

Possibilities for Cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian Historians on the History of Ukraine in the Seventeenth Century

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Although the possibilities of research into the history of Ukraine which the Polish historians had after the Second World War can hardly be compared with the situation of their counterparts in Ukraine, however, no publications on Ukrainian issues in the 1950s appeared in Poland either. This is well illustrated by the fortunes of Professor Władysław Tomkiewicz (1899-1982) and his student and disciple Zbigniew Wójcik who were removed from the work on Ukraine's history. Anyway, their professional careers cannot be compared with the tragic fortunes of the Ukrainian historians.

In the year 1960, during the so-called "wave of political thaw", my master Professor Zbigniew Wójcik published his famous book entitled "The Wild Fields on Fire. On the Cossacks in the Old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth"¹. His book generated a great deal of discourse in Poland. It had many editions in the following years, and it dispelled many of the myths which had existed in the Polish historiography in the past. In his General History of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Wójcik showed, against a broad background of European policies, how the forces were reshuffled and how they gave way to the emergence of such major powers as Russia and Brandenburg-Prussia and, later on, of Austria, Sweden, Turkey and Crimea, but, first of all, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, lost their importance in the international arena forever. Underestimation of the role of Ukraine in the Commonwealth, which largely led to the Uprising of Boghdan Khmelnytsky and to the Treaty of Pereyaslav, was, in my opinion, of primary importance in the process of change in the arrangement of forces in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Khmelnytsky Uprising and Ukraine's attempt to re-establish closer relations with the Commonwealth in the days of the Union of Hadiach were the subjects treated very cautiously by the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland at that time (the role of censorship), since there was only one interpretation of history in this domain and it was subordinated to the contemporary political system. Speaking in the most general terms, Ukraine should have been part of Russia as one element, beside

¹ Z. Wójcik, *Dzikie Pola w ogniu. O Kozaczyźnie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1968.

Belarus, of the common state descending from one root of the Kievan Rus. Here we come to an important issue, namely the so-called "theory of relocation", which holds that after the downfall of the Kievan Rus in the thirteenth century the centre of a uniform Ruthenian statehood shifted northwards, up to Suzdal and Vladimir-on-the-Klyazma and then to Moscow. The concept of a commonwealth of Moscow with the Kievan Rus, with a relocated centre of power, played a great part in Boghdan Khmelnytsky's "return to the real bosom" together with part of Ukraine by virtue of the act of the Pereyaslav Union of 1654. No wonder this act was later called the "Reunification of Ukraine with Russia" („Wossojedinienie Ukrainy z Rossijej”).

The situation changed and the freedom of expression appeared upon the collapse of the People's Republic of Poland.

Those years saw the publication of a large number of interesting books and articles concerning the history of the First Republic of Poland and of Ukraine. After Ukraine regained her independence, a cooperation with the Ukrainian historians could be established. One can hardly enumerate in a detailed way all those valuable meetings, conferences, as well as institutional and informal contacts. We should mention an interesting series of conferences held at the University of Warsaw which yielded in twenty-six volumes of "Studia Ucrainica", encompassing, of course, not only the seventeenth century². Let us mention here the name of Professor Władysław A. Serczyk, author of a number of interesting works on 17th-century Ukraine and of a synthesis entitled "The History of Ukraine". Its first edition was published in 1979, and only its second and third editions of 1990 and 2001 were published without the state intervention through censorship³.

Let me also mention "The Eastern Review" („Przegląd Wschodni"), which might appear after the year 1990, and the list of prizes connected with this interesting periodical (for example, the prize winner in 1997 was Natalia Yakovenko). I should also mention the publishing initiatives of the Institute of South-Eastern Studies in Przemyśl.

Under the new conditions of free exchange of historical thought, there might appear in Poland the works of the Ukrainian historians and of the Polish, so-called emigration historians, such as, for example, the books of Oskar Halecki, who was looked upon unwillingly by the Party authorities in the times of the People's Republic

² The last volume of: *Warszawskie Zeszyty Ukrainoznawcze* 25-26, *Spotkania polsko – ukraińskie, Studia Ucrainica*, ed. S. Kozak at al., Warszawa 2008.

³ W.A. Serczyk, *Historia Ukrainy*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków 2001.

of Poland. Those books were mainly published by the Institute of Central and East European Studies headed by Professor Jerzy Kłoczowski⁴.

In Lublin there appeared two volumes of the history of Ukraine written by the Ukrainian historians Natalia Yakovenko and Yaroslav Hrycak and designed for the Polish readers⁵.

Also worthy of mention here is the joint initiative of the Polish and Ukrainian historians who started an interesting discussion in the book entitled "Between Us: Polish-Ukrainian Historical Sketches". The work may show that it is possible to write a joint book or manual encompassing the modern time, and may be not only modern. One chapter of the book was written at that time jointly by Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel and Natalia Yakovenko⁶. In this short overview it is hardly possible to mention many interesting international conferences organized in Poland, Ukraine and in other countries. Let us mention that six Ukrainist Congresses have already been held; the latest one was organized in 2005 in Donetsk. where the issues of the seventeenth century also occupied a remarkable place and the second one in 2009 in Kiiv. Worthy of mention are also interesting conferences organized on Lago di Garda by Professor Giovanna Brogi-Bercoff⁷. Many interesting publications appeared on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the Union of Brest. Among them, as it seems to me, the most valuable work has been the series "Beresteiske Chitanyya", which appears thanks to the historians of the Bogoslovskaya Akademia in Lvov headed by Father Borys Gudziak⁸.

⁴ O. Halecki, *Historia Europy – jej granice i podziały* (The Limits and Divisions of European History), przekład J.M.Kłoczowski, pod red. J. Kłoczowskiego, Lublin 1994; O. Halecki, *Od unii florenckiej do unii brzeskiej* (From Florence to Brest), przekład A. Niklewicz OSU, t. I-II, Lublin 1997.

⁵ N. Jakovenko, *Historia Ukrainy. Od czasów najdawniejszych do końca XVIII wieku (Narys istoriji Ukrajiny z najdawniejszych czasów do końca XVIII stolittja)*, przekład O. Hnatiuk, K. Kotyńska, Lublin 2000; J. Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy 1772-1999. Narodziny nowoczesnego narodu* (Istorija Ukrajiny: 1772-1999. Narodnennija modernoj naciji), przekład K. Kotyńska, Lublin 2000.

⁶ *Między sobą. Szkice historyczne polsko – ukraińskie*, red. T. Chynczewska – Hennel, N. Jakowenko, Instytut Europy Środkowo – Wschodniej, Lublin 2000.

⁷ *Mazepa e il suo tempo. Storia, cultura, società, Mazepa and his Time, History, Culture, Society*, a cura di G. Siedina, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2004.

⁸ *400-littja Berestejskoji Uniji*, Materiały perszych – czetwertych „Berestejskich czytań”, red. B. Gudziak, współr. O. Turij, Lviv 1995-1997; B. Gudziak, *Kryzys i reforma. Metropolia kijowska patriarchat Konstantynopola i geneza unii brzeskiej* (Crisis and Reform. The Kyivan Metropolis, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest), tłum. H. Leskiw, A. Chrin, teksty staro-cerkiewno-słowiańskie, R. Łepa, red. H. Łaskiewicz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie – Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2008.

Professor Rostyslav Radyshevskiy is a scholar from Kiev but the Polish historiography owes him a valuable monograph dedicated to the Ukrainian poetry written in the Polish language; he is also the editor of the work of Jan Dalibor Vagilevich⁹.

In recent years, a good deal of source material has been published, including the Accounts of the war from the first days of the Polish-Cossack fighting during the Uprising of Boghdan Kmelnickiy, memoirs, the Kiev-Pechora Pateryk (by L. Nodzyńska), and the Latopis (by H. Sushko)¹⁰.

I have also mentioned the individual contacts: I myself have the pleasure of cooperating with many talented scholarship holders, many of whom come from Ukraine. They may work and study in Poland thanks to, *inter alia*, Polish Foundations such as, for example, the Mianowski Kasa Foundation¹¹.

Unfortunately, despite numerous efforts and measures undertaken I did not manage to create a team of historians who would willingly undertake a thorough work on the research into modern history of the Polish-Ukrainian relations. Projects for the publication of source materials were submitted several years ago to the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and to the University of Warsaw; however, there was no response to them. There is a possibility that such a team, that could also coordinate joint publishing undertakings with our colleagues in Ukraine, might be created at the University of Białystok.

PS - as a supplement written in 2010.

In October 2008 an International Conference devoted to the Union of Hadjač took place in Warsaw. As a result of this Conference a very interesting book was published. It included 42 articles written by historians from Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, USA, Italy and Hungary¹².

⁹ R. Radyszewskiy, *Polskojęzyczna poezja ukraińska od końca XVI do początku XVIII wieku*, cz. I Monografia, cz. II Antologia, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Oddziału Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Kraków 1996- 1998; Jan Dalibór Wagilewicz, *Pisarze polscy Rusini wraz z dodatkiem Pisarze łacińscy Rusini*, do druku przygotował i przedmową poprzedził R. Radyszewskiy, Południowo – Wschodni Instytut Naukowy w Przemyślu, Przemyśl 1996.

¹⁰ *Pateryk Kijowsko – Pieczerski*, wyd. L. Nodzyńska, Wrocław 1993; *Latopis hustyński*, opracowanie, przekład, komentarze, H. Suszko, Wrocław 2003.

¹¹ *Nauka Polska. Jej potrzeby, organizacja i rozwój*. Rocznik Kasy im. Józefa Mianowskiego Fundacji Popierania Nauki (2007) XVI (XLI), Warszawa 2007.

¹² *350-lecie Unii Hadziackiej (1658-2008)*, pod red. T. Chynczewskiej – Hennel, P. Krolla i M. Nagielskiego, Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa 2008.

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In the article Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel discusses the following points:

1. Difficulties in research into the history of Ukraine in modern times in Poland prior to 1989. The role of the so-called "theory of relocation", according to which there existed the only model of history, that is to say the subordination of the history of Ukraine and Belarus to Russia.
2. The emergence of new publishing initiatives in Poland following the year 1990 – The Institute of Central and Eastern Europe in Lublin, The Eastern Institute at the University of Warsaw, the Institute of South-Eastern Studies in Przemyśl etc.
3. Polish-Ukrainian meetings and conferences.
4. A scholarship programme for young Ukrainian historians in Poland.
5. Absence of a strong publishing centre for coordination of historical research connected with the Polish-Ukrainian relations in the seventeenth century.