

**NIKOLAJ VON WASSILKO.  
BUKOVINIAN STATESMAN AND DIPLOMAT**

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**Abstract:** *The article is dedicated to the study of the political biography of Nikolaj von Wassilko, a well-known Bukovinian leader, one of the most controversial personages among Ukrainian politicians of Austria-Hungary at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth mentioning that many scientists from various countries wrote about N. Wassilko, but separate studies about his life and political activities have not been written yet. Author paid considerable attention to the formation of N. Wassilko's political views, the evolution of his preferences from conservative Rusynism and Moscovophilia philosophy to the populist doctrine. Since the beginning of the 20th century, N. Wassilko became almost the sole leader of Ukrainians in Bukovina. The article presents the analysis of his activities in the Austrian Parliament, the Diet of Bukovina, public organizations, and his initiatives to resolve various regional issues. His activities in the years of World War I were equally rich. In particular, the article shows his diplomatic activities as the ambassador of the ZUNR (West Ukrainian People's Republic) in Vienna, the ambassador of the UPR (Ukrainian People's Republic) in Switzerland and other countries. At the end of the research, the author points out the remarkable path of N. Wassilko in the history of the Ukrainian movement in Bukovina in the early twentieth century, as one of the central figures of the Ukrainian diplomacy during 1918-1924.*

**Keywords:** *N. Wassilko, S. Smal-Stotsky, Bukovina, Austria-Hungary, Ukrainian People's Republic, World War I, Austrian Parliament, The Diet of Bukovina.*

**Rezumat:** *Nicolai Wassilko, om politic și diplomat bucovinean. Articolul este dedicat prezentării biografiei politice a lui Nicolae cavalier de Wassilko, un bine-cunoscut lider bucovinean, unul din cele mai controversate personaje dintre politicienii ucraineni din Austria-Ungaria de la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea – începutul secolului al XX-lea. În pofida faptului că despre Nicolai Wassilko au scris numeroși cercetători din diferite țări, până în prezent nu au fost întocmite studii distincte cu privire la viața și activitatea lui politică. Autorul acordă atenție deosebită formării opiniilor politice ale lui Nicolai Wassilko, evoluției preferințelor sale de la filosofia rusinismului conservator și moscoviliei la doctrina populistă. De la începutul secolului al XX-lea, Wassilko a devenit practic liderul incontestabil al*

ucrainenilor din Bucovina. În articol sunt analizate activitatea sa în Parlamentul austriac, Dieta Bucovinei, diverse organizații publice, precum și inițiativele sale de rezolvare a variatelor probleme regionale. Totodată, autorul reflectă bogata activitate a omului politic bucovinean în anii Primului Război Mondial. De asemenea, în articol sunt abordate activitățile diplomatice ale lui Nicolai Wassilko, în calitate de ambasador al Republicii Populare Vest-Ucrainene la Viena, ambasador al Republicii Populare Ucrainene în Elveția și în alte state. În partea finală a studiului, autorul subliniază parcursul remarcabil al lui Nicolai Wassilko în cadrul mișcării ucrainenilor bucovineni la începutul secolului XX și scoate în evidență rolul lui central în cadrul diplomației ucrainene în perioada anilor 1918-1924.

**Résumé: Nikolaj von Wassilko – politicien et diplomate bucovinien.** L'article est consacré à l'étude de la biographie politique de Nikolaj von Wassilko, dirigeant réputé de Bucovine, l'un des personnages les plus controversés parmi les personnalités politiques ukrainiennes autrichiennes et autrichiennes à la fin du XIXe siècle ou au début du XXe siècle. Il est à noter que de nombreux scientifiques de différents pays ont écrit sur N. Wassilko, mais que des études distinctes sur sa vie et ses activités politiques n'ont pas encore été écrites. L'auteur a accordé une attention particulière à la formation des opinions politiques de N. Wassilko, à l'évolution de ses préférences du philosophie conservateur rusinisme et moscophilia à la doctrine populiste. Depuis le début du 20ème siècle, N. Wassilko est devenu presque le seul dirigeant des Ukrainiens à Bucovine. L'article présente l'analyse de ses activités au Parlement autrichien, à la Diète de Bucovine, au sein d'organisations publiques, et ses initiatives pour résoudre divers problèmes régionaux. Ses activités au cours des années de la Première Guerre mondiale étaient également riches. L'article montre notamment ses activités diplomatiques en tant qu'ambassadeur de la ZUNR (République populaire d'Ukraine occidentale) à Vienne, ambassadeur de l'UPR (République populaire ukrainienne) en Suisse et dans d'autres pays. À la fin de la recherche, l'auteur souligne le parcours remarquable de N. Wassilko dans l'histoire du mouvement ukrainien à Bucovine au début du XXe siècle, en tant qu'une des figures centrales de la diplomatie ukrainienne de 1918-1924.

## INTRODUCTION

Among the Ukrainian politicians of the West Ukrainian lands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, N. Wassilko is rightly considered a great figure. Most researchers agree that he became the sole leader of the Ukrainian national movement in Bukovina on the eve of World War I, one of the few Ukrainian activists belonging to the Austrian political elite, a self-confident figure in the highest echelons of the imperial power. His personality became even more important in the years of World War I and the liberation movement of the Ukrainian people in 1917-1921.

However, N. Wassilko's activities, social preferences, ways of solving political problems, eventually his contribution to the development of the Ukrainian national movement and Ukrainian state formation still remain little known. Only a few publications about him as a prominent figure can be mentioned. Thus, K. Levytskyi in his work *Ukrainian politicians: Sylvets of our longtime ambassadors and politicians*, among several dozen political portraits of famous people of Galicia and Bukovina, presented an essay about N. Wassilko. The author, based on his own memories, showed some fragments of N. Wassilko's activity as member of the Austrian Parliament. Summing up, K. Levytskyi wrote that "Not all Galician Ukrainians had full confidence in the person of Ambassador Wassilko because he was not trusted by reason of close relations with government factors ... But my life experience from the long-term cooperation with Ambassador Wassilko tells me to publicly admit that he was working with us sincerely".<sup>1</sup>

Some information about N. Wassilko is contained in the work *Bukovyna*, a historical essay by T. Bryndzan, D. Kvitkovskiy, A. Zhukovskiy.<sup>2</sup>

In the case studies of Bukovina, which appeared in the independent Ukraine, N. Wassilko's great achievements were noted in the consolidation and political growth of the Ukrainians of Bukovina.<sup>3</sup> However, there are currently no special studies that would analyse the entire life course and activities of this outstanding person. The same applies to researchers from other countries. Among the authors, who in one way or another wrote about N. Wassilko, it is worth mentioning I. Nistor, M. Hausleitner, I. Cocuz, R. Wagner, M. Ceaușu,<sup>4</sup> and others.

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<sup>1</sup> Кость Левицький, *Українські політики: Сильветки наших давніх послів і політичних діячів* [Ukrainian Politicians: Silhouettes of Our Longtime Ambassadors and Politicians], Львів, Діло, 1936, Т. 1, с. 97-98.

<sup>2</sup> Денис Квітковський, Теофіл Бриндзан, Аркадій Жуковський, *Буковина. Її минуле і сучасне* [Bukovina. It's Past and Present], Париж-Філадельфія-Детройт, Зелена Буковина, 1956.

<sup>3</sup> Олександр Добржанський, *Національний рух українців Буковини другої половини XIX – початку XX ст.* [National Movement of Ukrainians of Bukovina of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.], Чернівці, Золоті литаври, 1999; В. Ляхоцький, *Микола Василько: парадокси пам'яті та забуття* [Mykola Vasylo: Paradoxes of Memory and Oblivion], in *Україна дипломатична* [Diplomatic Ukraine], Київ, 2002; Олександр Добржанський, *Микола Василько – визначний український дипломат австрійської школи* [Mykola Vasylo – a Distinguished Ukrainian Diplomat of the Austrian School], in *Дипломатична та консульська служба у вимірі особистості. Колективна монографія* [Diplomatic and Consular Service in the Measurement of Personality. Collective monograph], Київ, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Ion Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei* [History of Bukovina], București, Editura Humanitas, 1991;

Nevertheless, their works showed only some aspects of N. Wassilko's activities and not his integral portrait.

It is high time to present N. Wassilko's figure as an outstanding politician and diplomat. After all, Ukrainian politicians of this magnitude, who were active in the first decades of the twentieth century, can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Historical sources that give an idea of N. Wassilko's activity in Bukovina are the materials of the State Archives of the Chernivtsi oblast. The Central State Archives of the supreme governmental bodies and administrations of Ukraine have a separate N. Wassilko<sup>5</sup> fund and the vast majority of documents on his diplomatic activity are concentrated there. The N. Wassilko fund, which is kept at the Viennese United Administrative Archives, is quite large.<sup>6</sup> The well-known Bukovinian politician in the early 1920s wrote his life memoirs in 3 volumes. Unfortunately, for incomprehensible reasons, the managing director of N. Wassilko's house burned his records. There are documents in the fund of N. Wassilko that have probably been used to write memoirs.

The verbatim records of the meetings in the Austrian Parliament and the Diet of Bukovina, the publication of the periodicals, and the memoir literature made great sense in shaping the vision of N. Wassilko's activities.

The objective of this study is to create the political portrait of N. Wassilko, analyse his entry into high-level politics and his attempts to orient in the difficult social situation in Bukovina in the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the activities as member of the Diet of Bukovina and the Austrian Parliament, and leader of various political associations and groups. One of the important tasks is to determine the contribution of N. Wassilko to the development of the national movement in

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Marianna Hausleitner, *Die Rumänisierung der Bukowina* [The Romanization of Bukovina], München, R. Oldenburg Verlag, 2001; Ioan Cocuz, *Partidele politice românești din Bucovina: 1862–1914* [Romanian Political Parties in Bukovina: 1862–1914], Suceava, Cuvântul Nostru, 2003; R. Wagner, *Der Parlamentarismus und nationale Ausgleich in der ehemals österreichischen Bukowina* [Parliamentarism and National Compromise in Former Austrian Bukovina], München, 1984; Mihai Ștefan Ceaușu, *Parlamentarism, partide și elită politică în Bucovina habsburgică 1848–1918. Contribuții la istoria parlamentarismului în spațiul central-est european* [Parliamentarianism, Parties and Political Elite in Habsburg Bukovina of 1848–1918. Contributions to the History of Parliamentarianism in the Central Eastern European Area], Iași, Junimea, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> ЦДАВО [Central State Archive of Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine], Fond. 4456, *Василько Микола (1868–1924) громадський і політичний діяч, дипломат* [Mykola Vasylo (1868–1924), a Public and Political Figure, and Diplomat]

<sup>6</sup> Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, *Nachlaß von N. Wassilko* [M. Vasylo Heritage], Karton 1-2.

Bukovina, the organization of Ukrainian forces of Vest-Ukrainian lands under the conditions of World War I, and to disclose his diplomatic activity as a representative of the Vest-Ukrainian, and later the Ukrainian People's Republic.

The chronological and biographical methods of research that allowed the analysis of the way of life, and the main political and diplomatic achievements of N. Wassilko were used in the elaboration of this article.

### FORMATION OF NIKOLAJ VON WASSILKO AS A STATESMAN

The Wassilkos were an ancient Bukovinian boyar family. Since the Middle Ages, they had owned the Lukawetz estate. It is known that Alexander the Good, the Prince of Moldova, confirmed in 1428 to Yurii and Kuzma, the sons of Stanislav Lukawetzki, the right to own the Lukawetz estate.<sup>7</sup> The Wassilkos family originated from the Lukawetzki family.

Many references to the family of Wassilko-Lukawetzki can be found in the Moldavian principality documents. For example, on July 10, 1710, Ivan Wassilko Lukawetzki confirmed that Iliana from the Turculs family transferred a part of the land in the villages of Horoschoutz and Bojanczuk to his brother's wife Antimia, the widow of Constantin Turcul.<sup>8</sup> On November 20, 1755, Alexander Wassilko, as a public scribe, made an agreement according to which Parascovia and Silion, the children of Gheorghii Onciul gave Mihalachi Crâșcu 1/8 of their land plot in the estates of Lukawetz and Berhometh for debts,<sup>9</sup> etc.

The surname Wassilko was first mentioned in the Austrian documents in 1776. They mentioned that Alexander Wassilko, a mazil from Lukawetz, owned the village of Berhometh where he was a master.<sup>10</sup> On October 1, 1777, as a part of 93 mazils, Alexander Wassilko took the oath to the Austrian emperor in Chernivtsi.<sup>11</sup>

According to the decree of March 14, 1787, the Bukovinian nobility had equal rights with the Galician nobility. It was assumed that the Bukovinian gentry

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<sup>7</sup> *Der Adel von Galizien, Lodomerien und der Bukowina* [The Nobility of Galicia, Lodomeria and Bukovina], Wien, 1985, s. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Teodor Bălan, *Familia Onciul. Studiu și documente* [The Onciul Family. Study and Documents], Cernăuți, 1927, p. 62-63.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89-90.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Werenka, *Topographie der Bukowina zur Zeit ihrer erwerbung durch Oesterreich (1775-1785)* [Topography of Bukovina at the Time of Acquisition by Austria (1775-1785)], Czernowitz, 1895.

<sup>11</sup> Jochan Polek, *Die Huldigung der Bukowina am 12 Oktober 1777*, in „Jahrbuch des Bukowiner Landes-Museum“, Czernowitz, 1902, s. 38.

should be divided into the status of the masters and the status of the knights. The status of the lords consisted of earls and barons. These titles were given to 12 families, which at the time of the Moldavian principality occupied the highest state posts, as well as those nobles who had at least 3 thousand florins of annual income. The knight's status was given to all other boyars, and to the mazils – those who were listed in the registers of the Moldavian principality.<sup>12</sup> On August 10, 1792, Nikolai (Nikolaus), Vasile and Stephan Wassilko received the confirmation of their knight rank from the Austrian authorities, and in two years on February 22, 1794, N. Wassilko bought from the Onciuls family a part of the land plot in Moldavian Banilla.<sup>13</sup> In 1802, Nikolai Wassilko owned the estate in the villages of Ispas, Moldavian Banilla and Baince, his brother, Vasile Wassilko had the estate in the villages of Lukawetz, Berhometh, Panka, Zadowa, Mihowa, and their other brother, Stephan Wassilko – in Kalinestie.<sup>14</sup>

In the middle of the 19th century, Jordaki Wassilko, who owned the estates in Lukawetz and Berhometh, received the Order of the Iron Crown, Second Class, and the title of Baron on January 1, 1855 (diploma of July 14, 1855) by the Emperor's highest decision.<sup>15</sup> His son, Alexander von Wassilko, was a Marshal of the Diet of Bukovina in 1870-1871.<sup>16</sup> He was awarded the honorary title Serecki (named after the river of Seret, where his main village of residence, Berhometh, was situated). He took an active part in the political struggle in Bukovina and was one of the leaders of the Romanian national movement in the province.

Nikolaj, another son of Jordaki Wassilko, was elected February 7, 1867, to the Diet of Bukovina of the curia of large landowners. However, he did not show any special activity in the Diet. He did not like politics at all. Therefore, Nikolaj Wassilko did not take part in the next elections to the Seim of 1870. He was known as a great philosopher and probably, therefore, he was quickly disappointed with the Seim's work. Nikolaj Wassilko had a small estate in the village of Slobodzia-Komarestie. Both brothers, like their father, considered themselves Vlachs (Romanians).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> ДАЧО [State Archive of Chernivtsi Oblast], Fond. 1026, List. 7, File 25, p. 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> Teodor Bălan, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> ДАЧО [State Archive of Chernivtsi Oblast], Fond 1026, List. 2, File 1, p. 8-15.

<sup>15</sup> *Der Adel von Galizien, Lodomerien und der Bukowina* [The Nobility of Galicia, Lodomeria and Bukovina], Wien, 1985, s. 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtags für die zweite Session der dritten Wahlperiode. 1871* [Minutes of the Diet of Bukovina, the 2nd Session of the 3rd Term. 1871], Czernowitz, 1871, s.1.

<sup>17</sup> *Stenographische Protokolle des Bukowinaer Landtags für die erste Session der zweiten*

On March 24, 1868, a son was born in the family of Nikolaj Wassilko in the village of Slobodzia-Komarestie, Storozynetz district. His name was also Nikolaj (Nikolaus). Up to the age of 10, Nikolaj was educated at home under the guidance of Aglaia Freiin von Petrino-Armis, his mother. A Romanian-German home-based training was carried out.

In 1878, Nikolaj von Wassilko's parents sent him to Vienna for study at the prestigious closed institution Theresianum. It trained children of nobles, high-ranking officials, military men, who were preparing for state and diplomatic activities. The Theresianum school director in the early 1880s was the Austrian future prime-minister, Paul Gautsch Freiherr von Frankenthurn. Unfortunately, there is no information about N. Wassilko's years of studying in Vienna. One can only say with certainty that young Nikolaj had already got acquainted with many peers who later became influential people in the internal and external policies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. N. Wassilko successfully finished his schooling in Vienna in 1887.

After the Theresianum school, Wassilko spent one-year in military service in the 16<sup>th</sup> hussar regiment in Chernivtsi in 1887-1888.<sup>18</sup> Iancu Flondor, George Popovici, and Hilarion Iacubovici, who later became the leaders of the Romanian national movement in Bukovina, were under the military service during the same time and in the same regiment as N. Wassilko. Seven months later, Wassilko was discharged due to his health conditions. He was admitted to Chernivtsi University and studied law school there until 1891.<sup>19</sup>

N. Wassilko remembered those times speaking at one of the meetings of the Diet of Bukovina Seim: "Then I was a very frustrated living young man, all who remember me since then know that. Then I backstabbed (schemed against - Auth.) anyone who only hit me (laughter) and was also allowed to be backstabbed by all (long-lasting fun) ...".<sup>20</sup> He led a safe, fun life, spending large sums of money, not giving up all sorts of pleasures. He had enough money, moreover, that after the death of his father and mother, N. Wassilko took possession of the estate of Slobodzia-Komarestie (two communities).

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*Periode. 1867* [Minutes of the Diet of Bukovina, the 1st Session of the 2nd Term. 1867], Czernowitz, 1867, s. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Микола Василько, *Посольська діяльність в державній раді і в крайовому сеймі в роках 1901–1903* [Ambassadorial Activity in the State Council and in the Regional Seim in 1901-1903], Чернівці, 1904, с. 372.

<sup>19</sup> Anton Norst, *Alma Mater Francisko-Josephina* [Alma Mater Francisko-Josephina], Czernowitz, 1900, s. 131.

<sup>20</sup> Микола Василько, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

Raised up in the Romanian-German spirit, in recent years N. Wassilko maintained close relations with Romanian national associations. He donated over 100 guildens each year for 6 years for the Junimea society and was in the honorary committee at the parties held by society members. For some time, at the personal request of the famous Romanian politician, Ioan Zotta, Nikolaj Wassilko was in the Concordia society, but soon defiantly left because of the anti-Semitic statements of one of the leaders of this society, the consistorial adviser, Zurkan.<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that Wassilko never tried to occupy a prominent place in Romanian societies, and, as he noted later, he collaborated with them primarily under the influence of his comrades.<sup>22</sup>

On October 29 (November 3), 1890 N. Wassilko married Olga von Gherghel, who belonged to the noble family of Gherghely-Forgacs and had a dowry of 140 thousand crowns.<sup>23</sup> After that, he decided to sell the property in the village of Slobodzia-Komarestie and bought the estate of the village Ober-Lukawetz, which, as already mentioned, was the Wassilkos family seat for more than 400 years. It was here that he began his social activities. He was elected a local elder and he was interested in the problems of ordinary Ukrainian peasants among the villagers. During the next few years, Wassilko was concerned with the interests of Ukrainians. He took lessons of Ukrainian from a local teacher, introduced the Ukrainian language in public office and church services, and helped establish a village reading room. A new church in the village was built at the expense of N. Wassilko.<sup>24</sup> The rapid Ukrainization took place due to the fact that he had rather tense relationships with some leaders of the Romanian movement.

There are several reasons which could explain N. Wassilko's sincere, friendly attitude towards Ukrainian peasants and their national needs. First, it is his innate sense of the political situation and the understanding of the peasants' demands. His studies and training in Teresianum, which at that time had many teachers with progressive ideas, played a certain role. Secondly, Basil von Wolan, a Bukovinian physician and political figure, had a great influence on N. Wassilko. His wife was N. Wassilko's aunt. Basil von Wolan, who was a professor of medicine, director of the regional hospital, member of the Austrian Parliament and the Diet of Bukovina, had

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380-381.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>24</sup> Г. Савчук. *Посол на соймъ краевый и русский бояринъ Николай Василько* [G. Savchuk. Nikolaj Wassilko – Member of Regional Diet and Ruthenian Boyar], in “Селянинъ” [The Peasant], 1898, 1 вересня.

a significant influence on the political relations in the province. Together with Ivan Tyminski, they presented in 1892 the idea of creating a third political trend in the Ukrainian movement, which would operate separately from the Populists and Russophiles and took an intermediate position between the Ukrainians and the Romanians. Basil von Wolan and his supporters called themselves conservative Rusyns. The major foundations of this current were the slogan "Bukovina for the Bukovinians!", the protection of the Orthodox faith from the onset of Catholicism and Uniate, the idea of Orthodox solidarity of Ukrainians and Romanians in solving regional problems, the provision of priority rights in Bukovina for Ukrainians and Romanians as autochthonous peoples.<sup>25</sup> Such ideas were close to N. Wassilko, so he established close contacts with Basil von Wolan, recognizing him as his ideological leader. Thirdly, as N. Wassilko noted later, he had rather tense relations with some leaders of the Romanian movement, which apparently did not contribute to his political career in the Romanian camp and determined the search for opportunities to introduce himself to the Ukrainian movement. He perfectly understood that the Ukrainian movement, where there were few politicians of noble origin, may provide a more successful political career and, in particular, the chance to become a member of the representative bodies of power.

While maintaining close relations with the conservative Rusyns and Russophiles, during the 1890s, N. Wassilko simultaneously began to form associations in which he was recognized as a sole leader. Thus, in 1897 he founded "The Wiznitz-Putilla Council" association whose main task was to support N. Wassilko at the elections to the Diet. The following year he was elected as member of the Diet of Bukovina, and, in 1899, he became the youngest representative of Bukovina in the Austrian Parliament.

His activity as an MP made N. Wassilko a popular politician. Quite quickly he was spoken about as a talented speaker, visionary figure able to count his actions in advance. Certain hopes for a while were laid upon him by the Russophiles, who after the death of Basil von Wolan in 1899 were joined by a part of the former conservative Rusyns. However, N. Wassilko did not seek to justify these hopes. He did not disclose his position in the discussion between the Russophiles and the Populists, maintaining a neutral position for some time, and maintaining contacts with both sides.

Thus, a native of a noble boyar family, brought up in a Romanian-German spirit, having received a solid education in Vienna, N. Wassilko joined the

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<sup>25</sup> *Руське питання на Буковині. Обговорив буковинський православний русин* [Ruthenian Issues in Bukovina. Orthodox Ruthenian Discussed It], Чернівці, 1892, с. 1 - 23.

conservative Rusyns in the 1890s, became a member of the Diet of Bukovina and the Austrian Parliament, and began his political career as a defender of the Ukrainians of Bukovina. The first steps were successful, but in order to continue to operate in the political arena, he needed to determine the ideological benchmarks, to choose between two currents in the Ukrainian movement that operated at that time – the Russophiles or the Populists.

### THE LEADER OF THE UKRAINIAN MOVEMENT IN BUKOVINA

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, N. Wassilko presented the idea of uniting the Ukrainian parties, to stop internal quarrels in the Ukrainian camp. This was an obviously impracticable idea and perhaps it was understood by N. Wassilko himself. However, he gained additional popularity by such statements, and this position was supported by the official authorities.

Speaking in the Diet and Parliament, N. Wassilko was not afraid to show the most acute criticism of his opponents, regardless of the positions they occupied. He described the abuse of local Bukovinian officials in the management of the religious fund, forest trade, frauds with loans for various government works, and so on. When discussing the budget on February 27, 1902, N. Wassilko condemned the Austrian authorities for sending them to the Bukovina officials, who were completely uninterested in regional affairs and, through their inactivity, affected many local affairs. N. Wassilko said the following about Klahr, the president of the Regional Court, who had been sent to Bukovina from Graz: “We do not need a court president sitting in the Christian-German Society, having a beer there and “doing” politics there. We need a president of the court who cares about our land...”<sup>26</sup>

Such an uncompromising struggle, such as that of N. Wassilko, was not to the liking of many politicians. They tried to discredit him in the Diet of Bukovina. However, N. Wassilko was supported by S. Smal-Stotsky and Ye. Pigulyak, members of the Seim from Narodovtsi. On July 7, 1902, they called the popular assembly, which gathered more than 4 thousand people.<sup>27</sup> N. Wassilko together with S. Smal-Stotsky, Ye. Pigulyak and other Diet Ukrainian members explained their policy and got the support of all those present. That assembly was extremely important for the further political career of N. Wassilko. He stated that he was done with the Russophiles and the conservative Rusyns and finally joined the Populists camp.

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<sup>26</sup> Микола Василько, *op. cit.*, p.45.

<sup>27</sup> “Руслан” (Львів) [Ruslan (Lviv)], 1902, 28 червня.

This transition was regarded by most contemporaries as a great success of the Ukrainian camp. The Russian consul in Chernivtsi, Dolivo-Dobrovolskyi, reported in 1902 to St. Petersburg that "Ukrainians have recently made a valuable asset in the person of a former advocate of the Old Russian party, an adventurer, a member of the Diet and the Parliament, Nikolai Ritter von Wassilko."<sup>28</sup>

N. Wassilko has easily experienced all the political upheavals associated with the transition to the camp of the Populists. Already on October 30, 1902, he gave a vibrant speech in the Austrian Parliament on the abuses during the elections in Galicia, supported the requests of Ukrainian members of the parliament on the need to establish a Ukrainian university in Lviv and protected the agricultural strikers in Eastern Galicia. That is, he confidently defended the demands put forward by the Ukrainian Populists not only in Bukovina but also in Galicia.

In the early 20th century in Bukovina, there was a matter of the utmost urgency concerning a series of reforms that were supposed to modernize the social, political and economic relations in the province and eliminate the domination of the local oligarchs-landowners.

Under these conditions, the three well-known politicians of this land have come closer: N. Wassilko, leader of the democratic Romanians, A. Onciul and B. Straucher, the vice-president (later president) of the Jewish community of Chernivtsi. For the first time in a joint meeting, three local leaders and Moriz Stekel, the editor of the "Bukowiner Post" newspaper gathered in the N. Wassilko's apartment in Vienna, on May 25, 1903.<sup>29</sup> This was the beginning of an international parliamentary association, which made history as the so-called Conscientious Union. N. Wassilko became one of the organizers and leaders of this association.

The next year, supporters of the Conscientious Union ideas won the elections or the Diet of Bukovina, having secured a solid majority. After the election, six months after the meetings in 1904, the members of the union managed to promote through the Diet and submitted for the Emperor's approval a number of bills that would significantly modernize the social relations in Bukovina. In particular, it was a proposal on the reform of the Diet of Bukovina and the electoral law, the establishment of the Regional Bank, the increase of teacher salaries, the abolition of the exclusive right to produce and sell alcoholic beverages, reorganizing the self-governance of rural communities and the system of elections in public administration, etc. These laws and their approval process

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<sup>28</sup> Архив внешней политики Российской империи [Russian Empire Foreign Policy Archives], Fond 172, List 514/1, File. 1497, p.26

<sup>29</sup> "Bukowiner Post" [Bukovinian Post], 1903, 26 June.

in Vienna, which was very slow, became the core around which the political struggle in Bukovina revolved up to the beginning of World War I.

N. Wassilko actively defended and popularized the proposed laws during the next decade, despite the fact that in 1905 the Conscientious Union collapsed.

As a politician who does not compromise and has a sharp tongue, Mr. Wassilko has regularly entered disputes of all kinds with his opponents. Thus, his relations with Iancu Flondor, his friend in the 1890s, worsened in 1903. The latter inspired a series of articles against the members of the Conscientious Union and N. Wassilko personally in the "Bukowinaer Journal" published unsigned. They provided groundless allegations and disseminated unreliable information. I. Flondor initially objected to his involvement in the articles. But soon, Max Rainer, the editor of the "Bukowinaer Journal", admitted that one of the provocative articles was dictated to him by I. Flondor.

The scandal went beyond Bukovina. The Viennese and Galician newspapers wrote much about it. A special Diet Commission led by A. Skedl was set up to consider the case. Although it took a rather cautious decision, which saved I. Flondor from the court of honour, the reputation of the latter was severely affected. As a protest, Baron G. Wassilko left the Romanian Club of the Diet—and, after such a scandal, I. Flondor was forced to leave the political scene for a while.<sup>30</sup>

After the collapse of the Conscientious Union, N. Wassilko's relationship with A. Onciul became tense. During the by-elections for the Austrian parliament in 1908, N. Wassilko even supported Dori Popovici, the representative of the Romanian National Party, against A. Onciul. In response, A. Onciul initiated a series of articles in which he accused N. Wassilko of dishonest financial operations concerning the cement factory of Axelrod and having received an illegal income of a total of 60,000 crowns.<sup>31</sup> N. Wassilko filed charges against him. The trial, which took place on October 1, 1908, found A. Onciul's statement unsubstantiated; he was sentenced to 1 month of arrest or a fine of 3,000 crowns. In addition, he had to pay legal fees in the amount of 2,000 crowns<sup>32</sup>.

Periodically, newspaper quarrels appeared between N. Wassilko and Benno Straucher. The truth was that there were no trials, but both politicians harmed each other whenever they could, and the only winners in that case were those who

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<sup>30</sup> *Die Flondor Affaire im Bukowiner Landtage* [The Flondor Affair in the Bukovinian Seim], Czernowitz, 1903, p. 117-121.

<sup>31</sup> *Процес посла Васи́лька проти Ончула* [Deputy of Parliament Wasilko vs Onciul Legal Process], in "Буковина" [Bukovyna], 1908, 2 october.

<sup>32</sup> *По процесі* [After the Process], in "Буковина" [Bukovyna], 1908, 4 october.

sought to preserve the old order in Bukovina, which existed before the Conscientious Union.

In 1905-1907, in the Austrian part of Austria-Hungary, the issue of reforming the electoral law for the parliament, the introduction of general, equal, secret and direct elections was addressed. At the end of March that year, the Austrian Parliament created a commission for electoral reform that included 49 members of the House of Deputies, to which N. Wassilko was appointed by the Ukrainians. He actively defended the Ukrainian election rights both in Galicia and in Bukovina, especially by insisting that electoral districts should be created taking into account the ethnic composition of the population.<sup>33</sup>

Elections for the Austrian Parliament under the new electoral law of 1907 became a new success for the Ukrainians in Bukovina. They won in all Ukrainian constituencies and for the first time since 1848, they elected 5 deputies to the parliament: N. Wassilko, Ye. Piguliak, I. Semak, A. Lukashevych, M. Spinul. Together with the Ukrainian deputies from Galicia, they formed the Ukrainian Club. Yu. Romanchuk was elected as chair, and N. Wassilko as deputy.<sup>34</sup>

Since that time, N. Wassilko had been acting not only as a representative of Bukovina, but above all as a leader of the joint association of the Galician and Bukovinian members of parliament, who considered the problem of the Ukrainians of Austria-Hungary as a whole, and not only as a representative of the separate region.

N. Wassilko personified the flow of coercion and adaptation among the Ukrainian members of the parliament. He believed that it was necessary to obtain concessions in favour of the Ukrainians through negotiations, and the conclusion of various unions and secret agreements with representatives of government authorities. As one of the newspapers noted, "Ukrainians would not oppose the desire of the monarch, since N. Wassilko is still meaningful to them."<sup>35</sup>

Such a line of action, as a rule, was supported by the Bukovinian MPs. But the Galician people did not always agree with N. Wassilko, demanding more radical and decisive actions. Therefore, the Bukovinian parliamentary club had left the United Ukrainian club several times and then returned. This was the case

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<sup>33</sup> *Бесіда посла Н. Василька* [MP N. Wassilko's Conversation], in "Буковина" [Bukovyna], 1906, 12 november; *Виборча реформа* [Election Reform], in "Буковина" [Bukovyna], 1906, 15 September.

<sup>34</sup> *Ruthenische Wahlbezirke* [Ruthenian Electoral Districts], in "Bukowinaer Post" [Bukovinian Post], 1907, 15 Mai; *Wahlbildchen*, in "Bukowinaer Post" [Bukovinian Post], 1907, 12. Mai.

<sup>35</sup> "Neues Wiener Journal" [New Viennese Journal], 1912, 16 june.

in 1909, 1912 and 1913. When leaving the United Ukrainian club in 1909 N. Wassilko said: “We, Bukovinian Rusyns, are still waiting for our position – but when our Galician brothers will not be better than before, we will again be on their side and will fight them until the wave that brings us salvation or death!”<sup>36</sup>

N. Wassilko has actively participated in many parliamentary events, including the struggle to expand the national rights of the Ukrainians of Austria-Hungary. In 1903, when the Czech MP Karl Kramarz presented the idea of rebuilding Austria into the federation of autonomous territories, N. Wassilko gave a great speech in which he explained that such an idea was not good for the Ukrainians since Galicia had long been a state within a state where the Ukrainians were under Polish domination. Expanding regional autonomy would further aggravate the situation of the Ukrainians. Therefore, N. Wassilko proposed the autonomy of the peoples, and not the autonomy of the lands, and further developed the long-standing idea of the Ukrainians concerning the creation of a separate Ukrainian crown region in Eastern Galicia and Northern Bukovina. That speech caused a huge public uproar in the empire. Later, N. Wassilko, in his parliamentary speeches, repeatedly raised the idea of creating a separate autonomous Ukrainian region and proposed plans to solve this issue.

From 1905-1906, N. Wassilko, while speaking to Parliament, regularly addressed the problem of Russophilia in the West Ukrainian lands. Initially, he was referring more to Galicia and to the union of Russophiles with the Poles, but then the politician took over this issue throughout Austria. Particularly, his speech on December 11, 1909, was widely publicized. N. Wassilko stated that in the early 20th century Russophilia in Galicia and in Bukovina was almost gone. There were only the remains of Old Ruthenians – “Altruthenes”. However, after the 1907 elections in Austria-Hungary, Russophilia began to gain ground as a result of the support of the Poles in Galicia and receiving Russian rubles.<sup>37</sup> To a large extent, it was N. Wassilko who was inspired by the defeat of Russophilia societies in Bukovina in 1910 and increased the control over the receiving of Russian money for public organizations in Galicia and Bukovina.

The activities of N. Wassilko in the Diet of Bukovina turned to a different direction. Somewhere in the years 1903-1904, they had an informal division of

<sup>36</sup> К. Левицький, *Історія політичної думки галицьких українців 1848 – 1914* [History of Political Thought of Galician Ukrainians in 1848-1914], Львів, 1927, Частина 2, с. 519.

<sup>37</sup> *Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrates im Jahre 1910. XX. Session* [Minutes on the Meetings of the House of Deputies of the Austrian Parliament in 1910. 20th Session], Bd. 1, s. 953-959.

labour with Stepan Smal-Stotsky. N. Wassilko was engaged mainly in parliamentary affairs, and Smal-Stotsky, who became a vice-marshal of the Diet from 1904, was responsible for the Diet cases. However, the situation gradually changed. N. Wassilko's popularity, and at the same time his political influence has increased rapidly. This was also facilitated by the fact that he managed to solve a number of lagging issues of the region. One of them was the opening of the Vyzhnytsia gymnasium. Thanks to his considerable efforts, N. Wassilko managed to solve this problem in 1908. On October 23, the emperor signed a rescript on the Vyzhnytsia Gymnasia, and on November 22, the grand opening of this educational institution took place, which turned into a grand national holiday. All those present at the event unanimously recognized the merit of N. Wassilko in solving the issue of Vyzhnytsia Gymnasia; in his honour, a magnificent triumphal gate was decorated with banners.

The popularity of N. Wassilko also increased due to the fact that he several times sought to allocate significant funds to solve the economic needs of Bukovina. The image of a person who could solve and decide matters was firmly rooted in him.

Such a situation could not but cause increased tension between the two leaders. At first, everything was veiled. Both showed mutual respect in public, but there has already been a confrontation in the actions. In 1909, N. Wassilko was elected as chairman of the Progressive Party. In comparison, S. Smal-Stotsky organized a peasant party in Russka Rada. The rivalry was also noticeable in the national-cultural societies, in the formation of parliamentary groups, and so on.

In 1912, a financial abuse scandal concerning the Ukrainian Peasant Fund broke out, led by S. Smal-Stotsky. N. Wassilko decided to take advantage of the situation. He held behind-the-scenes talks to appoint T. Drachynskyi instead of Smal-Stotsky as Deputy Marshal of the Diet. When Smal-Stotsky learned about this, an open conflict broke out, which lasted until the beginning of the war. Most of the Ukrainian community supported N. Wassilko, having acknowledged him as the leader.

On the eve of the World War, N. Wassilko and his supporters had an influence on the "Nova Bukovyna" (New Bukovina) and the "Narodnyi Holos" (People's Voice) newspapers and joined the National Democratic Party.

The name of N. Wassilko in the pre-war period was connected with the greatest successes of the Ukrainian national movement, but there were other issues as well. He used any methods to achieve the goals. He believed that everything could be solved by secret methods, through secret negotiations, behind-the-scenes intrigues, which attracted a narrow circle of supporters. The influential Viennese newspaper "Neues Wiener Journal", which placed the

political portrait of N. Wassilko as an editorial, wrote: “MP Wassilko is a diplomat in Austrian domestic politics. He looks at every situation with a smile because everyone knows in advance what will happen. As some action begins, everyone has a plan sent from the top. At the same time, he shows all his instincts with his quick mind. And this is the secret of his political successes.”<sup>38</sup> Some political combinations of N. Wassilko really impressed contemporaries with their elegance and unpredictability.

With the start of World War I, the Galician politicians formed the Major Ukrainian Council, which made a statement on the position of Ukrainians regarding the war. The union of Ukrainian parliamentary and Diet Ambassadors of Bukovina, led by N. Wassilko, also prepared an appeal *To the Ukrainian people of Bukovina*, which noted that together with all peoples, Ukrainians will defend the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>39</sup>

During the war, N. Wassilko mainly stayed in Vienna. Most of the Bukovinian MPs also moved to the capital where they formed the Bukovina Club, which held meetings under the chairmanship of N. Wassilko every Tuesday.<sup>40</sup> Members of the club were engaged in the publishing business, they were asked to help the Ukrainian refugees, the widows, and the orphans of killed soldiers, and they also helped the wounded.

During the first months of the war, N. Wassilko started the organization of the Hutsul-Bukovina Corps (legion). This idea was implemented by his relative Yurii Wassilko at home. From the very beginning, the legion was under the command of Gendarmerie Colonel E. Fischer. A total of 1,500 Ukrainian volunteers were recruited. At the same time, 1,500 Romanian volunteers were recruited. From November 29, 1914, to January 1915, the Hutsul gunners held all paths to the Siret River, and from January 1 to February 19, 1915, the legion took part in battles near Moldova, Pojorâta, Mestecăniș, Cârlibaba. In March 1915, after the Russian troops were thrown away from the Prut River, they helped liberate Rohizna, Buda, Chornivka, and Sathora.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> N. Wassilko, in “Neues Wiener Journal”, 1912, 16 June.

<sup>39</sup> С. Попик, *Українці в Австрії 1914-1918. Австрійська політика в українському питанні періоду Великої війни* [Ukrainians in Austria in 1914-1918. Austrian Policy on the Ukrainian Issue of the Great War Period], Київ-Чернівці, Золоті литаври, 1999, с. 48.

<sup>40</sup> М. Никифорак, *Представництво Буковини в Австрійській державній раді* [Representation of Bukovina in the Austrian State Council], in “Науковий вісник Чернівецького університету”. Серія Правознавство [Scientific Herald of Chernivtsi University. Law Series], Чернівці, 1998, вип. 33, с. 56.

<sup>41</sup> В. Заповловський, *Національні збройні формування з Буковини в обороні краю*

The Hutsul gunners fought quite successfully furthermore and many of them received military awards. The Bukovinian intellectuals, MPs, and especially N. Wassilko, had always worried about the state of the gunners, giving them all kinds of help.<sup>42</sup>

On May 5, 1915, the General Ukrainian Council substituted the Major Ukrainian Council, which had to represent the entire Ukrainian people during the war. The Council was led by K. Levytskyi. N. Wassilko was appointed as deputy chairman. This appointment was a recognition of the high authority and influence of N. Wassilko. But the dissatisfaction with the policy of the General Ukrainian Council leadership for the excessive loyalty to power increased rather quickly among the left members of parliament.

Nevertheless, in November 1916, the Ukrainian parliamentary representation of Galicia was established, which stated that it would act on its own. In turn, on December 3-5, 1916, a meeting of the Union of Parliamentarians and Diet deputies of Bukovina, who stated that they would also act on their own, took place. The traditional course expressed in the words "Dedicated to the Emperor and the State" was confirmed. It was a great time for N. Wassilko. He acted firmly, negotiating with various authorities, helping refugees, protecting ordinary Ukrainians from groundless allegations.

Thus, N. Wassilko, after moving to a camp of Ukrainian populists, quickly proved to be an energetic and far-sighted politician who had considerable support in the government circles. On the eve and during World War I, he became the sole leader of the Ukrainian movement in Bukovina, subordinating the vast majority of Ukrainian political forces of the region. The Ukrainian leaders of Galicia could not but take him into account, he was respected in the government circles of Vienna as a well-considered and visionary politician.

### ON DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

From the very beginning of the Ukrainian revolution and the establishment of the Central Council in March 1917, and then the proclamation of the Ukrainian People's Republic, N. Wassilko closely followed the events in Ukrainian lands within

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(1914-1916 pp.) [National Armed Forces from Bukovina in the Defense of the Region (1914-1916)], in *Буковина – мій рідний край* [Bukovina – My Native Land], Чернівці, 1997, с. 76.

<sup>42</sup> *Буковинський православний календар на звичайний рік 1917* [Bukovinian Orthodox Calendar for Ordinary Year of 1917], Відень, 1916, с. 56-57.

the Russian Empire. Even in the pre-war period, he strongly supported the idea that, in the event of Russia's defeat in the war, the Ukrainian lands part of the Romanov Empire would form an independent Ukrainian state.

The most famous example of N. Wassilko's cooperation with the leaders of the Ukrainian People's Republic during the time of the Central Rada was his participation in the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty in February 1918. During the peace talks in Brest-Litovsk, N. Wassilko proved his influence and ability to solve the most difficult problems.

Having failed to resolve all issues with the inexperienced representatives of the Central Rada, the head of the Austria-Hungary delegation at the talks, O. Czernin, in a secret telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked for N. Wassilko, with whom he had long-standing friendly relations, to come to Brest-Litovsk. However, N. Wassilko's position in Brest-Litovsk was not what O. Czernin expected from him. O. Czernin wrote in his diary on February 6, 1918: "The situation was also cleared because yesterday, the leader of the Austrian Rusyns, Nikolai von Wassilko arrived. And although he is obviously enthralled with the role his Russian-Ukrainian comrades play in Brest, he speaks here in a more national chauvinistic manner than before in Vienna, we still managed to finally find out the minimum of Ukrainian demands."<sup>43</sup> N. Wassilko put the real Ukrainian interests first, after informing the delegation of the UPR about the real situation in Austria-Hungary and insisting on steadfastly adhering to Ukrainian claims. Under the influence of N. Wassilko, O. Czernin decided to sign a peace treaty with the UPR and a secret annex to it. Undoubtedly, this was a great success of the Ukrainians and N. Wassilko as a politician. D. Doroshenko wrote: "Thanks to his (N. Wassilko – Aut.) help, the Brest Treaty was expressed in a very favourable form for Ukraine, we had to use it."<sup>44</sup>

During 1918, events developed extremely fast. N. Wassilko finally defended the idea of the Ukrainian autonomous region as part of the Austrian Empire. He was a member of the Ukrainian National Council on October 18-19 in Lviv and then left for Vienna. He founded in Vienna the first foreign representation of the WUNR for Austria (and in fact for Germany). This mission was kept at the expense of N. Wassilko himself.

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<sup>43</sup> О. Чернин, *В дни мировой войны* [Days of World War], Москва-Петроград, 1923, с. 265-266.

<sup>44</sup> Д. Дорошенко, *Мої спомини про недавнє минуле (1914-1918)* [My Memories of the Recent Past (1914-1918)], in "Український історичний журнал" [Ukrainian Journal of History], Київ, 1993, № 4-6, с. 89.

The main purpose of N. Wassilko at that time was to popularize the idea of Ukrainian independence in the influential circles of Vienna and Berlin. The significance of the ZUNR Embassy in Vienna was highlighted by the fact that this city was the centre of the foreign policy of Western Ukrainians. N. Wassilko's diplomatic work in Vienna was very successful and could not be seen in Kyiv.

After uniting the ZUNR and the UPR, on May 10, 1919 N. Wassilko led the Embassy of the Ukrainian People's Republic in Switzerland. The objective that N. Wassilko faced was to deepen the relations of the Government of the UPR with other states whose embassies were represented in Bern. The result of his activity was the recognition of Ukraine by neighbouring states. At the end of the appointment decree, N. Wassilko's powers were determined, "... it is your authority, for all our missions which are located in Switzerland, and those who are there, whether political, military or economic, to supervise their activities; they are all obliged, subject to your assignment, for which you will be responsible to the Government".<sup>45</sup>

Despite the fact that N. Wassilko was considered "Germanophile", and the expectant policy of the representatives of the Entente countries towards him in Switzerland, he began the active diplomatic activity, striving to establish relations with diplomats of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia as soon as possible. For this purpose, N. Wassilko made not only official but also private visits, he made everything possible to keep those Ukrainian civil servants who could hurt the mission activities "away" from Switzerland. This was also explained by the fact that since the second half of 1919, the UPR government was forced to change some of its foreign policy activities and refused to fight for Bukovina and Bessarabia in exchange for an agreement with Romania and other neighbouring states that could guarantee Ukraine's recognition and assisting in the fight against its enemies. In this respect, it is indicative that N. Wassilko tried to prevent the stay of H. Hasenko, the former head of the UPR special mission in Romania, known for his anti-Romanian views, in Switzerland<sup>46</sup>. The reason for such a move was the dissatisfaction of the Romanian envoy with the content of the interview with H. Hasenko to one of the newspapers, in which the former head of mission presented his views on the situation in the Ukrainian-Romanian relations, interfering, according to the Romanians, in the internal affairs of the kingdom<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> ЦДІАВО [Central State Archive of Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine]. – Fond 3696, List 1, File 24, p. 14.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, List 1, File 167, p. 11.

In the first months, N. Wassilko, the head of the Bern mission, paid the most attention to strengthening relations with Romania and Poland. In this regard, his communication with the new head of the extraordinary diplomatic missions of the UPR in Romania, K. Matsiyevych, significantly intensified. It started at the initiative of N. Wassilko. K. Matsiyevych, congratulating his colleague on his appointment, presented an analysis of the internal events in Romania and its foreign policy situation, emphasizing that the territories annexed by Romania may not be recognized by the Entente, and because of this, Romania is looking for an accomplice, which Ukraine can do<sup>48</sup>.

Regarding the relations with the Polish representatives, in one of the letters to the Ministry in July 1919, N. Wassilko described in detail the content of the conversation with the military attaché of Poland in Bern, Major Gurko. From the conversation, it became clear that future relations between Ukraine and Poland largely relied on the successes of General A. Denikin, the activity of peasant detachments, that is, the events in Ukraine itself. Analysing the situation in Poland, according to the information of the attaché, N. Wassilko mentioned that the statements of A. Denikin on the annexation of Galicia and Bessarabia caused a negative attitude in Poland towards the white guard Russia (It should be noted that not only A. Denikin, but A. Kolchak also made statements that both Galicia, Bukovina and Bessarabia should be part of Russia).<sup>49</sup> Because of this, the independence of Ukraine became extremely desirable for Poland. Thus, N. Wassilko noted a turning point in Polish foreign policy, emphasizing that the head of the Polish government "is undoubtedly a supporter of the Ukrainian orientation and a great enemy of Russia." It was precisely because of this position of the highest Polish official, Major Gurko, who assured N. Wassilko that the Polish government would go on to conclude an agreement with S. Petliura.

N. Wassilko was head of the diplomatic mission in Switzerland to his death. In 1919 only, for the needs of Ukrainian diplomacy in Switzerland, N. Wassilko spent 100,000 francs of his personal funds.<sup>50</sup>

By Decree of Prime Minister of the UPR, I. Mazepa, of November 19, 1919, N. Wassilko was appointed as ambassador to Berlin. However, N. Wassilko did not accept this proposal because he was afraid that his appointment to Berlin would

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, File 172, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> О. Павлюк, *США і східно-галицьке питання на Паризькій мирній конференції 1919 р.* [The USA and the East Galician Issue at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919], in "Київська старовина" [Kyiv Antiquity], Київ, 1999, № 6, с. 71. 73.

<sup>50</sup> ЦДАВО, Fond 4453, List 1, File 17, P. 168.

cause misunderstanding with the Entente powers.<sup>51</sup> However, almost to the end of the UPR Embassy in Berlin (1923), N. Wassilko, following the instructions of the Government of the UPR and S. Petliura, took an active part in its activities and carried out an informal leadership. In December 1919 – January 1920, as well as from March 1 to June 1920, N. Wassilko stayed in Berlin. He energetically set up a meeting with the ambassadors of Poland and France, who had previously unfriendly treated the UPR.

N. Wassilko was also responsible for the work of the Ukrainian mission in Italy, and S. Petliura repeatedly insisted that N. Wassilko moved to Rome, but N. Wassilko believed that he had more opportunities for establishing diplomatic relations in Switzerland.

In July 1920, in Belgium (the city of Spa), an international conference was held, which had to deal with the implementation of the Versailles peace decisions and the claims of the Entente to Germany, and therefore the official representatives there were only the states of the Entente and Germany. Not only members of the Quadruple Union, but also neutral states were invited there.

N. Wassilko visited the City of Spa. However, attempts of the Ukrainian delegation to resolve the Ukrainian issue were rejected by the official participants to the conference.

This forced N. Wassilko to analyse the work of the Ukrainian delegations at the international conferences. In particular, having been acquainted with the work of the Ukrainian delegation in Paris, N. Wassilko gave a negative assessment to its leader, Count Tyshkevych, who did not use the opportunities to promote within the diplomatic circles an agreement between the UPR and Poland on April 22, 1920, did not maintain close relations with official institutions, but as an “aristocrat, clerical and anti-Semitic” figure, he stayed in touch only with individuals.<sup>52</sup>

S. Petliura paid considerable attention to the establishment of ties with the necessary states, recruitment of staff for this important part of state work. He suggested that more experienced diplomats provide advice and timely assistance to inexperienced diplomats. Nikolaj von Wassilko, as already noted, in addition to the Embassy in Switzerland, was ordered to exercise political control and responsibility for the embassies in Italy, Germany, and in Hungary. The financing of these and some other embassies was under his control. He was an ambassador with the rank of minister, and he was given broad powers in carrying out separate actions on behalf of the state. There is a certificate in the archives that was signed

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<sup>51</sup>*Ibid*, Fond 3695, List.1, File 199, p. 41.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, File.236, p. 44.

by the head of the Directorate and Chief, Otaman S. Petliura: "Our Minister, Mr. Mykola Wassilko, is specifically authorized to hold political, military and financial conferences and take on responsible commitments, for which he is given legitimate and power authorities".<sup>53</sup>

In the last year of his life, N. Wassilko, tremendously tired and in a bad state of health, intended to resign. However, S. Petliura and A. Livytskyi, chairman of the government, urged him to stay. Nikolaj von Wassilko still had to carry on the burden of financial support for the diplomatic embassies and missions, as well as helping certain individuals of Ukrainian emigration, in addition to active diplomatic activities. And he did that until his death, which suddenly occurred on August 2, 1924, due to an attack of a severe form of asthma.

### CONCLUSIONS

N. Wassilko was an extraordinary figure of the Ukrainian movement in Bukovina in the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an atypical representative of the diplomatic corps of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Taking into consideration his education and upbringing, he had to become an active member of the Romanian movement. However, he deliberately chose the Ukrainism and managed to become one of the leaders of the Ukrainian movement first in Bukovina, and then in Western Ukraine lands, as a whole. He did a lot to modernize and democratize social relations in Bukovina, strengthen the political positions of Ukrainian people and unite Ukrainians as a nation. At the same time, his tactics repeatedly caused contradictory responses, his sharp statements and actions often led to sharp conflicts with those with whom he had previously collaborated. However, no matter how we treat N. Wassilko, nobody will deny that this extraordinary person has left a noticeable footprint in history, without his figure it is impossible to understand the events that took place in Bukovina and in Austria-Hungary as a whole in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, Fond 3695, List 1, File 125, p. 26.