

IN SEARCH OF UKRAINIAN-POLISH UNDERSTANDING AT THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II

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Abstract: *The authors have chosen for their study a problem that almost no one has raised for many decades, but which is present in one form or another when it comes to the state of current Ukrainian-Polish relations. The motive that encouraged the authors to prepare this paper was the discovery in Polish foreign and domestic archives of documents that shed light on the search for possible ways to cooperate between the two nations to liberate from occupation and restore their statehood.*

Indeed, the Ukrainian-Polish negotiations in the Romanian capital of Bucharest in January 1940 gave a kind of impetus to the resumption of contacts in this matter between the Ukrainian State Center in Exile and the Polish Emigrant Government. The documents found as well as other materials adjacent to these issues allowed the authors to recreate the history of continuing attempts to resume the Ukrainian-Polish dialogue on liberation from occupation, rebuilding the statehood of the two countries and establishing cooperation after World War II.

Keywords: *World War II, Ukraine, II Rzeczpospolita, Romania, Bucharest, Ukrainian State Center, Polish Emigrant Government, Ukrainian-Polish relations.*

Rezumat: *În căutarea înțelegerii ucraineano-poloneze la începutul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Pentru studiul lor, autorii au ales o problemă prezentă, într-o formă sau alta, când vine vorba de actualele relații ucrainene-poloneze, dar aproape deloc discutată timp de mai multe decenii. Motivul care i-a încurajat pe autori să pregătească această lucrare a fost descoperirea în arhivele străine și interne poloneze a documentelor care aduc la lumină posibilele modalități de cooperare între cele două națiuni dornice să se elibereze de sub ocupație străină și să-și restabilească statalitatea.*

Într-adevăr, negocierile ucraineano-poloneze din capitala României, București, din ianuarie 1940 au dat un anumit impuls reluării contactelor în această chestiune, între Centrul de stat ucrainean în exil și guvernul emigranților polonezi. Documentele găsite,

precum și alte materiale adiacente acestei probleme au permis autorilor să recreeze istoria încercărilor continue de reluare a dialogului ucrainean-polonez privind eliberarea de sub ocupație străină, reconstruirea statalității celor două țări și stabilirea cooperării după al Doilea Război Mondial.

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the USSR and what was called “the world system of socialism” led to significant changes in the modern world order. Among the innumerable manifestations of this process, beyond any doubt for Ukrainians and Poles stands primarily a problem of relations between Ukraine and Poland - both at the international and especially at the human level. In the current circumstances, the importance of the need for mutual understanding in all spheres of life is determined by the conclusions of Polish academics of the XIX century that both states need each other. It has happened that today's Poland is far ahead of Ukraine in domestic development, as well as in the international arena.

However, Poles and Ukrainians in the past, unfortunately, have gone through great trials not so much because of the attitude of their neighbours, but primarily because of misunderstandings between them. Over time, conflict and generated negative stereotypes that are superimposed, grew to the twentieth century to reach its peak and cause in both nations' large losses in mutual counteracting that prevents even now from establishing proper human relations, although the interstate after Ukraine gained independence, before Poland's withdrawal from Soviet control, developed satisfactorily.

After the end of the Great War, several independent states appeared on the political map of Central and Eastern Europe as a result of the collapse of the Habsburg and Romanov empires. Among them are Ukraine and Poland. Each of them overcame considerable difficulties in establishing their statehood, establishing relations with neighbours.

For more than a century, the problem of why Ukraine did not establish itself as a sovereign, independent state among its neighbours has been debated. Poland regained its statehood. In addition to purely Polish ethnic areas, it included territories with a mixed Ukrainian-Polish population or those with an absolute majority of the population of which were Ukrainians.¹

¹ Volodymyr Holovchenko, *Poza mezhamy mozhyvoho: diplomatiya UNR u borot'bi za nezalezhnu natsional'nu derzhavu* [Beyond the Possible: UPR diplomacy in the struggle

Since ethnic Ukrainian-Polish borderlands were claimed by both countries, this could not affect the deepening contradictions between them. Moreover, in the process of post-war state formation, two Ukrainian states emerged - the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR), with its capital in Kyiv, and the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR), in territories previously part of Austria-Hungary, but mostly populated with Ukrainians. Due to the proclamation of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, an armed conflict arose between it and the revived Polish state, and the Western Ukrainian People's Republic lost. Even during the conflict, it was called in Poland "The Battle for Lviv", there was a unification of UPR and ZUNR in a single unified state. However, it was more declarative. The act of unification of the two Ukrainian states also did not contribute to the normalization of Ukrainian-Polish relations.²

As for the UPR, Poland recognized it, but only in areas for which it did not claim. In other words, it was about Galicia and the western part of Volyn, as well as Kholmshchyna and Podlasie, which the UPR considered its territories.³ The government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, led by Simon Petliura, faced a difficult choice. In this extremely difficult situation, the latter took the only right step, agreeing on April 21, 1920, in Warsaw, which is still popularly called the Petliura-Pilsudski Agreement.⁴

After the overthrow of the UPR by the Bolsheviks, their authority was established on the territory of Ukraine, which before the fall of the Romanov monarchy belonged to Russia, completely controlled by Russia, now Bolshevik state. The Soviet Ukrainian government, together with the Russian government, signed a peace treaty with Poland on March 18, 1921, on the same territorial basis as the Petliura-Pidsudsky Agreement. However, this did not prevent Soviet

for an independent nation-state] in *Ukrayina dyplomatychna. Naukovyy shchorichnyk* [Ukraine is diplomatic. Scientific Yearbook], Kyiv, 2017, p. 63-80.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*; Stepan Vidnyans'kyy, *Varshavs'kyy dohovir 1920 roku v otsyntsi suchasnoyi ukrayins'koy istoriografii* [The Warsaw Treaty of 1920 in the assessment of modern Ukrainian historiography], in *Ukrayina dyplomatychna. Naukovyy shchorichnyk* [Ukraine is diplomatic. Scientific Yearbook], Kyiv, 2017, p. 95-96; Yuriy Makar, *Ukrayins'kiy dyplomatiyi 100 rokiv* [Ukrainian diplomacy is 100 years old], in *Istoryko-politychni problemy suchasnoho svitu. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'* [Historical and political problems of the modern world. Collection of scientific works], t. 35-36, Chernivtsi, 2017, p. 84-86.

propaganda from claiming that Petliura had sold Western Ukraine to Poland. The lands of Ukraine, which became part of the established USSR (and this was the vast majority of its territory) have ceased to play any independent role, and not only in interstate relations.⁵

Throughout the interwar of the 20th century, the Polish authorities tried to subdue the Ukrainians who found themselves within its borders and interned the remnants of the UPR Army who came to its territory.

The beginning of the World War II showed to both Ukrainians and Poles that to defend their state interests, it is necessary to look for ways to get closer, and not to adhere to what distinguishes them. It so happened that the Polish government in September 1939 emigrated to Romania. Here it remained until the famous events of the following year. And Bucharest became the centre of concentration of Ukrainian and Polish political emigration, which was facilitated by the presence of the Ukrainian and Polish communities of this state in Romania from the times before the Great War.

After the actual division of Poland between Nazi Germany and Stalin's USSR, the Polish government, already being in exile, drew attention to the representation of Ukrainian State centre in exile, representing ousted UPR internationally, though had opportunities and adequate support for this.⁶

Nevertheless, the Polish émigré government set out to restore contacts with the UPR's foreign missions. As for the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, as Ukraine became known as part of the USSR, which II Rzeczpospolita interpreted as to its enemy⁷, it could not play any role in establishing Ukrainian-Polish relations.

AIMS OF THE STUDY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PROBLEM

In general, much has been written about Ukrainian-Polish relations in the interwar period, as well as during World War II. But in Soviet authors' papers dominated mostly ideological patterns, where were repeated myths about the

⁵ Yuriy Makar, *op. cit.*, p. 86-87.

⁶ Andrzej Wawryniuk, Yuriy Makar, *Malovidomi sproby pol's'ko-ukrayins'koho politychnoho porozumynnya na pochatku Druhoyi svitovoyi viyny* [The little known attempts at Polish-Ukrainian political understanding at the beginning of World War II], in "Zovnishni spravy", 2016, №7, p. 18-24.

⁷ Adam Daniel Rotfeld, Anatolij W. Torkunow (red.), *Białe plamy - czarne plamy. Sprawy trudne w relacjach polsko-rosyjskich (1918-2008)* [White spots - black spots. Difficult matters in Polish-Russian relations (1918-2008)], Warszawa, 2010, s. 99.

happy life of the Ukrainians in brotherly union with the other nations as the part of the USSR. At the same time, in the papers of the authors of that time condemned the behaviour of the authorities of neighbouring states, where local Ukrainians were persecuted. But beyond any, that focus remains the question of activity Ukrainian political leaders in exile.

And life pushed out from Ukraine a large number of Ukrainian politicians, scientists, cultural figures, etc., who first settled mostly in Europe, and later moved to North America. At that time, there were many Ukrainians in the United States and Canada, including those born there. They even raised the issue of Ukrainian statehood at the interstate level. For example, we can mention the member of the Canadian Parliament Michael Luchkowich, who brought the Ukrainian issue to the parliamentary debate. Back in 1931, he acquainted parliamentarians with the situation of Ukrainians in the USSR, Poland, and the activities of Ukrainian state branches in Europe⁸. M. Luchkowich was not the only representative of the Ukrainian diaspora in North America who demanded a positive solution to the Ukrainian issue in Europe. He was supported by other politicians in Canada and the United States. Newspapers in Ukraine, *Ukrainskyi Holos* (Ukrainian Voice), published since 1910, and *Svoboda* (Liberty) in the United States, published since 1893, expressed their support for the independence efforts of UPR and ZUNR politicians in exile.⁹

Since the state-independence movement in sub-Soviet Ukraine was brutally suppressed, in the interwar period it could only develop outside its borders, including in Poland, which, however, recognized only the UPR, as the authors mentioned above. Thus, we could talk about its recognition of Ukrainian statehood in the territory of Soviet Ukraine. The problems of Ukrainians living in the eastern districts of Poland were to be resolved by the authorities of that state by their domestic law and following the international obligations assumed after receiving the 1923 mandate from the League of Nations.¹⁰

Much has been written about how the commitments made by the authorities of the Second Rzeczpospolita to Ukrainians within its borders have been fulfilled - mostly negatively by the Ukrainian side, in particular in the mentioned magazines in the West. As for Poland, it can be said without a doubt

⁸ *A Ukrainian Canadian in Parliament: Memories of Michael Luchkowich*, Toronto, 1965. Appendix B., pp. 71, 81-95, 101-103, 104-105.

⁹ *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Volume V, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1993, pp. 479, 128.

¹⁰ Andrzej Tadeusz Olszański, *Historia Ukrainy XX w.*, Warszawa, 1992, s. 123-158.

that within its policy the interpretation of the Ukrainian problem was ambiguous. Even high-level politicians considered it appropriate to pursue a unifying policy towards Ukrainian citizens. It seems appropriate to refer to the memoirs of the Polish diplomat and scientist, Count Jan Stanisław Łoś, republished in Ukrainian in 2018.¹¹ Memoirs were written and printed in parts of the interwar period.¹² Later, the authors systematized them into three sections - his reflections on the Ukrainian cause in Poland, his correspondence in this case with Polish and Ukrainian figures and his maxims on establishing satisfactory relations with Ukrainians - citizens of Poland. The leading opinion of the author of the memoirs is a satisfactory attitude towards Ukrainians and establishing contacts with Ukrainian exile structures, including in Poland, which, in his opinion, should not only strengthen its domestic position but also significantly strengthen its position in the international arena due to the behaviour of the then neighbours from the west and the East - Germany and the USSR.¹³

The Ukrainian problem constantly bothered Polish politicians during World War II. It was discussed by members of the Anti-Hitler Coalition at the highest level and ended with the so-called population exchange, which, in our opinion, not only did not resolve it, but to some extent complicated the resettlement of Ukrainians and Poles, and ultimately the establishment of post-war borders. Accordingly, this was talked about after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Scientists on both sides of the border have set out to find ways to overcome long-standing negative stereotypes in interpersonal relationships against the background of the fact that interstate is developing satisfactorily.

With the collapse of the USSR, the situation changed significantly. Ukrainian and Polish scientists during several recent decades put a lot of effort, to find some common tangent, a contribution that would eliminate the negatives of the past in mutual relations. We can, for example, refer to the materials of Ukrainian-Polish scientific seminars in both countries in 1994-2001, with the general title *Ukraine-*

¹¹ Jan Stanisław Łoś, *Ukrayins'ka sprava u spohadakh, lystuvanni y publitsystytsi. Vybrani tvory*. uporyadk. Maciej Marszał i Sylwia Wójtowicz; pislyamova Marek Łoś. Perekład z pol's'koyi V. Sahan, nauk. red. S. Troyan, A. Kyrydon, Kyiv, 2018, 340 p.; Polish edition: Stanisław Łoś, *Sprawa ukraińska we wspomnieniach, korespondencji i publicystyce*. Wybór pism Stanisław Łoś; wyboru i redakcji naukowej dokonali, wstępem i przypisami opatrzyli Maciej Marszał i Sylwia Wójtowicz; posłowie Marek Łoś, Kraków, 2012, XXI, 410 s.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 19-30 (Ukrainian edition).

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-316.

Poland: difficult questions (published). The aim of this research was the relations of Ukrainians with Poles in 1918-1948. Among the topics that were discussed, there was a place and to the search of the issue of mutual understanding during the interwar period, especially during World War II.

In seminars materials' might be met the links to the conversations from the beginning of the war between the representatives of the Polish and Ukrainian public about combining efforts in the liberation struggle. It is, for example, the talks on this subject in April, and then in June-July 1940 between the representatives of the Polish Union of Związek Walki Zbrojnej (ZWZ) Władysława Piechowska and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky.¹⁴ In May of the same year, Lieutenant Colonel Stanisław Pstrokoński arrived in Lviv on behalf of the ZWZ leadership to establish "careful contacts" with Ukrainian national liberation organizations.¹⁵ On August 29 of that year, Polish General Stefan Rowecki, who headed the ZWZ, ordered his subordinates to reach an understanding with Ukrainians and Belarusians "not so much in the area of former Polish statehood, but as opportunities for fraternal defeat before a common enemy."¹⁶

The following year, on July 10, a representative of the Polish underground in Lviv met with a member of the government liquidated by the German occupation authorities, Yaroslav Stetsko, and lawyer Volodymyr Horbov, to discuss the principles of uniting liberation efforts.¹⁷ In October 1941, representatives of the Polish underground met in Warsaw with a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, Borys Levytsky, during which they discussed the possibility and principles of joint resistance to the occupiers.¹⁸ Just

¹⁴ *Polska – Ukraina: trudna odpowiedź. Dokumentacja spotkań historyków (1994-2001). Kronika wydarzeń na Wołyniu i w Galicji Wschodniej (1939-1945)* [Poland – Ukraine: Difficult Answer. Documentation of historians' meetings (1994-2001). Chronicle of events in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia (1939-1945)], Warszawa, Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2003, s. 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, s. 71-72.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, s. 72; Halina Czarnocka, Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, Józef Garliński i in. (Eds.), *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach, 1939-1945* [Armia Krajowa in Documents, 1939-1945], t. 1, Londyn, Gryf Printers Ltd., 1970, s. 298-299.

¹⁷ *Polska – Ukraina: trudna odpowiedź*, s. 79; Halina Czarnocka, Józef Garliński, Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki i in. (Eds.), *Armia krajowa w dokumentach, 1939-1945*, t. 2, Londyn, Gryf Printers Ltd., 1973, s. 143-144.

¹⁸ Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (hereinafter – AAN), *Ukraińskie organizacje polityczne i wojskowe w czasie wojny* [Ukrainian political and military organizations during the war], sygnatura 202 / III - 134, ark. 273.

a month in Lviv rep for the Polish Information and Press Bureau (Informacji i Presy) discussed the same issues with Professor Vladimir Kubiiovych, the Head of the Ukrainian Central Committee.¹⁹

Similar examples can be given from almost all years of the war and after it. Unfortunately, the problem of the reconciliation of Poles with Ukrainians at the interpersonal level is still waiting to be solved. Nowadays, it is constantly present both in scientific research and in political interstate relations. However, it is not thoroughly investigated as it should be. As for bilateral contacts during the war regarding the combined efforts to liberate themselves from occupation, there is no attempt to systematically investigate this issue. It is present but not adequately covered. Both sides mostly focus on mutual accusations - who did more harm and to whom.

However, in addition to the above-mentioned long-term scientific seminar, over the past three decades, scientists on both sides of the border have published many papers in search of mutual interpersonal reconciliation that benefits both peoples. Among the recent publications on this topic should be noted the collective work of Ukrainian and Polish scientists from the Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv and Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, edited by Walentyn Baluk and Mykola Doroszko.²⁰ Although it concerns Ukrainian-Polish relations in the present, it nevertheless contains excursions into the past, including events during the twentieth century. In our opinion, documentary research on the signing of the Treaty between the governments of the revived Poland and the Ukrainian People's Republic in April 1920 is of great mutual benefit in defending one's statehood through joint efforts. We mean the publications of 2010 and 2020. The first of them contains studies by Polish and Ukrainian authors with the involvement of many documents. The materials cover the entire last century²¹. The second was issued before the 100th anniversary of the said Agreement and contains Polish and Ukrainian documents with

¹⁹ AAN, *Zespół akt Armii Krajowej. Komenda obszaru Lwów. Sprawozdanie z grudnia 1941 r. o rozmowach z prof. Kubijowiczem* [Collection of files of the Armia Krajowa. Lviv area command. Report from December 1941 on talks with prof. Kubijowicz], sygn. 203/ XV - 3.

²⁰ Valentyn Balyuk, Mykola Doroshko (Eds.), *Ukrayins'ko-pol's'ki vidnosyny v umovakh hibrydnykh zahroz bezpetsi / Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie w warunkach hybrydowych zagrożeń bezpieczeństwa* [Ukrainian-Polish relations in the conditions of hybrid security threats], Kyiv-Lublin, 2019, 280 p.

²¹ Tadeusz Krząstek (Ed.), *Pol'shcha ta Ukrayina v borot'bi za nezalezhnist' 1918-1920* [Poland and Ukraine in the struggle for independence 1918-1920], Warszawa, Vipart, 2010, 524 p.

appropriate interpretations.²² Both publications are not limited to the events of that time. The documents published in them give the key to understanding the relations between the two peoples in fact to this day.

It can also be stated that only during the last decade on the Ukrainian²³ and Polish²⁴ sides, scientists are making new attempts to eliminate outdated stereotypes in relations between the two peoples and their ability to interact both for domestic development and for cooperation in the international arena.

The authors of the proposed paper set themselves the goal in finding the origins of attempts to establish cooperation between the Polish authorities in exile and representatives of the Ukrainian national liberation movement at the beginning of World War II. Before that, their motivation was to obtain materials from Polish archives in London, New York and Warsaw.²⁵

Following in the footsteps of us, in collaboration with the Polish scientist

²² Jan Pisuliński, Witalij Skalski, *Sojusz Piłsudski – Petlura. Dokumenty i materiały*, Warszawa, Studium Europy Wschodniej Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2020, 420 s.

²³ Yuriy Makar, Mykhaylo Hornyy, Vitaliy Makar, Anatoliy Salyuk, *Vid deportatsiyi do deportatsiyi. Suspil'no-politychne zhyttya kholms'ko-pidlyas'kykh ukrayintiv (1915-1945): doslidzhennya, spohady, dokumenty* [From deportation to deportation. Socio-political life of Kholm-Podlasie Ukrainians (1915-1945): research, memoirs, documents], T. 1, Chernivtsi, 2010, 880 s.; Ruslana Davydyuk, *Ukrayins'ka politychna emihratsiya v Pol'shchi: sklad, struktura, hromads'ko-politychni praktyky na terytoriyi Volyns'koho voyevodstva* [Ukrainian political emigration in Poland: composition, structure, socio-political practices in the territory of Volyn Voivodeship], L'viv-Rivne, 2016, 704 s.; Volodymyr Komar, *Kontseptsiya prometyizmu v politytsi Pol'shchi (1921-1939 rr.): natsional'no-kul'turne ta relihiyne zhyttya* [The concept of Prometheism in Polish politics (1921-1939): national, cultural and religious life], Luts'k, 2015, 404 s., etc.

²⁴ Marek Korwat, Wojciech Materski, *Między pokojem a wojna. Szkice o dyplomacji polskiej s lat 1918-1945* [Between peace and war. Sketches on Polish diplomacy, 1918-1945], Warszawa, 2015, 163 s.; J. Marszałek, J. Kowa, Z. Karpus, *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: historia i pamięć* [Polish-Ukrainian relations: history and memory], Toruń, 2008, 304 s.; Barbara Stoczewska, *Ukraina i Ukraińcy w polskiej myśli politycznej. Od końca XIX wieku do wybuchu II wojny światowej* [Ukraine and Ukrainians in Polish political thought. From the end of the 19th century until the outbreak of World War II], Kraków, 2013, 392 s.; Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego* [Ukrainian national idea of the interwar period], Toruń, 2013, 461 s.

²⁵ The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, *Council of Ministers (Cabinet Office)*, sygnatura 15a.; Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, sygnatura 701/9/2; AAN, *Ministerstwo spraw zagranicznych*, sygnatura 607.

Andrzej Wawryniuk, small research was published on this subject in Ukraine.²⁶

BUCHAREST: THE FIRST POLITICAL CONTACTS IN EXILE

The behaviour of the Soviet Union at the beginning of World War II clearly showed that it was not going to abide by previously concluded agreements with neighbouring states, including Poland, which was 1939 divided in September with Hitler's Germany, which, in turn, prompted the Polish emigrant government should pay attention to the exile centres of the overthrown UPR and talk to them about joint efforts to liberate themselves from occupation.

It so happened that at the very beginning of the World War II, the capital of Romania became the place of the first Ukrainian-Polish contacts between the two enslaved peoples at that time to possibly coordinate efforts for the future restoration of their independence.

According to the documents found, attempts of political dialogue between Polish and Ukrainian emigrants in the West began after the outbreak of World War II. The first signal of this dialogue could be considered the information transmitted to the Polish Foreign Ministry by the Polish Embassy in Romania in a letter dated on January 13, 1940. It said that a Polish-Ukrainian meeting was held in Bucharest on January 10-11 of that year, which was attended by well-known Ukrainian public and political figures from Bukovina and Bessarabia, at various times members of the Romanian Parliament, Volodymyr Zalozetsky, Ilko Gavrilyuk, Denis Mayer-Mykhalsky (a lawyer in Bucharest), Yuriy Serbinyuk, by the way, a native of Sadhora (now part of Chernivtsi), as well as representatives of the former UPR mission in Romania Vasyl Trepke, Dmytro Herodot (pseudonym of Dmytro Ivashin) and Colonel Hnat Porokhivskyy. Unfortunately, the authors were unable to find out who specifically participated in the negotiations on the Polish side. But, without a doubt, they were employees of the Polish embassy in Romania and, it is possible, politicians who arrived there together with the evacuated state structures from Poland. According to the authors of the information, "during the political discussion, strong tendencies of Ukrainians to impose close cooperation in Romania (with the Polish side – Ed.), as well as in the international arena, also not to raise irritating moments, were suddenly revealed. There is a noticeable advantage not only against Soviet but also against German accents". It is important to note that, as stated in the document,

²⁶ Andrzej Wawryniuk, Yuriy Makar, *op. cit.*, p. 18-24.

“several common fundamental political theses have been approved”. Of course, both the meeting and the committee set up at it were secret.²⁷

In another document, the Embassy of the Rzeczpospolita in Bucharest wrote about the mentioned meeting: “The initiative of this conference found the most favourable responses from both the representatives of the Ukrainian minority and the local Petliura branch.²⁸ As arises from the discussion, it is a collective invitation (representatives of local Ukrainian immigrants from Dnieper - Ed.) was perceived by Ukrainians as a gesture for unification.”²⁹

Interesting for modern researchers is the description of individual Ukrainian figures who took part in the meeting, given to them by the Embassy of the Rzeczpospolita. In particular, Vladimir Zalozetskyi and Yuri Serbyniuk, editor of *The New Council* in Chernivtsi, were described as the most energetic figures in Bukovina, and at the same time – of the *Ukrainian National Party*, which was equivalent to Galician *Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance*. Besides, Volodymyr Zalozetsky, a former member of the Vienna parliament and several convocations of the Romanian one, was described as “the greatest authority among Bukovinian Ukrainians, while Yuri Serbinyuk (who was recognized by Polish diplomats – Ed.) was the most active propagandist of Bukovinian Ukrainians.”³⁰

The letter from the Polish embassy also contained positive comments about other Ukrainian participants in the meeting. In particular, Ilko Gavrilyuk, a deputy of the former Russian Constituent Assembly (1917), was described as a prominent authority in the Ukrainian environment of Bessarabia. Three other representatives of the Ukrainian side were represented as the members of the Ukrainian emigration: Vasyl Trepke, a former Ukrainian military attaché during the Directory, was appointed head of the *Ukrainian mission*, and Dmytro Herodot was appointed the Head of the *Ukrainian agency in the Balkans*. It is written about Colonel Porokhivskyy that he was the founder of the *Union of Former Military Personnel*.

The Polish Embassy in Bucharest also provided information on the issues raised at the meeting. Among them was “the problem of Polish and Ukrainian minority in Romania, as well as the media cooperation, especially within Romania

²⁷ The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, *Council of Ministers (Cabinet Office)*, sygnatura 15a, ark. 1, 2, 4.

²⁸ The Polish side described the representatives of the State Center of the Ukrainian People's Republic in terms of “the Petliura center”, “a group of Petliurians”, and “the Petliurists”.

²⁹ The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, *Council of Ministers (Cabinet Office)*, sygnatura 15a, ark 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

and, if possible, elsewhere among immigrants (obviously Polish and Ukrainian - Ed.)". The quoted document contains an important, in our opinion, mention of the fact that during the meeting the Ukrainians "emphasized the need for appropriate cooperation under the slogan of protecting the statehood of each party."³¹ Among the most important conclusions of the meeting was the statement that "the existence of an independent Ukraine is impossible without a strong Poland, in turn, without an independent Ukraine, Poland will be in constant danger of German-Soviet understanding (to the detriment of the latter - Ed.)". The document also contains an important note that deserves to be quoted: "Mr. Trepke, bypassing the issue of Polish-Ukrainian borders, has noted that the cementing factor of Poland and Ukraine (obviously, relations between them - Ed.) will be not only their common interests but also a sincere understanding that would guarantee the ethnic interests of the Polish people living on Ukrainian territory and all (the people - Ed.) Ukrainian, who will be in the territory of Rzeczpospolita."³² Regarding the territorial borders of the future, Ukraine representative of the Polish Embassy in Romania Łączkowski stated that "Poland is not a country of unlimited pressure to the east, but Ukraine should not think of over-expansion to the west". The Polish diplomat also added that "not Lviv, nor Przemyśl, only Kyiv and the Donetsk basin are the centres of Ukraine."³³

It is not difficult to imagine that the initiative of the Polish embassy was not implemented, as Romania joined Hitler's coalition on November 23, 1940, and the Polish embassy in Bucharest ceased to function in September of that year. Polish interests in Romania was represented by Jerzy Giedroyc as head of the Polish section at the Embassy of Chile.³⁴

From the correspondence of the representatives of the Polish émigré government at that time, it is quite clear that the Ukrainian question was not indifferent to them. Thus, an influential worker Polish émigré Foreign Affairs Zdzisław Miłoszewski, a former officer of the Polish secret services, but after the

³¹ Archiwum i Muzeum im. Generała Sikorskiego w Londynie (AiMSL), *Prezydium Rady Ministrów* (PRM), sygn. 15a, ark. 5, 6.

³² *Ibid.*, ark. 7-9.

³³ *Ibid.* k 10.

³⁴ He is a well-known and extremely popular Polish public and political figure who has been advocating Polish-Ukrainian unification since the interwar period. He continued to do so in exile during and after the war, editing the monthly journal "Kultura" in France (Див.: *Entsyklopediya Ukrayinoznavstva. Slovnykova chastyna* [Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies. Vocabulary part], т. 2; Paris-New York, 1955-1957, p. 475).

war co-organizer of the Federal Central European club in Palestine in a letter dated on May 20, 1940, to Adam Tarnavsky, head of a department of the Foreign Affairs, anticipating developments in Romania recommended to send back employees who could perform secret assignments, lets names them - projects of prometeism³⁵, "pushing the peoples enslaved by Soviet Russia to fight against it"³⁶. In particular, he recommended entrusting the function to Jerzy Giedroyc, who was already there, and as his assistants were advised to be appointed a professional scout Piotr Kurnicki. This is stated in the letter: "Jerzy Giedroyc as a secret commissioner for Prometheus' work in Romania. The assistant is Peter Kurnicki, especially in Ukrainian affairs, but also in general because ... Mr. Kurnicki has wide contacts among leading Prometheus figures. I understand that Mr. Giedroyc also covers Hungary with his competence, where a special commissioner should not be appointed. Giedroyc's task will be to create the necessary network for himself. We have people who are accordingly."³⁷

POLISH VISION OF THE UKRAINIAN PROBLEM

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Documentation of the Republic of Poland prepared a document that is defined as "Coverage of current Ukrainian problems". It was addressed to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and was classified as a top-secret. What was the document about that should have been "locked up"? The fact is that at that time Polish politicians in exile realized that Ukrainian independence organizations were convinced that the German occupation authorities did not intend to help them create an independent Ukrainian state, but only tried to use them in their far-reaching plans to conquer Europe, or even more. But, for obvious reasons, Polish politicians did not want the Ukrainian issue to be resolved without their participation. That is why the letter draws attention to the fact that "the French make it easier for Ukrainians to access and contact with the American press". Moreover, the letter states, "that the Ukrainian nationalist camp has refused, partly sincerely and partly insincerely, from a common platform with Germany, is trying by all means to ensure that its representatives become informants and men of trust of French government

³⁵ Andrzej Wawryniuk, Yuriy Makar, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

³⁶ Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego w Nowym Jorku (IJPJN), *Rzqd na emigracji* (RPE), sygnatura 701/9/2, ark. 59.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

circles, and even more English, and the British have their support through semi-official assistance from the Canadian Dominion.”³⁸ According to the authors of the document, in the current situation, the most important task of Polish politics was not the Ukrainian program and the proclaimed Ukrainian independence slogans, but they need to “force the French and British with all our official and unofficial political steps to implement all their plans through us via Ukrainian Committee of Prokopovych and Shulgin, but not with other Ukrainian groups.”³⁹

What is written in the letter explains the principled position of the Polish side regarding the territory of future independent Ukraine, as it was seen by the authorities of this country in exile.

The documents we have studied show that the Polish émigré government, realizing the need for good contacts with the Ukrainian environment in Europe, even worked out a special budget to support the Ukrainian exile government, including funds for the publication of the weekly *Trident*, what followed the end of the publishing of *The Ukrainian word* in Paris.⁴⁰

Another aspect of Volodymyr Solovyi's activity sheds some light on the raised issue. According to the Polish materials found, on October 24, 1940, the Ukrainian embassy in Lisbon was approached by a “Ukrainian figure from the Petliurist group”, in fact, Volodymyr Solovyi. It is known that he came from the Eastern Lemko region, ran in 1930 for the Sejm of the Republic of Poland from the Sanitsky district. At the beginning of the war, he went to Paris and from there to London. Had the powers from the Prime minister of UNR in exile Alexander Shulhyn “to defend among Western allies the Ukrainian interests.”⁴¹

In connection with his appeal Polish Ambassador in Portugal Karol Dubicz - Penther, in turn, appealed to their government to explain himself how to behave in this situation. “Englishmen denied him (Soloviy - Ed.) on a visa to enter England without the permission of London and sent a letter to the Home Office. Since I do not know the current political posture of Mr. Shulhyn and Smal-Stotskyj (Roman - Ed.) and other gentlemen of the group⁴², I ask the Minister to instruct me to send instructions on whether and to what extent to provide him with the assistance of

³⁸ AiMSL, PRM, sygn. 15a, ark. 17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, ark. 19, 20.

⁴⁰ AiMSL, sygn. 36, ark. 31.

⁴¹ *Entsyklopediya Ukrayinoznnavstva. Slovnykova chastyna*, T. 8, Paris, 1976, p. 2946-2947.

⁴² The ambassador meant the State Center of the Ukrainian People's Republic, headed by Vyacheslav Prokopovich and Alexander Shulgin.

1000 escudos and I do not know whether to finance his further stay.”⁴³

The Foreign Minister of the Emigrant Government, August Zalewski, in response to the ambassadors to Portugal, asked him “not to allow Soloviy to come here (to London - Ed.)” so that he would not know that the opposition to leaving stemmed from us.”⁴⁴ Another letter, already signed by the Minister of the Interior of the Emigrant Government, Stanislaw Kot, to the Embassy in Brno, sheds light on his attitude to the State Center of the Ukrainian People's Republic in Exile and its figures. In particular, Kot wrote to Ambassador that the arrival of Soloviy to London as a representative of the UPR DC “irrelevant”, while “we should help financially to friendly Ukrainians, especially Prokopovych and Shulgin.”⁴⁵

We also have information that Polish diplomats in the West supported the efforts of Ukrainian exiles to create an armed force in the West. It is said, in particular, in a letter to the Polish Embassy in Stockholm and its Foreign Ministry on the actual negotiations with Alexander Shulgin on with the creation of the Ukrainian Legion from imprisoned Ukrainians.⁴⁶

UKRAINIAN PROPOSALS FOR COOPERATION

Continuing the story of the attempts to establish Polish-Ukrainian contacts at the initial stage of the war, it is worth to mention another document developed by the Polish Emigrant Ministry of the Interior, about which the Minister of Foreign Affairs was informed. The document is dated on April 4, 1941. It says that one of the leaders of the UNR in exile DC Vyacheslav Prokopovych, who was named in the document as the President, wrote on January 29 of that year to Stanisław Kot a letter with a proposal to collaborate. The letter, if implemented could help to work together for the benefit of both parties. Accordingly, the document deserves to be discussed in more detail. Thus, Prokopovych wrote that “he is deeply convinced that, despite the fluidity of war and unfavourable political situation, our common (Ukrainian-Polish - Ed.) efforts should protect the vital interests of our peoples, a stable order and lasting peace in the east of Europe”. In his view, the decisive prerequisite for this would be a “fundamental adjustment of solutions between our people for ethnographic grounds and agreement between

⁴³ AAN, *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (MSZ)*, sygn. 607, ark. 365, 366.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ark. 885.

⁴⁶ AiMSL, PRM, sygn. 15a, ark. 13.

the two countries in the economic and military spheres. A clear statement from your side would be very desirable. Sincere understanding and its terms, forms of cooperation now and its possible areas could be agreed in further negotiations.”⁴⁷

Vyacheslav Prokopovych then, addressing the Polish government-in-exile, wrote that if they agreed to the preconditions for cooperation set out by him, he, for his part, would be ready for precise talks with any neutral country or place of stay of the Polish government “on the condition that:

- 1) Necessary formalities will be agreed;
- 2) Necessary employees will be present with me;
- 3) I will be guaranteed proper financial opportunities.”⁴⁸

According to the Ukrainian statesman, with the consent of the Polish side, these issues could be agreed with the representatives of the Polish government-in-exile at his place of residence. “The Brotherhood of Arms in 1920, the bloodshed against Moscow together, the experience of many years of cooperation”, he wrote in his letter, “give me hope that today we will overcome all difficulties, find opportunities to restore, mutually beneficial, concerted work to bring to a happy end the years of hard struggle “for our and your freedom.”⁴⁹

We mentioned above the letter of the Polish Foreign Ministry in exile to its Foreign Ministry, as the reaction of the Polish side to Prokopovych's appeal, quite clearly, through the prism of the attack of Hitler's Germany, and then the Soviet Union, on Poland, in which the appeal of the exile prime minister position of protection in the future of the interests of the Polish state, which could in certain circumstances contribute to the development of good neighbourly relations between the two countries. Following Prokopovych, Kot wrote to his colleague Zaleski that, at the suggestion of the Ukrainian representative, “the starting point could be an agreement that would initiate closer military-economic cooperation between Poland and Ukraine, and should be based on a declaration by the Polish government that would reflect a positive attitude to the cause of Ukraine's independence, and would also mean resolving controversial issues on ethnographic grounds”. It is clear from the text of the letter that the former Ukrainian prime minister, and, by the way, not the president of the UPR, as written in the letter, would like to receive from the Polish government in exile assistance, both material and political, to leave France already occupied by German troops,

⁴⁷ AAN, MSZ, sygn. 608, ark. 680-681.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

and to obtain funds to keep a small group of employees and, ultimately, for future activities, because he understood that the support of the Nazis to restore Ukrainian statehood in the future should not be expected. As a result, one Polish minister recommended to another one "to use Prokopovych and his group to spread the slogans of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation."⁵⁰

Analysing the correspondence of the Polish authorities, it is worth noting that their attitude to the Ukrainian issues was to some extent opportunistic, in our opinion, for two reasons. First, 1940-1941 was a period when the Polish government in exile had more than enough of its internal problems. Secondly, it was about possible contacts with representatives of only those political forces that rallied around the Central Committee of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile. As we can see in the documents, the Polish side was ready to resume the dialogue, which was interrupted by the 1921 Riga Peace Treaty.

Therefore, in a letter from Kot to Zaleski, it could be read: "And Petlurites group that acts under the Prokopovych leadership with the restored initiative of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation can present you to our cost crystallized what branch of Ukrainian wider action if needed. However, regardless of whether the current general political situation allows the Polish government to raise the Ukrainian problem, I consider it expedient to provide support to Prokopovych and his associates, as well as to enable their activities. However, I believe that Switzerland (proposed by Prokopovich - Ed.), in addition to certain advantages, due to communication difficulties and, consequently, a weak propaganda reach in Canada and the United States, is the least suitable for Prokopovych's group to be there. Instead, the United States, which Prokopovych does not mention, is more appropriate for the Petliurists' action than Canada, whose authorities will probably not be able to agree now to a broader Ukrainian action, basically anti-Russian."⁵¹

The letter further discussed how to influence the former Prime Minister of Ukraine to persuade him to expand his activities in the United States, because, as noted, they were the state that should play a key role in "shaping the future map of the world". At the same time, the letter stated that "as can be seen from the reports of the foreign missions of the Republic of Poland, the British authorities (Canada) and the federal authorities of the United States are showing an increased interest in Ukrainians. From this point of view, the lack of a proper reaction from

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ark. 682.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ark. 683, 684.

Poland may harm the interests of Poland at the time of resolving the Ukrainian issue, in connection with the elimination of the consequences of this war.”⁵²

On April 30, 1941, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish government-in-exile decided on a proposition of Vyacheslav Prokopovych. According to Polish diplomats, the further stay of the Ukrainian People's Republic in France lost its meaning. Accordingly, as for the documents, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested Prokopovych move to London, promising at the same time that the Polish exile government will take the lead in organizing the move and ensure he and his staff home comforts and finance the publishers. Moreover, Prokopovych was informed that appropriate measures had already been taken to relocate him.

It follows from the diplomatic correspondence at the time that the Polish side, bearing in mind the prospect of developing relations with Ukraine, intended, in addition to Great Britain and its capital London, to enlist the support of the United States and Canada. In this case, the émigré government in London even consulted with its ambassador in Washington on which of the two states could best suit Poland's interests.

It is difficult to say how the Polish-Ukrainian negotiations on the development of possible cooperation during and after the war would develop further. However, if we talk only about the relations between the Polish émigré government and the State Center of the UPR in exile and keep in mind the above-mentioned contacts, then in fact in the fall of 1941 it became known about Vyacheslav Prokopovych's serious illness and, consequently, his unwillingness to leave France. The following year, Prokopovych died, and the DC of the Ukrainian People's Republic was headed by Oleksandr Shulhyn, who, in the opinion of the Polish side, “did not have such a strong position in the Ukrainian immigrant community as his former boss”. Therefore, unification attempts on both sides did not wait for the continuation. However, we can afford to assume that this was not the only, and most importantly - not the main reason for the termination of those negotiations.⁵³

CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, the Polish state authorities, even in exile, not only maintained their structure but also maintained fairly stable contacts with the states of the

⁵² *Ibid.*, ark. 683.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, ark. 683, 684.

future Anti-Hitler coalition, which was being formed. Instead, Ukrainian State Center has nothing like this because the government of the Soviet Union, followed by a subordinate of USSR did everything possible to convince the world that only the authority, which operated on the territory under Soviet Ukraine, was the only legal representative of the Ukrainian people, and not some *bourgeois-nationalist thugs* there. The lack of funds to support their activities, and ultimately simply not the physical survival of its members, together with the efforts of the USSR, made the work of Ukrainian exile structures extremely difficult.

In the situation that prevailed at the time, the establishment of Ukrainian-Polish relations in exile lost its relevance in the understanding of the joint struggle against Hitler's Germany or the Soviet Union. The problem of post-war interstate delimitation also hindered the combination of the liberation struggles of both sides.

The attempt to seek Ukrainian-Polish understanding at the initial stage of the World War II testifies to the understanding on both sides of the need for mutual support in the name of defending one's statehood in the conditions of foreign enslavement. Both nations faced a real threat of losing their statehood. However, this threat, so to speak, had significant differences between Ukrainians and Poles.

At the time Ukraine, being part of the Soviet Union, was, in fact, an enslaved territory of Russia, acting under the new name of a federal state that had an agreement with the Polish state from March 1921. Accordingly, Poland would not need to formally negotiate with Ukrainian politicians on a joint struggle to defend the independence of its states. However, two weeks after the outbreak of the war, the Polish government in exile convinced the exile that the 1921 agreement was a mere formality. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the Polish government returned to resume contacts with the Ukrainian emigrant politicians, who rallied around the Central Committee of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

Both sides well understood the inequality of each. However, they felt the need for mutual support. This is eloquently confirmed by the documents analysed by us. Due to the circumstances, the continuation of contacts between the two parties was stopped. It was later restored on the territory of occupied Poland and carried out at the level of local military and political leaders.

However, this is a separate, very important topic that requires wider mutual research. Therefore, without going into details, we note that over time the problem of Ukrainian-Polish cooperation in protecting the independence and sovereignty of their state had not lost its relevance. By the way, in connection with the centenary of the *Petliura-Pilsudski 1920 Agreement*, quite large-scale actions took place,

especially in Poland, regarding the actualization of the case, the importance of the Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the context of modern challenges.

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