

OMELYAN POPOVYCH – POLITICAL PORTRAIT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL LIFE IN BUKOVINA (LAST THIRD OF THE 19TH CENTURY – EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

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Abstract. The article examines the political career of Omelyan Popovych, a renowned Ukrainian civic and educational leader in Bukovina. It highlights that even as a student – first in a gymnasium and later in the teacher's seminary – he was deeply engaged in community work and served as President of the youth organisation "Soglasie" (Entente). Although he initially showed Muscophile inclinations, Popovych gradually shifted to Ukrainophile views under the influence of senior colleagues and his own introspection, eventually becoming one of the key figures of the Narodovtsi movement in Bukovina. The article offers an in-depth exploration of his contributions to Ukrainian cultural and educational societies, several of which he chaired. It discusses his work as an editor for Narodovtsi newspapers and the Bukovina Orthodox Calendar. Omelyan Popovych played a formative role in establishing Ukrainian political parties in Bukovina, and his initiatives to create the Ukrainian Progressive Party and the Ukrainian National-Democratic Party are reviewed. The study also traces Popovych's activities during World War I. Although he spent two periods in emigration, first in Vienna and later in Prague, he continued to closely monitor developments in Bukovina. He published the "Bukovyna" newspaper, which became the region's principal Ukrainian newspaper during the war. His involvement in forming the Ukrainian National Council in Lviv, the Bukovinian regional committee, organising the Ukrainian assembly on November 3, 1918, and participating in the governance of Northern Bukovina, as well as in the leadership of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, has also been analysed.

Keywords: Austria-Hungary, Bukovina, Popovych, Ukrainian movement, cultural, educational societies, political parties, Vasylko, Smal-Stotsky.

Rezumat: Omelian Popovici - portret politic pe fundalul vieții sociale din Bucovina (ultima treime a secolului al XIX-lea - începutul secolului al XX-lea). Articolul analizează activitatea politică a lui Omelian Popovici, cunoscut politician și pedagog ucrainean din Bucovina. Autorul menționează că încă din perioada studiilor la gimnaziu și apoi la seminarul pedagogic, Popovici s-a implicat activ în activități civice, fiind președintele asociației de tineret „Soglasie” (Înțelegerea). Deși, într-o primă etapă, Popovici a fost fascinat de curentul muscofil, influența colegilor mai în vîrstă și propriile constatări l-au condus către tabăra ucrainofilă, devenind ulterior unul dintre liderii mișcării poporaniste din Bucovina. Activitatea lui Omelian Popovici în societățile culturale și educaționale ucrainene, dintre care o parte le-a condus, este descrisă în detaliu, fiind reflectată participarea sa la redactarea ziarelor naționaliste și a „Calendarului ortodox din Bucovina”. Cum Popovici a fost unul dintre fondatorii partidelor politice ucrainene din Bucovina, sunt analizate proiectele sale privind crearea partidelor ucrainene progresiste și național-democratice. De asemenea, este prezentată activitatea acestuia în anii Primului Război Mondial. Deși a emigrat de două ori, mai întâi la Viena, apoi la Praga, el a urmărit cu atenție evenimentele din Bucovina, publicând gazeta „Bucovina”, care a devenit principalul ziar ucrainean din provincie în condițiile războiului. De asemenea, este analizată participarea lui Popovici la crearea Consiliului Național Ucrainean din Lviv, a Comitetului Tinutului din Bucovina, la organizarea vecei (adunării populare) ucrainene din 3 noiembrie 1918 și la activitatea autorităților ucrainene din partea de nord a Bucovinei în această perioadă, precum și la conducerea Republicii Populare Vest-Ucrainene.

INTRODUCTION

Omelyan Popovych (German: Omelian Popowicz) was a renowned Ukrainian public and political figure from Bukovina in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He is rightfully regarded as a leader of the Ukrainian movement and a notable representative of the region's educational system. He is frequently mentioned in the Ukrainian press, particularly during the anniversaries of the 1918 events in Bukovina. A considerable amount of work has been published about him as an educational figure. Larysa Platash defended a doctoral dissertation in pedagogical sciences on this topic.¹ Separate articles² have also been

¹ Larysa Platash, *Pedahohichni idei ta osvitnia diialnist Omeliana Popovycha* [Pedagogical ideas and educational activities of Omelian Popovich (1856-1930)]. Avtoreferat dysertatsii na zdobuttia naukovoho stupenia kandydata pedahohichnykh nauk, Ivano-Frankivsk, 2009.

² Natalia Bezhana, *Pedahohichna spadshchyna ta diialnist O. Popovycha v stanovlenni natsionalnoi osvity ta shkilnytstva* [O. Popovich's pedagogical legacy and activities in

published on this topic. His political activities are mentioned in the works of Vasyl Botushanskyi,³ Oleksandr Dobrzhanskyi,⁴ and Volodymyr Staryk.⁵ However, these studies lack a holistic understanding of O. Popovych's political figure and present only some aspects of his activities. To date, there has been no separate study of O. Popovych's political activities. This situation requires correction, as he was an extraordinary individual. He had been involved in events in Bukovina for over forty years and had participated in all the most significant public life activities among Ukrainians in the region. O. Popovych was a member of the leadership of many societies, organisations, and political parties, and edited newspapers and other publications, exerting considerable influence on the main directions of public relations development. Therefore, it is relevant to examine O. Popovych's political activities to assess his contributions to the development of the Ukrainian national movement and to public relations in the region. The author does not attempt to portray the historical figure under study; instead, he seeks to analyse the political activities objectively, taking into account all relevant circumstances.

The purpose of this article is to provide a political portrait of Omelyan Popovych, outline the most important events of his life, trace the development of his ideological convictions, and demonstrate the most significant areas of his

the development of national education and schooling], in *Pytannia istoriohrafii, dzhere-loznavstva ta arkhivoznavstva Tsentralnoi ta Skhidnoi Yevropy*. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats. Vyp. 1, Kyiv-Chernivtsi, 1997, pp. 133-139.

³ Vasyl Botushanskyi, *Rol Ukrainskoho kraiovoho komitetu v revoliutsiinykh podiakh 1918 r. v Chernivtsiakh (za spohadamy O. Popovycha ta M. Korduby)* [The role of the Ukrainian Regional Committee in the revolutionary events of 1918 in Chernivtsi (based on the memoirs of O. Popovych and M. Korduba)], in "Pytannia istorii Ukrainy: Zb. nauk. prats", Vol. 11, Chernivtsi, 2008, pp. 71-75; Vasyl Botushanskyi, *Do pytannia pro derzhavotvorchi orientatsii ukrainitsiv Bukovyny voseny 1918 r.* [On the question of the state-building orientation of the Ukrainians of Bukovina in the autumn of 1918], in "Pytannia istorii Ukrainy: Zb. nauk. prats", Vol. 20, Chernivtsi, 2018, pp. 43-56.

⁴ Oleksandr Dobrzhanskyi, *Natsionalnyi rukh ukrainitsiv Bukovyny druhoi polovyny XIX – pochatku XX st.* [The national movement of Ukrainians in Bukovina in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century], Chernivtsi, 1999; Oleksandr Dobrzhanskyi, *Ukrainitsi Bukovyny voseny 1918 r.: sobornyski idei ta ustremlinnia* [Ukrainians of Bukovina in the autumn of 1918: ideas and aspirations for unity], in *Persha svitova viina u fokusi "plynnoi nestabilnosti": mizhnarodna i vnutrishnia polityka: Kolektivna monohrafia*, Kyiv, 2019, pp. 167-184.

⁵ Volodymyr Staryk, *Vid Sarajeva do Paryzha. Bukovynskyi Interregnum 1914-1921. Part II: Mizh natsionalizmom i tolerantnistiu* [From Sarajevo to Paris. Bukovina Interregnum 1914-1921. Part II: Between Nationalism and Tolerance], Chernivtsi, 2009.

public activity and his influence on the development of political processes in the region in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The source material for this work comprises a collection of personal documents (in particular, O. Popovych's autobiography), as well as materials from government agencies and public organisations related to O. Popovych. These documents are stored in the Central State Archives of the Supreme Authorities of Power and Administration of Ukraine (Kyiv), the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv, and the State Archives of Chernivtsi Region. Certain information was gleaned from the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (Moscow). Of particular interest are the reports by Russian consuls in Chernivtsi on events in Bukovina during this period.

Published documents are of great importance, particularly O. Popovych's own memoirs, *The Revival of Bukovina*. Significant information is also drawn from the memoirs and journalistic works of Theodor Galip, Myron Korduba, and Stepan Smal-Stotsky, which characterise O. Popovych's activities. Reports in the media are also of great importance. In particular, newspapers such as "Bukovyna", "Ruska Rada", "Pravoslavna Bukovyna", "Ukraina", "Dilo", and others contain considerable information about the politician. His own journalistic works, which chronicle the principal political events in Bukovina, are also included.

Thus, the author sought to draw on as broad a range of sources as possible to provide a comprehensive and objective account of Omelian Popovych's activities, analysing both his successes and some of the controversial decisions he made.

FROM MUSCOPHILE VIEWS TO THE NARODOVTSI MOVEMENT: THE SHAPING OF IDEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

Omelian Popovych was born on 18 August 1856 in the village of Vatra Dornei, Câmpulung district, Bukovina. His father, Alexander, had been sent here a year earlier, after graduating from the seminary, to serve as an assistant priest. In the same year, 1856, A. Popovych took over the parish in Ust-Putyla. Little Omelian spent his childhood here, in the mountainous part of Bukovina.

His father was an extraordinary man. Alexander completed the Chernivtsi gymnasium in 1851 and graduated from the Orthodox seminary in 1855. He was fond of literature, wrote poems and prose in German, and published them in various German-language magazines in Austria under the pseudonym Otto Oskar Waldburg.⁶ Furthermore, he was engaged in ethnography and collected Ukrainian

⁶ Omelian Popovych, *Vidrodzhennia Bukovyny* [The Revival of Bukovina], Lviv, 1933, p. 8.

and Romanian folklore. He asked the rectorate of the theological seminary to allow him to publish the collection *Volksdichtungen, Sagen und Märchen der Rumänen*, but without success.⁷ He was an honorary member of the Radetzky-Verein (Radetzky Society), a Tyrolean-Vorarlberg society named after Radetzky, and was fluent in several foreign languages. By his own account, O. Popovych's father was a quintessential cosmopolitan, unconcerned with his ethnic origins. Alexander Popovych died far too young in 1870, at only 38.

His mother, Victoria von Beyer, was a descendant of the Ganitsky family and a cousin of Yuriy Fedkovych. It was his mother and his maternal grandmother (who was Yu. Fedkovych's mother's sister) who initially made a significant effort to instil in young Omelyan a love of his ethnic roots, the Ukrainian language, songs, customs, and so on.

He completed two years of public schooling in Ust-Putyla, then spent two more years at the Orthodox elementary school in Chernivtsi. In 1868, he entered the Chernivtsi gymnasium.⁸ During that period, his spiritual development was greatly influenced by his interactions with his paternal grandfather, Lev Popovych, and his paternal grandmother, Martha (from Shypyntsi), with whom he lived, as well as with students from Voloka at Cheremosh, who rented an apartment from his grandfather. Under their influence, Popovych enrolled in the gymnasium and began studying Ukrainian in the sixth grade. He had previously studied Romanian.⁹

O. Popovych had been studying at the gymnasium for less than 6 years and decided to leave it. He himself explained this decision by saying he was tired of learning Latin and Greek. He also noted that his love for a young girl also contributed to this.¹⁰ Later, he likely regretted this step on several occasions, as his subsequent professional trajectory shows. However, in 1874, O. Popovych entered the teachers' seminary in Chernivtsi and immediately enrolled in the second year, from which he graduated in 1877. His literary activity also began at that time. His first poem in German, entitled *Bukowina!*, was published in "Bukowinaer Pädagogische Blätter" in 1875.

His studies at the gymnasium and teacher training college were an essential

⁷ Osyp Makovei, *Aleksander Popovych*, in "Bukovyna", 1909, January 16.

⁸ *Programm des k.k. Ober-Gimnasiums in Czernowitz in dem Herzogthum Bukowina für das Schuljahr 1868*. Czernowitz, 1868, S. 101.

⁹ Derzhavnyi arkhiv Chernivetskoi oblasti [State Archives of Chernivtsi Region], Fond 228, Opys 1, Sprava 686, p. 1-2.

¹⁰ *Avtobiografia Omeliana Popovycha (05. 06. 1888)* [Autobiography of Omelyan Popovich (June 5, 1888)], in Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrayiny u Lvovi, Fond 401, Opys. 1, Sprava 96, p. 243-244.

period in the formation of O. Popovych's ideological convictions. He was a very active student and therefore took part in many social events organised by the gymnasium and seminary students. In 1871, together with his like-minded friends from Voloka at Cheremosh, he founded and headed a Ukrainian amateur theatre at the gymnasium, which staged plays by Ukrainian authors.

In the early 1870s, O. Popovych joined the secret youth society "Soglasie" (Entente), where he initially served as a librarian and secretary, and later, in 1876 and 1877, as its chairman. The society was founded on October 29, 1870, by students of the Chernivtsi gymnasium.¹¹ Its primary objective was to promote education in Ukrainian and to organise events and gatherings at which presentations on Ukrainian history, customs, and traditions were delivered. Initially, the society lacked a clear ideological orientation, and its members simultaneously supported various political concepts for the development of the Ukrainian people. However, soon D. Kira-Dinzhian, the Russian consul in Chernivtsi, began overseeing the society. In one of his letters, he wrote: "Since the committee members of the 'Russkaya Beseda' (Russian Conversation) society showed a certain negligence in educating the people in the Russian spirit, and since groups of students were promoting Kulishivka, phonetics, and Zaporizhzhia (that is, Narodovtsi and Ukrainianophile ideas – author), the 'Soglasie' society was established on my advice to stimulate the elders to proper work and to counter the Zaporizhian propaganda. Its purpose was to study and disseminate the Russian literary language and history, and, with the help of charitable committees, the 'Soglasie' has made significant progress in this regard. For this reason, the society must be safeguarded from persecution."¹² The Russian consul clearly exaggerated his role in the society's formation. It arose independently, without his guidance. However, as we can see, D. Kira-Dinzhian persistently sought to transform this society and the young people of Bukovina who belonged to it into obedient propagandists of Russian ideas, encouraging them to learn the Russian language, literature, and history. Significant funds were allocated for this purpose by Russian charitable societies and state institutions.

S. Smal-Stotsky observed on this subject: "The study of Rusyn (Ukrainian – author) literature was soon replaced by reading Moscow writers and Moscow literature; the love for one's native land, which had given rise to 'Soglasie', faded; the

¹¹ Stepan Smal-Stotskyi, *Bukovynska Rus* [Bukovinian Rus], Chernivtsi, 1897, p. 127.

¹² *Kopiya s chastnogo pisma Dmitriya Andreevicha Kira-Dinzhana k Nikolayu Arkadievichu Rigelmanu ot 23 dekabrya 1873 g.* [Copy of a private letter from Dmitry Andreevich Kira-Dinzhian to Nikolai Arkadievich Rigelman dated December 23, 1873], in Arkhiv vnesheini politiki Rossiiskoi imperii, Fond V-A2, Opis 181, Delo 1061, p. 25.

enthusiasm that had driven young people to work for their native people cooled, and over time, all ideals were replaced by cold calculations in hard currency, for which it was then necessary to worship foreign gods.”¹³

Nevertheless, one should not exaggerate ‘Soglasie’s’ Muscophilia. O. Popovych later recalled: “...our Russophilia never went beyond the boundaries of the ‘higher’ or ‘educated’ language, essentially ‘iazychie’ (language). In our imagination, ‘Holy Rus’ did not mean Russia, but truly the land and community of all Rusyns.”¹⁴ The society made significant contributions to the development of the youth movement and to the protection of Ukrainian youth’s national interests. Most Ukrainian activists in Bukovina at the end of the 19th century began their activities within this society.

The “Soglasie” society ceased its activities in 1877 due to ideological disputes and the considerable popularity of the ‘Soyuz’ student society, to which most Ukrainian youth soon joined.

The late 1870s and early 1880s were a period of crucial ideological exploration for O. Popovych. He was dissatisfied with Muscophilia’s slogans, propaganda promoting “Yazyky” (a movement advocating the use of the Russian language), etymological spelling, and the idea of “a single Russian people from the Carpathians to Kamchatka.” I. Tyminsky, who was four years older than O. Popovych and studied at the gymnasium from 1864 to 1873, had considerable influence on him while he was still at the gymnasium and in the “Soglasie” society. As O. Popovych wrote in his memoirs, I. Tyminsky was among the first to promote the ideas of the Narodovtsi in Bukovina actively.¹⁵ However, the decisive influence on the formation and development of the Narodovtsi movement in Bukovina, and on the transition of O. Popovych (as well as S. Smal-Stotsky, Ye. Pihuliak, and I. Tyminsky), was exerted by Hnat Onyshkevych, who in 1877 became an extraordinary professor and head of the Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature at Chernivtsi University.¹⁶ O. Popovych called him “the father of Bukovinian Narodovtsi.”¹⁷ Hnat Onyshkevych paid particular attention to young people, explaining to students and high school pupils the differences between the ideas of the Narodovtsi and the Moscophiles, and convincing them

¹³ Stepan Smal-Stotskyi, *Bukovynska Rus...* p. 131.

¹⁴ Omelian Popovych, *Vidrodzhennia Bukovyny ...* p. 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁶ *Personalstand und Ordnung der öffentlichen Vorlesungen an der k. k. Franz-Josef-Universität zu Czernowitz in Sommer-Semester 1877*, Czernowitz, 1877, S. 12.

¹⁷ Omelian Popovych, *Hnat Onyshkevych* [Hnat Onyshkevych], in „Bukovynskyi pravoslavnyi kalendar na rik 1895“, Chernivtsi, 1894, p. 56.

of the need to develop a national trend within the Ukrainian movement. "...Through his influence on the academic youth and, indirectly, on the most active members of the Chernivtsi Russian societies, he gave rise to the Russian popular movement," wrote O. Popovych of him.¹⁸

Immediately after graduating from the teachers' seminary in 1877, O. Popovych joined the Ruska Besida society and became its secretary the following year. He played a key role in transforming the society from a purely recreational organisation into a cultural and educational one, with a comprehensive programme of activities to develop education among peasants. In 1879, he began editing the Bukovina Orthodox Calendar, which he published for almost 40 years.

For some time, O. Popovych still hoped to reconcile the ideas of Narodovtsi and Muscophilia. However, with each passing day, he became increasingly convinced that this was impossible and that sooner or later a choice would have to be made.

The final break with Muscophilia occurred in the early 1880s. O. Popovych recalled this as follows: "...I became a Narodovets, and after weeping bitter tears over the time wasted on 'the study of languages' and 'etymological spelling,' I began diligently studying the language of Shevchenko, Fedkovych, Vovchok, and other eloquent singers and writers of ours. Having come to this conviction, I immediately set about purifying the national idea.¹⁹

Thus, O. Popovych's development as a politician and public figure was typical of the youth of that era. At first, he recognised the need to defend his ethnic roots and national interests, but from a Muscophile position, as Muscophiles dominated the Ukrainian movement in the 1870s. There was a transition from Muscophilia to national consciousness, and he became a committed supporter of the printed word in the people's language, of the idea of a separate Ukrainian people within Austria-Hungary and Russia, and of the creation of Ukrainian autonomy in the Ukrainian parts of Galicia and Bukovina. S. Smal-Stotsky, I. Tyminsky, Ye. Pihuliak and others followed a similar path of ideological development.

THE WHIRLPOOL OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

A significant stage in O. Popovych's political activity was the period from the mid-1880s to the outbreak of World War I. It can be roughly divided into two periods. The first period lasted from the mid-1880s to 1908. During that period, he

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁹ *Avtobiohrafia Omeliana Popovycha (05. 06. 1888)...*, p. 252.

worked closely with S. Smal-Stotsky. He made significant contributions to the development of cultural and educational societies, strengthened the Narodovtsi trend, and provided the Ukrainian movement with appropriate print media. The second period began in 1908 and lasted until the start of World War I. At this point, O. Popovych recognised M. Vasylko's leadership in the Ukrainian movement, worked closely with him on all political matters, and fought S. Smal-Stotsky in every possible way. In the years leading up to the war, he was primarily involved in establishing a separate political party to serve as a platform for M. Vasylko's supporters.

It should be noted that, despite his diverse activities, O. Popovych was first and foremost a teacher and was traditionally regarded as the most important organiser of Ukrainian education in the region. This status carried significant political implications. He progressed through all the most important stages of a teaching career. He served as an assistant teacher at the Chernivtsi municipal school on Semyhorodska Street, then as an assistant and full-time teacher at the Chernivtsi municipal school on Turetska Street, subsequently as the administrator of the Chernivtsi municipal school on Vodna Street, and finally as the head teacher at the Chernivtsi municipal school in Manasterishte. In 1892, O. Popovych became the inspector of schools in the Seret district; in 1894, the district inspector of schools in the Kitsman district; and in 1895, an advisor to the Bukovina Regional School Council. In 1898, he was appointed professor at the teachers' seminary in Chernivtsi. In 1905, he was appointed director of the examination board for public and district schools, and, in 1906, he became regional inspector of Ukrainian schools.²⁰

O. Popovych's teaching, cultural, and educational activities were closely intertwined with political ones, because at that time the emergence of a Ukrainian newspaper, the founding of a Ukrainian reading room, and the creation of a loan fund all had political overtones and contributed to the national growth of Ukrainian identity and the formation of a nation capable of defending itself and striving for statehood in the future.

The transition to the Narodovstvo movement immediately affected O. Popovych's public activities. In 1884, with his assistance, the Narodovstvo

²⁰ *Avtobiohrafia Omeliana Oleksandrovycha Popovycha (napysana nym vlasnoruch, ale perekazano zmist vid tretoi osoby)* [Autobiography of Omelian Oleksandrovych Popovych (written by him, but retold by a third party)], in Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchychk orhaniv vladu Ukrayny, Fond 4453, Opys 1, Sprava 16, p. 190; *Biohrafia O. Popovycha (18. VIII. 1856 – 22. III. 1930)* [Biography of O. Popovych (August 18, 1856 – March 22, 1930)], in Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrayny u Lvovi, Fond 328, Opys 1, Sprava 104, p. 8-10.

movement gained control of the “Ruska Besida” society. From 1891, O. Popovych led the society and, in 1894, initiated the adoption of a new charter modelled on the Galician “Prosvita” society. The society’s primary goal was to “spread education and promote the welfare of the Ruthenian people.”²¹ In subsequent years, he also made significant contributions to the development of this oldest Ukrainian society, which he first headed from 1902 to 1904 and then from 1904 to 1911, and served on its executive board for more than 40 years.

One more thing O. Popovych did was to found the ‘Ruska (Ukrainian – author) School’ society. It adopted its charter in 1887. O. Popovych was a member of the leadership of this association of educators for more than two decades, serving as its head from 1899 to 1901 and from 1909 to 1912. Due to his and many others’ efforts, these societies became the most influential in the region.

Furthermore, O. Popovych made considerable efforts to develop the following associations: Ruskyi Narodnyi Dim (Ruskyi People’s House), Tovarystvo Ruskoj Pravoslavnoj Shlyakhtry na Bukovyni (Association of Ruskyi Orthodox Nobility in Bukovina), and others. He recognised the importance of such associations in fostering national consciousness among the public.

One of the most influential aspects of O. Popovych’s work was his campaign to introduce phonetic spelling in Ukrainian public schools. This reform had significant political implications, affirming the distinctiveness of the Ukrainian language. As early as 1884, he argued that schools should replace etymological spelling with a phonetic system. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Popovych collaborated with Chernivtsi University professors S. Smal-Stotsky and T. Gartner, who provided the scholarly foundation for this change.

The essence of the issue was that, when writing in etymological spelling, many words could be read in both Russian and Ukrainian ways. Thus, this spelling brought Russian and Ukrainian closer together in writing, allowing Muscophiles to promote the idea of a “single language.” Unlike etymology, the main principle of phonetic spelling was “write as you hear.” Thus, this spelling system effectively conveyed the peculiarities of the Ukrainian language and demonstrated that it was a distinct language, markedly different from Russian.

S. Smal-Stotsky and T. Gartner wrote an appeal to the Ministry of Education

²¹ *Zminenyi statut ukrainskoho tovarystva “Ruska Besida” v m. Chernivtsi i lystuvannia z pravlinniam tovarystva shchodo zatverdzhennia zminenoho statutu* [Amended charter of the Ukrainian society “Ruska Besida” in Chernivtsi and correspondence with the society’s board regarding approval of the amended charter], in Derzhavnyi arkhiv Chernivetskoi oblasti, Fond 3, Opys 1, Sprava 6222, p. 1-2.

and Religious Affairs, in which they justified the need to introduce phonetics in schools. While the university professors provided academic explanations for introducing phonetics, O. Popovych justified it on teaching and educational grounds. He published articles entitled "Fears," "Spelling Issues,"²² and "The matter of managing Russian spelling."²³ In 1892, the ABC Book for popular schools was published, compiled using phonetic spelling, and it clearly demonstrated how much easier it would be for children to learn Ukrainian.

On 25 November 1892, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs issued a resolution stating that, from the following year, all schools in Galicia and Bukovina that used Ukrainian as the language of instruction would adopt phonetic spelling.²⁴ Thus, the nearly ten-year struggle came to a victorious end. Moscophiles could no longer provide textbooks and other educational materials for schools because they were written in etymological spelling and did not meet ministerial requirements.

O. Popovych made a significant contribution to the development of the Ukrainian press and publishing. At the general meeting of the "Ruska Besida" society in 1884, he justified the need to publish a Ukrainian nationalist newspaper and made every effort to implement the project. The first issue of the "Bukovyna" newspaper was published on January 1, 1885. Yu. Fedkovych was invited to serve as editor, but O. Popovych, in his memoirs, correctly noted that, until 1891, he did most of the editorial work, thereby contributing significantly to the newspaper's establishment and development.²⁵ From mid-1887, thanks to O. Popovych's efforts, the newspaper began publishing in phonetic spelling. It became a notable phenomenon in the region's social and political life. Additionally, O. Popovych served as editor of 'Biblioteka dlya molodi' (Library for Youth), Bukovynskyi Pravoslavny Kalendar (Bukovina Orthodox Calendar), and several other publications for many years.

In the 1890s, O. Popovych became actively involved in the political conflict between two factions of Ukrainian deputies in the Bukovina Diet. In 1890, for the first time, the Narodovtsi managed to get their representatives I. Tyminsky, Ye. Pihuliak and V. Volyan as deputies of the Diet. In 1891, S. Smal-Stotsky also became

²² *Strakhy* [Fears], in „Bukovyna”, 1887, 1 (13) Bereznia; *Pravopysne pytanie* [Spelling question], in „Bukovyna”, 1887, 16 (28) Bereznia.

²³ Omelian Popovych, *Sprava upravylennia ruskoj pravopysi* [The matter of managing Russian spelling], in "Ruska shkola", 1888, Vyp. 1, p. 31-35.

²⁴ *Nowa pisownia ruska* [New Ukrainian spelling.], in „Gazeta Lwowska”, 1892, 7 grudnia.

²⁵ Omelian Popovych, *Pochatky "Bukovyny"* [The beginnings of "Bukovyna"], in "Bukovyna", 1909, 7 sierpnia.

a deputy, and soon after, I. Bezhан. However, instead of working together, a split occurred among the Ukrainian deputies. The split stemmed from the personal ambitions of I. Tyminsky, who disliked the fact that S. Smal-Stotsky was becoming the unofficial leader of the Narodovtsi. Consequently, I. Tyminsky, V. Volyan, and I. Bezhан announced that they were breaking away from the Narodovtsi and forming their own separate group, which they called the 'Conservative Russky Club.' I. Tyminsky published *The Russky issue in Bukovina. Discussed by a Bukovinian Orthodox Rusyn* brochure,²⁶ in which he announced the creation of a separate party that would belong neither to the Narodovtsi nor to the Muscophilia. The slogan of Orthodox solidarity was put forward, along with joint action with Romanian politicians and the struggle of the autochthonous peoples of Bukovina against all kinds of "invaders" – Germans, Jews, Poles, Armenians, and Rusyns-Galicians.²⁷

In response, he published a series of articles in the *Bukovyna* newspaper, followed by a separate pamphlet, "Kotyuzi po zaslugam" (The cat deserved it). These articles sharply attacked I. Tyminsky, declaring him a traitor to Ukrainian interests, and explained that Ukrainians now had no way to influence the course of events and decision-making in the Diet. The pamphlet was written in a harsh tone, with O. Popovych disregarding that he and Tyminsky had been friends in the past and had collaborated on many Ukrainian issues. This revealed O. Popovych's intolerance towards his opponents and his desire to destroy their ideas at any cost.

The years 1905–1908 were significant for O. Popovych's political activity. They were a period of party-building and the differentiation of political forces. Initially, the Narodovtsi sought to unite into a political party. It was established in the autumn of 1905 and named the National Council of Rusyns in Bukovina. Popovych played an active role in the party's formation and became one of its leaders. However, a radical party soon split from the once monolithic Narodovtsi group, and supporters of social democratic ideas grew significantly stronger; as a result, Bukovinian teachers became a separate political force. But most importantly, tensions arose among the leaders of the nationalist movement, primarily due to the rivalry between S. Smal-Stotsky and M. Vasylko for leadership. The differences were mainly tactical and personal rather than ideological. Initially, their rivalry was concealed. In this confrontation, O. Popovych supported M. Vasylko.

²⁶ [Ivan Tyminskyi], *Ruske pytanie na Bukovyni. Obhovoryv bukovynskyi pravoslavnyi rusyn* [The Ruthenian question in Bukovina. Discussed by a Bukovinian Orthodox Rusyn], Cherivtsi, 1892.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.

In his campaign against S. Smal-Stotsky, O. Popovych sought to utilise party organisations. In 1908, he founded the Ukrainian Progressive Party to replace the inactive National Council of Rusyns in Bukovina. M. Vasylko was formally elected as the party leader, while O. Popovych was regarded as its unofficial ideologist. At that time, he almost solely controlled the leading *Narodovtsi* newspaper, *Bukovina*. He used it to address his fellow compatriots on behalf of the Progressive Party's interim leadership. From January 1, 1909, the newspaper "Bukovyna" began publication with the official subtitle "Organ of the Ukrainian Progressive Party in Bukovina." The tone of the newspaper shifted in line with O. Popovych's views. Attacks on radicals intensified, and the idea was then advanced that radicalism had been imported from Galicia. However, the experiment with the Progressive Party was never brought to a successful conclusion. Due to its small size, it merged with the Ruska Rada peasant political party, founded by S. Smal-Stotsky as a counterweight to the Progressive Party.

However, in 1912, an official break occurred between M. Vasylko and S. Smal-Stotsky. From that moment on, the confrontation became particularly bitter. The fighting was carried out by any means necessary, including accusations of corruption, squandering public funds, and authoritarianism. But most of all, S. Smal-Stotsky was accused of not being a native of Bukovina, as well as of involvement in abuses and the collapse of the "Peasant fund". To strike a blow against S. Smal-Stotsky and his Ukrainian People's Party, followers of M. Vasylko and O. Popovych began publishing the "Pravoslavna Bukovyna" newspaper. Although a certain Nikolai Unhurian signed the newspaper, it was well known in the region that O. Popovych was the initiator and ideological driving force behind the publication. The "Pravoslavna Bukovyna" gained an infamous reputation as a reactionary newspaper that advocated that all public offices in Bukovina be filled exclusively by Bukovinians. In one of its issues, the newspaper wrote: "Worse than the Lyakhs, our brothers, the Galicians have spread among us. They have taken the best places, squeezed into our communities, and, worst of all, stirred up the rural population. They call the Bukovinians bulls and fools, arguing that they cannot speak or write properly."²⁸ The articles in the "Pravoslavna Bukovyna" sparked a storm of protest. The Chernivtsi newspapers, such as "Kamenyari" and "Ukraina", strongly criticised them. It is noteworthy that even "Narodnyi Holos" and "Nova Bukovyna", which were the newspapers of supporters of M. Vasylko and O. Popovych, distanced themselves from the autochthonous publication. The

²⁸ *Holos khliboroba* [The voice of the peasant], in "Pravoslavna Bukovyna", 1913, 12 sichnia.

ideological orientation of the “Pravoslavna Bukovyna” was condemned by the Lviv newspaper “Dilo” and the Kyiv newspaper “Rada”. The “Pravoslavna Bukovyna” existed for only a few weeks (four issues were published) and then disappeared without a trace, convincingly proving that autochthonism could not gain serious support among the Ukrainian communities of Bukovina.

The question arises as to how seriously O. Popovych supported the autochthonous movement under the slogan “Bukovina for Bukovinians.” An analysis of his memoirs and the main aspects of his political activity shows that his commitment to unity with Greater Ukraine and Galicia was self-evident. Therefore, the episode involving the autochthonous movement was not characteristic of O. Popovych and was explained by his attempt to defeat his political opponent, S. Smal-Stotsky.

In the context of the rift between M. Vasylko and S. Smal-Stotsky, O. Popovych assumed the latter's role in political affairs. M. Vasylko continued to engage in politics in Vienna, while O. Popovych managed internal affairs in Bukovina. T. Galip explained this balance of power quite accurately in his memoirs.²⁹

In 1912, O. Popovych began forming a national democratic party to unite his supporters. On the eve of World War I, the party was still in the process of formation, but he continued to speak out as a representative of the National Democrats in the political arena.

Another issue highlighting the complexity of O. Popovych's political activity is the development of an organised teachers' movement in Bukovina. In the early 20th century, the teachers' movement underwent significant changes, and teachers emerged as a powerful political force. On August 6–7, 1901, the first Bukovina teachers' congress was held, at which the Bukovina Teachers' Union was revived. German G. Kipper and Romanian M. Chisanovici played significant roles in their respective societies. That same year, they began publishing “Freie Lehrerzeitung” (Free Teachers' Newspaper). Among the Ukrainians, I. Karbulytsky, K. Danyliak, O. Ivanytskyi, D. Pihuliak, and others took an active part in the new organisation. The Union undertook to protect teachers' professional interests. The organisation was international. The Bukovina Teachers' Union strongly criticised Ukrainian politicians, including O. Popovych, for insufficient attention to the issue of raising teachers' salaries. Unfortunately, he did not immediately recognise the potential of the teachers' professional movement and distanced himself from it.

In 1911, after O. Popovych officially retired and ceased serving as the

²⁹ Teodot Halip, *Z moikh spomyniv* [From my memories], in “Krakivski visti”, 1943, 25 Bereznia.

regional inspector of Ukrainian schools, he was elected a deputy to the Bukovina Diet. He also became a member of the committee of this representative body. After the elections, the Diet held only one session. However, the parliamentary committee met periodically, including during World War I, and O. Popovych remained a member of parliament until the war ended.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY DURING WORLD WAR I AND THE COLLAPSE OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Although there had been much talk of a possible war with Russia in Bukovina, especially since 1908, when Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, its outbreak came as something of a surprise to O. Popovych. Initially, he did not fully understand the full range of threats and did not consider leaving Bukovina. However, a conversation with Baron Nicu Flondor, who pointed out that Ukrainian politicians would be the first to be taken into captivity by the Muscovites when they reached Chernivtsi,³⁰ convinced him of the need to leave the region. He first moved to Hungary and then to Vienna, where he remained until the fall of 1915.

Omelian Popovych became actively involved in public life in the capital of Austria-Hungary. He revived the "Bukovyna" newspaper as the organ of the Union of Ukrainian Ambassadors in Bukovina, continued publishing the Bukovina Orthodox Calendar, and printed a prayer book for soldiers. The main idea promoted by the publications edited by O. Popovych at this stage was the struggle for Austria-Hungary's victory in the war. The "Bukovyna" paper also called for the unification of all Ukrainians and exposed various false ideas held by Russians about the Ukrainian population of Bukovina and Galicia. For example, the article "One language, one people" reads as if it were about current events, specifically Vladimir Putin's recent political statements, which he has repeated repeatedly in recent years. The author of the article noted, "...what Moscow's mercenaries failed to achieve through persuasion over the past fifty years, they will not achieve now, and the Muscovites themselves will never achieve through threats. We have never had a common language with them, and we will never form one people with them."³¹

O. Popovych worked fruitfully in the Ukrainian General Council (UGC),

³⁰ Omelian Popovych, *Voienni spomyny* [War memories], in "Kalendar dlia ukrainskoho narodu na zvychainyi rik 1915", Chernivtsi, 1915, p. 49.

³¹ "Adin yazyk, adin narod" ["One language, one people"], in "Bukovyna", 1915, 28 liutoho.

established on May 5, 1915, as the highest representative body of Ukrainians within Austria-Hungary. The UGC was based on the principles of securing independence for the Ukrainian lands that were part of Russia (following its defeat) and of creating a separate Ukrainian autonomous region within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He also worked extensively with the Ukrainian Cultural Council, which focused on Ukrainian education in the diaspora. He regarded the establishment of the terms “the Ukrainian” and “Ukrainian” in official Austrian documentation as a significant achievement of that time, to which he contributed significantly, together with M. Vasylko.

On October 22, 1915, O. Popovych returned to Bukovina. He spent most of his time in Vatra Dornei, where meetings of the Bukovina Diet’s regional committee were regularly held, as were those of other governing bodies. He visited Chernivtsi periodically to meet Ukrainian activists. At the time, he published a lengthy article in the “Dilo” newspaper (Lviv), expressing his satisfaction that a significant number of public schools, as well as Ukrainian gymnasiums in Chernivtsi, Vyzhnytsia, and later in Kitsman, had resumed their work.³²

However, on 10 June 1916, O. Popovych was compelled to leave his homeland again due to a new Russian offensive. He then moved to Prague, where most of the Ukrainians who had emigrated from Bukovina were living. There, he became head of the Committee for the Care of Ukrainian Refugees. The committee included, among others, well-known figures such as Ivan Horbachevsky and Ivan Puluj. Thanks to the committee’s efforts, several elementary schools for Ukrainian refugee children and gymnasium courses were established, and various forms of assistance were provided.

After the liberation of Bukovina from Russian occupation in August 1917, O. Popovych returned to his native land. On 1 May 1918, the “Bukovyna” newspaper resumed publication in Chernivtsi.

By the end of 1917, it was clear that the war was drawing to a close and that its conclusion would bring significant geopolitical shifts. However, O. Popovych, like other Bukovinian politicians, did not foresee what would happen to the region after the war. They believed to the very end that Austria-Hungary, although it would not win, would at least remain intact. The memoirs of O. Popovych and other Ukrainian leaders of Bukovina show that they were not fully prepared for the stormy events of October-November 1918. As a result, they did not always make timely decisions.

³² Omelian Popovych, *Vidbudova natsionalnoho zhyttia ukrainitsiv na Bukovyni* [Rebuilding the national life of Ukrainians in Bukovina], in “Dilo”, 1916, 23 kvitnia.

The rapid pace of events required experienced, balanced politicians. Therefore, O. Popovych, aged 62 at the time, was regarded by everyone, including his official political opponents, as the legitimate leader of the Ukrainians of Bukovina. Moreover, M. Vasylko and S. Smal-Stotsky were outside the region.

O. Popovych took part in the Ukrainian Constituent Assembly in Lviv, which formed the Ukrainian National Council, the governing representative body in the Ukrainian lands of Austria-Hungary. He was then elected chairman of the Bukovina Regional Committee of the Ukrainian National Council, which assumed leadership of the struggle to establish Ukrainian power in the region. During this period, O. Popovych made decisive and responsible decisions. The accusations by his opponents, such as M. Korduba, regarding his insufficient involvement with rural communities and O. Popovych's³³ lack of determination, which were made post facto in the 1920s, were unfounded and contradicted the realities of those turbulent days.

O. Popovych was one of the major organisers of the Bukovina People's Assembly on 3 November. He delivered a speech at this grand gathering, which was permeated with ideas of statehood. The People's Assembly decided to divide Bukovina along ethnic lines, based on the 1910 census.

Notably, thanks to O. Popovych's high authority, Ukrainian representatives reached an agreement with Romanian politician A. Oncul on the division of power in Bukovina, a proposal Oncul had previously expressed. Other Romanian politicians, regardless of party affiliation, rejected the idea of dividing the region. A. Oncul claimed to represent the Romanian National Council, but this was not entirely accurate. On December 6, 1918, O. Popovych, as head of the Ukrainian Regional Committee, assumed power in the northern part of Bukovina from Count J. Etzdorf, the Land's President, and became the head of the Ukrainian administration in that part of the region. In accordance with Bukovinian tradition, he came to be referred to as the President of the Ukrainian part of Bukovina.

All subsequent steps taken by the Ukrainian administration, headed by O. Popovych, to establish Ukrainian power were correct and appropriate. Life-support issues for the population were resolved; representatives were sent to Lviv and Kyiv to report on the situation in Bukovina; a decision was made to publish a newspaper; and civil servants were sworn in to pledge allegiance to the Ukrainian government. However, history did not give O. Popovych and his associates time to develop their efforts to build a state. Romania sent troops to

³³ Myron Korduba, *Perevorot na Bukovyni* [The coup in Bukovina], in "Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk", Vol. 81, Lviv, 1923, Kn. 10, p. 140-141.

Bukovina, and on November 9, 1918, O. Popovych suddenly left for Zalishchyky, leaving no successor in the regional committee. This departure caused dissatisfaction within the Bukovina Regional Committee, whose members even considered recalling O. Popovych to Chernivtsi, but on November 11, Romanian troops marched into Chernivtsi.

O. Popovych moved to Stanislav, where he was elected one of the deputy chairpersons of the Ukrainian National Council of the West Ukrainian People's Republic and a member of its committee. He also chaired the National Council's school board. O. Popovych initiated the establishment of the Bukovina Council to assist refugees from the Bukovina region.

O. Popovych remained in Stanislav until the end of 1922. In December of that year, he won a competition for the position of adviser at the Ridna Shkola association in Lviv. Thus, after many years, he returned to his beloved educational work. Despite challenging conditions, he made significant contributions to expanding the association's school network, published numerous textbooks, and wrote several articles in periodicals on educational, social, and political topics.

However, O. Popovych's health deteriorated markedly in his seventieth year. Finally, he left his job and moved to his daughter's home in Zalishchyky, where he died in 1930. He was buried there.

CONCLUSIONS

O. Popovych left a significant footprint in the history of Bukovina as a politician. He belonged to the cohort of founders of the Ukrainian national revival in the region. His efforts contributed to the growth of Ukrainian education, which achieved significant success in the pre-war period. He was an active leader of many Ukrainian associations, including the most powerful, such as "Ruska Besida" and "Ruska Shkola". Throughout his life, he was involved in journalism and publishing, utilising his writings to address significant social events. He made considerable efforts to combat Muscophilia, a movement hostile to Ukrainian identity. He made a substantial contribution to the development of Ukrainian political parties.

His political activities also included ill-considered actions, such as the periodic promotion of the autonomist slogan, extremely harsh statements against his opponents, and, at times, insufficiently democratic practices in his dealings with ordinary people.

During the war, O. Popovych did not sever his ties with his native land, worked in many Ukrainian organisations, and provided all possible assistance to

Ukrainian refugees.

As the most influential politician, O. Popovych headed the Bukovina Regional Committee of the Ukrainian National Council in the autumn of 1918. In November of that year, he also assumed power in the northern part of Bukovina from the Austrian President of the Land, Count J. Etzdorf. He made significant efforts to ensure a smooth transition.

O. Popovych had worked tirelessly for his life. He was called an ant for his tireless work in the public interest. He made a significant contribution to the development of Ukrainian culture in the region and rightly belongs among the most distinguished people of Bukovina. S. Smal-Stotsky wrote about him: "And although we have parted ways, I have always sincerely respected and continue to respect his enormous contributions to the Ukrainian people, where his name should be written in gold letters for the eternal memory of future generations."³⁴

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³⁴ Stepan Smal-Stotskyi, *Hrudka zemli na mohyli Omeliana Popovycha* [A lump of earth on the grave of Omelyan Popovich], in "Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk", 1930, vol. 103, p. 710.

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