrainian conservatism, which still had to undergo a long path of ideological and organizational refinement. This was well understood by the Hetman and his associates. Significantly, Skoropadsky emphasized that "the Hetmanate proved to be the first shift toward a more moderate course, more natural and thereby more enduring".[23]

At that time, Ukrainian conservatism possessed neither the necessary organizational strength nor a clearly defined ideology. The transformations initiated by Skoropadsky were not purely conservative; to a large extent, they were supplemented by liberal reforms. Therefore, Ukrainian conservatism in 1918 can be qualified as liberal: rather than opposing social change in general, it opposed the radical social experiments of Bolshevism and the Ukrainian socialists of the Central Rada.[24]

The activation of right-wing forces during this period and the search for conservative-statist models were characteristic of the socio-political environment of many ethnic groups. In this context, the Ukrainian conservative project does not appear exceptional. For instance, within the political calculations of the Polish elite, the creation of a Polish monarchy was a central idea, to be achieved by incorporating into Galicia the Polish ethnic territories that had been under Russian rule. Among the many

22 Pavlo Skoropads'kyj, *Spomyny: kinec' 1917 – hruden' 1918 roku*, ed. by Tetjana Ostaško and Jurij Tereščenko (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2019), p. 151.
23 Ibid., p. 271.
24 Jurij Tereščenko, 'Ožyvlennja tradycij', in *Ave. Do 100-littja Het'manatu Pavla Skoropads'koho*, ed. by Larysa Ivšyna (Kyjiv: Ukrajins'ka pres-hrupa, 2018), pp. 19–25 (p. 24).

contenders for a possible Polish throne, the most likely candidate turned out to be Archduke Karl Stefan Habsburg, a cousin of Emperor Karl I and the father of Wilhelm Habsburg (also known as Vasyl Vyshyvanyi). The figure of Karl Stefan Habsburg was particularly attractive to Polish conservatives due to his family ties with the Czartoryski and Radziwiłł dynasties.

The intention to implement conservative-monarchical concepts was characteristic of many other ethnic groups that were forming their own states out of the ruins of former empires. The Finnish envoy to the Ukrainian State, Herman Gummerus, recalled that in his country.

> [T]heyhey moved forward, with typical Finnish stubbornness, in the direction they had set out for earlier on. We needed a German king, even the brother-in-law of Emperor Wilhelm, despite the fact that the foundations of the Hohenzollern throne were already shaking.[25]

On 12 Apri 1918, in Riga, the creation of the Baltic Duchy in union with Prussia was proclaimed. It was headed by Heinrich Hohenzollern, the brother of the German Emperor, Wilhelm II. On 4 July 1918, the Council of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Taryba*) adopted a decision to establish a monarchy in Lithuania and to invite Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg to the royal throne under the name Mindaugas II.[26]

As a statesman, Viacheslav Lypynskyi did not seek political confrontation either during the time of the Ukrainian Central Rada or under the Directory of UNR. He criticized the Ukrainian national authorities only when their actions harmed the consolidation of political forces, leading to a policy of self-destruction.

The inconsistent political steps of the Directory and its repressions against the state-minded activists ultimately compelled him to resign from his post as Ukrainian envoy in Vienna. The final impetus for this step was the execution of the talented military commander Petro Bolbochan, who had dared to oppose the political course of the Supreme Commander of the UNR Army, Symon Petliura.

In an extended letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UNR, Andriy Livytskyi, dated 16 October 1919, Lypynskyi wrote that the basis for his

> loyal attitude toward the new Government was the firm hope that this Government, taught by the bitter experience of the unfortunate class policy of the last days of the Central Rada, would not repeat its

25 Quoted after: Jurij Tereščenko, 'Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho jak projav konserватyvnoji revoljuciji', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryčnyj žurnal*, 3 (2008), 19–37 (p. 24).
26 Tereščenko, 'Ožyvlennja tradycij', pp. 23–24.

> old mistakes. Nor would it repeat the mistakes of those Ukrainian right-wing and moderate circles who, having created the Hetmanate, nevertheless failed to find a path to understanding the left-wing Ukrainian circles, and thus failed to rise to a truly national ideology and to create that inter-class national cement without which the building of our state is absolutely impossible.[27]

In fact, Lypynskyi equally reproached both Ukrainian socialists and the Ukrainian right circles who had supported Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky for their failure to reach political compromise and unite their efforts towards the common goal of building an independent state. Despite the fact that the Directory, in such a dramatic moment, dared to destroy its own Ukrainian State through an uprising, he still hoped that it might become "not a narrowly class-based" but a truly national institution. Filled with this hope, he tried to persuade his fellow Hetmanites that they were mistaken in abandoning Ukrainian political work.

Lypynskyi continued his efforts, resisting

> the temptation to withdraw completely from the – ultimately quite understandable –chaos that had by then taken hold of our foreign policy, destroying what Ukrainian statehood had already managed to secure abroad in the time of the Hetmanate.[28]

He further noted that, despite the dire situation in which the UNR found itself, the republican leadership

> still less than the former Hetman government (where at least attempts were made), managed to summon within itself that moral effort that would have enabled it to unite around itself all strata and classes of Ukraine for the defence of its Homeland.

According to Lypynskyi, the UNR leaders followed "the path of narrow class partisanship and irresponsible demagogy". They failed to "lead the people behind them, as befitted a National Government and the intelligentsia that stood behind it in such critical times, but instead allowed themselves to be led by a dark mass, long demoralized by servitude". He described the very fact of the execution of Colonel Petro Bolbochan

27 'Lysty: 26 lypnja 1919 r.; 16 iovtnja 1919 r.', in *The Political and Social Ideas of Vjačeslav Lypyns'kyj*, ed. by Jaroslaw Pelenski (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute), Harvard Ukrainian Studies, vol. 9, no. 3–4, pp. 382–93 (p. 383).
28 Ibid., p. 384.

as "merely the higher more visible flame of the process of self-immolation that destroyed our house".[29]

Lypynskyi wrote these lines in late 1919, when the Ukrainian republican leadership had in fact already lost control of Ukrainian territory. His open letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UNR, Andriy Livytskyi, dated 16 October 1919, was the first opinion piece in which Lypynskyi directly accused the Ukrainian democratic forces of being incapable of reaching a compromise, both within their own political camp and with their opponents. He provided a comparative analysis of other newly established European states that arose after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, etc.), where democratic leaders "in times of national peril put aside all class, party, and internal disagreements".[30]

At the same time, this letter may be regarded as the first warning to the republican leadership in which Lypynskyi, with great concern, foresaw the worst possible prospects for Ukraine's future. In his view, the fragmentation of Ukrainian society – coupled with the unchecked dominance of monopolistic "parties" within the state – threatened to cause not only political disaster but also national-cultural catastrophe. He cautioned the Ukrainian leadership against the temptation to sacrifice – for the sake of private, class, or other momentary political interests – the common national ideal of freedom and the solidarity of the nation in defending that freedom.

In early November 1919, Lypynskyi entered a new stage of his political activity. First, he addressed his fellow party members in the UDKhP with the article 'Dear Friends', dated 8 November 1919. The article, in effect, became a prelude to his political treatise *Letters to Our Brothers-Farmers*. In it, Lypynskyi maintained that because of persecution and intolerance by the UNR authorities toward the UDKhP, the party had no chance of convening its own congress. For this reason, he was compelled to address his fellow party members with this letter, reaffirming the party's existence as well as its moral and ideological unity.[31]

One of the very first questions Lypynskyi sought to answer was why the Ukrainian nation had been defeated in its struggle for liberation in the twentieth century – a struggle which, as he stressed, "will long continue under the banner of mass social movements directed toward a clearly defined goal – that is, movements deeply thought out, theoretically well-grounded, and organizationally well-prepared". Lypynskyi was convinced that any activity lacking these features – that is, profound theoretical

29 Ibid., pp. 384–85.
30 Ibid.
31 Lypyns'kyj, 'Dorohi druzi', p. 25.

and organizational foundations – would, despite its patriotism and activism, ultimately fall into tragic dependence on better-organized foreign political forces. He pointed out that sectarian squabbles and mutual intolerance among political parties had led Ukrainian society to a dead end.[32]

Instead of a detailed party program, he proposed precisely defined main goals of political struggle since, in his view, Ukrainian society was facing not a battle of party programmes, but a long and stubborn struggle over fundamental principles: for the Ukrainian State or against it, and over the foundations upon which such a state should be built. He then emphasized the need to regroup political forces by not parties but political unions or blocs, whose primary principle would be to "think of the Ukrainian national life in no other terms than in the form of its own Ukrainian State".[33]

In his essay 'The Tragedy of the Ukrainian Sancho Panza: Impressions from an Emigrant's Notebook', Lypynskyi used an allegorical form to depict the relationship between the leading social stratum, personified by Don Quixote, and the people, Sancho Panza, while analysing the interplay between realism and idealism in Ukrainian and European public life. Concurrently, he summed up the consequences of the leading stratum's behaviour during the era of the nation's liberation struggles.

Comparing the positions of Western European and domestic elites, Lypynskyi observed that in Europe, Don Quixote, that is, the leading class (aristocracy), while preserving its "traditional ancestral faith, chivalric tradition", culture, and the experience of past generations, strove to hand down this "treasure" to Sancho Panza – the new generations of pragmatists born from within the various strata of European society. According to Lypynskyi, without Don Quixote "the existence of a modern European nation would be inconceivable".

Lypynskyi then noted that when the European, undemocratic, nationally-oriented Don Quixotes won the trust of the "primitive Sancho Panzas, and the latter began sacrificing their lives for the idea of their nation, the European nations arose. These nations are complex spiritual human collectives that evade comprehension by these new Sancho Panzas, with their very pragmatic methods".[34]

By contrast, in Ukraine – where, in Lypynskyi's view, the Ukrainian elite had lost its national spirituality – "only the corporeal Don Quixotes remained: Don Quixotes who lost faith in themselves, in their culture, in their vocation". Without Ukrainian faith and Ukrainian culture, the Ukrainian elite – "our Don Quixotes" – converted to foreign religions,

32 Ibid., p. 26.
33 Ibid.
34 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Trahedija ukrajins'koho Sančo Pančo (Iz zapyskoji knyžky emihranta)', *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj ta joho doba*, I, pp. 29–37 (p. 31).

became foreigners, sacrificed their lives for Poland, and built up the might and power of the Great Russian Empire".

Lypynskyi believed that the national revival in Ukraine found the Ukrainian Don Quixotes – who had transformed into "penitent nobles and clerics' sons" – unprepared. Instead of preserving their social essence and providing "guidance and tutelage" to the rest of society, they begged forgiveness from Sancho Panza, the peasantry, for being part of the "bad gentry stock", whose "ancestors had always wronged Sancho Panza", and so forth.

Lypynskyi's usage of allegory was directed against that group of the Ukrainian elite who, instead of becoming a firm support for the people and serving as leaders, shifted onto the people an "unbearable task" of seeking its own independent path. Yet, without national idealism, whose bearer was the stratum representing the national tradition, Lypynskyi saw no possibility of restoring statehood:

> Without its Don Quixote, without faith in the nation, without faith in the national idea, it was time for our Sancho Panza – for the nation – to speak its word. In that terrible hour, when not a minute could be lost, Sancho Panza, together with the penitent nobleman and the humble cleric's son, took the road he had already travelled.

Lypynskyi railed against the inconsistency of Ukrainian democracy: its autonomism, its "flirtations" with Russian democratic circles, and its appeals to the people "for advice". He observed,

> All this once again led nowhere. It ended where it began, with Sancho Panza throwing the worthless Don Quixote out the door and going off to look for faith from his ragged neighbours, for he no longer had one of his own, for Don Quixote had not given him faith.[35]

Lypynskyi was convinced that the Ukrainian aristocracy's loss of its social identity and its transition into the ranks of so-called democracy ultimately led to a national tragedy. Deprived of leadership capable of instilling in society at large – and in the peasantry, represented by Sancho Panza – the idealistic "Don Quixotian" striving for its own national state, the Ukrainian peasantry did not follow the feeble, pragmatic Ukrainian Don Quixote, the democrat. Instead, it found itself in the embrace of Don Quixote, a foreign Muscovite.

35 Ibid., p. 36.

Concurrent with this dramatic period of Ukrainian history, when society seemed to be gripped by "democratic" chaos and social disintegration, Lypynskyi also discerned some constructive elements of development. These were linked to the fact that

> for a moment, the old Ukrainian Don Quixote of the Hetmanate was revived on the western frontiers of Ukraine, where the cult of the penitent nobleman and the idealized tramp had not taken hold. Therefore, the Ukrainian Don Quixote created the Galician Army.

In his view, these were the only constructive moments in the era of Ukrainian national-liberation struggles, when the Ukrainian Sancho Panza felt pride in his Don Quixote,

> but Don Quixote lacked strength, and the tragedy of Sancho Panza unveiled again... and in righteous indignation, Sancho Panza grumbled with all his fury at his Don Quixote that he was weak, that he had failed to lead him.

This tragedy, Lypynskyi argued, would continue until the time when, instead of a Ukrainian democrat – "a boorish, vagrant, self-spitting Ukrainian intellectual from the ranks of penitent nobles and humble clerics' sons" – there appeared a Don Quixote with "unshakable faith in himself, in his old weapon, in his old tradition, and in his old culture".[36]

Thus, in the revival of Ukrainian conservative forces (in both Eastern and Western Ukraine), which had succeeded in restoring the national form of statehood (the Hetmanate) and in creating a regular Ukrainian Galician Army, Lypynskyi saw a real path to overcoming national disintegration. Only the political and spiritual activation of national conservatism and the transfer of Ukrainian leadership into its hands could bring the peasantry, "our Sancho Panza", back onto the path of national-state consciousness, putting an end to the peasantry's terrible tragedy.

Lypynskyi then concluded that the Ukrainian Don Quixote must shed his democratic garb and return to his essence, restoring faith in himself and in the national-state promises embedded within him.

In the aforementioned letters, notes, and journalistic writings, Viacheslav Lypynskyi identified the main reasons for the defeat of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921, criticizing particular aspects of Ukrainian democracy. Furthermore, in his *Letters to Our Brothers-Farmers: On the Idea and*

[36] Ibid., p. 37.

*Organization of Ukrainian Monarchism*, he focused on these questions systematically. According to Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, this work became "a unique phenomenon" within modern Ukrainian social thought, containing "both an exposition of his [V. Lypynskyi's] philosophy and his practical political program".[37] Given that a large part of his treatise was devoted to comparing three political systems – the Central Rada, the Hetmanate, and the Directory – one might posit that they form the basis for his analysis of various forms of state organization, namely classocracy, ochlocracy, and democracy.

Lypynskyi concluded that the socio-political order of the future Ukrainian state must be pluralistic. He also opposed any restrictions on social strata or political currents in the process of state-building. In his view, Ukraine must possess a differentiated class structure encompassing all the social strata necessary for the existence of a mature nation and an independent state. All of social strata were to become co-participants in the creation of the new elite, one "recruited from the best people" representing the various classes of society.

Addressing his "brothers-farmers" – that is, representatives of the Polonized and Russified Ukrainian gentry – Lypynskyi emphasized that only through cooperation with the people and through mutual influence during this cooperation could both the "lords" and the people rid themselves of their shortcomings. Indeed, Ukraine could be created only by the joint efforts and collaboration of these social groups. Otherwise, both groups were doomed to mutual destruction: "Vile slaves [would] periodically slaughter their vile lords; in their turn, vile lords [would] sell their lordly honour to one or the other metropolis and once again, with its help, place a muzzle on the rebellious slaves".[38]

Appealing to the intelligentsia, Lypynskyi maintained that democracy and the people were not synonyms since "the people were, are, and always will be, and the future always belongs to them". However, the people never govern directly; they only bring forth a national elite from their own midst. Furthermore, the people fare best when their elected representatives are guided by "the loyalty, honour, intellect, and organizational experience of mature leaders".

At the same time, Lypynskyi was unwilling to put up with the intelligentsia's claims to supreme political power, as was the case in 1917. Instead of giving "its nation a single unifying political ideology", the intelligentsia produced "a parasitic splitting of the nation into a multitude of parties and ideologies that kept devouring each other".[39]

37 Ivan Lysjak-Rudnyc'kyj, 'Vjačeslav Lypyns'kyj: deržavnyj dijač, istoryk ta polityčnyj myslytel', *Istoryčni ese*, II, pp. 149–58 (p. 153).
38 Lypyns'kyj, 'Lysty do brativ-chliborobiv', p. 97.
39 Ibid., p. 132.

With regard to the material foundations and the way the Ukrainian democratic intelligentsia lived and worked, Lypynskyi pointed out that this group supplied the main cadres for the nationally oriented Ukrainian movement before the Revolution of 1917. He drew attention to the fact that the representatives of the intelligentsia "belonged to all sorts of the so-called free Russian professions" and "absolutely could not imagine themselves in the role of builders of a Ukrainian state".

Therefore, in his view, "the idea of their own state, built by some other Ukrainian classes, was to them if not contentious, then at best entirely alien". Instead, they sought

> to exploit exclusively for themselves the only role for which, by their very nature, they felt capable – the role of intermediaries between the Russian state and the Ukrainian popular masses, whose first manifestations of national consciousness they strove to take under control with all their might.[40]

This, in turn, determined the fact that the Ukrainian socialists strove by all means possible to continue performing the mediating role, clinging to the remaining "fantasies" of the old Russian state. Lypynskyi demonstrates that the independence of the Ukrainian socialist parties that dominated the Ukrainian Central Rada did not emerge as an organic fact of their political evolution, but arose literally within a few days, and they themselves ridiculed this independence as "bourgeois chatter".

Lypynskyi then pointed out that the Ukrainian socialist parties proclaimed independence not because "they suddenly felt the irresistible desire of the masses to have their own state, but simply because the new Bolshevik Russia no longer wished to speak with them as the representatives of the Ukrainian nation". In his words, "suddenly there was no one in front of whom they could mediate", and it was precisely "the Russian Bolsheviks, and not the Ukrainian national idea" that forced the leadership of Ukraine to embark on the path of national independence and state-building.[41]

Lypynskyi underlined that "when it comes to its internal policy, the entire first period of the Central Rada's activity passed under the slogan of struggle against the independentists (*samostiynyky*) in general, and the non-socialist independentists in particular".[42] Characteristically, his position was shared by his opponent, Mykhailo Hrushevsky:

40 Ibid., p. 151.
41 Ibid., p. 152.
42 Ibid., p. 157.

> Only after a prolonged and serious period of hesitation did the main Ukrainian parties – the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats – decide to proclaim the independence of Ukraine, and even then [it was done in such a manner that] all suspicions or hopes of the independence of Ukraine being a form of Ukrainian reaction or Ukrainian national exclusivity would be deemed irrelevant.[43]

According to Lypynskyi, this last phrase means that

> at a certain point, the Ukrainian socialist parties decided to monopolize the idea of independence exclusively for themselves, simply driving out all long-standing independentists as 'reactionaries and hetmanate', beyond the boundaries of the Ukrainian nation (which was to become a free and independent nation of social revolutionaries upon the day of the proclamation of the Fourth Universal). In doing so, they would exchange autonomy for independence.[44]

Lypynskyi underscored that non-socialist independentists, having joined state building process during Skoropadsky's Hetmanate and having started to implement these intentions, encountered determined resistance from the Ukrainian socialists and democrats. Referring to Hrushevsky, Lypynskyi reiterated that for the Ukrainian democrats of that time, the idea of restoring the Hetmanate, reviving the Cossack army and Ukrainian national aristocracy, establishing a strong Ukrainian authority, and expanding the Ukrainian state was regarded as a threat to "freedom and democracy".[45]

In a letter to Maksym Gechter, a Ukrainian publicist of Jewish origin, Lypynskyi noted,

> I have never imagined the possibility of the existence of a Ukrainian Nation without its own Ukrainian State, and herein lies the fundamental psychological difference between myself and the Ukrainian democrac".[46]

Nevertheless, throughout Lypynskyi's twenty years of political activity, he constantly heard insinuations from Ukrainian socialists that "independence was a bourgeois invention, and that only my [Lypynskyi's] 'bourgeois origin' explains my political 'independence position'". Furthermore,

43 Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, 'Rokovyny ukrajins'koji nezaležnosti', in *Tvory: u 50 tomach*, ed. by Pavlo Sochan' and others, 50 vols (L'viv: Svit, 2002–?), IV (2007), bk. 2, pp. 257–59 (p. 258).
44 Lypyns'kyj, 'Lysty do brativ-chliborobiv', p. 151.
45 Ibid.
46 Vjačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Lystuvannja', *Povne zibrannja tvoriv, archiv, studiji, Archiv*, ed. by Roman Zaluc'kyj and Chrystyna Pelens'ka (Kyjiv–Filadel'fija, 2003), I, pp. 290–91.

in emigration they reproached Lypynskyi and his like-minded supporters, saying that they had never been and could never be independentists since "independentism is exclusively a socialist trait".[47]

Advancing his thesis on the principles of nation-building, Lypynskyi stated that "nations were shaped by victories or by misfortunes shared by all members of a national collective on a psychological level". By contrast, he argued, Ukrainians "defeated themselves" because "the leaders of the nation failed to create a concept, a faith in, a legend of a single, unifying, free, and independent Ukraine for all Ukrainians", and therefore "did not fight for it. [As a result], such a Ukraine could not come into being, could not take on a real, living form".

As a consequence of this struggle, there appeared "a new national ruin with its old division into various external orientations, with a hopeless and inescapable strife between the formerly poor and the formerly wealthy within it".[48]

Lypynskyi stressed that the "honeymoon period" of Ukrainian democracy was the era of the Ukrainian Central Rada, when it (democracy) was "just by itself, the only one, without 'Bolsheviks' and without 'Hetmanites'". This period, however, quickly passed, and in emigration the representatives of this democracy "managed to squabble with each other" and once again split into left- and right-wing party factions. He then asked: Whom and what do such parties actually represent? Can we assume that

> all these democratic, more or less socialist parties are representatives of some organic economic and political class interests, or are they merely temporary unions of democratic intelligentsia formed with one purpose – to 'benefit from being in power' under any possible circumstance?

Lypynskyi reinforced his assumption while analysing the political tactics of the aforementioned parties toward the principal figure of Ukrainian democracy at the time, the Head of the Directory of the UNR, Symon Petliura:

> When he rose up against the Ukrainian government and 'overthrew the Hetman', all, as one man, were with him and around him. But as soon as he himself became the government, immediately the 'parties' – without any real reason grounded in political or national ideology – began turning against him.

47 Lypyns'kyj, 'Lysty do brativ-chliborobiv', p. 176.
48 Ibid., p. 163.

Lypynskyi then inquired why Ukrainian democrats had abandoned Petliura and, for the most part, left for abroad, "when his policy was absolutely the logical one, pursued from the beginning of the revolution by the entire Ukrainian democracy?"

He concluded that, having risen up against Hetman Skoropadsky, the all-national Ukrainian authority, Ukrainian democracy failed to create another model of national power independent of foreign forces, and instead "had now produced two Ukrainian democratic and socialist independences, one of them dependent on Piłsudski's power, and the other on Rakovskyi's".[49]

Ukrainian democratic forces used the same logic when opposing Skoropadsky, who, according to Lypynskyi, provided "the maximum" of what "the Ukrainian nation could obtain at that time". They boycotted their own state. For this, in Lypynskyi's view, Ukrainian democracy bears "responsibility before history, in no lesser degree than those who then headed the Ukrainian state".[50]

Lypynskyi further pointed out that the proclamation of the 1918 Hetmanate paved the way for the stable existence of the Ukrainian State. In 1918, Ukrainian conservatism, represented primarily by landowners of various kinds, was already implementing its programmatic principles in alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie. Cooperation between Ukrainian conservatives and local progressive elements was supposed to contribute to the "rejuvenation" of the former, as well as to the rebirth of the nation and its own state:

> The 1918 Hetmanate was, in fact, a heroic attempt to rejuvenate and strengthen local conservatism. It was meant to create a single local territorial state authority, common both to conservatives and to progressives [*postupovtsi*], and to re-establish, together with such an authority, normal relations between the followers of conservatism and progress in Ukraine.[51]

The study of the national and state traditions of the Hetmanate led Lypynskyi to the conclusion that it was precisely the hereditary "ancestral" monarchy (favoured by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi at the end of his life) that was regarded as the most successful form of state organization in Ukraine.

The choice of Skoropadsky as a likely candidate for heading the Hetmanate was one of the decisive components in developing the idea of a Ukrainian monarchy. Drawing largely on the practical experience of

49 Ibid., p. 171.
50 Ibid., p. 154.
51 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Lysty do brativ-chliborobiv (rozdil IV)', *V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj ta joho doba*, IV (2015), pp. 84–223 (p. 144).

the Hetmanate of 1918, Lypynskyi elaborated on the theory of a hereditary monarchy in Ukraine and defined the role and functions of the head of the hetman lineage. The head of supreme authority in the state had to be completely independent of external, non-Ukrainian factors. The majesty of the Ukrainian nation was to become equally dear to all Ukrainians, to be kept above party intrigues and devoid of influence by various politicians. Thus, the institution of the Hetmanate was to stand above all classes and parties, belonging to no political current. The chief guarantor of stability in the state had to be the legitimate Hetmanate: hereditary rather than elective.

Moreover, Lypynskyi regarded the Hetmanate as a monarchical point of support, one that was constant, rooted in historical tradition and historical continuity, and capable of "creating the foundation upon which and within which every one of our leaders and patriots will be able to manifest his creative reformist activity".[52]

In his view, only the Skoropadsky lineage could provide a genuine monarchical personification of the Hetmanate, being the only one "to have maintained itself to the present day at the appropriate level; to it alone did God grant sufficient courage and strength in 1918 to revive our state tradition and its own ancestral Hetman tradition".[53]

In his letter to Andriy Bilopolskyi, dated 9 December 1921, Lypynskyi explained his reasoning behind the choice of Pavlo Skoropadsky for the role of future hetman:

> Only the Father [Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky], who holds the mandate of the agrarian class granted to him on the territory of Ukraine, has the legitimate right to play the role of personification. This legitimacy is highly important for eradicating the most terrible Ukrainian malady – *otamanshchyna* – within our milieu.[54]

Concurrently, by formulating the theoretical foundations of the monarchical power in Ukraine, Lypynskyi sought to develop the relationship between the personifier of the lineage and the political organization. In his conception, the nonpartisan Hetmanate organization – the Ukrainian Union of Landowners-Statesmen (USKhD) – was supposed to unite around Skoropadsky all those who desired the revival of Ukraine:

> We want them to stand up, one and all, to back up the Hetman and his Lineage as the only genuine living Symbol of Ukraine. Only

52 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, *Poklykannja «varjahiv», čy orhanizacija chliborobiv* (N'ju-Jork, 1954), p. 29.
53 Ibid., p. 54.
54 Lypyns'kyj, 'Lystuvannja', p. 205.

> finding support within itself, only securing a stable Ukrainian centre that is being passed on from father to son, will provide a backbone to the Ukrainian idea – the nucleus of the Ukrainian nation.[55]

As for Eastern Galicia, Lypynskyi observed that the government of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic – the dictatorial government of Yevhen Petrushevych – differed fundamentally "from all our illegal and usurping *otaman*-led administrative units since it arose on a completely different soil than ours – the Galician soil, which possessed stronger conservative elements and therefore more easily withstood even democratic disorganization".[56] Nevertheless, in Lypynskyi's view, even for Galicia, a government representing the democratic and republican method of state-building would, in the end, prove harmful and destructive.

With his concept of personifying the hetman lineage as a symbol of the purity of the monarchical movement, Lypynskyi sought to ensure the unity of the future state. Elaborating on his position, as well as that of his like-minded colleagues, he wrote:

> For us, the decisive factor for introducing personification in emigration was the moment of legitimacy. We hoped to eliminate the danger of a struggle among claimants by personifying the Hetmanate in advance, on the condition that the representative of this lineage would symbolize an idea, like all of us. At the same, he won't be a former hetman exploiting this idea for self-restoration.[57]

In creating the concept of the Hetmanate movement, Lypynskyi laid down the principle of balancing state institutions. In his view, the Hetmanate was to be limited by a political body, the Council of Jurors, and by an executive body, the Hetmanate Administration. As a result, the institution of Hetmanate was to perform consolidating and representative functions within Ukrainian society.

Lypynskyi believed that the Hetman was a rather symbolic figure in the state, merely representing the Hetmanate movement rather than being its actual political leader. At the same time, he hoped that a strong Hetmanate organization of an "order-like type", which he envisioned the USKhD to be, would be able to control the Hetman's actions and guide his steps – under his own ideological and political leadership – thereby strengthening his outward moral and political authority.

55 Lypyns'kyj, 'Lysty do brativ-chliborobiv', p. 118.
56 Lypyns'kyj, *Poklykannja «varjahiv», čy orhanizacija chliborobiv*, p. 29.
57 V'jačeslav Lypyns'kyj, 'Vstupne slovo', in *Zbirnyk Chliborobs'koji Ukrajiny* (Praha, 1931), I, pp. 3–13 (p. 6).

By the mid-1920s, Skoropadsky had become a symbol of the Ukrainian monarchical idea. The majority of Ukrainian monarchists perceived him as the sole possible candidate for the hetman of a future hereditary Ukrainian labour monarchy. Thus, Lypynskyi succeeded in resolving the most important issue that emerged for the founders of the USKhD, which concerned both the ideological and political foundations and the organization of the Ukrainian monarchical movement: the question of dynasty.

In addressing this matter, Lypynskyi was convinced that electing a new hetman in emigration as the head of the Ukrainian monarchical state was not expedient since such a state still had to be established. In the meantime, until a return to Ukraine became possible, it was necessary to personify the idea of the Ukrainian labour monarchy in a figure who would symbolize the purity of that same idea and of the unity of the monarchical organization.

As an ideologist of Ukrainian conservatism, Viacheslav Lypynskyi inaugurated a new trend in Ukrainian socio-political thought after the defeat of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921. His theoretical conception of the future development of the Ukrainian state gained wide resonance during the interwar period among Ukrainian émigré circles in Western Europe, Canada, the United States, and later in Latin America and the Western Ukrainian lands.

Lypynskyi's ideology of Ukrainian conservatism was inextricably linked to the experience of Skoropadsky's Hetmanate in 1918 and was based on the following principles:

Social pluralism: Ukraine must develop a differentiated class structure encompassing all strata necessary for the existence of a mature nation and an independent state.

Revival of the national aristocracy: this was supposed to link the "old" and the "new" Ukraine, introducing an element of stability into national life.

Political pluralism: the necessity of opposition capable of counterbalancing the Hetman's authority and preventing inertia in the state apparatus.

Territorial patriotism: all inhabitants of Ukraine are its citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin, confession, social status, or national-cultural consciousness.

Religious pluralism: equality of all confessions and the impossibility of identifying nationality with any particular denomination.

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Serhy Yekelchyk

# NESTOR MAKHNO AS A MIRROR OF THE "RUSSIAN REVOLUTION" IN UKRAINE

For most people educated in the Soviet Union, Lenin's article 'Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution' (1908) was a familiar reference. It was quoted in school textbooks and included in full in university curricula in the humanities and social sciences. In this brief essay, written to mark Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, Lenin argued that the writer's philosophical teachings reflected the political immaturity of the Russian peasantry before and during the Revolution of 1905 – the "Russian Revolution" of the title, which Tolstoy had rejected: "In our revolution a minor part of the peasantry really did fight, did organize to some extent for this purpose; and a very small part indeed rose up in arms to exterminate its enemies, to destroy the tsar's servants and protectors of the landlords. Most of the peasantry wept and prayed, moralised and dreamed, wrote petitions and sent 'pleaders' – quite in the vein of Leo Tolstoy!"[1]

From a present-day perspective, Lenin's analysis appears deeply flawed. His crude sociological method of correlating cultural phenomena with underlying social processes is not surprising for a Russian Marxist of that period. More puzzling is Lenin's belittlement of the peasantry's active and often violent participation in the Revolution of 1905, and his choice of a public figure who was neither a peasant nor someone who was sympathetic to the revolution as its symbolic representative. The only explanation is that Lenin deliberately constrains the peasantry's political options to a choice between Tolstoy and the Bolsheviks. Absent from his account is the success of other groups that were able to engage the peasantry during the 1905 Revolution – most notably the Socialist Revolutionaries and the All-Russian Peasant Union, both conspicuously missing from his text.

A historian of Ukraine would find Lenin's representation of the peasantry particularly distorted. The year 1905 marked the emergence of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries as a group distinct from the Russian party, with local organizations bringing together peasant activists and professionals working in the countryside. It also saw the founding of Prosvita educational societies and the growing popular demand for Ukrainian-language schools. Alongside spontaneous outbreaks of violence,

1 Vladimir Lenin, 'Lev Tolstoj, kak zerkalo Russkoj revoljucii', *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, 55 vols (Moskva: Politizdat, 1958–66), XVII, pp. 206–13 (p. 211). English translation adapted with minor changes from Vladimir Lenin, 'Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution', *Marxists.org*, n.d. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/sep/11.htm> [accessed 1 November 2025].

there were agricultural strikes organized by socialist activists. Admittedly, not all peasants or members of the radical intelligentsia working in rural areas prioritized the Ukrainian national cause or even identified as Ukrainians. Yet Lenin was certainly aware of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Union (Spilka) and its success in working with the peasantry. A splinter group of the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party that joined the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party as a semi-autonomous entity in 1905, Spilka won six seats in the 1907 elections to the Russian parliament.[2]

These were the stories Lenin sought to erase in his brief article on Tolstoy. Yet a more general problem underlies his analysis: the Russian Bolshevik viewed the peasants as passive recipients of political messages, failed to recognize the specific forms of struggle that they were developing, and ignored the leaders emerging from among them. Lenin's rejection of the peasantry's political agency would confront him during the next revolution, that of 1917–1920. Peasant rebels in Ukraine, in particular, taught him some very painful lessons in 1919–1920, when the Bolsheviks finally managed to establish control over most of the Ukrainian lands of the former Romanov Empire. In the short term, these lessons produced concessions to the peasantry's economic power and to Ukrainian culture; in the long term, however, they contributed to Stalin's settling of accounts with Ukraine and its peasantry during the genocidal Holodomor of 1932–1933. Yet the agency of the Ukrainian peasantry is still all too frequently overlooked in Western accounts of the "Russian Revolution".

With the methodological shift toward social and cultural history, Western historians of "Russia" in 1917–1920 continued to marginalize the nationalities problem even as they paid more attention to the Bolsheviks' struggle against the peasantry. The Ukrainian peasant warlord Nestor Makhno enjoyed great popularity in these narratives, but he typically appeared as part of the all-Russian story. A committed anarchist and opponent of any state institutions, he served as a convenient protagonist in a narrative in which Ukrainian state building was dismissed as lacking popular support. Moreover, the story of Makhno's ultimately untenable resistance to the Bolsheviks implicitly removed the need to discuss the Ukrainian national movement and Bolshevik neo-imperialism. Makhno stood for Ukraine, and the Ukraine he purportedly represented appeared politically inseparable from Russia and incapable of offering a meaningful political alternative to the Bolsheviks' extreme centralism.

2 See Oleksandr Fed'kov, *Ukrajins'ka social-demokratyčna spilka na počatku XX st.: u pošukach idejno-polityčnoji identyčnosti* (Kam'janec'-Podil's'kyj: Kam'janec'-Podil's'kyj nacional'nyj universytet imeni Ivana Ohijenka, 2017).

There were few attempts to recover the Ukrainian dimension of the Makhnovist movement by drawing on such sources as the Ukrainian-language diary of Makhno's spouse, Halyna Kuzmenko. In a pioneering article, Frank Sysyn examined the Ukrainian elements of Makhno's own identity and his interactions with the Ukrainian governments of the time.[3] Sean Patterson focused on reconstructing the Makhnovists' understanding of social liberation as inclusive of Ukraine's national rights.[4] After 1991, Ukrainian historians began to claim Makhno for Ukrainian history as the leader of a peasant movement that caused problems for the Russians, both White and Red. They examined in detail Makhno's difficult relations with the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR).[5]

Since Makhno often functions in Russian-history surveys as an implicit symbol of the revolution in Ukraine, it is worth examining his suitability for this role, using as a foil his nemesis and rival for the title of the nation's most famous warlord, Nykyfor Hryhoriiv, whom Makhno (or his aide) killed on 27 July 1919.

## MAKHNO AND UKRAINE

Where can we position Makhno on the spectrum of identities in revolutionary Ukraine? His ethnic identity is less relevant to this question than his national or political one, but it is still worth considering. Makhno's family name and the first names of his known relatives indicate Ukrainian ethnicity; it is striking that he himself avoided addressing this question in his extensive autobiographical writings. He does acknowledge, in passing, that he could not speak Ukrainian, which he nevertheless refers to as his native language. While traveling by rail in Ukraine in 1918 during the rule of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, railway officials refused to answer his questions in Russian: "And I, not knowing my own native [*ne vladeia svoim rodnym]* Ukrainian language, was compelled to mangle it so badly in my interactions with those around me that I felt ashamed".[6]

How was he not able to speak Ukrainian? Makhno's birthplace, Huliaipole, was an unusual village. With a population of 7,000 in 1906,

3 Frank Sysyn, 'Nestor Makhno and the Ukrainian Revolution', in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. by Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977), pp. 271–304; Frank Sysyn, 'U pošukach nacional'noji identyčnosti Nestora Machna', *Ukrajina Moderna*, 17 May 2025 <https://uamoderna.com/history/u-poshukah-naczionalnoyi-identychnosti-nestora-mahna/> [accessed 1 November 2025].

4 Sean Patterson, *Makhno and Memory: Anarchist and Mennonite Narratives of Ukraine's Civil War, 1917–1921* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020); Sean Patterson, 'Power, Powerlessness, and Identity: Themes of Ukrainian Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Makhnovshchyna, 1917–1921', paper presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Slavists, Edmonton, 8 May 2025.

5 See Vladyslav Verstjuk, *Machnovščyna: seljans'kyj povstans'kyj ruch na Ukrajini (1918–1921)* (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 1991); Valerij Volkovyns'kyj, *Nestor Machno: lehenda i real'nist'* (Kyjiv: Perlit prodakshn, 1994).

6 Nestor Machno, 'Pod udarami kontrrevoljucii', in *Spovid' anarchista* (Kyjiv: Knyha rodu, 2008), pp. 237–410 (p. 399).

it boasted two factories producing agricultural equipment (one of which is still in operation today) and several pottery-making establishments, among some thirty businesses classified as "trade or industrial". Huliaipole also hosted no fewer than three annual fairs.[7] It was essentially a small industrial and trading town with its own working class composed of locals as well as workers recruited from elsewhere in the Russian Empire.

Huliaipole stood on what had once been the empire's southern steppe frontier. These prime agricultural lands were opened for colonization after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768–1774, which saw the Russian conquest of the Crimea. Catherine II and her successors encouraged the resettlement of peasants from other Ukrainian and Russian regions, as well as foreign colonists. The Mennonites was one such (prominent) group in and around Huliaipole, prospering there during the nineteenth century and leading Makhno to see them as "exploiters" of the local peasantry. In such a multiethnic region, minorities tended to embrace the empire's dominant culture–Russian. The language of the cities and factories was also Russian, with newcomers from the Ukrainian countryside assimilating in order to fit in.[8]

It is thus not surprising that Makhno grew up as a Ukrainian of Russian culture. More important for our purposes, however, is how he understood the choice of his own identity. In his memoirs, he follows his admission of not speaking Ukrainian with a sharp critique, equating the use of Ukrainian with betraying the toilers:

> I asked myself: On whose behalf was such mangling of the language demanded of me, when I did not know it? I understood that this demand did not come from the Ukrainian working people. It came from those fictitious "Ukrainians" born under the heavy boot of the German-Austro-Hungarian Junkers, trying to imitate a fashionable tone. I was convinced that such Ukrainians needed only the language, not the fullness of Ukraine's freedom and that of its working people. Outwardly they posed as friends of Ukraine's independence, but inwardly they clung – with their Hetman Skoropadsky – to Wilhelm of Germany and Charles of Austria-Hungary and their anti-revolutionary policies. These "Ukrainians" did not understand one simple truth: Ukraine's freedom and independence are possible only with the freedom and independence of its working people, without whom Ukraine is nothing.[9]

7 'Guljaj-pole', in *Ènciklopedičeskij slovar' Brokgauza i Efrona*, ed. by Ivan Andreevskij and others, 86 vols (Sankt-Peterburg, 1890–1907), Ia (1905), p. 641.
8 Andrii Portnov, *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2022).
9 Machno, 'Pod udarami kontrrevoljucii', p. 399.

Here and elsewhere in his writings, Makhno implicitly acknowledges Ukraine's existence. But even though he does not refer to the historical regions of "Little Russia" and "New Russia", as in tsarist discourse, he remains uneasy with the term "Ukrainians". For instance, he thus describes the spring 1918 arrival of German and UNR troops in Huliaipole: "[T]he Germans and the Ukrainians entered Huliaipole".[10] He often uses the term "Ukrainian chauvinists" for the Central Rada and the UNR government, but also refers to them more broadly as the "government of the Ukrainians".[11]

Makhno claims that his position reflected the attitude of the peasantry, but his choice of language is revealing. He notes that local peasants beat up Ukrainian emissaries "as enemies of the fraternal unity (*bratskogo edineniia*) of the Ukrainian and Russian people."[12] After the 1905 Revolution, the term "fraternal unity" was widely used by Russian liberals and socialists, including Lenin, but it essentially restated the tsarist idea that Russians and Little Russians were two "tribes" of the greater Russian people. Makhno also seems to believe that the strong showing of all-Russian Bolsheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in southern Left-Bank Ukraine during the fall 1917 elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly confirmed that the Ukrainian peasantry there "had not yet been corrupted by the politics of the [Ukrainian] chauvinists".[13] This suggests that, in his view, the default political identity of workers and peasants in his region was Russian.

It is now clear that Makhno accepted "Ukraine" as his homeland and as a region of Russia, but not as a separate political entity. He also associated the term "Ukrainians" with a modern Ukrainian identity implying separation from Russia – which he regarded as a mortal threat to his all-Russian political project. He writes that the toilers of Huliaipole fought "against the Ukrainian chauvinist movement, which corrupted the great beginnings of the Russian Revolution in Ukraine".[14] At the same time, Makhno reports that during his personal meeting with Lenin in 1918, he twice objected to the Bolshevik habit of referring to Ukraine as "Southern Russia" or "the South".[15] In the immediate context of their conversation, it appears that he did so to emphasize the important role of anarchists in Ukraine, a role that the Bolshevik leaders neither recognized nor understood, just as they failed to see that Ukraine was more than simply the "Russian South". If so, this suggests that Makhno viewed the Ukrainian peasantry as embodying a somewhat distinct revolutionary tradition and ideology, even within the all-Russian political space.

10 Nestor Machno, 'Vospominanija: iz detskich let i junosti', in *Spovid' anarchista*, pp. 10–23 (p. 18).
11 Nestor Machno, 'Russkaja revoljucija na Ukraine', in *Spovid' anarchista*, pp. 25–235 (p. 70).
12 Ibid., p. 132.
13 Ibid., p. 122.
14 Ibid., p. 123.
15 Machno, 'Pod udarami kontrrevoljucii', pp. 375, 378.

Makhno presents the toilers' response to Ukrainian statehood in radical terms, describing their "hatred toward the very idea of a Ukrainian liberation movement".[16] At a rally that he organized in Huliaipole in July 1917, participants wished "death and damnation" upon the Central Rada and its General Secretariat (cabinet of ministers) "as the bitterest enemies of our freedom". After the Bolshevik Revolution, the local congress of Soviets passed a resolution calling for "death to the Central Rada".[17]

Makhno explains this stance as reflecting the perception that, of the two belligerents in Ukraine, the UNR and the Bolsheviks, the UNR posed the greater threat, for it allegedly aimed "to suppress any elements of a social revolution". He mocks the Ukrainian authorities by quoting them in Ukrainian, using distinctly parochial phrasing, claiming that They sought to expel the *katsaps* (a pejorative term for Russians) "from the native land of dear mother Ukraine" *(iz ridnoi zemli nenky Ukrainy).*[18]

Makhno also proclaims his "toilers" to be fighting "against any form of separatist Ukrainianness" (*so vsiakoi formoi obosoblennogo ukrainstva*), regardless of its political guise.[19] He expresses similar outrage at demands that both the socialist leaders of the Central Rada and the conservative officials of Hetman Skoropadsky use Ukrainian, referring to them collectively as "all this counterrevolutionary scum" (*svoloch).*[20]

Such a radical rejection of Ukraine's potential as an independent political entity casts Makhno as a revolutionary "Little Russian," a left-wing counterpart to conservative regional patriots who saw themselves as part of the greater Russian nation. His negative use of the term "Ukrainians" supports this reading. It is likely that he would have called the Ukrainian people Little Russians, if the term had not been discredited by its association with tsarist colonialism and consequently rejected by most left-of--center parties around 1905, and more decisively in 1917.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PEASANTRY

Was Makhno's stance representative of the Ukrainian peasantry during the revolution? He himself preferred to speak on behalf of Left-Bank Ukraine and, more narrowly, of the Zaporizhia and Azov Sea regions.[21] The unusual but not unique environment of Huliaipole, which was large enough to have workers and a Russian-speaking revolutionary intelligentsia

16 Machno, 'Russkaja revoljucija na Ukraine', p. 123.
17 Machno, 'Russkaja revoljucija na Ukraine', pp. 70, 122–23, 128.
18 Ibid., p. 134.
19 Ibid., p. 137.
20 Machno, 'Pod udarami kontrrevoljucii', p. 324.
21 Machno, 'Russkaja revoljucija na Ukraine', pp. 122–23.

but small enough to maintain close ties to the countryside, shaped Makhno's political views in a way that could be reproduced in some but not all parts of Ukraine. The presence of an anarchist group was not a given in any urban area, let alone a small town like Huliaipole, and Makhno's ideological formation as an anarchist during his third prison sentence in Moscow between 1911 and 1917 further distinguished him from other peasant warlords. His use of the term "Ukraine" and his insistence on remaining connected to the "fraternal" Russian people stem from this background, as does his aversion to antisemitism.

Still, the Makhnovist movement, in its overall trajectory, reflected the interests of the Ukrainian peasantry. When the peasants experienced the first wave of Bolshevik food requisitioning in the spring of 1919 and began rebelling *en masse*, Makhno embraced the idea of a separate Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (*Makhnovtsi*), which was established only after he broke with the Bolsheviks in July 1919.

It is instructive to compare his actions to those of his fellow warlord, Nykyfor Hryhoriiv, who cultivated political contacts with the left wing of the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries and, during the winter of 1918–1919, was affiliated with the UNR Army before switching to the Bolsheviks in February. In May 1919, he launched the largest anti-Bolshevik rebellion in Ukraine by issuing a Universal to the Ukrainian people, a form of political pronouncement popularized by the Central Rada, a tradition that which it borrowed from the Cossack hetmans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hryhoriiv called on the Ukrainian people to take power into their own hands, and blamed their exploitation on Jewish and Russian newcomers.[22] This effort to ethnicize politics helped trigger a murderous wave of Jewish pogroms.

Just before the Hryhoriiv rebellion broke out, the Red commander in Ukraine, Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, visited his headquarters in the village of Verbliuzhka. It was located in the same county as Huliaipole but was apparently very different from Makhno's hometown – or at least according to the version presented in Makhno's narratives, shaped by him and his intellectual-anarchist advisers, who downplayed the language issue and, like the Bolsheviks, promoted agrarian communes. Antonov-Ovseenko reported that both the Ukrainian language and Bolshevik agrarian policies were sensitive issues for Hryhoriiv's troops: "Comrade Shumsky spoke in Ukrainian and at first enjoyed obvious success. But as soon as he moved on to the land policy of the Soviet government and uttered the word 'commune,' a rumble rose from the back rows, swept over the whole crowd,

22 On Hryhoriiv's rebellion against the Bolshevik rule, see Volodymyr Horak, *Hryhor'jevs'kyj povstans'kyj ruch u konteksti bromadjans'koji vijny na Pivdni Ukrajiny u 1918–1919 rokach* (Kyjiv: Stylos, 2013).

and grew into a furious roar. Faces twisted with malice, fists clenched".[23] The visitors barely avoided being lynched.

Although Hryhoriiv and Makhno held conflicting political and national views, their shared reliance on peasant sentiment brought their forces together in the summer of 1919 within the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine. At the time, the army presented itself as unaffiliated, reflecting the peasantry's growing disillusionment with both the Reds and the Whites. As the White Army pushed back the Red Army in the summer and fall of 1919 and seized control of parts of Ukraine, this balance began to shift – albeit gradually – giving Makhno time to plot his next moves. It was then that he organized Hryhoriiv's assassination and absorbed his units. He also opened negotiations with the UNR Army, which still controlled parts of Right-Bank Ukraine, and concluded an agreement for an alliance against the White Army, which was understood at the time as a defensive measure.

The Whites' attempt to restore the old socioeconomic order quickly antagonized the peasants, who feared that the land they had seized in 1917 would be returned to the landlords, who were returning. Sensing a new opportunity, Makhno left his sick and wounded with the UNR forces and on 27 September 1919 launched a daring raid on the rear of the White Army. This action helped the Bolshevik forces halt the White advance on Moscow and ultimately contributed to the Reds' victory. Makhno would go on to establish a "free peasant republic" in the Katerynoslav region, conclude another alliance with the Bolsheviks in 1920, and finally escape abroad in 1921, after the Reds found a way to isolate his forces from the peasantry.

One could argue that Makhno understood the importance of the national question in Ukraine only retrospectively, during his difficult life as a political exile in Western Europe. The Soviet policy of Ukrainization during the 1920s seemed to challenge Makhno's belief in a revolution in Ukraine conducted in Russian. In the introduction to the first volume of his memoirs, written in 1926, he even expressed regret that his work was not being published in Ukraine and in the Ukrainian language.[24]

23 Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o Graždanskoj vojne*, 4 vols (Moskva i Leningrad: Vyssij voennyj redakcionnyj sovet i Gosvoenizdat, 1924–33), IV (1933), p. 82. Oleksandr Shumsky (1890–1946): a Ukrainian revolutionary who had been a member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Spilka, the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries, and that party's left-wing splinter group, the Borotbists, before joining the Bolsheviks along with most other Borotbists in March 1920. In May 1920, he served on the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine and held the position of People's Commissar of Education.

24 Machno, 'Russkaja revoljucija na Ukraine', p. 28.

## MAKHNO AS A WARLORD

If not Makhno's personal identity and his political project, can we at least say that the form and tactics of his insurgency reflected the essential characteristics of the revolution in Ukraine? If we view Makhno as the extreme expression of *otamanshchyna* – a peasant insurgency led by charismatic warlords adopting the old Cossack title of *otaman* (chieftain) and often addressed in the paternalistic spirit of peasant society as batko (father) – then the answer is yes. The enduring strength of the Cossack tradition in Ukraine was closely tied to the notion of personal freedom (rather than subjugation as a peasant serf) and the idea of serving as a protector of the peasant community. This tradition inspired the largely spontaneous, grassroots formation of self-defense militias known as the Free Cossacks, which emerged in the spring of 1917 and grew into a mass movement by that fall. Yet it was *otamanshchyna* that truly became the dominant form of military mobilization in Ukraine in late 1918, when the peasantry rose up *en masse* against the agrarian policies of Hetman Skoropadsky and the occupying German and Austro-Hungarian forces, which, following their defeat in the First World War were preparing to withdraw from Ukraine.

The UNR authorities embraced *otamanshchyna* as a military model of necessity, even though in theory they would have preferred a regular army of volunteer and conscripted soldiers. They were not alone in doing this: The Bolsheviks, too, relied heavily on Ukrainian *otamans* in their military operations in Ukraine in 1919–1920. Antonov-Ovseenko, in particular, depended on Makhno and Hryhoriiv during his tenure as commander of the Red Army's Ukrainian "Front" (in Russian military terminology, a group of armies covering the same direction) in the spring of 1919. The Hryhoriiv rebellion in May prompted the People's Commissar of War, Leon Trotsky, to dismiss Antonov-Ovseenko in June and declare Makhno an outlaw. Yet Trotsky did not establish a regular army immediately: In 1920 he needed Makhno's help again to fight the Whites, and one could argue that the much-mythologized Red First Cavalry Army operated very much like a warlord's paramilitary force.

The UNR Army evolved in a similar way over the course of 1919. Like the Red Army, it sought to transform warlord detachments into regular units, and – just as in the Red Army under Antonov-Ovseenko – this process initially amounted to little more than assigning warlord bands the names and numbers of regular regiments and brigades. In both cases, the political and military leadership soon discovered that they could not control the warlords. Famously, when Antonov-Ovseenko ordered Hryhoriiv to march from Odesa to Romania to support the communist revolution in

Hungary, the *otaman* instead sent his troops by rail to their home base in Oleksandrivsk County for rest and recuperation.[25]

Several *otamans* abandoned the UNR government in 1919 and joined the Bolsheviks – often not for long – and one of them, Illia Struk, defected to the Whites. The creation of the State Inspectorate, headed by Colonel Volodymyr Kedrovsky in May 1919, signaled the UNR leadership's desire to transform its forces into a disciplined regular army, but time was not on their side. Increasingly confined to a small territory in Right-Bank Ukraine (west of the Dnipro River), while the titanic struggle between the Reds and the Whites unfolded across central, eastern, and southern Ukraine, the UNR could neither implement effective conscription nor secure the resources needed to raise a strong regular army.

Present-day Ukrainian historians have endeavored to classify the *otamans* into those whose actions were destructive to the Ukrainian state and those who made a constructive contribution to nation building. However, a more intriguing suggestion that has been made is that the *otamans* and their bands shared a distinct political culture centered on their often-outsized role in revolutionary processes.[26] Makhno always saw himself as a political figure first and foremost, while Hryhoriiv was known for sending long, bombastic telegrams in all directions extolling the revolutionary feats of his army. Indeed, Joshua Sanborn in his article on Russian warlords of the revolutionary period argues that having a political agenda was their most important shared characteristic.[27]

One other trait shared by most otamans–army service during the Great War – makes Makhno an exception and perhaps helps explain his unique characteristics as a warlord. Unlike most revolutionary leaders, he spent most of the time between 1906 and the spring of 1917 under arrest or in prison, and thus missed the formative experience of the First World War, including the ethnicization of politics and mass violence against enemy civilians. Both of these trends, incidentally, targeted the Jews, who were victimized by the otamans in 1918–1920. There is some evidence, however, that the effectiveness of Makhno's troops owed something to the war experience of his soldiers and officers. Antonov-Ovseenko wrote: "The units were composed entirely of former soldiers; the cadre was excellent – everyone who returned from the war to Huliaipole had held at least the rank of non-commissioned officer".[28] Hryhoriiv fits this model more

25 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o Graždanskoj vojne*, IV, pp. 36–37, 78.
26 Jurij Mytrofanenko, *Ukrajins'ka otamanščyna 1918–1919 rokiv*, 3rd edn (Kropyvnyc'kyj: Imeks, 2016), p. 101; Volodymyr Lobodajev, 'Vil'ne kozactvo: vid samooborony do povstannja (vesna 1917 – lito 1918 pp.)', in *Vijna z deržavoju čy za deržavu? Seljans'kyj povstans'kyj ruch v Ukrajini 1917–1921 rokiv*, ed. by Volodymyr Lobodajev and others (Kharkiv: KSD, 2017), pp. 20–58 (p. 50).
27 Joshua Sanborn, 'The Genesis of Russian Warlordism: Violence and Governance during the First World War and the Civil War', *Contemporary European History*, 19.3 (August 2010), 195–213.
28 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o Graždanskoj vojne*, IV, p. 117.

closely, having served as a junior officer during the war, but without creating a large social gap between himself and his peasant soldiers.

Yet viewing Makhno and Hryhoriiv as representatives of the new, political warlordism obscures the fact that, in their interactions with their troops, these batky ("fathers") retained familiar patriarchal traits of peasant chieftains from earlier times. Their peasant armies were also able to operate efficiently in their native regions, as the Red Army's disastrous 1919 attempt to deploy the Makhno "brigade" against the Whites in the Donbas demonstrated. Western historians have recently proposed examining the experiences of peasant soldiers and paramilitaries across Eastern and Central Europe during the twentieth century through the prism of "peasant wars".[29]

## LENIN AND TROTSKY WEIGH IN

Although Lenin did not write a separate article on Makhno or Hryhoriiv as revolutionary symbols, he recognized otamanshchyna as reflecting Ukrainian specificities. In July 1919, he offered the following analysis in one of his speeches:

> Given the extremely low level of proletarian consciousness in Ukraine, the weakness and lack of organization, the Petliurist disorganization, and the pressure of German imperialism, hostility and partisan warfare arose there spontaneously on this basis. In every detachment, peasants took up arms and chose their own otaman or batko in order to establish local authority. They paid no attention at all to the central government, and each batko believed himself to be the otaman of that location, imagining that he alone could decide all Ukrainian matters without regard for anything undertaken in the center.[30]

At that point, Lenin believed that the restoration of the old social system in areas controlled by the Whites would "cure [the Ukrainian peasants] of the defects of guerrilla tactics and chaos".[31] By this he meant that they would begin joining the Red Army in large numbers, yet this did not happen. By December 1919, in his "Letter to the Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine apropos of the Victories over Denikin", Lenin offered greater concessions,

29 Jakub Beneš, *The Last Peasant War: Violence and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2025); Colleen M. Moore, *The Peasants' War: Russia's Home Front in the First World War and the End of the Autocracy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2025).

30 Vladimir Lenin, 'O sovremennom položenii i bližajših zadačach sovetskoj vlasti. Doklad na soedinennom zasedanii VCIK, Moskovskogo Soveta rabočich i krasnoarmejskich deputatov, Vserossijskogo soveta professional'nych sojuzov i predstavitelej fabrično-zavodskich komitetov Moskvy 4 ijulja 1919 g.', in *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij, XXXIX*, pp. 30–43 (p. 35).

31 Ibid., p. 36.

including on the issues of Ukraine's statehood and the Ukrainian language. It is unclear whether he intended them to be permanent.

It was Trotsky, rather than Lenin, who used Makhno and Petliura as symbols of the revolution in Ukraine in his 1920 article (also published separately as a booklet) entitled *What Is the Meaning of Makhno's Coming over to the Side of the Soviet Power*? Like Lenin, he attributed resistance in Ukraine to its alleged backwardness:

> Ukraine has lagged behind Great Russia in political development. The revolution in Ukraine was interrupted by the German invasion. The subsequent succession of regimes introduced frightful political confusion in both town and country, and held up the central process of the Soviet revolution, namely, the unification of the working people against the exploiters, the poor against the rich, the poor peasants against the kulaks.[32]

In other words, Trotsky acknowledged that the Ukrainian village remained united–in his terminology, led by the kulaks (he also provides the Ukrainian equivalent, *kurkul*). This allowed both Petliura and Makhno, whose political projects allegedly reflected the interests of wealthier peasants exploiting the labor of others, to rely on the peasantry in general: "Consequently both the Petliura movement and the Makhno movement relied directly upon the kulak upper stratum in the rural areas. Petliura did this consciously – Makhno, without thinking".[33]

To Trotsky, Makhno's willingness to ally with the Red Army in 1920 to clear the Crimea of the Whites indicated the beginning of class differentiation and class struggle in the Ukrainian countryside. The reality was more prosaic: With the impasse in the Soviet-Polish War confirmed by a ceasefire, the Bolsheviks had a large army at their disposal, which could be used in the state's war against the Ukrainian peasantry.

* * *

On 28 August 1921, some eighty remaining Makhnovists, exhausted after months of being pursued by the Bolsheviks, crossed the border into Romania. Having helped the Reds storm the Crimea and eliminate the White Army in November 1920, the Bolsheviks no longer had any use for the most famous warlord of the Ukrainian steppes. They hunted the Makhnovists

32 Lev Trockij, 'Čto označaet perechod Machno na storonu Sovetskoj vlasti?', *Kak vooružalas' revoljucija*, 3 vols (Moskva: Vysšij voennyj redakcionnyj sovet, 1923–25), II, bk. 2, pp. 210–12 (p. 210). The English translation is based on Leon Trotsky, 'What Is the Meaning of Makhno's Coming over to the Side of the Soviet Power?' *Marxists.org*, n.d. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1920/military/ch69.htm> [accessed 1 November 2025].

33 Trockij, 'Čto označaet perechod Machno', p. 211; Trotsky, 'What Is the Meaning'.

until the army of many thousands had been reduced to a band of a few dozen, who then escaped across the border, carrying the wounded Makhno. UNR representatives in Poland soon approached him about a potential alliance against the Bolsheviks, but he refused to have any dealings with them.

In the last days of October 1921, three groups of UNR soldiers crossed the border from Poland, hoping to connect with smaller bands of peasant rebels and launch a mass revolt against Bolshevik rule. This so-called Second Winter March of the UNR Army was led by Yurii Tiutiunnyk, a former chief of staff of Hryhoriiv's forces. Although he emerged from the *otamanshchyna* milieu, Tiutiunnyk now held the official army rank of Major General in the UNR Army.[34] Yet the moment for a peasant revolution had passed; a harsh winter set in and, instead of being welcomed by peasant rebels, Tiutiunnyk's forces were met by Soviet troops lying in ambush.

Neither Makhno nor Tiutiunnyk were able to harness the protest potential of the Ukrainian peasantry on the scale seen in 1918–1919. Yet smaller bands, led by local otamans, continued operating until 1923–1924, carrying the memory and banners of the UNR. The final stage of the Bolshevik war on the Ukrainian peasantry – the Holodomor-genocide of 1932–1933 – ensured that no figure like Makhno, Petliura, or Hryhoriiv would ever again be able to raise a peasant army in Ukraine.

Makhno and Hryhoriiv stand as complementary symbols of how the revolution in the Ukrainian lands of the former Russian Empire was both part of the larger Russian Civil War and an independent political dynamic – the Ukrainian Revolution – wherein all the belligerents had to make concessions to the peasantry or face defeat. They also link the Ukrainian and broader European tradition of peasant wars with the modern political and nationalist world inaugurated by the First World War. The Makhnovist *tachanka* – a modern machine gun mounted on a traditional horse-drawn carriage – best represents this symbiosis of the national and political, as well as the new and old.

34 Jaroslav Tynčenko, *Lycari Zymovych pochodiv. 1919–1922 rr.* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2017), p. 136.

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# JERZY MATUSIŃSKI IN SOVIET CUSTODY: INSIGHTS FROM NKVD INTERROGATION RECORDS


## ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the study of previously unknown documents that shed light on the fate of Jerzy Matusiński, the former Consul of the Republic of Poland in Kyiv. We introduce into scholarly circulation documents discovered in the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine. Analysis of these sources is instrumental for clarifying the particulars of the operation to detain and arrest employees of the Polish Consulate in Kyiv that was carried out by Soviet state security organs in September 1939. The article also presents internal NKVD correspondence, as well as transcripts of Jerzy Matusiński's interrogations by investigators of the USSR NKVD Directorate of State Security.

## INTRODUCTION

The events of August–September 1939 marked a fateful turning point in Europe's history. The "secret protocols" signed on 23 August 1939 as an addition to the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact gave Hitler a free hand to launch war against Poland. On 1 September 1939, German troops crossed Poland's western border. On 17 September, the Red Army invaded from the east. The Soviet Union officially claimed that its forces were entering "to protect the population of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus". Under this pretext the USSR not only occupied vast Polish territories but immediately began a large-scale operation to dismantle Polish statehood. The NKVD's primary targets were those members of Polish state and society whom the Soviet leadership regarded as part of the country's elite: civil servants, army and police officers, the intelligentsia, and representatives of big business. Polish diplomats and consular officials still at their posts in Polish missions on Soviet territory also came under the scrutiny of the Soviet security services.

One of the most well-known yet enigmatic figures of that time is Jerzy Matusiński, the former Vice-Consul of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv, who was abducted by the NKVD and – as was long believed – disappeared without a trace in Soviet prisons in October 1939. While records exist that prove his abduction by the NKVD, the circumstances have never been known in detail. The absence of documentation gave rise to the view that Matusiński was executed shortly after his arrest – a view repeatedly expressed in a number of publications. The Polish-language Wikipedia entry on Matusiński lists his date of death simply as "after 8 October".[1]

The purpose of this article is to bring into scholarly circulation newly discovered archival documents that shed light on Matusiński's fate. These materials conclusively demonstrate that Jerzy Matusiński was alive at least until 10 December 1939, which is the date of his last known interrogation by NKVD investigators. The documents make it possible to move some of the speculations about the fate of the former Polish Vice-Consul out of the realm of conjecture and into the realm of documented facts.

By the time the Soviet Union invaded Poland on 17 September 1939, the Polish diplomatic presence in the USSR consisted of the embassy in Moscow, headed by Ambassador Wacław Grzybowski,[2] and the general consulates in Leningrad, Minsk, and Kyiv. The Polish consulate in Kyiv had opened in 1926 and was housed in a one-story mansion at 1 Karl

1 'Jerzy Matusiński', *Wikipedia*, n.d. <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerzy_Matusi%C5%84ski> [accessed 21 September 2025].
2 Wacław Grzybowski (1887–1959): Polish politician and diplomat, ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1936–1939.

Liebknecht St. After the transfer of the Ukrainian SSR's capital from Kharkiv to Kyiv, the mission was elevated to the status of a General Consulate. Starting on 1 August 1934, the Kyiv General Consulate Jan Karszo-Siedlewski;[3] from 1 October 1937 to 1 October 1939, it was headed by Jerzy Matusiński.

Matusiński was born in Warsaw in 1890 and had served in the diplomatic corps since 1926. Before his appointment to Kyiv, he had held posts as Polish Consul General in Pittsburgh, New York, and Lille (France).

The building of the General Consulate at Karl Liebknecht St. was under constant surveillance by NKVD agents. Every visitor to the consulate and all its employees were meticulously recorded by the external monitoring service. As of April 1938, the General Consulate employed thirteen people: the consul-general and vice-consul, clerical staff, cooks, a courier, and so forth. The NKVD maintained an operational file and assigned an operational codename for each consular employee. Vice-Consul Matusiński was given the codename "Lysyi" ("the Bald One"), Vice-Consul Koch – "Pinscher", while the typist Szyszkowska was known as "Mazurka".[4]

Diplomatic relations between the USSR and Poland were governed by the Consular Convention signed in Moscow on 18 July 1924, with the exchange of ratification instruments taking place in Warsaw on 1 April 1926. The Convention defined the mutual rights, privileges, and immunities of Consuls General, Consuls, and Vice-Consuls. Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention stated:

ARTICLE 4

Consuls, Consular Secretaries, and Consular Attachés of one of the contracting parties may not be subjected to personal detention on the territory of the other party – whether in administrative order, as a measure of restraint, or in execution of a court sentence, except in the following cases:

1. Execution of a judicial sentence on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for crimes specified in the articles... [*followed by a list of articles from the USSR Criminal Code*].

3 Jan Karszo-Siedlewski (1891–1955): Polish diplomat. He served as a Polish consul in Kyiv from 1 August 1935 to 1 October 1937.

4 Przemysław Ceranka and Krzysztof Szczepanik, *Urzędy konsularne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918–1945* (Warszawa: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2020), p. 180; Piotr Olechowski, 'Konsulat Generalny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Kijowie pod lupą radzieckich służb specjalnych w kwietniu 1938 roku', *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski*, 8.2 (2017), 159–69 (p. 164).

2. Initiation of criminal proceedings under those same articles of the respective Criminal Codes if the offender is caught in the act.

If a court sentence is imposed on a Consul, Consular Secretary, or Consular Attaché on the basis of articles of the respective Criminal Codes other than those listed in paragraph 1 above, the government of the appointing state must, at the immediate request of the government of the state of assignment, recall the consular official in question.

In all cases of the detention of a Consul or any member of a Consulate, the initiation of criminal proceedings against them, or the issuance of a criminal judgment concerning them, the Government of the state of the Consul's assignment must immediately inform the Diplomatic Representative of the Consul's appointing state.

## ARTICLE 5

Consuls and consular staff, insofar as they are citizens of the state that appointed the Consul, are not subject to the jurisdiction of the state of their appointment in respect of their official activities.[5]

In the 1939 episode under review, the Polish consul's immunity was grounded not only in specific treaty provisions but also in the norms of "customary international law" – the body of rules formed by states through general and consistent practice. Historically, diplomatic and consular privileges were endowed with personal inviolability, immunity from criminal jurisdiction, and functional guarantees. These norms had existed as international custom long before they were codified in the 1961 Vienna Convention.

Thus, Soviet and Polish consuls could not be detained without very weighty grounds. On the night of 17 September 1939, the telephone rang at the Polish embassy in Moscow. The call came from the secretariat of Vladimir Potemkin, First Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.[6] Ambassador Grzybowski was urgently requested to come to the Commissariat to receive an important message.

Potemkin read a note to Grzybowski, stating that the Soviet government had ordered the Red Army to cross into Poland and "take under its protection the life and property of the population of Western Ukraine and

5 League of Nations, 'Poland and Union of Socialist Soviet Republics Consular Convention, with two Additional Protocols, and Exchange of Notes relating thereto, signed in Moscow, 18 July 1924', *World Legal Information Institute*, p. 205 <https://www.worldlii.org/int/other/LNTSer/1926/139.pdf> [accessed 2 October 2025].

6 Vladimir Potemkin (1874–1946): Soviet statesman and party official, historian, educator, and diplomat. First Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs (1937–1940).

Western Belarus". The Soviet note also asserted that the Polish state and government had ceased to exist; consequently, all treaties and agreements between the USSR and Poland were annulled. Grzybowski refused to accept the note and attempted to protest, but there was no way to alter the Soviet leadership's decision.

From the Soviet perspective, all Polish state institutions and consular establishments on Soviet territory had ceased to exist. Polish consular staff were stripped of their diplomatic immunity. On 17 September 1939, the Polish consulate in Minsk was ransacked, and its personnel interned. The Soviet leadership's actions toward Polish diplomats were illegal and overtly hostile, but by that point Poland had no means of influencing the situation.

Events at the Polish consulate in Kyiv unfolded in a dramatic manner as well. The approximate chronology of what happened to the staff of the Kyiv Polish consulate has been described in detail by Viktoria Okipniuk, SBU archivist, in her article 'The Consulate of the Second Polish Republic in Kyiv: The Tragic Epilogue of Autumn 1939':[7]

> By mid-1939, the Kyiv consulate headed by Matusiński employed five contract staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: head of the chancery Ludomir Czerwiński; secretary Antoni Pieńkowski (in reality, Polish intelligence officer Captain Włodzimierz Prosiński); trainee Henryk Słowikowski; Henryk Wiśniewski; and consular secretary Eugeniusz Zarębski (in reality, Major Mieczysław Słowikowski).[8] In late 1939 they were joined by Vice-Consul Józef Zdanowicz (in reality, Captain Jan Kraczkiewicz). The consulate's drivers were Andrzej Orszyński and Józef Łyczek. Orszyński arrived in Kyiv on 7 October 1936 from Tbilisi, where he had also served as the consulate's driver. Łyczek had been hired for this position somewhat earlier.[9]

Another relevant work on the fate of Matusiński and his coworkers was written by the historian Ihor Melnikov: 'How the Bolsheviks Kidnapped the Polish Consul in September 1939':[10]

> On the morning of 17 September, NKVD functionaries entered the premises of the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in

7 Wiktoria Okipniuk, 'Konsulat Generalny II Rzeczypospolitej w Kijowie. Tragiczny epilog jesieni 1939 r.', *Przegląd Archiwalny Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9 (2016), 151–64.

8 Mieczysław Słowikowski (1896–1989): Lieutenant Colonel of the Polish Armed Forces. In 1937, he entered service in the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, which dealt with intelligence and counterintelligence. In December 1937, Słowikowski was assigned to the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv as a diplomat and head of the Second Department's intelligence station.

9 Okipniuk, 'Konsulat Generalny', p. 155.

10 Igor Melnikov, 'Kak v sentiabre 1939 goda bolsheviki pokhitili polskogo konsula', *Novaya Polsha*, 1 June 2023 <https://novayapolsha.ru/article/kak-v-sentyabre-1939-goda-bolsheviki-pokhitili-polskogo-konsula/?ysclid=mf5tqhj3pi507377903> [accessed 21 September 2025].

Kyiv and prohibited the staff from leaving the building. On 19 September the Soviet authorities informed the Polish diplomats that they no longer possessed the right to diplomatic immunity.

On 30 September Jerzy Matusiński was summoned to the office of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) in Kyiv and was told that the consulate's staff must prepare for departure to Moscow. It was at this moment that the consul learned of the fate of the detained 'Eugeniusz Zarębski' and Henryk Sławkowski. In the early morning of 1 October, he was again summoned to discuss the details of the Polish consulate staff's transfer to Moscow. The consul went to the meeting accompanied by drivers Andrzej Orszyński and Józef Łyczek. None of them returned.

The following day, at 6 a.m., the consulate staff sent a horse-drawn carriage to check whether the consul's car was still parked at the NKID (the Soviet authorities had forbidden them to leave the building). Three hours later, Vice-Consul 'Józef Zdanowicz' telephoned the NKID and was told that they knew nothing about the visit or Matusiński's presence there. Another half hour passed before the consulate received a telephone call: a Soviet official, speaking in a calm voice, informed them that the Polish consul had not been summoned to the NKID.[11]

At 14:00, the previously detained 'Eugeniusz Zarębski' and Henryk Sławkowski arrived at the consulate.

On 4 October, the staff of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv departed for Moscow. On 10 October, the Polish diplomats left the USSR for Finland.[12]

Thus, Jerzy Matusiński disappeared, and there was no information about him until 1941, when the Soviet authorities announced an amnesty for Polish citizens and began to release them *en masse* from camps and prisons. One of those liberated, Rittmeister Trzaskowski, related that during the evacuation of a Moscow prison to Saratov in 1941, he encountered Andrzej Orszyński, the former driver of Consul Matusiński. According to Orszyński, the passengers in Matusiński's automobile were arrested near the NKID building in Kyiv, spent eight days in prison, and were then sent by train to Moscow. The train arrived in Moscow on 10 October 1939, after which the detained Poles were taken to Lubyanka, the NKVD internal prison. Orszyński stated that he had seen Matusiński boarding the train

11 Melnikov, 'Kak v sentiabre 1939 goda'.
12 Ibid.

in Kyiv on 8 October, and for a long time this date was regarded as the last witness-confirmed moment when Matusiński was known to be alive.[13]

The Law on the Decommunization of Ukraine, which entered into force on 21 May 2015, created an archival revolution of European scale. Thanks to this law, the archives of the state security organs across the entire territory of Ukraine became accessible.[14] The bulk of the documents is held in the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine in Kyiv. The documents discovered in the archive have made it possible to expand our knowledge of Matusiński's fate and to learn new details about the operation conducted against him by the NKVD in Kyiv.

The following documents were found in the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine (HDA SBU):

- Collection (fond) 16, inventory (opis') 1, file (sprava) 368: materials concerning the abduction of Matusiński.
- Fond 16, op. 1, spr. 481: interrogations of Matusiński by the NKVD.

File 368 contains classified telegraphic reports from the Second Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, Nikolai Gorlinsky,[15] addressed to the People's Commissar of the NKVD of the USSR, Lavrentii Beria, dispatched in the early morning of 1 October 1939. From Gorlinsky's coded messages to Moscow it becomes apparent that at midnight on 30 September 1939, he was summoned to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine by the Second Secretary of the Central Committee, Mikhail Burmistenko.[16]

Burmistenko conveyed to Gorlinsky an order from Moscow issued by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party [TsK KP(b)], Nikita Khrushchev, citing a decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee to arrest the former Polish Consul Matusiński. The arrest was to be carried out outside the consulate building. For confirmation and coordination of the arrest, Gorlinsky appealed to Stepan Mamulov, Head of the Secretariat of the NKVD in Moscow.[17] After receiving confirmation from Moscow, the Kyiv security officers arranged to summon Matusiński to the offices of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Kyiv.

Consul Matusiński and his two drivers, Łyczek and Orszyński, were arrested at 2 a.m. on 1 October 1939 by the NKID building. In his coded

13 Okipniuk, 'Konsulat Generalny'.
14 Law of Ukraine 'On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols', *Vidomosti Verchovnoji Rady* (VVR), 2015, no. 26, art. 219, art. 5, para. 4.
15 Nikolai Gorlinsky (1907–1965): Soviet state security officer, Lieutenant General. From December 1938 to July 1940, he served as Second Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR.
16 Mikhail Burmistenko (1902–1941): Soviet politician. From 1938 to 1941, he served as Second Secretary of the TsK KP(b) of Ukraine.
17 Stepan Mamulov (1902–1976): Soviet party official and state security officer. From 16 August 1939 to 26 April 1946, he served as the Head of the NKVD and MVD Secretariat.

telegram to Lavrentii Beria, Gorlinsky reported that a total of seventeen employees of the consulate and their family members were inside the consulate building. Gorlinsky was therefore requesting further instructions as to how to deal with these individuals.

The archival file contains a complete list of the participants in the operation: a total of twenty-six people took part or were informed about it. The operation was carried out by the 3rd Department of the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB) of the Ukrainian SSR NKVD, which was responsible for counterintelligence and operational work against espionage, sabotage, and for the surveillance of foreign citizens and organizations. Next to each participant's surname in the document, his or her position was indicated: "head of department", "driver-intelligence officer", and so forth.

The archival file also contains handwritten non-disclosure agreements from each participant of the operation to abduct the Polish consul. In these agreements, the participants pledged under no circumstances to inform anyone about these activities.

File 481 contains the records of two interrogations of Jerzy Matusiński conducted in Moscow at Lubyanka, the headquarters of the USSR NKVD. One interrogation is dated 22 November 1939, and the other – 9–10 December 1939. The interrogation of 22 November was certainly not Matusiński's first, since the transcript refers to another interrogation that took place on 13 October 1939. The text of the 13 October interrogation has not been located in the archive. Both interrogations were conducted by a certain Rapoport, Captain of State Security, an officer of the 3rd Department of the GUGB NKVD.

The first interrogation was devoted primarily to Matusiński's possible contacts with representatives of the Polish General Staff during the consul's visits to Warsaw. Matusiński's principal contacts in Poland were officers of the Second Department of the General Staff: Captain Niezbrzycki,[18] Captain Urjasz, Rittmeister Spiciński, and Major Wąkiewicz. Meetings generally took place in the restaurant of the Hotel Bristol.

The intelligence officers were interested in Matusiński's views on a number of issues that concerned the Polish leadership in 1938–1939: the Sudeten crisis, the concentration of Soviet troops on Poland's borders, and whether the USSR would act against Germany in the event of war in Europe. During these conversations they also discussed the sentiments of Soviet citizens, as well as prices in Kyiv.

Special attention was given to the questions of surveillance and NKVD control over the staff and visitors of the consulate in Kyiv. In great

[18] Jerzy Niezbrzycki (1902–1968): captain of the Polish Army. In 1930–1939, he headed the "East" Section of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff.

detail, Matusiński described the strict regime of observation imposed on the consulate: all visitors were detained after leaving the building in order to establish their identity, the reasons for their visit to the consulate, and the nature of the conversations held. In response, Matusiński proposed that equivalent measures be introduced against Soviet consular establishments in Poland.

During questioning, Matusiński was asked by the investigator which Polish intelligence agents he knew. In response, he named four individuals whose names had at some point been communicated to him by Niezbrzycki.[19] Matusiński also stated that, in 1939, intelligence officers attached to the consulate, acting on instructions from the Polish ambassador in Moscow, Grzybowski, repeatedly travelled from Kyiv to various locations for the purpose of verifying and monitoring the movements of Soviet troops. Reports on the results of these inspections were sent to the Political Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Polish Embassy in Moscow.[20]

Examination of the materials from the second interrogation creates the impression that Matusiński did not possess any information of real value that might have interested the investigators. Studying the situation at the borders and the movement of troops was nothing out of the ordinary, and the four individuals Matusiński named as agents did not occupy any special position nor possess a level of access that would have made them of interest to the Polish special services. As for the intelligence officers seconded to the consulate, this was a common practice at that time, and it remains so even today for almost any consular institution of any state.

The second interrogation of Matusiński took place on 9–10 December 1939 at Lubyanka. The main part of the questioning was devoted to the alleged agents in the Ukrainian SSR that were supposedly known to Matusiński. "Alleged" because certain details of the interrogation allow us to presume that the testimony was either extracted from Matusiński under duress or simply added by the investigator.

The very form in which the questions and answers were written in the section of the interrogation dealing with the agents strongly resembles similar passages we have repeatedly encountered in criminal cases of the late 1930s which were later recognized as fabricated.

Here we quote a characteristic section of the interrogation,

19 Interrogations of Matusiński, Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine (Haluzevyj deržavnyj archiv Služby bezpeky Ukrajiny, hereafter SSA SBU), f. 16, op. 1, spr. 481, ark. 257.
20 SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 481, ark. 261–2.

> Question: Is it your intention to keep insisting that you have communicated everything to the investigation in regards to this matter?
>
> Answer: I have finally decided to cast aside all my hesitations and doubts on this matter and will present everything known to me about Polish intelligence activities in the USSR, in full and without reservation.
>
> Question: You have repeatedly given such assurances to the investigation, and the sincerity of your further conduct will be determined by the veracity of your testimony, the factual side of which will not present any particular difficulty for the investigation to verify...[21]

During this interrogation, Matusiński "recalled" another eighteen individuals allegedly connected with Polish intelligence, in addition to the four he had named at the first interrogation.[22] We believe these to have been Soviet citizens named by Matusiński arbitrarily, under duress. Some of these eighteen individuals were fairly well known. Among those named during the interrogation as "Polish spies" were Adolf Petrovsky, the former plenipotentiary of the NKID in Kyiv, and his deputy Mikhail Yushkevich.

Both had been arrested in 1937 and very quickly sentenced: Petrovsky was executed, while Yushkevich was sentenced to ten years in the camps. After Stalin's death, both were rehabilitated, and their criminal cases were officially recognized as fabricated. Nevertheless, in the interrogation protocol Matusiński indicated that, according to the previous Polish consul in Kyiv, both had been Polish spies.

Citing the same former consul, Tadeusz Karszo-Siedlewski, the interrogation transcript further listed as Polish spies the People's Artist of the Ukrainian SSR, soloist of the Kyiv Opera Theatre, Mykhailo Donets, and an actress of the same theatre, Oksana Petrusenko. Also identified as a Polish spy was Petro Franko, the son of the renowned Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko.

Despite the fact that according to Matusiński's testimony, Donets, Franko, and Petrusenko were all named in the interrogation materials as Polish spies, none of them was arrested in 1939 or 1940. Petrusenko died in 1940 under mysterious circumstances, shortly after being discharged from a maternity hospital. Donets and Franko were arrested in June 1941. For a long time, their fate remained unknown, but in the 2000s a directive was discovered in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow, ordering the People's Commissar of

21 SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 481, ark. 267–8.
22 Ibid., fols 269–91.

State Security, Vsevolod Merkulov, to execute the arrested "nationalists" Donets and Franko on the instructions of Nikita Khrushchev. Therefore, we can conclude that Donets and Franko were under state security surveillance but were not spies; otherwise, they would have been detained well before 1941.

We can now state with certainty that by 10 December 1939 the former Polish consul, Jerzy Matusiński, was alive and being held in prison in Moscow. According to our information, the criminal case against Matusiński is located in the Central Archive of the FSB in Moscow. However, it remains inaccessible as the case is classified.

The case of the "abduction of Matusiński" clearly demonstrates the importance of the laws adopted by Ukraine aimed at the complete opening of the archives of the Soviet state security organs, which have helped to shed light on the details of the abduction of the Polish consul by NKVD officers in Kyiv in 1939.

Below you can find two blocks of documents: Interrogations of Matusiński: SSA SBU, fond (collection) 16, inventory (opis') 1, file (sprava) 481, fols (ark.) 251–263, 264–92; Documents on the abduction: SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 245–57.

The following notation marks were used when working with the documents:

a...a – the fragment is reproduced exactly as it appears in the original
b...b – handwritten comment
c...c – handwritten correction in the text, note, or fragment inserted into the sentence
d...d – underlined by hand
e...e – strikethrough or other explicit deletion of a fragment of text
f...f – handwritten signature
g...g – anonymous handwritten signature
h...h – strikethrough in the margins or other markings in the text
i...i – incomplete deciphering
[...] – fragment of text is missing

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# DOCUMENT № 1

Interrogation Protocol of Jerzy Matusiński 22 November 1939

## INTERROGATION PROTOCOL

of MATUSIŃSKI, Jerzy Ignatyevich –
former Counsellor of the Polish Embassy in Moscow,
Acting Head of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv,
dated 22 November 1939

*Question:* At the interrogation of 13 Octobe 1939, you testified that prior to your departure from Warsaw to the Soviet Union to assume the position of Head of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv, in late November 1937, you had a specially arranged meeting in the building of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff[1] with the following intelligence officers: Captain NIEZBRZYCKI,[2] Captain Urjasz, Rittmeister STPICZYŃSKI,[3] and the Head of the Soviet Section, Major BĄKIEWICZ.[4]

Describe in detail when and under what circumstances your subsequent meetings with officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff took place, and what issues were discussed during these meetings.

*Answer*: I indeed had subsequent meetings with officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff. There were three such meetings in total. All these meetings took place while I was in Warsaw on trips from Kyiv.

My first trip from Kyiv to Warsaw took place in the spring of 1938.

Shortly after my arrival, I telephoned the Second Department and spoke with NIEZBRZYCKI, telling him that I was in Warsaw and would

1 The Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Army – the Polish military intelligence service – was active between 1918 and 1945.

2 Jerzy Antoni Niezbrzycki (1902–1968): Polish intelligence officer, Head of the "East" Section of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff (1932–1939). After 1939, he lived in exile, teaching at the British intelligence school and working at the Polish Ministry of Information and Documentation. Niezbrzycki published under the pseudonym "Ryszard Wraga" and specialized in Soviet Studies (Sovietology).

3 Aleksander Stpiczyński (1898–1987): Polish intelligence officer, head of intelligence residencies in Kyiv and Bratislava, and officer of the "East" Section of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff. During the Second World War, he was assigned to the Command of the Union of Armed Struggle (*Związek Walki Zbrojnej*, or ZWZ) in France, and later in Warsaw, where he organized the "East" intelligence network and led the Eastern Section "WW-72" until 1942. Subsequently, he worked in the "666" group (a transfer and intelligence unit). In February 1943, he was arrested by the Germans but managed to escape and make his way across Europe to Great Britain. There, he completed the *cichociemni* (The Silent Unseen) special operations training course and, in September 1944, was parachuted into Poland. In November 1944, he was once again assigned to the Second Department of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) Headquarters, but in December 1944 was re-arrested by the Germans and remained in concentration camps until the end of the war.

4 Wincenty Adam Emil Bąkiewicz (1897–1974): Polish military officer, recipient of the *Virtuti Militari* Order. He served in the Imperial Russian Army, later in the Polish Army (*Wojsko Polskie*), and in the Polish Armed Forces in the West. During the interwar period, he headed the Independent "Russia" Section of the Second Department of the General Staff. In 1939, he served as chief of the Second Department of the *Armia Prusy* Staff and was subsequently captured by the Soviets. After his release, Bąkiewicz headed the Second Department of the Polish Forces in the USSR. He later served as an officer of the Second Corps and Deputy Commander of the Second Carpathian Rifle Brigade. After the war, he lived in exile in London.

like to meet with him. NIEZBRZYCKI asked me to stop by at 3 pm, so that afterward we could go to a restaurant and talk over lunch.

At 3 pm, I arrived at the Second Department to see NIEZBRZYCKI, and from there I went with him, STPICZYŃSKI, and URJASZ to the restaurant of the Bristol Hotel.

During lunch in a private room, NIEZBRZYCKI asked me to describe the situation and conditions of my work in Kyiv and, in the course of the conversation, posed a number of questions.

In particular, he was interested in the following: what might be the possible stance of the Soviet Union in the event of an armed conflict between Poland and Germany; whether it could be expected that the USSR would go to war with Germany; the standard of living and prices in Kyiv, and so forth.

NIEZBRZYCKI and his colleagues were especially interested in the methods of surveillance used by the NKVD in regards to the consulate.

They questioned me in detail about the following: at what distance secret agents follow our staff during surveillance; whether there is any difference in the system of surveillance applied to myself, other senior officials, and the junior personnel of the consulate; whether secret agents follow our employees into shops; how postal correspondence is delivered to the consulate, and so on.

I provided a detailed account of the methods of surveillance used in regards to the consulate and our staff to NIEZBRZYCKI, STPICZYŃSKI, and URJASZ. I also explained that upon leaving the building, all visitors to the consulate are detained in order to establish their identity and the nature of the conversations they had at the consulate.

The information I shared allowed me to conclude that the strict surveillance regime effectively excluded the possibility of establishing direct personal contacts with the local population in general, and in particular with the intent of carrying out intelligence work.

I urged NIEZBRZYCKI, STPICZYŃSKI, and URJASZ to establish a similar surveillance regime in Poland with regard to Soviet diplomatic representatives and their staff.

NIEZBRZYCKI replied that surveillance of Soviet diplomatic representatives and their staff in Poland was conducted in a more discreet manner; that such surveillance was not maintained over all employees simultaneously, but was instead carried out periodically, with respect to each person, for a designated period of time.

According to NIEZBRZYCKI, even if they were to decide to establish simultaneous and continuous surveillance over all employees of the Soviet diplomatic missions, this would be difficult to implement due to a shortage of personnel and vehicles.

*Question:* This is far from everything and does not in any way exhaust the range of specific questions discussed with you during this meeting by NIEZBRZYCKI and the other officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff.

You must understand that you will have to speak about the concrete intelligence work conducted by Poland against the Soviet Union, therefore you must name all Polish agents in the USSR known to you.

Speak plainly: In what manner were questions of practical intelligence work raised, and which agents were named to you by NIEZBRZYCKI, STPICZYŃSKI, and URJASZ?

*Answer:* I have decided to speak fully about everything known to me in this regard.

In the course of the conversation, NIEZBRZYCKI told me that, despite the difficulties encountered in work in Ukraine, much depended on the expertise of the operatives entrusted with intelligence assignments. In particular, he indicated that MICHAŁOWSKI,[5] during his time at the Consulate in Kharkiv, had succeeded in recruiting people, and that his successor, KAMINSKY, also worked effectively thereafter.

According to NIEZBRZYCKI, in cities and localities of Soviet Ukraine, situated along the Soviet-Polish border (where the main units of the Red Army had been stationed), there existed a Polish intelligence network, which was being gradually expanded through new recruitments. This network had been created during the period when conditions still allowed relatively free movement across the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), and when meetings with persons of interest could be held with lesser risk of exposure.

After the possibilities to maintain contact with the agent network by officers seconded to the consulate became particularly constrained, the Second Department switched to a system of maintaining contact with that network by sending special illegal couriers.

These couriers transmitted the relevant assignments to the agents and carried intelligence information received from the agents back to Poland.

The espionage data thus obtained was compiled in the Second Department and forwarded as guidance to the officers of the Second Department seconded to the Kyiv Consulate.

5 Ludwik Michałowski (1900–1964): Polish intelligence officer, head of intelligence residencies in Kyiv and Prague. After 17 September 1939, he was captured by the Soviets but escaped. He was then captured by the Germans in November 1939. Following his release, Michałowski served in the Second Polish Corps, where he headed a Special ("S") Section within the Information Department of the Corps Headquarters. After the war, he remained in the United Kingdom.

Couriers travelling from Poland to the Soviet Union were supplied with Soviet documents, clothing made in the USSR, Soviet currency, and weapons.

To create a dedicated stock of appropriate clothing for these purposes, [d]the Second Department maintained a special depot at the Red Cross post in Zdolbuniv, where they specifically exchanged Soviet-made clothing for Polish clothing for persons in need, arriving in Poland from the Soviet Union.[d]

GIVE A BRIEFING IN RIVNE.

NIEZBRZYCKI told me that an illegal courier constantly risked his life and that, if circumstances arose making arrest by the Soviet authorities inevitable, his only recourse was "to put a bullet through his own head".

As I understood it at the time, an illegal courier did not conduct independent recruitment operations on Soviet territory; new people were recruited by agents already working there.

In response to my question to NIEZBRZYCKI about which circles the agent network was drawn from, he told me that, first and foremost, agents were selected and recruited from among Poles who wished to return to Poland, as well as from individuals hostile to the Soviet regime – in particular, Ukrainian and other nationalists, Trotskyists, and similar elements.

At that point, NIEZBRZYCKI named between twelve and fifteen agents with whom contact was maintained through the courier network. He said that information on the locations of these agents was kept at the Kyiv Consulate by their *exponents* (by which he meant officers seconded to the consulate), and that meetings with any of these agents (apart from the couriers) could take place only in extreme circumstances, and only with guarantees against exposure.

Of the agents named by NIEZBRZYCKI, I remembered only the following:

1. [d]ZAWADZKI, a Pole, house owner residing in Anopol;
2. HNATYSHAK (male), a Ukrainian nationalist, employed in a minor clerical position at one of the Soviet institutions in Kamianets-Podilskyi;
3. KSIĘŻOPOLSKI, a Pole, residing and working (as either a civil servant or labourer) in Vinnytsia;
4. GOLDBERG (or GOLDMAN), a Jew, supposedly a Trotskyist residing in Berdychiv.

*Question:* Name all the remaining agents about whom NIEZBRZYCKI informed you.

*Answer:* Apart from those I have mentioned – ZAWADZKI, HNATYSHAK, KSIĘŻOPOLSKI, and GOLDBERG (or GOLDMAN) – I[d] do not recall NIEZBRZYCKI mentioning any other Polish agents who had worked in Soviet Ukraine. It is impossible for me to recall the names of the remaining agents.

*Question:* You will nevertheless have to name in full all agents known to you. Tell us now by what means (apart from couriers from Poland) you and other employees of the former Polish Consulate in Kyiv maintained communication with the Polish agents known to you from NIEZBRZYCKI.

*Answer:* Personally, I had no connection with that agent network. The means by which (apart from couriers) MAJEWSKI, MICHAJŁOWSKI, ZARĘBSKI,[6] ZDANOWICZ, and PIEŃKOWSKI maintained contact with the agents, I do not know, as they did not share that information with me.

*Question:* Your statement does not correspond to reality. You *were* aware of the methods and means of communication with the agents used by ZARĘBSKI and the other officers of the Second Department seconded to you. State everything you know about this.

*Answer:* I continue to maintain that I have no knowledge of this matter.

*Question:* Absolutely none?

*Answer:* ZARĘBSKI and other officers of the Second Department seconded to the consulate took occasional trips by car in various directions out of Kyiv.

They usually complained that they were under surveillance by the NKVD and that their routes were restricted by the authorities. Therefore, I do not know whether they were able, to any extent, to maintain contact with the agent network during these trips. I am unaware of any other means they might have used to sustain such contact.

*Question:* Continue your testimony regarding your meetings in Warsaw with officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff.

6 Mieczysław Zygfryd Słowikowski, codename "Eugeniusz Zarębski" (1896–1989): Polish intelligence officer, head of the intelligence residency in Kyiv. He was arrested by the Soviets in 1939. Between 1941 and 1944, he directed the "Africa" intelligence network in Algeria, which played a crucial role in preparing the Allied landing in North Africa. After the war, Słowikowski remained in the United Kingdom.

*Answer:* My next meeting with officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff took place while I was in Warsaw during my July 1938 trip from Kyiv.

I telephoned NIEZBRZYCKI at the Second Department and told him that I wished to invite him to breakfast with STPICZYŃSKI and URJASZ. As on the previous occasion, the meeting took place at the restaurant of the Bristol Hotel. NIEZBRZYCKI and STPICZYŃSKI came. URJASZ did not attend, as he was ill at that time.

During the conversation led by NIEZBRZYCKI, we discussed three main questions:

1. the Sudeten events and the possibility of the USSR taking military action to support Czechoslovakia;[7]
2. measures of Soviet counterintelligence with respect to the Polish Consulate in Kyiv;
3. the planned repressive countermeasures against the Soviet Plenipotentiary Office[8] in Warsaw and the Soviet Consulate in Lviv.

On the first question, I indicated that in Kyiv there were as of yet no signs that the USSR would actively intervene in Czechoslovak affairs.

On the second question, I informed NIEZBRZYCKI and STPICZYŃSKI that the strict surveillance regime established by Soviet counterintelligence over the Polish Consulate and its staff remained unchanged. In connection with this, the third question arose concerning retaliatory measures in Poland.

NIEZBRZYCKI told me that the issue of applying repressive measures to the Soviet diplomatic establishments and their staff in Warsaw and Lviv had been coordinated by the Second Department with BECK[9] and approved in the affirmative.

In particular, it was decided to detain all visitors to the Plenipotentiary Office and the Consulate; establish external surveillance over all employees of these institutions; prohibit shops from delivering food to the Plenipotentiary Office, the Consulate, and private residences; and so forth.

*Question:* You are omitting the fact that during this conversation with NIEZBRZYCKI and STPICZYŃSKI, the main point of discussion was the practical intelligence work in Soviet Ukraine. Describe this part of the conversation in detail.

7 This refers to the first Sudeten crisis in May 1938, when the USSR declared its readiness to assist Czechoslovakia in accordance with the 1935 Treaty of Mutual Assistance, but only on the condition that France also fulfilled its allied obligations – which, however, did not take place.

8 Prior to 1941, Soviet Plenipotentiary Office fulfilled the functions equivalent to an embassy.

9 Józef Beck (1894–1944): Polish politician, diplomat, and military officer, a close associate of Józef Piłsudski. Beck served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland from 1932 until the outbreak of the Second World War.

*Answer*: NIEZBRZYCKI and STPICZYŃSKI stated that the primary intelligence task for the officers of the Second Department working in Kyiv was to determine whether, in connection with the Sudeten question, there was any concentration of Red Army forces on the Soviet-Polish border with a goal of delivering a strike against Poland and providing military assistance to Czechoslovakia.

The question then arose about intensifying intelligence activity in Soviet Ukraine. I do not remember how I reacted to this. I did not receive any practical instructions concerning intelligence work from NIEZBRZYCKI or STPICZYŃSKI.

*Question:* From whom, then, did you receive such instructions?

*Answer*: I received assignments to determine the movement of Soviet troops toward the Soviet-Polish border from the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, GRZYBOWSKI,[10] by cipher and by mail.

*Question:* How did you carry out these assignments?

*Answer:* I always informed one of the officers of the Second Department, seconded to me, on these assignments. He would usually travel together with SŁOWIKOWSKI[11] by rail to make direct observations of the military trains.

*Question:* To whom, how many times, and in what form did you report the results of these assignments?

*Answer:* The observations made by the officers of the Second Department were reported by me in the form of telegrams and reports to GRZYBOWSKI in Moscow, with copies to the Political Department No. 3 (P3) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID).[12] I sent such reports three times.

*Question:* When did you last meet with the officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff in Warsaw?

*Answer:* My last meeting with officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff took place during my trip from Kyiv to Warsaw in March 1939. As during my previous visits, I telephoned NIEZBRZYCKI

10 Wacław Grzybowski (1887–1959): Polish psychologist and diplomat, doctor of psychology. He served as Polish envoy to Czechoslovakia (1927–1935) and ambassador to the USSR (July 1936 to 17 September 1939). Grzybowski refused to accept the Soviet note announcing the termination of treaties with Poland.

11 Henryk Słowikowski (1910–1975): Polish diplomat and consular official. He served at the Polish Consulate in Kyiv in 1937–1939, where he was arrested by the NKVD. Later, he worked as an attaché and delegate of the Polish diplomatic service in the USSR and Baghdad. After Second World War, Słowikowski lived in Ottawa.

12 P-3, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the Third Political Department of the Soviet MID, which in the 1930s–1940s was responsible for the analysis and coordination of foreign policy and intelligence information concerning the southern and eastern regions (including Turkey, Iran, and the Middle East), as well as bordering countries (such as Poland).

at the Second Department, after which we met at the restaurant *Simon i Stecki* (near the Bristol Hotel). Together with NIEZBRZYCKI came STPICZYŃSKI, URJASZ, and another officer whom I didn't know. The officer was wearing a military uniform of a captain and had recently returned from somewhere abroad.

The conversation revolved around the situation in Czechoslovakia, Soviet-Polish relations, and the conditions and circumstances of the work of the Kyiv Consulate.

I noted that despite signs of improvement in the relations between Poland and the Soviet Union, the surveillance regime over us in Kyiv had remained exactly as before.

Incidentally, in the course of the conversation I gave a negative assessment of the officer of the Second Department seconded to me, PIEŃKOWSKI, and expressed concern that, owing to his lack of restraint, some complications might later arise with the Soviet authorities.

*Question:* What did you mean by describing PIEŃKOWSKI as "lacking restraint"?

*Answer:* I told NIEZBRZYCKI and the other participants in the conversation that immediately upon his arrival in Kyiv, PIEŃKOWSKI had called his intelligence colleagues cowards, reproached them for "not being worth their salt", and declared that he would show how one ought to work despite existing difficulties, by using bold and risky methods. I also reported that PIEŃKOWSKI had expressed his intention to curse at, strike, or otherwise insult the agents who were observing him.

NIEZBRZYCKI told me that PIEŃKOWSKI had been sent to Kyiv "on trial" and was expected to be recalled to Warsaw shortly.

However, PIEŃKOWSKI continued to work in Kyiv until the liquidation of the consulate.

The interrogation protocol has been recorded accurately from my words, read by me, and signed below: (signature)

INTERROGATED BY:
HEAD OF THE FIFTH SECTION OF THE THIRD DEPARTMENT GUGB NKVD OF THE USSR
CAPTAIN OF STATE SECURITY

(Rapoport)

[Seal]

Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine (Haluzevyj deržavnyj archiv Služby bezpeky Ukrajiny, hereafter SSA SBU), f. 16, op. 1, spr. 481, ark. 251–63.

# DOCUMENT № 2

Interrogation Protocol of Jerzy Matusiński, 9–10 December 1939

## INTERROGATION PROTOCOL[1]

of MATUSIŃSKI, Jerzy Ignatyevich –
former Counsellor of the Polish Embassy in Moscow,
Acting Head of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv,
dated 9–10 December 1939

*Question:* In your previous interrogations concerning your meetings with officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff in Warsaw, you testified about your meetings and conversations with the following officers of the Second Department: BĄKIEWICZ, NIEZBRZYCKI, STPICZYŃSKI, URJASZ, and another officer of captain's rank unknown to you.

Were your acquaintances within the Second Department of the Polish General Staff in Warsaw limited to these individuals?

*Answer:* In my previous testimony, I failed to mention that on the day of my visit to the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, prior to my departure in November 1937 for diplomatic service in Kyiv and after speaking with NIEZBRZYCKI, STPICZYŃSKI, and URJASZ, I went with NIEZBRZYCKI and URJASZ into the office of Colonel PEŁCZYŃSKI,[2] the Head of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, to whom I was then introduced.

PEŁCZYŃSKI received us standing, thereby signalling the brief nature of the audience. Having learned from NIEZBRZYCKI that I was departing for Soviet Ukraine as Acting Head of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv, he asked whether I had previously been to Russia. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, he merely wished me success in my work.

I asked PEŁCZYŃSKI to convey my greetings to his wife, Wanda PEŁCZYŃSKA,[3] whom I had previously met in France, in the city of Lille.

The entire conversation with PEŁCZYŃSKI lasted only a few minutes, and thereafter I never met with him again.

1 The interrogation protocol is missing pages 282 and 286.

2 Tadeusz Pełczyński (1892–1985): Polish military officer and head of military intelligence. During the interwar period, he served as Chief of the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, where he was responsible for the organization and coordination of Polish intelligence networks abroad, including those operating on the Eastern Front. During the Second World War, he was one of the organizers of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army) intelligence service, overseeing both intelligence and counterintelligence operations within the Polish underground.

3 Wanda Pełczyńska (1894–1976): Polish independence activist, publicist, and member of Sejm (4th term, 1935–1938). During the Second World War, she served as a courier and underground operative, working for the Information and Propaganda Bureau of Armia Krajowa. After the war, she emigrated to the United Kingdom.

*Question:* Under what circumstances did you become acquainted with Wanda PEŁCZYŃSKA?

*Answer:* Wanda PEŁCZYŃSKA, a deputy of the Polish Sejm and chairwoman of the Society for Women's Civil Labor, came to Lille, where I was heading the Polish Consulate, in the summer of 1936. Her visit to France, and to Lille in particular, was connected with the organization of local branches of the Society she led.

In addition, she was interested in the life of the Polish émigré community in France.

On her trip from Paris to Lille, Wanda PEŁCZYŃSKA was accompanied by Regina JĘDRZEJEWICZ, the ex-wife of the former Minister of Education (in 1936, he served as a Commissioner of the Polish Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition), Wacław JĘDRZEJEWICZ.[4]

Regina JĘDRZEJEWICZ worked at the Polish Embassy in Paris, where she was in charge of Polish schools in France.

During Wanda PEŁCZYŃSKA'S two-day stay in Lille, I extended to her all possible assistance and received her at my residence.

Before leaving Lille, she invited me to visit their home in Warsaw.

When meeting her husband, Colonel PEŁCZYŃSKI, at the Second Department, I deliberately conveyed my greetings to his wife, hoping that he would invite me to his home. However, no such invitation followed from [a]PEŁCZYŃSKI.[a] I wanted to cultivate a closer acquaintance with PEŁCZYŃSKI for reasons of advancing my career, as the Second Department exercised considerable influence over the entire state apparatus of Poland.

*Question:* Were there other representatives of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff with whom you were acquainted and maintained contact?

*Answer:* In late 1936, during a visit to Warsaw, I called on one of the Deputy Heads of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, Major ENGLICHT,[5] and made his acquaintance at that time.

4 Wacław Jędrzejewicz (1893–1993): Polish officer and politician of the Sanation movement (from Polish *sanacja*: healing), Head of the "Eastern" Section of the intelligence service of the Second Department of the General Staff. In 1934–1935, he served as Minister of Education. After the war, he emigrated to the United States, where he became co-founder of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in New York.

5 Józef Englicht (1891–1954): Polish military officer and intelligence operative, one of the key organizers of Poland's interwar intelligence service. He headed the "Russia" Section Within the Second Department of the General Staff. In 1939, he became Deputy Chief of the Second Department. He oversaw intelligence operations against the USSR and the coordination of eastern intelligence outposts. After 1939, Englicht lived in exile, serving as an officer of the Polish Armed Forces in France and the United Kingdom, and later as editor of the military journal *Bellona* in London.

I asked ENGLICHT to verify the identity of BRATEK KOZŁOWSKI,[6] who headed the Polish Union of Reservists and Former Servicemen in France in the city of Douai (France, Nord département). I asked him to do this using the materials of the Second Department.

I approached ENGLICHT with this request because BRATEK KOZŁOWSKI seemed suspicious to me, since I had received information from members of the *Union of Reservists* and other Polish organizations in France that KOZŁOWSKI passed himself off as a captain of the Polish Army without actually holding that rank; that he illegally wore the Order of *Virtuti Militari*;[7] and that he lacked a state licence for medical practice (which he was engaged in).

ENGLICHT promised to check all these issues, and indeed soon sent detailed information to me in Lille about BRATEK KOZŁOWSKI, confirming all the compromising information already in my possession.

As with PEŁCZYŃSKI, I did not meet ENGLICHT again thereafter.

*Question:* Let us now circle back to the issue of the Polish intelligence network on the territory of the Soviet Union.

Do you continue to maintain that you have already communicated everything on this matter to the investigation?

*Answer:* I have finally decided to set aside all my hesitations and doubts on this question, and I will present my testimony regarding what is known to me about the Polish agent network in the USSR, fully and up to the last detail.

*Question:* You have repeatedly given such assurances to the investigation, and the sincerity of your further conduct will be determined by the truthfulness of your testimony, the factual side of which will not present any particular difficulty for the investigation to verify.

Tell us what considerations led you to not provide exhaustive, clear, and precise testimony on the question of the Polish agent network in the USSR.

*Answer:* What held me back from giving entirely truthful and exhaustive testimony on this matter was solely fear for my own fate. This fear did not stem from the possibility of severe punishment by Soviet justice,

6 Franciszek Witold Bratek-Kozłowski (1900–1988): Polish physician and military officer, participant in the Polish-Soviet Wars (1918–1921). After studying in Kraków and Paris, he specialized in surgery and urology. While in France, he organized a network of Polish veterans' associations. During the Second World War, he served as a military surgeon, and from 1942 was stationed in Canada, where he rose to the rank of major. After the war, he worked as a surgeon and community leader within the Polish diaspora in Montreal.

7 The Order of *Virtuti Militari* (Order of Military Virtue) is Poland's highest military decoration for valour in the face of the enemy, established in 1792 by King Stanisław August Poniatowski. It is one of the world's oldest military decorations still in use, awarded to both individuals and military units for acts of outstanding bravery on the battlefield.

but rather from the fear of revenge on the part of members of the former Second Department of the Polish General Staff.

I thought that if, after some time, I were to be released, someone from among the former Polish intelligence officers might kill me as a traitor to his homeland.

I often thought about the fate of the former counsellor of the Polish Embassy in Moscow ZALEZIŃSKI, who died here under strange circumstances in 1931.

His sister, MIROSLAVSKAYA, later told me that ZALEZIŃSKI had been poisoned in Moscow by order of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff for assisting Soviet counterintelligence. Similar rumours circulated in the circles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[8]

*Question:* Proceed with your testimony concerning the Polish intelligence network in the USSR.

*Answer:* I am aware of the following agents within the Polish intelligence service who were engaged in espionage on the territory of the USSR:

1. PETROVSKII:[9] former plenipotentiary representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) in Kyiv.

During my meeting with my predecessor at the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv, KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI,[10] at his apartment in Warsaw in October 1937, he informed me that PETROVSKII had supplied him with intelligence information on matters of internal party affairs (party purges, internal factions, particularly bourgeois-nationalist tendencies, etc.), on the situation in government circles (individual transfers and dismissals, the reasons for them, etc.), on arrests, and similar matters.

KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI did not say anything as to whether PETROVSKII had received monetary compensation from the consulate for his work. However, he noted that PETROVSKII had been his guest on several occasions and had participated in drinking parties at his apartment.

KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI recommended that, should the opportunity arise, I re-establish contact with PETROVSKII.

8 Any information confirming this event or even mentioning Zaleziński is missing in both historical and scientific sources.

9 Adolf Markovich Petrovskii (1887–1937): Soviet diplomat, plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Estonia, Lithuania, Persia, Austria, and Hungary. Starting December 1934, he served as Authorized Representative of the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in the Ukrainian SSR. Petrovskii was arrested in 1937 during the Great Purge and subsequently executed.

10 Jan Karszo-Siedlewski (1891–1955): Polish diplomat and consular official. He served as Consul General in Kharkiv and Kyiv. Starting 1938, he was as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Poland to Iran and Iraq. Between 1935 and 1937, he headed the Polish military intelligence outpost in Kyiv, maintaining close cooperation with Poland's intelligence services.

During the final months of KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI's stay in Kyiv, he had stopped hosting large receptions, and I do not know when precisely his contact with PETROVSKII broke down. When I arrived in Kyiv, PETROVSKII was no longer serving as plenipotentiary of the NKID. I never met him, and thus we never became acquainted.

2. YUSHKEVICH:[11] former deputy plenipotentiary of the NKID in Kyiv.

During that same conversation, KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI informed me that YUSHKEVICH, like PETROVSKII, had supplied him with espionage information regarding the same matters.

KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI told me that, as compensation for this work, YUSHKEVICH's wife received from Warsaw parcels containing fabric, perfumes, stockings, and similar items.

By the time I arrived in Kyiv, YUSHKEVICH, like PETROVSKII, was no longer employed by the NKID, and I did not establish contact with him.

3. DONETS:[12] a performer (singer) in Kyiv.

4. PETRUSENKO:[13] a performer (singer).

During the same conversation, KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI told me that through the receptions held at the Polish Consulate in Kyiv, he had become acquainted with DONETS and PETRUSENKO, from whom he subsequently received valuable intelligence information concerning Russification in Soviet Ukraine and the attitudes of Ukrainian public circles toward the prospects for national development under the existing regime, as well as the tendencies among those circles toward the creation of an independent Ukrainian state.

KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI did not share with me whether he extended any material assistance to DONETS or PETRUSENKO.

He recommended that I become acquainted and re-establish contact with DONETS and PETRUSENKO.

However, I met neither DONETS nor PETRUSENKO, as I was unable to arrange receptions in Kyiv.

11 Mikhail Yushkevich (1882–?): Deputy Representative of the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) in Kyiv. On 18 October 1937, he was sentenced to ten years in a corrective labour camp (Russian: *ispravitel'no-trudovoi lager'*, ITL).

12 Mykhailo Ivanovych Donets (1883–1941): Ukrainian Soviet opera singer, People's Artist of the Ukrainian SSR. He was arrested by the NKVD and died in prison in 1941.

13 Oksana Andriyivna Petrusenko (1900–1940): Ukrainian opera singer, People's Artist of the Ukrainian SSR (1939). She performed in theatres in Kherson, Kyiv, and other cities.

5. ZAREMBINSKAYA: resided (and possibly still resides) in Kyiv. Approximately 80 years of age. She had two sons: one who served as an engineer in Tbilisi, and another who was a Catholic priest somewhere in central Russia (both died in the early years of the Revolution). Her husband, some kind of a state official, died even before the Revolution. Her husband's brother lived in Poland but it was not possible to locate him.

ZAREMBINSKAYA received some small allowance from the Social Welfare Office, and for a number of years (up to the fall of 1938, that is, until the moment she ceased visiting the consulate) she received a monthly payment of 50–60 roubles.

She assisted the consulate in locating persons of interest in Kyiv, informed the consulate about affairs at both Roman-Catholic churches in Kyiv, about the mood among the faithful, and, within the limits of her ability, about the population in general.

At the consulate, she maintained contact with Vice-Consul KOCH, with the officer of the Second Department MICHAŁOWSKI, and with me.

During her last visit to the consulate, she complained of feeling unwell. I provided her with some food items and linen, and thereafter she no longer appeared at the consulate.

Later I prepared a parcel for her with food and clothing (sent for her from Warsaw) and intended to have this parcel delivered to her home by the consulate courier MUSIAŁ. The latter, however, advised me against this step, referring to the fact that if he were to visit her apartment, she might get arrested.

6. Olga KURKO: resided (and possibly still resides) in Kyiv. Prior to my departure from Warsaw to my post in Kyiv in November 1937 (or uring my first return from Kyiv to Warsaw in February 1938), the former head of the Polish General Consulate in Kyiv (1933–1934), Piotr KURNICKI,[14] who worked in the Soviet Section of the Third Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (P3), informed me that KURKO had served as his liaison agent and located persons he needed to find. KURNICKI said that KURKO would come directly to the consulate to see me. He then handed me 196 roubles to be given to KURKO but provided no explanation regarding this sum.

[14] Piotr Kurnicki (1899–1975): Polish diplomat and consular official, former consul in Khust, secretary of the Polish Embassy in Bratislava, and consul in Zagreb. He also served as an agent of the Polish intelligence service (residency "Ku") in Kyiv, where he documented and reported on the Holodomor.

Besides KURNICKI, prior to my departure to take up the post in Kyiv, I had a meeting in Warsaw with the chairwoman of the Committee for Aid to Those Suffering in the Eastern Borderlands – MARIA SABAŃSKA.[15] She gave me a list with 3–4 names of Polish nationals residing in Soviet Ukraine. These individuals had relatives who lived in Poland. She asked me to locate these individuals. When I told her that doing so would be rather difficult if the search were to be conducted in an official manner through Soviet agencies, SABAŃSKA said that in Kyiv there was a woman, Olga KURKO, who could assist me in this matter.

During my stay in Kyiv, KURKO did not renew her contact with the consulate. I haven't met with her and did not pass her the money I had received from KURNICKI.

7. Wanda HERBIKH: resides in Kyiv, where she works, if I remember correctly, as an assistant to a doctor (whose surname I have forgotten, but it begins with the letter "G", possibly Glazunov).

In February 1938, during my trip from Kyiv to Warsaw, KURNICKI invited me to his office at the MID, where Wanda's sister Celina (or Yelena) HERBICH was already present.

Celina HERBICH told me that in addition to her sister living in Kyiv, their mother also lived near Kyiv. Together with Celina, they had not left the USSR for Poland. This departure did not take place because Wanda had been refused exit permission by the Soviet authorities, and the mother did not want to leave the USSR without Wanda.

Celina HERBICH passed to me a small parcel with warm slippers and chocolate, as well as 40 złoty, to be delivered to Wanda in Kyiv.

After Celina HERBIKH left KURNICKI's office, he told me the following: during the time of his service in Kyiv, Wanda HERBICH had collaborated with him on intelligence work and, in particular, supplied him with information regarding the mood among the local population, specifically on the questions of nationalist tendencies within the circles of Ukrainian intelligentsia.

KURNICKI mentioned that Wanda HERBICH would be informed if there was a parcel for her at the consulate. She would come for it herself, and during this visit I would be able to renew contact with her.

15 Likely, Maria Zofia Teodozja Sobańska (1865–1951): Polish social and philanthropic activist, organizer of literary salons in Warsaw. She served as vice-chairwoman of the Warsaw branch of the National Women's Organization.

Wanda HERBICH never came to the consulate in Kyiv to see me, and I was afraid to take the initiative myself to establish contact with her. As a result, I never became acquainted with her.

I knew from the consulate employee CZARWINSKI that after KURNICKI's departure from Kyiv, Wanda HERBICH continued to visit the consulate and meet with his successor KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI.

In view of this, I assumed that after KURNICKI, Wanda HERBICH had been connected in intelligence work with KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI.

8. Petro FRANKO,[16] son of the well-known Ukrainian writer Ivan FRANKO.[17] A chemical engineer residing in Lviv, 2 Obertynska St., apartment no. 9.

In 1936, through the Soviet Consulate in Lviv, Petro FRANKO concluded a contract for employment at the Kharkiv Institutes of Dairy Industry and Applied Chemistry. In the summer of 1937, FRANKO left Kharkiv for vacation in Lviv, and after his time-off ended, he did not receive a re-entry visa to the USSR.

In this connection, FRANKO submitted a number of material claims against the institutes where he had worked under contract, as well as against the Kharkiv publishing house *Mystetstvo*. His claims against the institutes, for certain inventions and related works, amounted to 85,000 roubles, and against the publishing house (for the portrait of his father, Ivan FRANKO, which he had given them) to 10,000 roubles.

The institutes partially satisfied FRANKO's claims, paying a sum not exceeding 2,000 roubles, while he received nothing from the publishing house.

I maintained correspondence with the office of the Plenipotentiary of NKID in Moscow in connection to FRANKO's claims, informing him of this through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

FRANKO repeatedly appealed to the MID regarding this matter, and the MID corresponded with me.

16 Petro Franko (1890–1941): Ukrainian educator, chemist, ethnographer, and public figure, son of Ivan Franko. He was a member of the *Plast* movement, a captain of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, an inventor, and a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR. Arrested by the NKVD in 1941. Competing accounts persist regarding the manner and place of his death in July 1941. Some state he was killed while being transported near Proshova (Ternopil) amid the NKVD evacuations and shootings at the war's outset; others hold that he was executed by NKVD operatives in Kyiv. Newly cited archival material includes a ciphered NKVD/NKGB telegram of 6 July 1941 from Kyiv to Moscow, reporting that, "by order of Comrade Khrushchev", Petro Franko, Kyrylo Studynsky, and artist Mykhailo Donets had been arrested and – since evacuation was difficult – "it is considered expedient to shoot them", a proposal approved "for" at the centre (Beria, Molotov, likely Malenkov). A 1969 KGB summary later concluded Franko had been shot without trial in 1941; nonetheless, the exact circumstances remain uncertain.

17 Ivan Franko (1856–1916): major figure in Ukrainian literature and thought: poet, novelist, dramatist, critic, publicist, folklorist, and social philosopher. Often called the "second great awakener" after Taras Shevchenko, Franko helped to shape the modern Ukrainian literary language and national consciousness. His works, written in both Ukrainian and Polish, combine realism with strong ethical and social engagement, articulating the intellectual foundations of Ukrainian modernity.

In early December 1937, when I received the consular files in connection with the liquidation of the Kharkiv Consulate and the establishment of a single General Consulate in Kyiv from the former Polish Consul in Kharkiv, BRZEZIŃSKI,[18] he informed me regarding Petro FRANKO's matter.

Brzezinski told me then that FRANKO, being a Ukrainian nationalist, had been establishing illegal contacts in Soviet Ukraine with the local Ukrainian elements, in order to ascertain to what extent the national consciousness there was prepared for the separation of Soviet Ukraine from the Soviet Union with the aim of creating an independent state.

BRZEZIŃSKI also mentioned that during his stay in Kharkiv, FRANKO had acted as BRZEZIŃSKI's informant on Ukrainian affairs.

Despite this, BRZEZIŃSKI believed that one must exercise particular caution in dealing with FRANKO, since FRANKO adhered to the position of creating a *Soborna* (United) Ukraine – that is, an independent Ukrainian state encompassing the territories of Soviet Ukraine, Western Ukraine, Subcarpathian Ukraine, and Bukovyna.

In Kharkiv, FRANKO resided with a certain HESBURG, and later (after FRANKO's departure from the USSR), through diplomatic mail, I received copies of FRANKO's letters to HESBURG. The tone of the letters was rather warm.

9. TENENWURCEL: an elderly Jewish woman, who resided (possibly still resides) in Kharkiv; she was dependent on her relatives and was formerly a Polish subject. In early 1938, the Soviet authorities brought up the question of returning TENENWURCEL's Polish passport (previously confiscated by the Polish Consulate in Kharkiv), so that she could subsequently depart from the Soviet Union to Poland.

In the course of clarifying the question of TENENWURCEL's nationality, I learned from a consulate employee, Ewa SZISZKOWSKA (who had previously worked in Kharkiv), that in Kharkiv, TENENWURCEL had met and maintained contact with Captain KAMIŃSKI, an officer of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff; that he had personally handled the question of her nationality; and as a result of his intervention, the Soviet authorities had annulled the exit visa that had previously been issued to her.

18 Tadeusz Brzeziński (1896–1990): Polish diplomat and consular official. He served in various diplomatic and consular posts (Essen, Lille, Leipzig, Kharkiv). Starting 1938, he was Consul General in Montreal. After the Second World War, he remained in Canada, becoming an active figure in the Polish émigré community.

SZISZKOWSKA advised me to resolve the matter of TENENWURCEL only after discussing it with KAMIŃSKI, who by that time was serving in the consular section of the Polish Embassy in Moscow.

Shortly thereafter, when I was in Moscow on official business, I met KAMIŃSKI at the embassy and asked him to update me on the matter of TENENWURCEL.

KAMIŃSKI informed me that TENENWURCEL had been collaborating with him in Kharkiv on intelligence-related work; that, for reasons of expediency, he had arranged for her to remain residing in the USSR by depriving her of Polish citizenship; and that TENENWURCEL herself did not wish to leave the Soviet Union. KAMIŃSKI advised me to insist on refusing to issue a Polish passport to TENENWURCEL and, for the time being, to avoid establishing any contact with her. He did not specify what kind of intelligence information TENENWURCEL had supplied him with.

Following Kamiński's instructions, I did not issue TENENWURCEL a Polish passport and never made contact with her.

10. Maria PANKOVA-KHOMINA: resides in Kharkiv.

In 1926–1927, she arrived in the Soviet Union as the fiancée of Khomin, who had been released from Polish custody under a special exchange agreement after receiving a ten-year prison sentence in Poland for communist activity.

Khomin was later arrested in the USSR and died either in exile or in a labour camp.

I learned about this from letters written by Maria's mother, Anastasiya PANKOVA, who resided in Lviv, 12 St. Teresa Street.

Since 1938 and until recently, no less than once a month I would receive letters from Maria PANKOVA's mother through diplomatic mail.

In these letters, Maria PANKOVA's mother informed me that her daughter had sympathized with the communist movement only during the time she lived in Poland, when she was engaged to Khomin.

Once in the USSR, however, she had fully adopted the position of Ukrainian nationalism and joined the Ukrainian nationalist movement. Anastasiya PANKOVA asked me to provide her daughter with every possible assistance in arranging her return to Poland and, until her departure, to provide her material support, since she had neither employment nor means of livelihood in Kharkiv.

She further indicated that if I established contact with Maria PANKOVA, I would be able to obtain from her very valuable information about

the nationalist movement in Soviet Ukraine. If I failed to do so, her daughter would pass this information to the Polish authorities upon her return to Poland.

Every other month I would send Maria PANKOVA money orders to Kharkiv in the amount of 200–300 roubles. Along with these remittances, I enclosed letters stating that the money was being sent at the request of her mother.

Maria PANKOVA-KHOMINA replied with brief letters acknowledging receipt of the money, expressing gratitude, and asking that her return to Poland be expedited.

To reimburse me for the funds I had remitted to her daughter in Kharkiv, Anastasiya PANKOVA deposited equivalent amounts into the current account that belonged to our consulate, at the postal savings bank in Warsaw.

In late 1938, in one of my letters I asked PANKOVA-KHOMINA to come from Kharkiv to Kyiv in order to meet with me, but she declined, citing poor health. Thus, my meeting with her never took place. The question of restoring her Polish citizenship and her subsequent departure to Poland remains unresolved.

11. I can't remember her first and last name, and patronymic: a Polish woman, Soviet citizen, with a distinctly Polish last name, a dentist who maintained her own dental office in her apartment in Vinnytsia.

In the summer of 1938, during my trip from Kyiv to Warsaw, I spoke with ZDANOVSKAYA, a secretary of the Administrative Department of the MID, who had previously lived in Russia, where she had owned an estate not far from Vinnytsia.

ZDANOVSKAYA informed me that the woman mentioned above, the dentist, was an old acquaintance of hers. She recommended that I visit her in Vinnytsia and establish contact with her.

ZDANOVSKAYA believed that this woman could assist me in locating several individuals of interest to the consulate, as well as with providing information on specific matters that might concern us. She emphasized that it would be convenient to call on this acquaintance under the pretext of being a patient. Upon my return to Kyiv, I informed MICHAŁOWSKI, an officer of the Second Department, about my conversation with ZDANOVSKAYA.

MICHAŁOWSKI told me that ZDANOVSKAYA's acquaintance, who lived in Vinnytsia and worked there as a dentist, was known to him, and that she was one of their agents.

In my conversations with both ZDANOVSKAYA and MICHAŁOWSKI, the last name of this dentist was mentioned, but it has since slipped my memory.

12. PERELMAN: resides in Berdychiv, about 17–18 years old. He was studying (and possibly still studies) at a secondary school. He lives together with his younger sister (one year younger than him) at their grandfather's home. The PERELMAN siblings were brought to Berdychiv in early childhood by their mother, who later returned to Poland (to a small town in Western Ukraine), where she survives on an allowance from a local Jewish community.

In late 1937, a question arose regarding the revocation of Polish citizenship for the PERELMAN brother and sister, in accordance with the new instruction of the MID concerning Polish nationals residing in the USSR.

PERELMAN was summoned to the Polish Consulate, where he had a conversation with MICHAŁOWSKI. Shortly thereafter, when the matter of the PERELMAN case was being discussed, MICHAŁOWSKI told me that he had managed to reach an agreement with PERELMAN and to recruit him as an agent. Due to the minor age of the PERELMAN siblings, there were no legal grounds for depriving them of Polish citizenship; moreover, there were no indications that the Soviet authorities intended to raise the issue of their departure for Poland. Therefore, their Polish passports were not confiscated.

I do not know how contact was subsequently maintained with the recruited PERELMAN.

[...]

After HNATYSHAK had done this, it turned out that the ticket was sold only as far as Zdolbuniv, and being without funds, she did not know how to proceed from Zdolbuniv to Lviv. I reassured her that I would arrange for her travel from Zdolbuniv to Lviv. The remaining 30 roubles she had were transferred to the account of the Polish Consulate General in Kyiv; subsequently, this amount was remitted to her by the MID to her location in Lviv.

While traveling from Shepetivka to Zdolbuniv in the same compartment with HNATYSHAK, and once we crossed the border, without letting her understand that I was aware of her intelligence work for Poland, I started a conversation with her about the Ukrainian nationalist movement in Soviet Ukraine. I asked HNATYSHAK whether she could

discern any tendencies toward the creation of an independent Ukrainian state in the circles of Ukrainian intelligentsia and youth. She replied that, in her personal opinion, Ukraine had not yet matured for independence, and that its fate was to remain under the rule of either Poland or Russia. She described the youth as apolitical, preoccupied with material and economic concerns, and not engaging with the question of Ukraine's "self-determination".

At the Zdolbuniv station, HNATYSHAK was met by a representative of the Polish Red Cross station, and I never saw her again.

14. STANKIEWICZ: an elderly Pole, citizen of the USSR, formerly a bailiff residing in Vinnytsia. His brother lives in former Poland, where he serves as a mid-level government official in one of the voivodeships (probably in Kielce).

In 1938, STANKIEWICZ submitted a petition to the Soviet authorities requesting the issuance of a foreign passport to travel to Poland to visit his brother. He asked the consulate, in the event that he received such a passport, to secure an entry visa for him, explaining that if he were able to enter Poland, he would not return to the Soviet Union and would petition the Polish authorities for the restoration of his Polish citizenship.

Stankiewicz came to the consulate, it seems, twice, but I saw him there only once, in the spring of 1939 (in May, of course).

At the request of STANKIEWICZ's brother, who lived in former Poland, I provided STANKIEWICZ with modest financial assistance consisting of two postal transfers of 100 roubles each.

During his visit to the consulate in the spring of 1939, STANKIEWICZ spoke with ZARĘBSKI, an officer of the Second Department, who personally handed him an additional sum of money.

After this conversation with STANKIEWICZ, ZARĘBSKI told me that STANKIEWICZ had given him some information of interest and hinted that he (ZARĘBSKI) had recruited him for further work.

The question of STANKIEWICZ's departure to Poland remains unresolved.

15. PONIATOWSKI: an elderly Pole, citizen of the USSR, a veterinary assistant residing in Tiraspol.

He appeared at the consulate during the same period as STANKIEWICZ (around May 1939) to inquire about the possibility of leaving the USSR for Poland.

Before coming to the consulate, PONIATOWSKI had written to me about his difficult financial situation and had asked me to contact his relatives living in the former Wilno voivodeship to find out whether they would be willing to take him into their care.

The response from his relatives was negative, and together with the letter informing of this, I sent him 100 roubles by post.

When PONIATOWSKI came to the consulate, he immediately sat down to write letters to his relatives, and I exchanged only a few words with him in the reception room.

[...]

Before his arrest, ŻENSIKOWSKI had been involved in espionage activity, maintaining contact with the Polish Consul in Kyiv, to which he provided information regarding collective farm construction and the mood of the collective farmers.

During the investigation of his case, he said nothing about this activity. After his release from the labour camp, he returned to his family in the *Kovali* collective farm.

ŻENSIKOWSKI asked me to arrange for his departure to Poland.

Since ŻENSIKOWSKI's case was held at the Polish Embassy in Moscow, I promised him that I would send an inquiry to the embassy, then contact the Soviet authorities, and inform him of the results.

At the same time, I asked ŻENSIKOWSKI whether he would agree, pending a decision on his departure to Poland, to resume informing for the consulate.

Without any hesitation, ŻENSIKOWSKI gave his consent. I then advised him to return to *Kovali*, live there quietly, and informed him that he would receive instructions for his work from the consulate during his next visit (once we had summoned him).

The question of payment for ŻENSIKOWSKI's work was not raised, but I gave him a one-time payment of 100 roubles.

When ZARĘBSKI (he returned to Kyiv a couple of days later) learned about my conversation with ŻENSIKOWSKI, he was pleased and took the entire matter into his own hands.

At that time, I requested ŻENSIKOWSKI's case from Moscow; I received it about three weeks later. The information contained in the dossier fully corresponded to the biographical data provided by ŻENSIKOWSKI himself and made it possible to raise the question of recognizing his right to Polish citizenship.

However, ŻENSIKOWSKI did not receive a Polish passport.

Around mid-July 1939, ŻENSIKOWSKI received a letter from the consulate, requesting that he come to the consulate to process his passport application.

In order not to attract attention of the Soviet authorities to this matter, the letter stated that ŻENSIKOWSKI should either come to Kyiv personally or send his photograph.

ŻENSIKOWSKI did not appear at the consulate and did not respond to our letter.

17. Anton KOSTETSKYI: Ukrainian, former Austrian subject residing in Cherkasy. He was born in a village near the town of Terebovlia (Western Ukraine), where his entire family still lives, except for his sister (married name MAKARCHUK), who lives in the United States, in New Jersey (near New York), where she and her husband own an inn.

In 1926, KOSTETSKYI, fleeing military conscription and repression for his involvement in the communist movement in Western Ukraine, escaped from Poland to Austria, where he studied for two years at the medical faculty of the University of Graz.

While in Austria, KOSTETSKYI joined the Communist Party and was subsequently expelled from the country.

After his expulsion from Austria, he lived for some time in Germany. In 1930, with the assistance of the International Red Aid (MOPR),[19] he arrived in the USSR.

While in the Soviet Union, KOSTETSKYI resided in Kyiv, where he first studied at the medical faculty of the local university and then, around 1932, joined the Kyiv Film Studio.

In 1933, KOSTETSKYI was arrested in Kyiv on charges of belonging to a Ukrainian nationalist organization and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the Solovki prison.

In January 1939, KOSTETSKYI was released from prison and arrived in Moscow, where he appeared at the Consular Department of the Polish Embassy, requesting assistance in returning to Poland.

Although KOSTETSKYI's "dossier" was kept at the Polish Embassy, he was given no definitive answer there.

19 MOPR (Mezhdunarodnaya organizatsiia pomoshchi bortsam revoliutsii – International Organization for Aid to Revolution Fighters) was a Soviet-sponsored international organization founded in 1922 under the auspices of the Communist International (Comintern). Its purpose was to provide political, legal, and material assistance to communists and other leftist activists imprisoned or persecuted abroad. Often described as a "Red Cross of the Revolution", MOPR functioned as both a relief agency and a tool of Soviet soft power, maintaining branches in many countries until its dissolution in the late 1940s.

Immediately after leaving the embassy building, KOSTETSKYI was detained by representatives of the Soviet authorities, who instructed him to proceed to Kyiv.

Upon arrival in Kyiv, KOSTETSKYI came directly to me at the consulate, recounted all of this, repeated his request for assistance with leaving for Poland, and asked that I contact his sister living in New Jersey to arrange financial assistance and to inquire about the possibility of emigrating to the United States (should his departure to Poland be denied).

I promised KOSTETSKYI that I would inquire about him at the embassy, write to his sister, communicate with the local Polish authorities, and asked him to return in two weeks for the results.

At the same time, as a form of financial support, I gave KOSTETSKYI 80 roubles, for which I received a written receipt.

The "dossier" on KOSTETSKYI that arrived from the embassy and the reply from the local Polish authorities (to my inquiry) confirmed the biographical details he had provided. However, it turned out that after his flight from Poland, KOSTETSKYI's Polish citizenship was annulled, making his return virtually impossible.

During one of his subsequent visits to the consulate, I informed KOSTETSKYI of this fact, but he continued to come and insist on obtaining permission to leave for Poland. During his third visit, KOSTETSKYI told me that he had been detained by the NKVD, where he had been advised to abandon the idea of emigrating to Poland and was promised employment.

I advised KOSTETSKYI to accept this offer and told him that if he were later able to re-establish contact with Ukrainian nationalist organizations, he might be useful to the Polish consulate for intelligence work.

KOSTETSKYI agreed to this proposal in principle but still asked that his case for return to Poland continue to be presented to the Polish authorities.

Through the Polish Consulate in New York, KOSTETSKYI's sister sent her brother a letter and 25 U.S. dollars.

The letter and money were sent by his sister following my inquiry about her to the Polish Consul General in New York, who had summoned her to the consulate.

In total, I issued 650 roubles to KOSTETSKYI over a period of time. Until May 1939, KOSTETSKYI lived in Kyiv without registration or fixed residence, spending most nights at railway stations.

In May 1939, he was forcibly settled in Cherkasy.

In June 1939, KOSTETSKYI came from Cherkasy to Kyiv for the last time to visit the consulate. He said that he still had no employment and

requested the issuance of a Polish passport with permission to depart for the United States.

Through me, he sent his sister a letter asking her to petition the American authorities for a visa allowing him entry to the United States.

During KOSTETSKYI's last visit to the consulate, he was also interviewed privately by ZARĘBSKI, who, as usual, was interested in questions related to the local military garrison.

18. KARPOVICH: approximately 13 years old, Belorussian. His father had been arrested several years earlier; his mother had been deported, after which he was placed in the Ovruch orphanage.

In July 1939, KARPOVICH came to the consulate, saying that he had run away from the orphanage after being accused of stealing linen. KARPOVICH explained that he had come to the consulate because he had once visited it with his mother, who had petitioned for permission to leave for Poland, where they had relatives in Western Belorussia.

In the course of the conversation, KARPOVICH also mentioned that while living in the Ovruch orphanage he had played in the orchestra of a military regiment stationed there.

When asked whether he wanted to go to Poland, KARPOVICH replied in the negative, explaining that he did not know the whereabouts of his relatives.

When I asked him what he wanted, KARPOVICH replied: "Just a bit of money".

Although an immediate check of the consular card index did not confirm the fact that KARPOVICH's mother had previously visited the consulate, I ordered that he be fed at the consulate, and, after giving him 30 roubles, advised him to return to the orphanage.

Two or three weeks later, KARPOVICH unexpectedly appeared at the consulate again, saying that he had run away from the orphanage once more but was planning to return there and was asking for money for a ticket and travel expenses to Ovruch.

Since KARPOVICH struck me as a very intelligent and capable boy, I immediately referred him to ZARĘBSKI for further conversation.

ZARĘBSKI recruited KARPOVICH on a trial basis, and after providing him with money for the ticket and travel, gave him an assignment to gather information on the military units stationed in the Ovruch area.

DESCRIPTION OF KARPOVICH: short in stature, slender build, dirty blond cropped hair.

Regarding the intelligence agents NIEZBRZYCKI mentioned to me, ZAWADZKI, HNATYSHAK (male), KSIĘŻOPOLSKI, and GOLDBERG (or GOLDMAN), about whom I testified during the interrogation of 22 November 1939, I find it necessary to clarify the following:

a) I might have remembered the last name "ZAWADZKI" incorrectly. It is possible that the name was ZALEWSKI or ZAKRZEWSKI. In Anopol, there lived a Polish property owner with one of these three last names; he departed for Poland in 1938.

b) As for HNATYSHAK, NIEZBRZYCKI referred either to Minodora HNATYSHAK's husband (later deceased) or to Minodora HNATYSHAK herself, known to me as being involved in intelligence work under MICHAŁOWSKI's direction.

c) I am not entirely certain that KSIĘŻOPOLSKI resides in Vinnytsia. Incidentally, in an old report from 1936 by my predecessor at the Kyiv consulate, KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI, it was noted that he had issued financial assistance to KSIĘŻOPOLSKI in the amount of 200 roubles.

d) I may also be mistaken in stating that GOLDBERG (or GOLDMAN) resides in Berdychiv. In that same report by KARSZO-SIEDLEWSKI, it was recorded that this individual had received financial assistance of 150 roubles from him.

Apart from the persons I have already listed, I am aware of the former involvement in Polish intelligence of several others:

- BINENFELD, doctor of chemistry from Konstantinovka;
- VERBER, doctor from Kharkiv;
- BIBIKA;
- IVINSKII, worker from the Donbas;
- KWAŚNIEWSKI and SHENFELD, Catholic priests from Kyiv;
- HORCHINSKII, Catholic priest from Kharkiv;
- Ilya PAWLIAK, from Kyiv.

All these people were, at various times between 1937 and 1938, arrested by the NKVD.

Only one of those arrested, namely PAWLIAK, was expelled to Poland in 1938.

*Question:* You will be interrogated further regarding these arrests and a number of other matters.

MATUSIŃSKI: I wish to make the following statements:

1. In May 1937 (shortly before his arrest), the Kyiv priest KWAŚNIEWSKI left information at the consulate stating that in the old Catholic

church of St. Alexander, under the wooden floor of the choir loft on the left side of the organ, a cache had been hidden containing valuable silver liturgical objects. After KWAŚNIEWSKI's arrest, no new priest was appointed; the faithful gathered in the church on their own, and later the church was closed.

2. During the liquidation of the Polish Consulate General in Kyiv, Officer of the Second Department, ZDANOWICZ, gave instructions to bury in the earthen floor of the cellar several cameras and photographic equipment, in particular a photographic apparatus for reproducing documents. All these items were buried. However, later on ZDANOWICZ hesitated, considering whether to unearth the items in order to take them with him out of the USSR. Whether ZDANOWICZ retrieved this equipment from the cellar or not in the end is unknown to me.

This testimony has been accurately recorded from my words, read and signed by me: (MATUSIŃSKI)

INTERROGATED BY:
HEAD OF THE FIFTH SECTION, THIRD DEPARTMENT, MAIN DIRECTORATE OF STATE SECURITY, NKVD USSR CAPTAIN OF STATE SECURITY:

(Rapoport)

[Seal]

SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 481, ark. 264–95.

# DOCUMENT № 3

Non-disclosure pledge signed by Chauffeur Pavel Maslov, dated 1 October 1939

## PLEDGE

1 October 1939
city of Kyiv

I, the undersigned, Pavel Platonovich Maslov, chauffeur and intelligence officer of the first category, employed by the First Section of the Third Special Department within the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, hereby submit this non-disclosure pledge to the Head of the Third Special Department of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, Captain of State Security, comrade Zavgorodny.[1] I pledge to keep in the strictest secrecy all that is known to me concerning the operation carried out during the night of 30 September – early morning of 1 October of the current year and to not disclose it to anyone, anywhere. In the event of any breach, I shall bear responsibility to the full extent of the law.[2]

SIGNATURE

Pledge has been collected

Head / Deputy Head of the Department

SIGNATURE

1 October 1939

chauffeur – Maslov

Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine (Haluzevyj deržavnyj archiv Služby bezpeky Ukrajiny, hereafter SSA SBU), f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 247.

1 Mikhail Zavgorodny (1900–1983): Soviet state security officer. Starting 1939, he headed the Third Department of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR. In 1941–1943, he served the Chief of the Combat Security Department at NKVD, subsequently heading NKVD directorates in the Stavropol Territory, as well as in the Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk) and Izmail oblasts.

2 The phrasing is characteristic of investigative and administrative documents of the NKVD from the late 1930s. Under the provisions of Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (and Article 54 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR), which prescribed the death penalty as the highest measure of punishment for a wide range of so-called "counterrevolutionary" acts, such a warning in practice amounted to a threat of execution.

# DOCUMENT № 4

## Cipher Telegram to Nikita Khrushchev Concerning the Arrest of Jerzy Matusiński, dated 1 October 1939

PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
OF THE UKRAINIAN SSR

EX. No. _____ Copying Prohibited TOP SECRET
CIPHER TELEGRAM Outgoing No. 3149

"___" _____ 193_ Received at the Cipher Bureau [ShB] on "1 October" year 1939 at "4:20 am"

Not classified
Act No. 24/2-609 dated 22 February 1913

FROM: Kyiv, NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR
TO: Moscow, NKVD of the USSR, Comrade Beria

In accordance with the directive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party(b) of Ukraine, Comrade Khrushchev,[1] at 1:30 am this morning, I arrested the Polish Consul Matusiński and the chauffeurs Łyczek and Orszyński, who were with him.

I request instructions regarding the remaining personnel of the consulate.

Gorlinsky
(SIGNATURE)

Released copies: No. 1, 2 – to the Cipher Bureau of the NKVD UkrSSR; No. 3 – to _____; No. 4 – to __.
Encrypted by _____ [signature] 1 Oct. 1939, 4.35 am, "_" words, "41" groups.
Secretary

SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 256.

1 Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971): Soviet statesman and party leader; First Secretary of the TsK KPSS (1953–1964) and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1958–1964). In 1938–1949, he held senior positions in Ukraine, serving as First Secretary of the TsK KPU(b), and simultaneously as a member of the Politburo of the TsK of the All-Union Communist Party (b).

# DOCUMENT № 5

Non-Disclosure Pledge of an NKVD Officer, dated 1 October 1939

## PLEDGE

I hereby submit this pledge to the Head of the Third Special Department within the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, Captain of State Security comrade Zavgorodny, that I undertake under no circumstances to disclose to anyone any information concerning the operation carried during the night of 30 September – early morning of 1 October 1939.

In the event of any violation, I shall bear full responsibility to the entire extent of the law.

Deputy Head of the 3rd Special Department of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR
Lieutenant of State Security

SIGNATURE

1 October 1939

Pledge received by:
HEAD OF THE RECORDS DEPARTMENT

SIGNATURE

1 October 1939

SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 239

# DOCUMENT № 6

List of Persons Involved in the Operation to Abduct Jerzy Matusiński, dated 1 October 1939

REFERENCE NOTE

Not classified
Act No. 24/2-609 dated 22 February 1913

The following comrades participated in or were informed of the operation carried out on the night of 30 September – early morning of 1 October of the current year:

1. Gromovenko: Head of the Third Department
2. Zavgorodny: Head of the Third Special Department
3. Tverdokhlebenko: Head of the Department of the Economic Directorate (EKU)
4. Zhelai: Deputy Head of the Third Special Department
5. Drumashko: Operations Officer of the Third Department
6. Levenets: Head of the Fifth Department
7. Bessonov: Acting Head of a Section within the Third Department
8. Donskoi: Head of a Section within the Third Special Department
9. Korolyov: Senior Operations Officer, Third Department
10. Falkovsky:[1] Deputy Head of a Section within the Third Department
11. Voloshin: Senior Operations Officer, Third Special Department
12. Maslov: driver and intelligence officer
13. Onishchenko: driver and intelligence officer
14. Malyshev: intelligence officer
15. Polishchuk: intelligence officer
16. Zenin: intelligence officer
17. Svetlov: intelligence officer
18. Dobrolyubov: intelligence officer
19. Ivanovsky: Head of the Reconnaissance Group
20. Sokolova: intelligence officer

Non-disclosure pledges attached.

[1] Veniamin Falkovsky (1908–1942): lieutenant, Soviet State Security officer. Starting 1933, he served in the OGPU–NKVD. Starting September 1939, he held the position of Deputy Head of the Third (Counterintelligence) Department of the Directorate of State Security within the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR. Falkovsky was reported missing in action at the Soviet–German front on 8 August 1942.

Head of the Third Department of the Directorate of State Security (UGB) NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR

Senior Lieutenant of State Security

SIGNATURE
(Gromovenko)

1 October 1939

21. Timofeyev
22. Udovichenko
23. [a]M–r[a]
24. Intelligence officer
25. [i]Timoshenko[i]
26. Warden

SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 236

# DOCUMENT №7

Non-Disclosure Pledge Signed by State Security Lieutenant Veniamin Davidovich Falkovsky, dated 1 October 1939

## PLEDGE

1 October 1939
Kyiv

I, Falkovsky, Deputy Head of the First Section within the Third Department of the Directorate of State Security of the NKVD, Ukrainian SSR, hereby give this pledge that I shall not disclose any information known to me concerning the operation carried out during the night of 1 October 1939, at the Polish Consulate in Kyiv.

I have been warned of the consequences should I disclose such information.

SIGNATURE

SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 245

# DOCUMENT № 8

## Cipher Telegram Concerning the Arrest of Jerzy Matusiński, dated 1 October 1939

Not classified
Act No. 24/2-609 from 22 February 1913

To be deciphered immediately

TO: Moscow, NKVD of the USSR
TO Comrade Beria[1]

On 30 September at 12 am, I was summoned to the Central Committee by comrade Burmistenko, who informed me that comrade Khrushchev, acting on instructions from Moscow and by order of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (b), provided the directive to arrest the former Consul of Poland, Matusiński, outside the premises of the former consulate.

I coordinated this matter with comrade Mamulov,[2] whereupon on 1 October, at 2 am, I arrested the former Polish consul and two chauffeurs on the street, in their automobile, having previously arranged for Matusiński to be summoned by telephone from the consulate through the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The arrested individuals have been placed in custody.

Seventeen people – former employees of the consulate and members of their families – remain on the premises of the former consulate.

I request your instructions.

Gorlinsky

Cipher Bureau of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR
Received by Cipher Bureau: 5:15 am
Sent for encryption: 6 am
Encrypted by g(signature)g
Cipher Bureau No. 50145/3150

1 October 1939
5 am

SSA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 368, ark. 257–58

1 Lavrentii Beria (1899–1953): Soviet statesman and party official, one of the principal architects of Stalin's system of repressions. He was the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs and head of the USSR's security and law enforcement apparatus.

2 Stepan Mamulov (1902–1976): Soviet party and state official, Lieutenant General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) / NKVD. Between 1939 and 1953, he held various senior positions within the NKVD system, including First Deputy Head of the NKVD Secretariat and Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR.

Jan Pisuliński

# Book Review: Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Jozef Pilsudski: Founding Father of Modern Poland* (Cambridge, MA – London: Harvard University Press, 2022)

Józef Piłsudski is undoubtedly one of the most important figures of twentieth-century Polish history, but he inspired disparate attitudes in his lifetime: he was both revered and despised. Today, however, he commands a place in the pantheon of the greatest Polish heroes. So, it is no surprise that he has also become the hero of the works of numerous Polish historians, including Wacław Jędrzejewicz, Andrzej Garlicki, Daria and Tomasz Nałęcz, and Włodzimierz Suleja.[1]

Joshua D. Zimmerman's book is the first scholarly biography written by a non-Pole. The author rightly notes the incomprehensible lack of studies on or interest in Piłsudski outside of Poland – this fact alone makes his book notable. Similarly important is the prestigious publishing house involved. The author himself is a graduate of the University of California and was awarded his doctorate at Brandeis University. A long-time professor of history at Yeshiva University, Zimmerman has to his name works on the history of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish relations, including on the Polish underground's approach to Jews during the Second World War,[2] the relationship between the Bund and Polish socialists,[3] as well as Jews in fascist Italy.[4] Many years ago, he attempted to present Piłsudski's attitude to the Jewish question.[5] This biography offers a comprehensive portrait of the same figure. While the author's book on the Polish underground and the Jews was generally well received around the world,[6] in Poland it was somewhat controversial.[7] In contrast, his biography of Piłsudski has so far received positive reviews.[8]

1 Wacław Jędrzejewicz, *Józef Piłsudski 1867–1935: życiorys* (Londyn, 1986); Daria Nałęcz and Tomasz Nałęcz, *Józef Piłsudski: legendy i fakty* (Warszawa, 1986); Andrzej Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski: 1867–1935* (Warszawa, 1988); Wojciech Suleja, *Józef Piłsudski* (Wrocław, 1995). I do not include here the numerous popular history books on the subject.

2 Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2015). Also translated into Polish: Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Polskie Państwo Podziemne i Żydzi w czasie II wojny światowej*, trans. Małgorzata Macińska (Warszawa, 2018).

3 Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews and the Politics of Nationality: The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in the Last Tsarist Russia, 1892–1914* (Madison, 2004).

4 *The Jews of Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1939–1945*, ed. by Joshua D. Zimmerman (Cambridge–New York, 2005).

5 Joshua D. Zimmerman, 'Józef Piłsudski and the Jewish Question, 1892–1905', *East European Jewish Affairs*, 28.1 (1998), 87–107.

6 Reviews include Antony Polonsky, 'The Complex Story of Armia Krajowa: review of *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945*, by Joshua Zimmerman', *Yad Vashem Studies*, 43.2 (2015); Theodore R. Weeks, review, *Polish Review*, 63.1 (2018), 107–09.

7 Dariusz Libionka, '"Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945" – recenzja', *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, 12 (2016), 548–56; Joshua D. Zimmerman, 'Odpowiedź na recenzję', *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, 13 (2017), 873–79; Andrzej Zbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi. Perspektywa Amerykańska (Joshua D. Zimmerman, Polskie Państwo podziemne i Żydzi*, trans. by M. Macińska, ed. by M. Rusiniak-Karwat, Warszawa 2018, pp. 623), *Konteksty Kultury*, 16.1 (2019), pp. 90–94; Waldemar Grabowski, 'Recenzja: *J. D. Zimmerman, Polskie Państwo Podziemne i Żydzi w czasie II wojny światowej*", Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, Warszawa 2018', *Polish-Jewish Studies*, 2 (2021), 296–320; Dawid Warszawski, 'Polskie Państwo Podziemne i Żydzi w czasie II wojny światowej. Na pytanie: „Jak było?", rzetelny historyk odpowie: „to zależy"', *Gazeta Wyborcza* "Ale Historia" supplement, 30 April 2018.

8 See Anita J. Prażmowska, '*Jozef Pilsudski: Founding Father of Modern Poland*, by Joshua D. Zimmerman', *The English Historical Review*, 138 (2024), 1459–60; J. Kaufman, rev. *Austrian History Yearbook* 2023; Mark Cornwall, 'Rebel with a Cause: review of Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Józef Piłsudski: Founding Father of Modern Poland*', *Literary Review*, February 2023.

The book's title demonstrates the author's intention to present his subject above all as the founder of Polish statehood. In the introduction, however, he declares a desire to address Piłsudski's "dual legacy": on the one hand, he was the founder and champion of the Polish state, laying the foundations of Polish democracy and defending tolerance and national minorities; on the other, he is the black legend of the imposition of authoritarian rule on Poland after 1926.

The biography is divided into 18 chapters, as well as an introduction, epilogue and index. It is richly illustrated with photographs, maps, and diagrams, which provide the reader with a better understanding of the contents. It is just a pity that there is no bibliography. The sources the author uses are predominantly Piłsudski's own writings as well as the memoirs of his friends, colleagues and contemporaries. Zimmerman also makes use of archival materials collected at the Piłsudski institutes in London and New York, as well as, to a modest extent, the Archives of Modern History Documentation in Warsaw. Polish readers, especially those familiar with Piłsudski's biography, are unlikely to find any new sources here that depict the marshal in a new light or reveal unknown details about his life. Something of note that the author does offer, however, is views quoted from the Western, particularly American, press, not just on Piłsudski himself, but also about the events taking place at the time in Poland. Also valuable are the accounts of Western politicians who met the Polish leader, thus showing how he was perceived in the Western world. As well as works in English, the author also uses a large amount of literature in Polish, with which he is undoubtedly well acquainted, especially older books. His knowledge of newer literature on the subject is less complete. There is no mention of the works of Waldemar Paruch and Grzegorz Nowik, for example.[9]

At the centre of the author's interests lies, of course, Józef Piłsudski, but he sketches the context in which he operated quite broadly, including the great powers' approach to the Polish question during the First World War. This provides Western readers unfamiliar with Polish history with a better understanding of the protagonist. Zimmerman portrays Piłsudski as a conspirator, leader, and statesman, but he also describes his complex emotional and private life. Above all, he gives a voice to his subject. We get to know Piłsudski chiefly through the many quotations from his own statements and publications, as well as accounts, recollections, and opinions about the man from the people around him. Zimmerman seems less interested in Piłsudski's political ideas, which is not to say that he omits

9 Waldemar Paruch, *Myśl polityczna obozu piłsudczykowskiego 1926–1939* (Lublin, 2005); Grzegorz Nowik, *Odrodzenie Rzeczypospolitej w myśli politycznej Józefa Piłsudskiego 1918–1922*, 2 vols (Warszawa, 2017–2020), See also e.g. *Józef Piłsudski: wyobraźnia i dzieło polityczne*, ed. by Jan Machnik and Andrzej Nowak (Kraków, 2006).

them. He also makes relatively little use of the views of previous biographers or other scholars.

The period covered at the greatest length in the book is that of Piłsudski's conspiratorial activity in the Polish Socialist Party. Five chapters are devoted to these 12 years (1892–1904), whereas Piłsudski's rule following the May Coup receives only three. The reason for this may be the author's particular interest in the earlier period, which he researched for his aforementioned book on the relations between Polish and Jewish socialists. An interesting and scarcely known topic is Piłsudski's attempts to collaborate with Lithuanian and Jewish socialists. Zimmerman also devotes a comparatively large amount of space to Piłsudski's approach to Jews, especially his efforts to win the Jewish community over to the idea of Polish independence by publishing in Yiddish. The author highlights the presence of people of Jewish origin in his subject's circle and the socialist leadership – Stanisław Mendelsohn being one example. He addresses similar issues later in the book too: for example, the postwar pogroms of Jews and Piłsudski's reaction (pp. 295–300), and the internment of Jewish soldiers at a camp in Jabłonna (pp. 364–68). Generally, Zimmerman emphasises Piłsudski's tolerance and positive attitude towards Jews [although he sometimes uses the diminutive *Żydki* (approximately: "little Jews")]. Fortunately, however, the Jewish themes in the book are not dominant and do not overshadow others. They are also certainly interesting for Polish readers, as previous biographies have tended to overlook these issues somewhat.

In keeping with the title, Zimmerman writes at length on Piłsudski's activities as Poland's Chief of State and his role in building the Second Polish Republic, particularly in border struggles. The author rightly cites this as his subject's greatest contribution. He notes that despite inheriting practically absolute power in November 1918, especially until the election of the Legislative Sejm the following year, Piłsudski did not exploit this for his own objectives. He decided to build a democratic, pluralist state. Quoting the words of Maxime Weygand, Zimmerman indirectly supports the view that it was Piłsudski who was behind the victorious Wieprz counteroffensive (pp. 368–69). However, he overlooks the fact that the Polish command had cracked the Bolsheviks' cipher and was therefore aware of their intentions, as Grzegorz Nowik wrote some time ago.[10]

The final chapters on the May Coup and the subsequent government are something of a disappointment. The author does not actually describe the Sanacja government, confining himself to basic information about the August Novelisation and the formation of the Non-party Bloc for

[10] See Grzegorz Nowik, *Zanim złamano "Enigmę"...: Polski radiowywiad podczas wojny z bolszewicką Rosją 1918–1920* (Warszawa, 2004); Grzegorz Nowik, *Zanim złamano "Enigmę"...: Rozszyfrowano "Rewolucję"* (Warszawa, 2010).

the Support of the Government. Of course, the book also addresses the conflict with the left and People's Party, and the emergence of Centrolew (the centre-left coalition), but it focuses less on the rise of authoritarian tendencies. The author recognises that the constitution adopted in April 1935, which gave the president vast power, was an element of Piłsudski's wider programme for Poland, which he had been developing since the early 1920s – the culmination of years of reflection on the need to strengthen the executive. In a sense, however, Zimmerman also excuses Piłsudski, quoting Antony Polonsky in noting that he criticised the tricks employed when parliament adopted the constitution (a reference to the voting on the so-called constitutional theses).

Zimmerman covers Piłsudski's foreign policy and relations with Germany and the Soviet Union at more length, including the non-aggression pacts with these two neighbouring countries. He discusses the issue of the so-called 'preventive' war in detail. For the author, the German-Polish declaration of non-aggression of 26 January 1934 was a significant achievement for Piłsudski as it was the culmination of his policy pursued in 1932–1934, namely the gradual departure from dependence on France towards balanced relations with Germany and Russia. Zimmerman cites the approving references to the agreement that were expressed in such newspapers as *The Observer*, *The New York Times*, and *Le Temps* (pp. 461–63). In his view, with this move Piłsudski "had achieved international calm and security, temporarily suspending any chance of compromising his country's security" (p. 469). Furthermore, he had strengthened Poland's status in the eyes of the Western powers, demonstrating to them that any disturbance of the border guarantees would lead Poland to do whatever was necessary to ensure its security. The author also notes, however, that Piłsudski was a pessimist regarding Poland's further prospects and wondered aloud to those he trusted which of the country's neighbours would be the first to strike.

On Piłsudski's death, Zimmerman underlines that the whole Jewish community in fact united in grieving for him. Jews saw him as their defender, the author notes, and the wave of violence against Jews was only unleashed after his death (pp. 483–85). He also points out that Poland lacked capable heirs to the marshal's legacy. Józef Beck, the foreign minister, was unable to navigate the country through the crises stacking up in the international arena, steering a pro-German course in the questionable belief that the January declaration would guarantee Poland a longer peace (pp. 485–87) (although his attitude to the Anschluss with Austria or the Czechoslovak crisis raises valid objections).[11]

11 See, for example, Marek Kornat and Mariusz Wołos, *Józef Beck. Biografia* (Warszawa, 2020), especially pp. 876–82.

The author generally confines himself to presenting his subject's biography, showing less interest in his political ideas. He omits, for example, the concept of Prometheanism, which is associated with Piłsudski, or the "imperial thought" developed by his supporters. He also fails to address at length issues that caused the most controversy in his subject's biography, such as his stance on federalist ideas. Many scholars have major doubts regarding the perception of Piłsudski as a federalist – citing the widely known assertions from his letter to Leon Wasilewski of April 1919 – as did those who worked with him, such as Michał Romer, a member of the Polish Legions. Nor does the author specify the shape of the planned federation – for instance whether it would only encompass Belarus and Lithuania, or also Ukraine.[12] Moreover, when discussing Piłsudski's minority policy, he does not mention the so-called "Volhynia Experiment".

As is often the case with biographers, Zimmerman goes easy on his subject, although he does not conceal his more controversial manoeuvres and actions. Perhaps it is for this reason, however, that he is sparing in his description of the Brest arrests and the torture, trials and sentencing of those imprisoned in the Brest Fortress, including individuals once ideologically close to Piłsudski, such as the socialist Herman Lieberman. He does, however, point out that the Brest affair had a major impact on the evaluation of the last years of Piłsudski's rule, citing the views of the Western press. However, there is no mention of the still-unexplained fate of General Włodzimierz Zagórski or the beatings of people critical of Piłsudski, such as Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz and Adolf Nowaczyński. Zimmerman also omits his subject's role in the pacification of Eastern Galicia (p. 425), although the marshal personally ordered the minister of internal affairs, Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski, to carry it out.[13] There is a general lack of criticism of the system created by Piłsudski after 1926 – for which he bore full responsibility – which was based on military men, many of whom did not have appropriate competences, and Piłsudski surrounded himself with followers and supporters rather than people willing to oppose him, etc. Zimmerman is not interested in the cult of the marshal which formed in Piłsudski's lifetime – encouraged by the man himself – although he does highlight the meetings of the members of the Polish Legions.

In his conclusions, Zimmerman addresses Piłsudski's greatness and merits for Poland and his place in Poles' collective memory. He also emphasises the accuracy of his predictions regarding the threats from Germany and the Soviet Union. Zimmerman sees Piłsudski generally as a democrat

12 On this subject see: Jan Pisuliński, 'Czy Piłsudski był federalistą? – dylematy polskiej historiografii', *Biuletyn Ukrainoznawczy*, 11 (2005), 111–26; id., 'Polityka wschodnia Józefa Piłsudskiego – interpretacje polskiej historiografii', in *Józef Piłsudski: wyobraźnia i dzieło polityczne*, pp. 51–58.

13 See Sławoj F. Składkowski, *Strzępy meldunków* (Warszawa, 1988), pp. 104–05.

who, after years of chaos and changing governments, believed that the Poles were not ready for democracy. In his view, a key event influencing this state of affairs was the assassination of President Gabriel Narutowicz and the public response to this crime (pp. 491–492). One must agree with the author's sad observation that Piłsudski is practically unknown outside of his homeland. Zimmerman concludes by emphasising that his subject had a vision of a tolerant, multiethnic Polish Republic, a democratic and pluralistic country whose citizens had equal rights regardless of sex, religion, or nationality. Facing a political crisis in the last years of his rule, however, he relied on force as way to restore the democratic future, therefore leaving a mixed legacy. While this final observation is questionable, it illustrates the author's approach to his subject well.

The book also contains certain errors and inaccuracies. As for the major mistakes, it is hard to agree with the author's claim that one of Piłsudski's first decisions as leader was to send officers to Poznań, thanks to which the Germans surrendered the city as soon as November 1918 and "Piłsudski's troops" (sic) seized most of the surrounding province "largely without bloodshed" (p. 293). On 22 December 1919, the Supreme Council of powers merely suspended its earlier decision of 21 November to grant Eastern Galicia to Poland for 25 years as a mandate of the League of Nations, rather than bestowing the region to Poland, as the author writes (p. 350). This was only formalised by a decision of the Conference of Ambassadors on 14 March 1923. Later, Zimmerman confuses the Supreme Council decision of 8 December 1919 that designated the eastern border of the territories on which Poland could establish its administration with the contents of a dispatch from British Foreign Secretary Lord George Curzon from July 1920, which became the basis of the so-called Curzon Line. Also, 3 May is Constitution Day in Poland, not "Kościuszko Day" (p. 374). Moreover, it was not Piłsudski who claimed in 1919 that there was no independent Poland without an independent Ukraine, although many attribute this quotation to him. In fact, these words were spoken in March 1920 at a banquet hosted by the Ukrainian Diplomatic Mission in Poland by Ignacy Daszyński, his erstwhile close colleague and opponent in his later years (as Speaker of the Sejm in 1928–1930).[14]

Therefore, while this book might leave readers, especially Polish ones, with a feeling of something missing, in general it serves as a reliable presentation and popularisation of the figure of Józef Piłsudski around the world. That is commendable.

14 Oleksander Docenko, *Litopys ukrajins'koji revoljuciji. Materijaly j dokumenty do istoriji ukrajins'koji revoljuciji*, (1917-1923), vol. 2, issue 5 (Lviv, 1923), p. 251.

Wiktor Węglewicz

# Book Review: Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Jozef Pilsudski: Founding Father of Modern Poland* (Cambridge, MA – London: Harvard University Press, 2022)

In Poland, Józef Piłsudski needs no introduction. He remains one of the most important figures in the country's history, with a continuing gigantic influence on the Polish nation. In the West, however, he is not widely known. The publication of the first Western scholarly biography of Piłsudski, by Joshua Zimmerman, is therefore a welcome event.

Joshua D. Zimmerman is a professor at Yeshiva University in New York; his interests include Polish-Jewish relations in the first half of the twentieth century, the history of the Bund, working-class movements in the late nineteenth century, and the Holocaust.[1]

The subject of Zimmerman's research this time is Józef Piłsudski. Since the author is not from Poland and is therefore emotionally unattached to the controversial figure of the country's first marshal, it will be extremely interesting to examine Piłsudski from an entirely unprejudiced, critical perspective.

Following an introduction, the book contains 18 chapters and an epilogue. The review copy in PDF format contains a total of 641 pages. The publication also includes the Piłsudski family tree, a dozen or two photographs and maps, endnotes, acknowledgements, a list of illustrations, and an index. It lacks a separate bibliography, which somewhat hampers efforts to trace the sources on which it is based.

In the introduction, the author begins the book with two quotations. The first, from Adam Michnik, concerns Piłsudski's desire for a multinational state. The second is from Andrzej Garlicki, who claims that Piłsudski saw himself as able to shape the course of history and Poland's destiny according to his will; "like other great persons from the past", he thought he should be able to dominate others. Zimmerman proceeds to explain (p. 6) that the book will portray Piłsudski through his dual legacy of authoritarianism and pluralism. The first legacy – the "white" legend – concerns Piłsudski's tolerance, especially towards the Jews; the second – the "black" legend – is that of the May Coup, the 1934 declaration of non-aggression with Germany, the formation of the Bereza Kartuska camp, and the preparation of a constitution which gave a permanent form to authoritarian

[1] Joshua D. Zimmerman's major publications include: *Poles, Jews and the Politics of Nationality: the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892–1914* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) and *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* (Cambridge – New York, 2015).

governments. In the subchapter titled 'Piłsudski's literature', the author discusses the existing works on Piłsudski, starting with the first one, published in 1915 and written by Wacław Sieroszewski. He then discusses the foreign-language works published before the Second World War as well as Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski's biography. Zimmerman also points to Oskar Halecki's *A History of Poland*, published in the United States in 1943, the first to portray Piłsudski in both a positive and a negative light. After the Second World War, historiography was divided into two camps: behind the Iron Curtain, the black legend reigned, elements of which also appeared in works of Polish post-WWII emigres in Western countries; meanwhile, in most works of émigré historians, the white legend was in the ascendancy, casting Piłsudski as a national hero. Zimmerman notes that Andrzej Garlicki, a historian from the University of Warsaw, was the author of the first fully fledged scholarly biography, which both continued and departed from the image of the black legend (p. 11), yet this author focused largely on Piłsudski's failures, especially in the 1926–1935 period, paying considerably less attention to his successes (1914–1920). Zimmerman points out that the main and for years only biography of Piłsudski was that written by Wacław Jędrzejewicz, who portrays the marshal as a hero – the resurrector of Poland. Concluding his literature review, the author details the most important biography in Polish, by Włodzimierz Suleja, who demonstrates both Piłsudski's positive and negative features.

The biography begins with a chapter entitled 'Childhood and Adolescence'. Zimmerman briefly describes Józef Klemens's ancestors, paying much attention to his parents, especially his father, Józef Wincenty, and his unsuccessful business interests. Interestingly, he refers to Piłsudski Senior as an agricultural "visionary" with a very future-oriented approach to running his farm (p. 25). The next pages paint a tableau of the fire on the Piłsudski estate in 1874 that forced the family to move to Vilna (which became the favourite city of the future Marshal of Poland, as Zimmerman notes on more than one occasion in the book). He discusses the Russian schools that Piłsudski attended, the last of which he completed in 1885. Of course, there is also a passage about the Russian teachers who would appear in Piłsudski's nightmares much later (pp. 36–37). A small comment: the quotation about 15-year-old Piłsudski throwing out the Muscovites refers to not the whole of Poland, but only Zułów (p. 38). After completing school, Piłsudski went to university in Kharkov, but Zimmerman mentions this only briefly before proceeding to describe the beginnings of Piłsudski's revolutionary activity in Vilna and arrest for involvement (albeit only incidental) in the plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander III, resulting in five years of exile in Siberia. According to Zimmerman, although Piłsudski's

involvement in the plot was only incidental but his elder brother Bronisław's involvement was direct, these events represented a turning point in Piłsudski's life.

Chapter 2 discusses Piłsudski's Siberian exile in Kirensk and Tunka. The author uses the interesting ploy of showing his subject's psychological condition at the time through his extensive correspondence with his family. He focuses in this chapter on describing the marshal's later romance with Leonarda Lewandowska, particularly their lengthy correspondence, and also the end of the relationship. Zimmerman uses these letters to Leonarda to show Piłsudski's state of mind, emotions and family issues. Slightly less space is devoted to presenting the young exile's relations with important figures who made a decisive impact on his views: Bronisław Szwarce, Stanisław Landy and Michał Mancewicz.

The next chapters (3–5) concern Piłsudski's underground activity. Chapter 3 begins with his return to Vilna on 30 June 1892. The author writes little about the beginning of Piłsudski's acquaintance with Maria Juszkiewicz, although he does mention the fact that Roman Dmowski also made overtures towards his future wife (p. 78). He also describes his participation in the activities of socialist organisations in Vilna and his contacts with Jewish socialists until the formation of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in Warsaw in March 1893. This is followed by Piłsudski's activity in the PPS, the Jewish question and his debut writing for *Przedświt*, his trip to London, and the inaugural printing of the *Robotnik* newspaper. The author notes, importantly, that it was on these pages that Piłsudski first presented federalist ideas. In my view, this chapter spends too much time discussing contacts between the PPS and Jews. Chapter 4 moves on to Piłsudski's international activity, i.e., his trip to London for the Fourth Congress of the Second Socialist Internationale, then the printing of Jewish newspapers and brochures, but particularly his trip to the International Socialist Congress, where he was keen to secure a resolution on Poland's independence but was unsuccessful due to Rosa Luxemburg's opposition. Chapter 5 explores Piłsudski's life after returning to Vilna, including workers' issues, discussions with his colleagues (such as Leon Wasilewski), and the question of building monuments to Adam Mickiewicz and Mikhail Muraviev (particularly interesting here is Zimmerman's depiction of Piłsudski's views on these events), concluding with his marriage to Maria Juszkiewicz, the move to Łódź, and his arrest in 1900. Also in this chapter the author deals at length with his subject's contacts with the Jewish workers' movement, but there is little about Piłsudski's actual activity among Polish workers; the author also focuses on the texts he published in *Robotnik* and issues related to PPS's political programme.

Chapters 6 and 7 are transitional, containing such elements as a description of Piłsudski's audacious escape from a Saint Petersburg hospital, then his journey to London and to Galicia, and his writing of articles in Galicia until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. Here we could insert a general remark that throughout the book Zimmerman is more interested in the PPS's relations with Jews and Lithuanians than in issues concerning Polish workers and independence – this applies particularly to Chapters 3–6. A minor quibble is the author's not entirely correct use of the term "Lithuanian city" for Vilna in 1903 (p. 167). He also discusses two important texts: 'How I Became a Socialist' and 'The Revolutionary Struggle in the Russian Partition', printed in Krakow.

Chapter 8 is a very important one, covering issues from the period of the revolution in 1905. Zimmerman discusses Piłsudski's departure to Japan and meetings with the Japanese authorities, yet he deals with them quite briefly and with an emphasis on Dmowski's counterproposal. He also explores Piłsudski's activity at the time of the 1905–1907 revolution in the Kingdom of Poland (stressing that his subject was less interested in revolutionary activities, despite the admiration of his comrades, and paid more attention to working on the creation of Poland's own military organisation in the form of the Union of Active Struggle, rightly foreseeing that liberalisation in Russia would be short-lived). This chapter also includes the beginnings of Piłsudski's romance with Aleksandra Szczerbińska and the collapse of his marriage to Maria. In my opinion, Zimmerman should have expanded on the question of the Russo-Japanese War because Piłsudski (as the author later notes) was hugely interested in Japanese military action against the Russians and studied individual battles in minute detail. Indeed, this was such an important issue for him that in the 1920s he decided to award the Order *Virtuti Militari* to the surviving veterans of the Japanese operations (Zimmerman could have developed this issue to include the text cited in the footnote).[2]

Chapter 9 begins with Piłsudski's final wishes, thoughts, or guidance regarding the future direction of Poland's political landscape and leadership in the event of his death, which he sent to Feliks Perl before the Bezdany raid. The author describes this operation itself in quite general, undetailed terms. He then sketches the creation of the Riflemen's Association and the Union of Active Struggle, as well as cooperation with the Austrian Army intelligence (Captain Józef Rybak), followed by his lectures on the January Uprising. The chapter concludes with the famous Paris lecture of February 1914 (the author quotes the memoirs of the Russian

2 Wacław Jędrzejewicz, 'Japończycy kawalerami Virtuti Militari', *Niepodległość*, 7 (1962), pp. 245–53.

socialist Viktor Chernov) and the outbreak of the First World War. Zimmerman portrays Piłsudski here as a man preparing to embark on efforts to form an army to regain independence.

The subject of the next two chapters, 10 and 11, is Piłsudski's activity during the First World War. They contain standard elements that had to be included in any biography of the marshal: the march of the First Cadre Company and Piłsudski's address on this occasion. Zimmerman concentrates more on political activity and issues of cooperation with the Supreme National Committee (NKN), leaving less room for the military activity of the Legions. Chapter 10 ends in August 1915, with the capture of Warsaw by the Central Powers. Chapter 11 concerns Piłsudski's activity between 1915 and 1918. There is a great deal here about his activity, relations with Germans (e.g., General Beseler), the oath crisis, and his internment in Magdeburg. The author also outlines the development of the Polish question in 1917–1918: Wilson, the Polish National Committee (KNP). For me, however, this chapter is missing two things: 1) the question of Polish formations in the East (Naczpol, the Polish Chief Military Committee in Saint Petersburg, chose Piłsudski as honorary head of the Union of Military Poles, and for a moment he even considered breaking through to the East); 2) the information that Brigade II of the Polish legions swore allegiance to the Central Powers and only withdrew this obligation following the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

Chapter 12 begins with the fall of the Hohenzollern monarchy in Germany, meaning Piłsudski's release followed by his return to Warsaw and capture of power. It is good that the author presents various views on this event, not just positive ones; his account suggests that everyone was in favour of Piłsudski taking power and ensuring order in the country. However, I have a few comments on this chapter: Daszyński's (Lublin) government was dissolved on not 16 November but 12 November. Further controversies are caused by the sentence on p. 293, which states that "Piłsudski sent army officers to Poznań" and that "Poles had taken control over Poznań province by November 1918", which is not quite true. The uprising did not start until 27 December 1918, after I.J. Paderewski's journey via Poznań to Warsaw. Similarly controversial is the description of the taking of power in Lwów by the Ukrainians from the Austrians: it was not the viceroy who handed control to the Ukrainians, and it was not merely an "opportunity" for the Ukrainian National Council but a well-planned process that had been going on since 16 October 1918. Lwów railway station was not occupied by the Ukrainians but came under a Polish-Ukrainian agreement, although it was later Poles who manned the area of the station. It is also not quite correct to call the capture of Lwów a "Polish uprising"; here, Zimmerman is

following the conclusions of Damian Markowski's book, but the latter's arguments are unconvincing. In my view, we should refer to the Polish-Ukrainian struggles for the city. The author also depicts the anti-Jewish violence that broke out mainly in Galicia, especially the pogroms in Lwów and Kielce. However, it is important to note that in the section on anti-Jewish violence he does not mention that it was not only soldiers but also the urban underclass who participated in the pogrom, and those arrested by the police for looting also included Ukrainians and Jews. The conclusion to the chapter is excellent, however, as Zimmerman magnificently captures the situation in which Piłsudski found himself upon his return to Poland in November 1918 – one of chaos and a lack of a strong army.

Chapter 13 is about negotiations with the KNP to establish a uniform Polish representation in the international arena and appoint a Legislative Sejm. Zimmerman offers an interesting depiction of Piłsudski through the eyes of Western diplomats and journalists and does not hesitate to cite the Western press from the period. I have just one comment: the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) was formed only in 1925; prior to that it was the Communist Workers' Party of Poland (KPRP).

Chapter 14, "The State Builder", presents what in my view was the most important aspect of Piłsudski's activity: his efforts, which lasted even until late 1920, to construct a state amid wars with Poland's neighbours. However, I have numerous comments on this chapter. First, on p. 335, why does the author find the federalist idea "controversial"? It seems that Zimmerman could be looking at the incorporation of the federalist concept from a somewhat present-day point of view. I am not sure whether Piłsudski did indeed think in such terms in early 1919. The author includes the famous quotation about the Eastern frontier where "there are doors that open and close", which is an excellent illustration of his policy at the time. Piłsudski was therefore adapting his policy to the circumstances. A more serious shortcoming of this book is the author's exceptionally brief treatment of the question of the war in Eastern Galicia, a matter which in fact played a major role in his policy; there is no mention, for example, of the fact that Piłsudski saw the outbreak of the war as a bad thing that complicated his political plans in the East. Zimmerman omits Piłsudski's reflections on the border in Galicia entirely, devoting just one sentence to the offensives in May and July 1919. I also have concerns regarding the question of the division of Cieszyn Silesia at the Spa Conference: the author does not mention the context of the Poles' defeat on the Bolshevik front, meaning that no other result was possible at the time. There is equally little on Dnieper Ukraine. Symon Petliura is referred to only a few times in the book, although in 1920 he played a key

role in Piłsudski's Ukrainian policy. The author discusses the Treaty of Warsaw at great length, but his presentation of Piłsudski's address given in Vinnytsia on 17 May 1920 could also have included, for example, Isaak Mazepa's impressions and opinions from his memoirs.[3] It is unclear why the author completely overlooks the Battle of the Niemen River, which was the culmination of the routing of the Red Army that was carried out during the Battle of Warsaw and sealed the failure of Lenin's programme. The chapter is saved somewhat by its conclusion: Zimmerman asserts that the Treaty of Riga was a failure of two programmes – the federalist one and Lenin's aspirations. Minor quibbles: p. 338 – Kowel was captured from the Ukrainians in February 1919; p. 343 – Rumsza was still a colonel at the time, and it was actually the remnants of the Fifth Siberian Rifle Division who returned to Poland; p. 348 – should say "remaining neutral"?; p. 351 – the talks in March 1920 took place in Borisov, which the author does not mention; p. 361 – the 10th Soviet Army was not on the Polish front, so I assume the author is referring to the 10th Rifle Division. The question of the camp in Jabłonna needs to be treated separately and one must be very careful with numbers: 17,680 Jewish soldiers, a figure based purely on press reports, is definitely too high. This was the number given in the order for their internment; however, in reality fewer were interned, according to scholars including Jerzy Kirszak.[4] In general, this chapter is disappointing and unbalanced: again the author covers Jewish issues in depth, while summarising Ukrainian matters in brief and general terms without understanding the delicate nuances (the West Ukrainian People's Republic, the Ukrainian People's Republic, the issue of Eastern Galicia). There is no mention of Piłsudski's declaration that the Eastern Galician question was closed for a generation, nor of his attempts to negotiate with Metropolitan Sheptytsky. A major flaw in my view is the author's failure to discuss the issue of the "third Russia" (neither "white" nor "red" Russia, which Piłsudski wanted to build with revolutionist Boris Savinkov), as well as his stance on the members of the "White Guard" (General Karnicki's mission, issues of the Third Russian Army, formed in Poland in 1920). There is also no mention of the Belarusian question.

Chapter 15 examines the years 1921–1926, which encompassed Piłsudski's visit to France in 1921, the change in government, normalisation of family life, the murder of President Narutowicz, his withdrawal from political life to Sulejówek, his activity as a writer, and ending with the May Coup. Unfortunately, Zimmerman writes little about the assassination

3 Isaak Mazepa, *Ukrajina v obni j buri revoljuciji 1917–1921* (Praha, 1942), III, pp. 24–25.
4 Piotr Korczyński, 'Czarna legenda 1920 r. – Jabłonna', *Polska Zbrojna*, 16 August 2020 <https://www.polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/31833?t=Czarna-legenda-1920-r-Jablonna> [accessed 28 April 2024].

attempt carried out by a "Ukrainian nationalist", Stepan Fedak (Jr), son of Stepan Fedak (Sr), in Lwów in 1921. Information about the attack can be found in the memoirs of the elder Stepan Fedak.[5] Once again, the author demonstrates his lack of grasp of Ukrainian Galician issues. It is also a pity that Zimmerman does not cite the view of Piłsudski expressed by Prince Nicholas, son of King Ferdinand of Romania (who, during the Pole's visit to his country in 1922, wanted to receive him nonchalantly, with a cigarette in hand, but when Piłsudski reached him, the king stood to attention, demonstrating the effect the marshal had on people). A comment on p. 388: the resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors also deemed Eastern Galicia to be an integral part of the Polish state. I also have reservations regarding Piłsudski's history of the 1920 war, which was announced in 1924 as a response to Tukhachevsky's publication "March across the Vistula". Zimmerman is wrong to claim that the main conclusion from the Soviet general's text was that the Red Army's failure was caused by technical deficits: Tukhachevsky makes it clear that it was the divergence of the fronts at right angles that caused the defeat. Meanwhile, it should be added here that Piłsudski's book was supposedly a response to Tukhachevsky's publication, but it was aimed directly at certain Polish generals and had more of an impact in Poland than in the USSR. Zimmerman's discussion of the May Coup is also rather too brief.

Chapters 16 and 17 present Piłsudski's life after 1926, i.e., his path towards authoritarian rule. The author discusses the various changes of government, the August Novelisation, the Centrolew (centre-left coalition) and the Brześć affairs. Zimmerman shows that – with the political situation having stabilised in 1931 and amid worsening health – Piłsudski decided to manage personally only foreign policy and control of the army. The author devotes a large part of this chapter to discussing Piłsudski's policy towards the USSR and the Third Reich, and the signing of the two non-aggression pacts. He also refers to Piłsudski's supposed proposal to France of a pre-emptive strike against Germany. Zimmerman does not state conclusively whether such a document actually existed, cautiously accepting that Piłsudski considered such a plan, but he conclusively states that it was probably not formally presented to the French. Piłsudski's farsightedness is striking as he anticipated that peace would be short-lived; indeed, the Polish–German non-aggression pact was a success, but only a temporary one ("it will last for another four years"). A useful addition to the chapter would have been a description of the marshal's review of the cavalry in Krakow in 1933.

5 Stepan Fedak, 'Rozmova z Maršalom', in *Sojusz polsko-ukraiński 1920 roku. Refleksje nad przeszłością – myśli o przyszłości*, ed. by Jan Matkowski and Stanisław Stępień (Warszawa, 2020), pp. 199–203.

The final chapter presents the last months on Piłsudski's life and his efforts to secure the best possible peace for Poland. Zimmerman (perhaps too) briefly depicts the marshal's death and the ensuing mourning, also showing how he was viewed abroad at the time, as well as how the Jewish community saw his death (the author claims that the Jewish stance was that thanks to Piłsudski there were no persecutions, and pogroms began only after his death). It is a shame that he does not show Poles' experience of the mourning. The author concludes with a critical overview of Minister Beck and his policy; what is lacking, however, is a brief discussion of his successor, Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz, and the policy pursued by President Ignacy Mościcki.

The book ends with an "epilogue". Zimmerman sums Piłsudski up as an ardent democrat who always aspired for Poland to be a democratic country in which all minorities and Poles had equal freedom of choice. His attempt to push Russia's borders eastwards towards its ethnic boundaries and to build buffer states was unsuccessful, so he regarded this failure as a misfortune for Europe. However, after concluding that the French assurance did not apply to border guarantees, he made pacts with the Germans and Soviets but had no illusions that these guarantees, especially with Germany, would last longer than four or five years. The most controversial episode in Piłsudski's life was the May Coup, but Zimmerman demonstrates that this resulted not from a change in his views – which remained democratic – but rather the economic and political chaos in 1918–1926, as well as Polish society's inability to implement its new obligations as a free country, respect constitutional equal rights for all, and accept the results of free elections even if they were disappointing. Zimmerman argues that the decisive moment that changed Piłsudski for good was the assassination of President Narutowicz and his shock at the press's public praise of the murderer. In my view, the author's quoting of the words of Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski is apt: "The Right's murder of Narutowicz, and the complete impunity of the chief instigators led Piłsudski to the conviction that nothing can be achieved in Poland through kindness and persuasion, that force and extortion are the only way, and that one has to be tough and ruthless" (p. 492).

I have no major comments to make about the bibliography; useful additions, however, apart from those cited in the footnotes, would be Marek Kornat and Mariusz Wołos's biography of Józef Beck,[6] as well as the works of Jan J. Bruski.[7]

6 Marek Kornat and Mariusz Wołos, *Józef Beck: biografia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2020).
7 Jan J. Bruski, *Petlurowcy. Centrum Państwowe Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej na wychodźstwie (1919–1924)* (Kraków: Arcana, 2000); Jan J. Bruski, 'Ukraina w koncepcjach Józefa Piłsudskiego w latach 1918–1921', *Czasopismo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich*, 31 (2020), 11–25.

## CONCLUSION

This is a good, interesting, extremely balanced book. Although the author's sympathies for his subject shine through, he leans neither towards hagiography nor towards accusing Piłsudski of dictatorial tendencies. Perhaps the book's biggest merit is that it shows that Józef Piłsudski always remained a democrat, although the situation in Poland and the immaturity of its population forced him to employ authoritarian methods in power. Regarding the portrayal of minorities, Zimmerman is most interested in Piłsudski's attitude towards Jews and vice versa, as well as everything related to this. An example is the emphasis on the little-known figure of Bronisław Mansperl, a Jewish soldier of the Legions, whose photograph is even included on p. 225. In contrast, the author lacks extensive knowledge on Ukrainian issues, has a moderate familiarity with the subject literature, and does not understand that, as Bruski showed, the Ukrainian question was central to Piłsudski's political thought in 1918–1921. In sum, this is a solid biography of Piłsudski that gives non-Polish readers familiarity with the complicated life of this important figure.

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