

З.С. | Зовнішні справи

*Заснований у 1991 році
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**Том 33, № 5
2023**

ISSN: 2663-2675
E-ISSN: 2663-2683

**Свідоцтво про державну реєстрацію
друкованого засобу масової інформації**
Серія: KB № 24816-14756 ПР від 31.03.2021 р.

Журнал включено до
Переліку наукових фахових видань України (Категорія «Б»)
з історичних наук (Наказ Міністерства освіти і науки України № 1188
від 24 вересня 2020 р.)

Журнал представлено
у таких наукометричних базах:
Google Scholar, НБУ ім. В. І. Вернадського,
Фахові видання України, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

Зовнішні справи / Ред. кол.: Т. В. Сидорук та ін. – Київ: Громадська спілка «Редакція журналу «Зовнішні справи», 2023. – Том 33, № 5. – 53 с.

Засновник і видавець:
Громадська спілка «Редакція журналу «Зовнішні справи»
01001, пров. Рильський, 6, м. Київ, Україна
E-mail: info@uaforeignaffairs.com
www: <https://uaforeignaffairs.com/uk>

F.A. | **Foreign Affairs**

*Founded in 1991
Published six times per year*

**Volume 33, No. 5
2023**

ISSN: 2663-2675
E-ISSN: 2663-2683

**Certificate of state registration
of the print media**

Series: KV No. 24816-14756 PR dated 31.03.2021

Journal included in List of scientific professional publications of Ukraine (Category “B”)
in Historical Sciences (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 1188
of September 24, 2020)

**Journal is presented
in the following scientometric databases:**

Google Scholar, VNLU, Professional publications
of Ukraine, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

Foreign Affairs / Ed. col.: T. V. Sydoruk et al. – Kyiv: Public Union Editorial Board of the Journal
“Foreign Affairs”, 2023. – Volume 33, No. 5. – 53 p.

Founder and publisher:

Public Union Editorial Board of the Journal “Foreign Affairs”
01001, 6 Rylskyi Ln., Kyiv, Ukraine
E-mail: info@uaforeignaffairs.com
www: <https://uaforeignaffairs.com/en>

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DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.8-9

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Before and after 24.02.2022: Neighbouring Russia and Ukraine's mission

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До і після 24.02.2022: сусідство з Росією та місія України

Russia's geographical neighbours have long been familiar with the significant security threat posed by the common border with this country. The events after 24 February 2022, as well as cases of nuclear blackmail by the Russian government, have extended this threat beyond Europe and Asia. It has become clear that the problem of neighbouring Russia has acquired a global dimension.

Among the 14 countries that share land borders with the Russian Federation, six of them have joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and are under the Alliance's nuclear protection. Each of these countries, except for Norway, joined NATO after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), influenced by the fact that they had repeatedly been the target of Russian (Soviet) expansion in the past, losing sovereignty or a significant part of their land.

As of 2023, territorial disputes between Russia and its Baltic neighbours, as well as Japan, are still ongoing. Under the direct influence of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Finland joined NATO and the accession of traditionally neutral Sweden is being finalised. In September 2022, Ukraine applied for fast-track accession to NATO, which was supported by many NATO members, primarily Russia's current and former neighbours. Proclaimed by the revanchist leadership of the nuclear superpower Russia to justify the occupation of Ukraine's territories, the concept of "historical lands" directly threatens the

territorial integrity and sovereignty of several countries. Like Ukraine, the territories of 15 other states: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were part of the Russian Empire or the USSR in the last century.

Kazakhstan, unlike Ukraine, did not even have the status of a "union republic" until 1936 and was part of Russia as an autonomous region, with its then-capital located in Orenburg, the administrative centre of one of the modern regions of the Russian Federation. Countries sharing a border with Muscovy (which was transformed into Russia, the USSR, and other configurations) often found themselves under the influence or control of this state. The periods of independence of these countries were followed by periods of loss. Some formerly sovereign states became part of Russia, as was the case with the former Kazan, Crimean, Astrakhan, and Kalmyk Khanates, as well as Tuva. Russia's ambitions to the south are confirmed by the history of many conflicts with Turkey and Persia, as well as the Soviet invasions of Afghanistan and the Russian invasion of Syria. Russia had imperial aspirations that extended beyond its borders to the Black Sea straits and the Balkans region.

Since the 18th century, control over Ukraine and its resources has played a key role in the realisation of Moscow's imperial aspirations on all azimuths, especially the

Received: 06.07.2023, Revised: 05.09.2023, Accepted: 28.09.2023

Suggested Citation:

Bersheda, Ye. (2023). Before and after 24.02.2022: Neighbouring Russia and Ukraine's mission. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(5), 8-9. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.8-9.

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European one. The Balkan campaigns and the seizure of Crimea, the conquest of Siberia and the Caucasus, and the conquests in Central Asia and the Far East were made possible by using Ukraine's potential. At the beginning of the Second World War, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) launched an aggression against Poland and Romania. After 1945, when Hungary and Czechoslovakia became the USSR's new neighbours, Soviet troops invaded from the same territory during the memorable years of the Hungarian Uprising (1956) and the Prague Spring (1968).

In some countries, not everyone remembers how, during the Soviet era, the Ukrainian SSR was used as an anti-Western foothold, where a million-strong military force was deployed, primarily aimed at the Mediterranean. Destroyed by the collapse of the USSR and de-Europeanised by the secession of Ukraine and other European "union republics", Russia has lost resources but not imperial illusions and claims at least to dominate Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Russia's possession of one of the two largest nuclear arsenals has created a sense of permissiveness and impunity among its leadership, and the unexpected military resistance to Russian aggression by Ukraine, along with the unprecedented support of Kyiv by the united West, and the failure of energy blackmail, have prompted the Kremlin to use nuclear intimidation. However, this is not accepted even by China, which is loyal to Russia and has not forgotten that before it acquired nuclear status in 1964, Moscow repeatedly tested its neighbour. Beijing seems also wary of the possible desire to acquire nuclear weapons by some countries neighbouring China, which have certain concerns about it and, on the example of Ukraine, have seen the potential threat of aggression from a neighbour that possesses them.

Its own experience of dominating its neighbours prevents Moscow from realising the geopolitical realities of a globalised world where it has become an object of external governance to a greater extent than the larger and more autocratic USSR or the Russian Empire. After the end of the Eastern (Crimean) War (1853-1856), Russia was banned from having a navy, fortresses, and arsenals in the Black Sea. Measures were taken to demilitarise the ports of Sevastopol and Mykolaiv. After the defeat of the war with Japan (1904-1905), Russia lost South Sakhalin, the Liaodong Peninsula and control of the Port Arthur fortress.

The Brest-Litovsk Separate Peace Agreement of 1918 sealed Russia's defeat in World War I and the loss of Ukraine, the Baltic States, Belarus, and Georgia. The loss in the Soviet-Polish war of 1919-1920 forced Moscow to cede territories to a much smaller young state supported by the West. The most striking example of external pressure, and in fact, the management of a nuclear Russia-USSR, was the containment of its expansion during the Cold War, which naturally resulted in the defeat and collapse of the USSR. This was preceded by the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the flight of vassals in Europe, and the disappearance of zones of influence in Africa and America.

Separated from Western countries and under pressure from them, the Russian Federation is trying to play the "Chinese card", exploiting the possibility of getting closer to China in the context of confrontation with the United States. At the same time, it is trying not to recognise its secondary importance in relations with Beijing. Russia's centuries-old geopolitical ambitions as a link between the West and the East pose a danger to the Russian Federation and its neighbours. It is likely to be difficult to avoid this geopolitical tension, which dates to the time of Muscovy, without transforming the largest hereditary chain of the former USSR, which became the Russian Federation, into a democratic state with abandoned imperial ambitions or even dividing it into several independent countries. The experience of the restoration of authoritarianism in Russia after 1917 and 1991 should not be a verdict on the prospects for democratic development in the post-Putin space. Although in both cases the government in Moscow remained authoritarian, independent states emerged on the ruins of the Russian-USSR, choosing and winning the democratic path of development. Russia and some of its territories may have certain traditions and potential for such development. The change of generations and the awareness of its own vulnerability in a globalised environment may in the future facilitate Russia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, to which it is geographically, historically, and culturally inclined.

The Russian Empire was an ally of the influential European powers, and the USSR would hardly have survived World War II without the support of the United States and the United Kingdom. Ukraine's unique vocation as a civilisational entity that professes common civilisational values with the West is to carry out a twofold strategic mission in relation to neighbouring Russia and Belarus. This refers to repelling the expansion of Russian imperialism in southeastern Europe and building a democratic society and modern economy alongside Russia after the war. A large European post-Soviet state, Slavic and predominantly Orthodox Ukraine is intended to become the most understandable and attractive example and model of successful development for most Russians.

Ukraine's external influence on Muscovy-Russia has a long history, and the two Kyiv Maidans revealed Kyiv's leadership as a carrier of democratic traditions, due to its affiliation with Western civilisation. Ukraine's assets include a civil society, freedom of the media, and a functioning parliament, even under martial law.

Therewith, Ukrainian democracy as a model of promising development for Russia will only work if there is reliable protection against Russian expansion based on the military, political, financial, and economic institutionalisation of Ukraine's membership of the Western community. Ukraine's membership in NATO and the EU can free Russia from its eternal desire to own the Ukrainian state, help it get rid of its imperial syndrome and learn to live alongside its neighbours.

UDC 327.5
DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.10-17

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Diplomatic Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the context of a full-scale war

Abstract. The relevance of this study and the stated problem primary lies in the fact that Ukraine has a large common border with Belarus, which is why the political and security situation within it directly affects the national security of Ukraine. It is also worth noting that this topic is not sufficiently disclosed in the works of other domestic and foreign scientists, political scientists and historians. In this regard, the purpose of this scientific work is to study the diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus, as well as the prospects for their development in the context of a full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine. In addition, the tasks of the work are to study the influence of Belarus on the Russian-Ukrainian war. The following scientific methods are the main ones in this research: analysis, induction, synthesis, comparison and graphical methods of presenting information. In the article, the concept of diplomacy is revealed, the procedure for establishing diplomatic relations between states is described. It is considered how Belarus and Ukraine implemented their foreign policy towards each other after the collapse of the Russian Empire and the declaration of independence of the young states. It has been studied the conclusion of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine in 1991 and the course of bilateral relations between the states until 2022. It has also been considered how Belarus contributed to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, as well as its role in this conflict. Special attention is paid to the course of the Russian-Ukrainian peace negotiations that has taken place on the territory of Belarus in 2022. The materials of the article are of practical and theoretical value for political scientists, historians and other representatives of the scientific community who are interested in the diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Belarus

Keywords: international relations; aggression; history; political science; foreign policy

Introduction

In the modern world, the preservation of peace and stability is the key factor to the development of any state. In addition to military and economic potential, this important task is carried out through diplomatic activities. Since Ukraine and Belarus are historically and culturally close countries, it is natural that after gaining independence in 1991, the countries have begun to develop bilateral political, economic, and humanitarian relations. Although they had good partnership relations, especially in the economic sphere, all the achievements of more than 30 years of cooperation have been erased by Belarus' participation in Russia's military aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Thus, the relevance of the stated problem lies in the need for the Ukrainian state to ensure security from the Belarusian border, as well as the importance of changing the authoritarian regime in Belarus so that the two countries can be successful partners in the region again.

A. Kotljarchuk & N. Zakharov (2022) draw attention to the historical and cultural closeness of Ukraine and Belarus. Even the name "Belarus" is associated with the name of the medieval state of Kievan Rus. Based on the name, Kyiv was its center, namely the capital of modern Ukraine. The territories of both states were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Union. Researchers draw attention to the fact that before the division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between the Russian Empire, Austria, and Prussia, the only Ruthenian language was used on the territory of modern Ukraine and Belarus, which was significantly different from the Russian language, and it was used in Muscovy. Thus, the modern Ukrainian and Belarusian languages are very close and have a large amount of common vocabulary.

D. Michaluk & P.A. Rudling (2014) studied in their work the diplomatic relations of the young Belarusian

Received: 20.06.2023, Revised: 04.09.2023, Accepted: 28.09.2023

Suggested Citation:

Lisiecka, M.Z. (2023). Diplomatic Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the context of a full-scale war. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(5), 10-17. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.10-17.

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People's Republic (BPR) and the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR), which arose as a result of the civil war in the Russian Empire. They draw attention to the fact that the Belarusian state received both political and significant financial support from the UPR. After Hetman P. Skoropadsky took power into his own hands, the relations between states began to develop faster. As a result, a BPR consulate was opened in Kyiv, headed by Professor Mitrofan Dounar-Zapolsky.

Y.V. Mahda (2022) draws attention to the fact that relations between independent Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus (RB) largely depended on the position of A. Lukashenko tried to maintain neutrality in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in the period from 2014-2022. This is explained by the dictator's desire to improve his political positions, namely, to increase the space to maneuver in relations with Russia and Western countries, as well as the desire to continue economic cooperation with Ukraine. Considering the last thesis, he notes that economic cooperation between the countries has been wider than the political one. Thus, as of 2021, Ukraine ranked second in Belarusian exports, second only to Russia.

Studying the role of Belarus in the Russian-Ukrainian war, T.Y. Polovyi (2022) noted the attempts of A. Lukashenko gives the impression of neutrality of Belarus in this conflict. Thus, Minsk (the capital of the Republic of Belarus) became the venue for negotiations on the settlement of the conflict in Donbas. The scientist draws attention to the fact that such a choice of venue for negotiations has been beneficial to Ukraine since the image of the mediator country has made further escalation impossible with the involvement of Belarus in the conflict. Thus, Ukraine received security guarantees for more than 1000 kilometers of the border with Belarus.

D. Klavins (2011) believes that it is necessary to provide a more modern definition of diplomacy so that it corresponds to all the features of this process in the 21st century. Thus, he defines diplomacy as the process of countries' communication with each other and with non-state and supra government global players. He divides modern diplomacy into two parts. The first one is the traditional perception of diplomacy as a manifestation of the state's foreign policy activity in communication with other states. The second one is manifested in the participation of diplomats in the activities of international organizations and the support of dialogue on international platforms. Thus, the main purpose of diplomacy is the establishment of diplomatic relations and their development (Qin, 2020).

The purpose of the work is to study diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus, their history, development, and prospects in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Materials and Methods

The following methods were used in the research process: analysis; comparison; generalization; method of matching; classification; graphic methods of presenting the information.

With the help of the analysis method, it was carried out a theoretical collection and elaboration of existing

approaches in the history and political science regarding diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus; was considered the information data from books, electronic articles, monographs, scientific conferences, dissertations, which it was deeply and comprehensively disclosed the aspects and features of bilateral relations between these countries. In addition, this method helped in disclosing the relevance of this issue based on the study of existing works devoted to the stated problem, its features, peculiarities, and approaches to explanation; it also helped in demonstrating the historical prerequisites for the development of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Belarus. The method of comparison made it possible to give brief reviews of the studies of other scientists, to compare the results of these studies, and to identify unexplored issues. In addition, it was identified the problem, purpose, forms, and ways (methods) of analyzing this problem; the plan for conducting research work was drawn up.

The method of analysis was used to identify the regulatory framework for bilateral relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus and to determine the number of signed interstate and intergovernmental documents. In addition, with its help, the key areas of cooperation between the two states were considered, and the most priority ones were identified. It was shown that political relations between countries depended largely on the mood of the leader of Belarus. The method of induction was applied to determine events and factors, which became the reason for the fact that relations between Ukraine and Belarus began to deteriorate. It studied the impact of the Belarusian protests in 2020 and the reaction of Ukraine and the international community to the bilateral relations between the two states. The role of Belarus in the preparation and implementation of a full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine was considered a separate issue, including the fact that Belarus supported the Russian military formations before and during the attack.

In addition, it was determined how Belarus tried to maintain diplomatic relations with Ukraine, even despite its direct participation in the military aggression against Ukraine. It has been noted how the peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine (which took place on the territory of Belarus) affect the diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus. By summarizing the material and describing the results, it substantiated the aspects of conducted political science research work; the conclusions obtained during the writing of scientific work were systematized.

In addition, using various theoretical methods, it was processed the data obtained during the work; theoretical and practical conclusions, and results of the study were substantiated. Using the method of comparison, it presented a comparative analysis of studies and approaches aimed at a more detailed study of the problem of the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Belarus, their history, and prospects for further development of bilateral relations. In addition, using the methods of classification and generalization, it was presented the results of the work; its contribution to political science as a study of international relations was determined.

Results

Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Belarus after the collapse of the Russian Empire and during the Soviet period. Since diplomatic relations is a fairly broad and complex concept, it is worth trying to define it. Thus, diplomacy is a way to implement the state's foreign policy, to achieve its national interests in a non-military way. Heads of state, government, ministers of foreign affairs, ambassadors, and diplomats can carry out diplomatic activities (Barston, 2019).

Thus, diplomatic relations are the main form of supporting official relations between states. The establishment of diplomatic relations is the result of negotiations between the interested parties or their representatives, which is legally formalized through the exchange of letters, and notes between authorized persons in the state (usually the president, the head of government, or a minister of foreign affairs). The parties agree on the level of diplomatic representation (embassy or mission), and the date of the agreement's entry into force. The severance of diplomatic relations occurs at the initiative of one or two parties through an official announcement of the termination of diplomatic relations with the other. This process is accompanied by the expulsion of ambassadors, consuls, and other diplomatic representatives (Jonsson & Hall, 2005).

As Slavic states, Belarus and Ukraine have closely related cultures and they are predominantly populated by the East Slavic ethnic groups of Belarusians and Ukrainians. Based on this, it does not seem strange that Belarus and Ukraine (which are historically, linguistically, culturally, and ethnically close states) have maintained close relations after the collapse of the Russian Empire. After the declaration of independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) and the Belarusian People's Republic (BPR), the representatives of the latter one made efforts to have their independence recognized by the Central Council. This was important for them since the following factors depended on it: the definition of the Ukrainian-Belarusian borders, and the provision of financial assistance to the BPR by the Ukrainian authorities. However, although the Central Council accepted the representatives of the Belarusian People's Republic and recognized their legal personality, they did not formally recognize their independence (Dedurin, 2017).

In the future, the process of negotiations became active after the coup and the establishment of the power of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky. As a result, the Belarusian People's Republic received financial support, and the countries mutually opened consulates. Thus, the Belarusian consulates were opened in Kyiv and Odesa, and the Ukrainian consulates – were in Minsk and Orsha. However, the issue of the border and disputed territories was not resolved. After the anti-Hetman uprising and the establishment of the power of the Directory, the financial issues and the conclusion of federative relations between the UPR and the BPR were the main topics of the Belarusian-Ukrainian negotiations, which were not implemented due to hostilities on the territory of Ukraine (Datskiv, 2010).

It should be noted that there were no relations between the republics as such after the establishment of the

Bolshevik regime in them. This was the only political treaty concluded by them: the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (TSFSR).

Development of diplomatic Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the post-Soviet period. Diplomatic relations between the already independent Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus were established after the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 27, 1991. In the next few years, the countries exchanged diplomatic representatives. Thus, on June 30, 1992, the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Belarus was opened, and on October 12, 1993 – the Embassy of Belarus in Kyiv. In 2004, the Consular Office of the Ukrainian Embassy (located in Brest) was transformed into the Consulate General of Ukraine (2020).

On August 17, 1995, the official visit of the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko to Ukraine took place in Ukraine. In the course of this visit, it was signed the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness, Cooperation, and Friendship between Ukraine and Belarus. This agreement became the foundation of bilateral relations between the countries, as it secured the development of modern relations between Ukraine and Belarus (which are based on mutual trust, respect, and consent). According to it, the parties pledged to be guided by the principles of respect for sovereignty, equality, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, as well as be guided by some generally recognized norms of international law. Ukraine and Belarus have recognized the inviolability of borders existing between them and have confirmed that they have no territorial claims against each other, and they will not put forward such claims against each other in the future. Based on these principles, on May 12, 1997, it was concluded in Kyiv an agreement of unlimited duration between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus on the border. However, this treaty was ratified only in June 2013 (Kondratenko, 2020a). It should be noted that Ukrainian-Belarusian relations are characterized by the absence of territorial claims of the parties to each other.

For 27 years, about 90 bilateral meetings have been conducted between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus, as well as 205 documents have been signed. These include 100 intergovernmental and interstate documents and 105 interdepartmental ones. According to these documents, Ukraine and Belarus cooperate in political, economic, scientific and technical, humanitarian, and other fields (Vasylyshyn, 2017). It should be noted that relations between Ukraine and Belarus directly depended on the political leadership of Ukraine, or rather they depended on the fact of how A. Lukashenko perceived the political leadership of Ukraine. Thus, in 2004, amid the Orange Revolution and the coming of President V. Yushchenko to power (oriented towards Western European institutions), there was a deterioration in interstate relations. Subsequently, they improved, but only in economic terms, while the political relations between the Ukrainian and Belarusian leadership remained relatively tense. In 2010, when V. Yanukovich won the presidential elections, the improvement of relations did

not happen immediately, since Yanukovich nominally also advocated further European integration of Ukraine. However, after he abandoned these plans and announced the reorientation of the state's foreign policy towards the Russian Federation (RF), A. Lukashenko began to support him in every possible way (Vasylyshyn, 2019).

The greatest aggravation of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Belarus was experienced in 2020. In August 2020, mass protests began in Belarus, caused by another falsification in the presidential elections, according to which A. Lukashenko won again. On August 17, 2020, Ukraine recalled its ambassador from Belarus for a consultation to assess the prospects for bilateral relations. On August 28, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmitry Kuleba said that Ukraine would suspend all contact with Belarus only after being convinced in the absence of moral, reputational, or political damage to Ukraine due to the above-mentioned terms of contact. On September 5, the Ukrainian ambassador returned to Belarus. As a result, the government of Ukraine nevertheless decided not to recognize the legitimacy of the election of Alexander Lukashenko as President of the Republic of Belarus, and it also joined the EU sanctions against him (Talent, 2020).

The following fact became also important for Ukraine's relations: Belarus returned to Russia the detained militants (who were part of the Wagner Group) despite the Ukrainian calls to send the detainees to Ukraine to bring them to justice due to their participation in the conflict in Donbas.

Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Belarus after February 24, 2022. On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation carried out a full-scale military invasion of the territory of Ukraine, which took place in many directions. The Republic of Belarus was one of them, which provided the Russian armed forces with its military airfields, weapons, and equipment, the ability to launch missiles, and the territory to attack Ukraine from the northern area of the Kyiv region. On February 26, 2022, the Chairman of the State Border Service of Ukraine S. Deyneko responded to these treacherous actions in a letter to the Chairman of the State Border Committee of the Republic of Belarus A. Lappo (The reaction of..., 2022).

On March 9, 2022, the Belarusian Ambassador to Ukraine Igor Sokol, and 11 other employees of the Belarusian embassy left the territory of Ukraine, using a checkpoint on the border with Moldova. On March 23, 2022, Belarus announced the closure of the Consulate General of Ukraine in Brest. In addition, the diplomatic staff of the Ukrainian mission was reduced to 5 people. A few days later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine announced a symmetrical response to the actions of Belarus and reduced the number of representatives of the Belarusian embassy in Kyiv. There is an interesting fact: despite the open hostility of the rhetoric and actions of the Belarusian regime towards Ukraine, the diplomatic relations between the countries were not severed (as was done with Russia). It is possible to say that the peace talks between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (which took place on the territory of Belarus) were the biggest manifestation of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus after the full-scale invasion of Russia.

The first round of negotiations began near the Belarusian border on February 28. The Office of the President of Ukraine named the call for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine as the main goals. It ended without urgent agreements. The second round of peace talks began on 3 March. Both sides agreed to open humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of civilians. Russia's put forward the following demands for Ukraine: the recognition of the Russian-occupied Crimea, the independence of separatist-controlled Lugansk and Donetsk, as well as "demilitarization" and "denazification". The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has stated that although his country is ready to resume negotiations, Russia's demands have not changed and are unacceptable to the Ukrainian state (Lawler, 2022). The third round of talks took place on March 7, amid the continued fighting and bombardment. Ukrainian negotiator and presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter the following: "There have been some positive developments in the logistics of humanitarian corridors" (Karmanau, 2022). It is also worth noting that Belarus is now actually not a sovereign state, but it has almost completely become a satellite of the Russian Federation. Given this, as well as the fact that most of the population of the Republic of Belarus does not agree with the policies of Lukashenko and the Russian Federation, Ukraine should maintain adequate relations with the Belarusian people and representatives of the Belarusian opposition (the liberal opposition led by S. Tikhonovskaya and the fighters of the Kastus Kalinovsky regiment) (Zogg, 2022).

Summing up, Ukraine and Belarus (being historically, culturally, and ethnically close) had fairly close diplomatic relations throughout the existence of the two states. However, despite the past close relations and their potential development in the future, the Belarusian regime canceled all diplomatic and economic achievements on February 24, 2022, when it joined the Russian military aggression. Although the Belarusian troops do not participate in the war, the open hostility of A. Lukashenko's towards Ukraine (who usurped the power in Belarus) and his all-around support of the Russian Federation leave Ukraine no other choice than to respond to them symmetrically. It can be concluded that the current state of relations between the two countries does not allow hope for an improvement in bilateral diplomatic relations until a change of power takes place in Belarus and A. Lukashenko's regime bears responsibility for the crimes committed both in Ukraine and towards the people of Belarus.

Discussion

Proceeding from the fact that diplomatic relations of any country are based on international law, it is worth paying attention to the book by E. Denza (2016). According to the book's title, the scientist studies in detail the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. She notes that convention formulates the basic rules according to which the relations between states are established, the exchange of diplomatic representatives is carried out, and the rights and obligations of diplomats are fixed. Such a massive acceptance of the Convention (in the form of

universal rules for the conduct of diplomatic activity) was achieved because a special Commission on International Law was created. The purpose of its functioning was to develop the provisions of the Convention in such a way that it would satisfy the majority of countries. The Commission also introduced and considered amendments to the Convention. Since the diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Belarus is the topic of the presented work, E. Denza's (2016) research on the document (according to which all modern diplomatic relations are based) is very useful.

Since the legal and contractual framework is one of the most important foundations of any diplomatic relations, it is important to consider the work of D. Vasylyshyn (2019). In this work, the scientist conducted a deep analysis of diplomatic and economic relations between Ukraine and Belarus in the period from 1991-2014. He draws attention to the fact that during this time, more than two hundred documents have been signed between the countries that regulate bilateral cooperation in various fields and at different levels. This cooperation was reinforced by the frequent contact between the leaders of countries, heads of government, and representatives of parliaments. The researcher considers the following fact as an outstanding one: the economic ties between Ukraine and Belarus were closer than the political and diplomatic ones. He considers the disagreements in the domestic and foreign policy directions of the development of the two states as the main reason for this. For example, the Belarusian authorities represented by A. Lukashenko did not share Ukraine's intentions for European integration and NATO membership. In the study by D. Vasylyshyn (2019), in contrast to the presented work, the issue of the legal framework of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus is considered in more detail.

Continuing the theme of bilateral relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus, it will be interesting to pay attention to the work of R.M. Kondratenko (2020b), in which he studies the impact of public diplomacy on the development of relations between the two countries. The scientist focuses on the fact that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between states, their main goal consisted of the development of stable and mutually beneficial relations, both political and economic. This is due to the historical, cultural, and geographical proximity of the countries. According to the researcher, it was the economic aspect of bilateral relations that had the greatest development. In his opinion, the desire to maintain stable economic ties became the reason for official Minsk to agree to become a platform for negotiations to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The results of the scientist's study on the development of economic relations between Ukraine and Belarus coincide with the results of this study.

Speaking about relations between Ukraine and Belarus in the context of Russian aggression in 2014-2022, it is worth paying attention to the work by Y. Preiherman (2022). Author notes that during this period, Belarus tried to adhere to "neutrality" in the issue of supporting one of the parties to the conflict. Thus, A. Lukashenko tried to maneuver between the support of contacts with Europe and the full support of Putin's policies. However, after

the presidential elections in 2020, mass protests of people dissatisfied with the results of the elections were held in the Republic of Belarus. After their brutal suppression, sanctions from the EU and Ukraine were imposed against Lukashenko and Belarus; in turn, Lukashenko was not recognized as a legitimate president. According to the researcher, all this led to the fact that the deepening of relations with Russia became the only foreign policy direction for the development of Belarus. Finally, this resulted in the fact that Belarus became a satellite state of the Russian Federation, providing them with the territory for the passage of troops, weapons, equipment, training grounds for the military, and a springboard for launching missile strikes on the territory of Ukraine. The conclusions of the researcher regarding the impact of the 2020 protests on the possibility of A. Lukashenko for political maneuvering coincides with the conclusions of this work.

Since the mass protests of 2020 in Belarus have had a great impact on the positions of A. Lukashenko concerning Russia, Ukraine, and the European Union, it will be important to consider this point in more detail. For this, the work by N. Chernyshova (2022) "Invasion of Ukraine: How Belarus Became a Pawn of Russia" will be suitable. Until the summer of 2020, A. Lukashenko maintained a certain independence from Russia, which allowed him to implement a strategy of multi-vector policy. Due to such policy, he was able to maintain contacts with Western countries, receive funds from the Russian Federation, and prevent the permanent location of the Russian military in Belarus. However, the outright falsification of the results of the presidential election in August 2020 sparked protests, a scale of which was unprecedented in the history of the young state. Faced with the greatest manifestation of popular discontent during the entire time of his leadership, Lukashenko found nothing better than adopting the most pro-Russian and anti-Western rhetoric. He has made several statements, claiming that the West foments artificial protests, because "support for Lukashenko in the Belarusian society is maximum". According to his opinion, the West's purpose is to destabilize Belarus and turn it into a "bridgehead against Russia". The results of the study by N. Chernyshova (2022) regarding the protests of 2020 in Belarus and their impact on Ukrainian-Belarusian relations coincide with the results of the presented work.

As for the support provided to Russia by the Republic of Belarus, it is worth mentioning the work by S.A. Mudrov (2022). In this work, he notes that Belarus is one of Russia's closest allies, both politically and practically. The self-proclaimed president of Belarus, A. Lukashenko, supports Putin in every possible way, allowing the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to enter Ukraine from Belarus and use both military and civilian infrastructure to meet the needs of the Russian army. In addition, the researcher focuses on the fact that representatives of the Belarusian regime no longer even try to disguise the hostile rhetoric towards Ukraine and its people. Nevertheless, Lukashenko is trying to save at least some space for political maneuver, by resisting the involvement of Belarusian military units in confrontation with the Armed Forces of Ukraine in every possible way. As in the presented work, the researcher

described in detail how Belarus provided support to the Russian army.

Considering the issue of supporting contacts between Ukraine and Belarus after Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, it is worth paying attention to the work by B. Zogg (2022). In this work, the author argues that Ukraine and Western countries should accept the fact that Lukashenko's regime had no choice but to accept Russia's demands and provide comprehensive assistance to the aggressor state. Therefore, Kyiv and Western countries need to pay attention to the official and unofficial signals given by the Belarusian leadership. Due to this, it will be possible to obtain valuable information within the regime, determine social and political trends in society and political elites, understand how much Belarus has lost its sovereignty, and based on this, develop a plan for further actions regarding Belarus (Karmanau, 2022). Although the conclusions of this work regarding the responsibility of A. Lukashenko's regime for participation in the war against Ukraine does not coincide with the conclusions of B. Zogg (2022), they nevertheless deserve attention.

N. Gould-Davies (2022) believes that concessions on the issue of punishing A. Lukashenko's regime can have extremely negative consequences in the future. In his opinion, the post-war arrangement in the region should provide for clear and confident solutions, since compromises are unacceptable and they will only lead to even greater instability in the future. Thus, after the end of the war, A. Lukashenko and the Belarusian elites must be brought to justice at the same level as Putin and the military and political elites of the Russian Federation. Because the preservation of Ukraine and securing its place among the Western democracies are the main goal of Europe and the West as a whole in this war, democratic transformations within Belarus are necessary, since Ukraine needs to have a secure rear in the form of Belarus. The results of the scientist's work (regarding the fact that concessions in considering the responsibility of A. Lukashenko and his apparatus of power for participation in the war are unacceptable) fully coincide with the results of this work.

Conclusions

Thus, the growing deterioration of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus is a very important and urgent problem, since the security of the Ukrainian state largely depends on the military-political and security situation on the territory of Belarus.

In this article, it was considered the concepts of diplomacy, the process of establishing and terminating diplomatic relations between states. It was noted that Ukraine and Belarus had much in common in ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and historical aspects since the time of Kievan Rus. For a long time, both states were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Russian Empire. That is why, when the two states declared their independence during the civil war in the Russian Empire, diplomatic relations immediately arose between them, and the then-current Ukrainian authorities tried to help the Belarusians. The bilateral relations between the two states after gaining independence from the Soviet Union were separately considered, including their regulatory and legal framework. Attention was drawn to the fact that political ties between states were inferior in development to economic ones. It was considered the aggravation of diplomatic relations between states after the people's protests in 2020 in Belarus. Attention was focused on the fact that the Republic of Belarus (led by Lukashenko) provided comprehensive assistance to the occupying army of the Russian Federation during a full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022. It was noted that the desire of Belarus to become a platform for peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in March 2022 was a manifestation of A. Lukashenko's desire to maintain contact with the Ukrainian leadership. Finally, it has been concluded that Ukrainian-Belarusian relations are in almost the worst state since their establishment and that the Republic of Belarus is a satellite state of Russia, retaining only an insignificant part of its sovereignty.

The materials of this article can be used by political scientists and historians, scientists involved in the study of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Russia.

It is worth continuing the study and conducting it more deeply, as well as continuing the study of the problem of aggravation of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations. The diagnostics carried out do not exhaust all the features of this political and historical topic and it is required further consideration of the issues such as the preservation of the Republic of Belarus's sovereignty.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Дипломатичні українсько-білоруські відносини у контексті повномасштабної війни

Анотація. Актуальність поданого дослідження та заявленої проблеми, перш за все, полягає в тому, що Україна має великий спільний кордон з Білоруссю, через що політична та безпекова ситуація всередині неї прямо впливає на національну безпеку України. Також варто звернути увагу на те, що ця тема недостатньо розкрита у роботах інших вітчизняних та іноземних науковців, політологів та істориків. У зв'язку з цим, мета цієї наукової роботи полягає в дослідженні дипломатичних відносин України та Республіки Білорусь, а також перспектив їх розвитку в умовах повномасштабного війни Росії проти України. Окрім цього, задачами роботи є дослідження впливу Білорусі на російсько-українську війну. В якості основних наукових методів дослідження виступають аналіз, індукція, синтез, порівняння та графічні методи представлення інформації. У статті розкрито поняття дипломатії, описано порядок встановлення дипломатичних відносин між державами. Розглянуто, яким чином Білорусь та Україна реалізовували зовнішню політику відносно один одного після розпаду Російської Імперії та проголошення незалежності молодих держав. Досліджено укладання дипломатичних відносин між Республікою Білорусь та Україною в 1991 році та перебіг двосторонніх відносин між державами до 2022 року. Також розглянуто, яким чином Білорусь посприяла військовій агресії Росії по відношенню до України, а також яку роль вона відіграє в цьому конфлікті. Окрему увагу приділено перебігу російсько-українських мирних перемовин, що проходили на території Білорусі у 2022 році. Матеріали статті представляють практичну та теоретичну цінність для політологів, істориків та інших представників наукового співтовариства, що цікавляться дипломатичними відносинами між Україною та Білоруссю

Ключові слова: міжнародні відносини; агресія; історія; політологія; міжнародна політика

UDC 316.32
DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.18-26

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Factors of the impact of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union on Ukraine and Europe. Ukrainian-British relations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries

Abstract. The functioning of the union of countries with various political, economic, social, and cultural orientations is an important question, which lies in the feasibility of such a union. The United Kingdom is one of the countries that had a peculiar national development strategy that became inconsistent with the pan-European direction. Resolving the problems that have arisen within the framework of cooperation between the UK and the European Union is important to ensure the continued future existence of the EU and to maintain stability in Europe as a whole. The disadvantages and problems that resulted from Brexit could have a major impact on the EU, as the UK was one of the largest and most influential members of the EU. The purpose of this study was to examine the consequences of Britain's withdrawal from the EU for Ukraine and Europe as a whole. It is also possible to explore potential opportunities for further development of relations between Ukraine and the UK, given the new conditions after the UK's exit from the EU. The study used such scientific methods as chronological, comparative, and historical, systematisation, analysis and synthesis, generalisation, and graphical. The main results of the study of the topic are to determine the history of Britain's existence in the European Union, to substantiate the specific features of political behaviour in the Union, to identify the reasons and factors that influenced the country's withdrawal from the European Union. One of the tasks was to investigate the direction of the UK's international strategy towards Ukraine. The study analysed the development of Ukrainian-British relations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The paper described the consequences of Britain's withdrawal for Europe and Ukraine. The study showed the directions of Britain's foreign policy towards Ukraine in 1992-2016. The problems and prospects of Ukrainian-British relations after Britain's withdrawal from the European Union were considered. This study can help communications professionals understand how to communicate Brexit to the general public in Ukraine and Europe. The study can also help in understanding how to interact with British colleagues working in the field of international relations and trade

Keywords: integration; economic crisis; society; history; politics; international equilibrium

Introduction

The United Kingdom is one of the most powerful countries in the world, the founder of the Commonwealth of Nations, which includes 56 independent countries, a member of the G7 summit, a NATO member, and has been a member of the European Union for about 47 years (Hrubinko, 2017). The UK has a dual policy towards integration, on the one hand seeking cooperation with EU countries for economic equilibrium, and on the other hand seeking to preserve national identity in the political and economic life of the country. For Britain, the European Union became one of the opportunities to boost its economic development after the Second World

War, but Britain stayed committed to its own ideas and concepts of development. In Britain's accession to the EU, one can observe a contradictory attitude towards European integration. In the mid-20th century, Britain set out to create a European Union with a federal structure. British federalism is based on the historical and cultural commonality of peoples, ensuring peace and stable development of society, as well as solving economic, political, and other problems. The differences between the theoretical vision of the EU's development and the practical decisions of the member states began to differ dramatically in 2010, when the majority in the

Received: 19.06.2023, Revised: 06.09.2023, Accepted: 28.09.2023

Suggested Citation:

Kravtsov, Yu. (2023). Factors of the impact of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union on Ukraine and Europe. Ukrainian-British relations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(5), 18-26. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.18-26.

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British government was Conservative, which exacerbated the crisis in the European Union and led to changes in European integration.

Thus, the experience of the UK's participation in the European Union is becoming a very relevant issue, as Brexit has become a serious challenge for European integration and undermined some of its principles. The EU leadership should consider opportunities to minimise crises among member states and ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of European integration, including such aspects as foreign policy, security and defence, economic cooperation and trade, migration, etc. (Grubinko, 2017). Studying the factors influencing Britain's foreign policy course within the EU will help to better assess Britain's role in international relations with Ukraine, which also affects the future development of the European Union. The European Union is changing, expanding, and needs improved reforms in its political and economic policy towards Ukraine.

The European Union is a collection of countries with different socio-economic development, and the task of integration is to help weaker countries and maintain the status of strength of other countries. Therefore, the history of Britain's membership shows that the state has its specific features, which it seeks to preserve and develop with mutual support, rather than hinder the development of strong states. The investigation of the factors influencing Britain's foreign policy course within the EU will help to better assess Britain's role in international relations with Ukraine, which affects the future development of the European Union (Erman, 2022).

Many scientific studies have been devoted to the issues of the UK's European integration development and its impact on Ukraine, including K.M. Witman (2019), M. Salewski (2014), L. Porritt (2015) and others. Thus, M. Salewski (2014) has identified issues associated with the change in international influences and noted that the European Union is increasingly turning into a Roman Empire of the decline rather than the rise. The scholar K.M. Witman (2019) focused on the process of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, considering ethno-political factors. J. Bitterlich (2005) was one of the first researchers to prove a concept that considers the complex mosaic of different socio-cultural worlds of the European Union member states. Highly developed European countries have not only a local identity but also a limited international subjectivity. The paper substantiates the different opinions of well-known British publications on the political, legal, socio-economic situation in Ukraine and searches for the main reasons that impede reforms.

Some researchers in the field of international relations point out that some European states have limited foreign policy subjectivity, i.e., they do not have full freedom in making decisions in the international arena and depend on the decisions of other states or international organisations. Such limited foreign policy subjectivity can be related to a range of factors, such as relations with other countries, economic dependence, national identity, etc. It is a complex mechanism for the interaction of common European interests at the European and national levels. The researchers concluded that the deterioration of

Britain's trade relations with the EU has led to a decline in economic and business activity in the UK. While appreciating the achievements of scholars, some issues require further research, specifically, the social and cultural factors that influenced Britain during its cooperation with the EU and the results that Europe and Ukraine have received as a result of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. In this regard, there is a need to examine in more detail the degree of development of Ukrainian-British relations.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the specific features of the Britain's withdrawal from the European Union and to assess its impact on the formation of Ukrainian-British relations.

Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of this study is formed by an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach. The interdisciplinary approach is based on the use of theoretical developments in sociology, law, philosophy, history, political science, cultural studies, economic theory, etc., which allow for a comprehensive investigation of the factors of EU influence on Britain, and the identification of advantages and disadvantages in British-Ukrainian relations in the early 21st century. A comprehensive approach is used to identify the history of Britain's European integration, investigate the preconditions for the country's exit from the European Union, identify the main problems of Britain and Europe that affect Ukraine, and assess the role of Ukraine in international relations with Britain. The use of the principle of historicism made it possible to study the development of Britain in the EU and identify the cause-and-effect factors of integration. These approaches have led to the choice of appropriate general theoretical and specialised scientific methods, namely, the hermeneutic method was used to determine the essence of the terms "European integration" and "foreign policy"; historical and genetic method (to investigate the historical origins of the idea of Britain's European integration and the factors of Britain's influence on Europe and Ukraine); dialectical method of cognition (helped to reveal the evolution and contradictions of Britain's European integration course); comprehensive analysis (to find the main factors influencing Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, to critically analyse the processes of formation and development of Britain's foreign policy); historical and systemic (to consider relations between states as an integral functional system, together with internal and external factors of development); method of analogy (to compare the political course of British governments in different times regarding European integration and Ukraine); structural and functional analysis (to investigate the historical development of Ukrainian-British relations); comparative and historical (for a comprehensive analysis of the international activities of the UK and Ukraine during Ukraine's European integration steps); graphic method (to create a graphic image and schematic presentation of theoretical material); content analysis (media information, programmes and statements of public figures, legal acts); periodisation method (to identify general periods of British European integration and the development of British-Ukrainian

relations); method of historical hermeneutics (to interpret the texts of speeches by British statesmen and political party programmes); method of descriptive analysis (to establish the exact facts and events in the UK's foreign policy towards Ukraine, involvement in the economic and security space of the European Union. Using event analysis, the dynamics of political changes in Ukrainian-British relations were investigated, and the intensity of events was monitored to investigate several ways of developing international relations. Based on the diachronic analysis, the author analysed the development of Britain's cooperation with the EU member states in the socio-economic, military-technical, and peacekeeping spheres. The monitoring helped to identify the state and changes in Europe after Britain's exit from the EU. To follow the principle of comprehensiveness of the research and the use of the method of cognition, the following materials were used: laws and regulations of the EU, resolutions, reports, scientific publications of Ukrainian and foreign scholars.

Results

The UK has been involved in European integration since 1973. It was as a result of the Second World War that the government needed economic support in the union format, but this led to political divisions, with some seeking integration and others refusing. The leader of the Labour Party, H. Gaitskell, considered joining Europe "a betrayal of the country's thousand-year history". In joining the EU, the UK gradually adapted to changes in foreign policy and took on the role of initiator of influencing the dynamics and process of the entire association A.V. Hrubinko, & A.Yu. Martynov (2021). In its policy, the British government pursued a course of development based on the US principle, and therefore throughout its existence in the European Union, the country acted as an intermediary between the US and Europe, which caused ambiguous political and economic activities regarding European integration. Conservatism, which means preserving the established norms and procedures of the constitutional monarchy, the evolutionary development of society, and the preservation of the traditions of culture, education, and science, is in the history of the development of the British national policy (Salewski, 2014).

Notably, the European Union has certain elements of a state, such as a single parliament and a pan-European court whose decisions apply to the entire EU, and the European Commission has gradually become a pan-European government. Such EU challenges for Britain have become a test, a necessity to adapt to EU standards, to obey certain rules and laws, and this is impossible for the conservative view, which avoids unnecessary changes. The main factors that led to Britain's final withdrawal from the European Union include:

1) National and cultural identity of British citizens. Territorial remoteness from continental Europe, known as "splendid isolation"; a special and stable state and political apparatus of governance; a peculiar historical path and specific features of local culture; and a powerful military potential (Porritt, 2015).

2) Public policy and sovereignty. The conservatism of British political parties, which saw the threat of European

integration to preserve the integrity of a socio-economically developed state. The UK was obliged to follow the laws and court decisions formulated by the European Union, which was considered as a "loss of power and humiliation for the country". According to the House of Commons Library, 60% of UK laws are passed by the European Commission, but none of the 28 countries' representatives on the Commission are elected. The movement to leave the European Union intensified after the election victory of D. Cameron, who, to win votes and prevent a split within the Conservatives in January 2013, made several changes to the party. The slogan "take back control" was the main driving force behind Brexit supporters before the UK's exit from the EU. Throughout its existence in the EU, British foreign policy has been based on the principle of global power through cooperation (Haba & Holland, 2020).

3) EU economic policy and the country's potential. The UK's contributions to the EU's general budget provided support to countries that faced economic crisis in 2008-2010. According to statistics, the UK pays an average of £350 million to the EU every week, which is extremely dissatisfying for the British. The weekly fee paid by the UK to the EU does not exceed £125 million. In 2008, the United Kingdom paid the EU £2.7 billion to cover the costs of EU institutions and support for weaker member states. By 2013, the amount had reached £11.3 billion, which was then worth \$17.4 billion. In addition, the UK could not negotiate trade agreements with other countries on its own, and Brussels must negotiate on behalf of EU member states. British business is burdened by the strict market rules of the European Union. Unfair distribution of the EU agricultural subsidy budget. The UK received only 7% of the EU agricultural budget, less than Germany, France, Italy, or even Poland (European Movement International, 2018).

4) Social environment. After the big EU enlargement in 2010, anti-European sentiment in British society intensified. The UK is also home to about 3 million EU immigrants. There is no upper limit to the number of immigrants, and the country cannot control its borders. The European Union intended to increase the number of immigrants from Eastern Europe entering the UK. The influx of large numbers of immigrants has placed a heavy burden on public services such as healthcare, education, transport, and housing in the UK.

5) Environmental policy. The European Union has banned tungsten light bulbs and forced the use of fluorescent lamps, which is why many people with epilepsy suffer from seizures, vacuum cleaners cannot exceed 1,600 W, and various rules affect people's lives (British Chancellor of the Exchequer..., 2017).

6) Maritime economic zone. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), each country has the right to define its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) up to 370 kilometres from its coast. In this zone, the country has the exclusive right to use and explore marine natural resources such as fish, oil, and gas. As for the rest of the maritime area, which is not part of the EEZ, it is subject to regulation through various international agreements and institutions. Thus, the European Union has a common fisheries policy that makes provision

for joint management of fisheries resources in EU waters. As of the beginning of 2017, Spanish fishing boats caught 15,000 tonnes of seafood in the Atlantic Ocean off Scotland, while British fishing boats caught only 7,000 tonnes in the area (Mathieu, 2020).

In June 2016, a British referendum decided on Brexit. On 16 March 2017, Queen Elizabeth Mary Windsor approved the Brexit Bill, which allowed Theresa May to officially commence the process of leaving the European Union. On 29 March, the Brexit process officially began (Reuters, 2021). According to the agreement between the UK and the EU, the UK was to officially "leave the EU" on 29 March 2019. On 26 June 2018, the Queen of England approved the Brexit Bill, which allows the UK to leave the European Union. On 12 July, the UK published a White Paper on Brexit, and on 25 November, the leaders of 27 EU countries (excluding the UK) unanimously approved the draft Brexit agreement (Travis, 2017). On 10 December, the European Court of Justice ruled that the UK could unilaterally reverse its decision to leave the EU. Therefore, on 30 January 2020, the European Union officially approved Brexit. In

December, after several rounds of intense negotiations, the European Union and the United Kingdom finally reached an agreement on a range of cooperative relations, including trade, clearing the way for the United Kingdom to complete the Brexit transition period in 2020 (Travis, 2017).

According to research published by the UK's Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE), around 1.3 million foreign workers left the UK between July 2019 and July 2020 and returned to countries such as: Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia (Centre of Excellence for Economic Statistics, n.d.). The UK inflation rate was 5.1%, the highest level in 10 years, which resulted in unaffordable prices and rising costs of living in all aspects. According to data released by the Office for Budget Responsibility, the cost of Britain's exit from the European Union is \$1,300 per citizen, which means that the cost of living will continue to rise (The National Audit Office of Great Britain, n.d.).

According to the Centre for European Reform, it was found that leaving the EU single market and customs union reduced trade in goods between the UK and the world by £8.5 billion, or 11.2%, in September 2021 (Fig. 1).

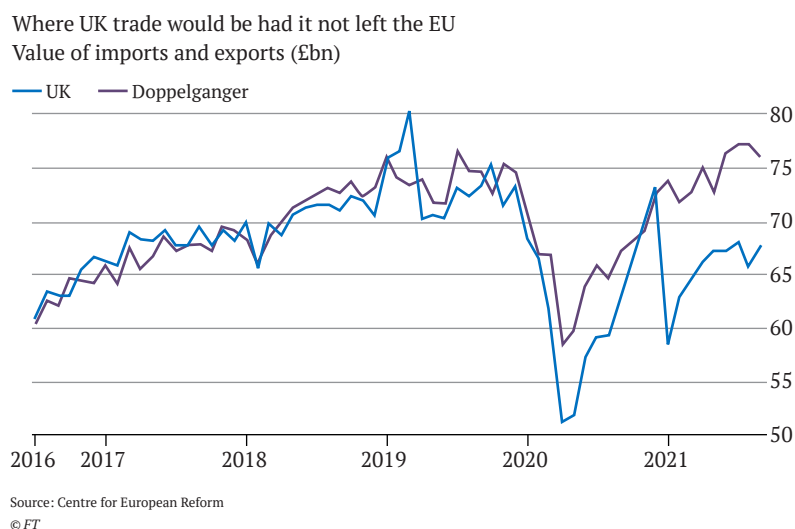


Figure 1. The economic impact of Brexit on the European price market

Source: D. Springford & D. Ports (2023)

Monthly trade figures have been volatile, but since May 2021, modelling shows an impact on UK trade of between 11% and 16% (Center for European Reform, n.d.).

A study by the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium found that the UK's final exit from the European Union had adverse economic consequences for the whole of Europe. About 1.2 million people who were employed lost their jobs. The free movement of people between the EU and the UK has been suspended. For the UK, the healthcare sector has been affected, leading to understaffing and a reduced ability to deliver services properly. As a result, UK companies are forced to redistribute their production and operations to stay competitive. Thus, the main interest of the British company is still the establishment of branches in Europe. Notably, the single European market is based on the principle of

free movement of goods, people, services, and capital. By leaving, Britain has started a chain that will last for years and gradually affect all European countries.

The labour markets in Malta, Ireland, Belgium, and Slovakia were most affected by Britain's exit from the EU. These countries have an intensive exchange of goods and services with the UK. The UK imports about 38% of its food, and the EU accounts for a considerable share of food imports. At the end of 2020, the UK and the EU signed a trade agreement in which the parties outlined the specifics of trade with zero quotas and duties. This agreement improved the economic situation in Britain and Europe as a whole.

For Ukraine, the Association Agreement, namely the free trade area, is the key element in its international cooperation with Europe. International agreements signed

by the UK on behalf of the EU are no longer valid, and therefore Ukraine needs to negotiate the free trade area directly with the UK. Considering the history of Ukrainian-British relations, Britain was the first European Community state to recognise Ukraine's independence (Wilson & Oliver, 2019). In the early 1990s, the UK perceived Ukraine as "a potentially economically developed medium-sized European state that is already playing a prominent political role in the world". The 1994 Cooperation Agreement has become a guarantee of successful cooperation between Ukraine and the UK. In December 2000, with the support of the United Kingdom, the EU summit in Nice recognised Ukraine's desire to join the European Union and included it in the list of countries with membership (Hughes, 2014). The following years were marked by an intensification of foreign policy activity in the countries under the influence of the revolutionary events in Ukraine in 2004. In 2008, President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko visited the UK, which resulted in a joint agreement that laid out the strategic development of Ukrainian-British relations. Specifically, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said: "When Ukraine meets generally accepted European norms and standards, it will become a member of the EU, and the new agreement between Ukraine and the EU will take the form of political and economic integration" (Questions and Answers on the United Kingdom's..., 2020).

The UK is committed to Ukraine's European integration and supported its accession to NATO. During 2009-2014, in its diplomatic relations with Ukraine, the UK focused on signing the Association Agreement as the main mechanism of European integration. However, at the Vilnius EU summit on 27 November 2013, due to the anti-European sentiments of the presidential administration, the association agreement was not signed, which had a negative short-term impact on Ukrainian-British relations (Ammendola, 2019). However, during the events of the Revolution of Dignity in November 2013 – February 2014, the UK supported the Ukrainian people in their bid to join the EU and called on the interim government of Ukraine to resume its course towards European integration. Finally, on 21 March 2014, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed in two stages. On 1 September 2017, after a lengthy process of ratification by all member states, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement entered into force. The UK has fulfilled the objectives and goals of Ukraine's European integration that it had proclaimed (Parashchenko & Secunova, 2016).

After that, Ukraine had the opportunity to take on a higher priority in the UK's foreign policy, given the UK's desire to expand its international activities. Thus, Presidential Decree No. 837/2019 "On Urgent Measures to Reform and Strengthen the State" (2019) noted that the UK is one of Ukraine's key partners in Europe, especially in the security sector. Bilateral negotiations on a free trade area were launched in 2018, and since 2020, Ukrainian-British political and security issues have been discussed. A key area of cooperation is the UK's support for Ukraine's position in international organisations. On the positive side, after leaving the EU, the UK stayed a member of the UN Security Council and continued to cooperate within the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Notably, the international community between the UK and the US provides Ukraine with guarantees of support and communication with US leaders. The basis of bilateral relations is the UK's aid in promoting internal reforms in Ukraine and providing financial aid for the country's economic development.

According to the British Home Office, in the first half of 2022, about 89,000 Ukrainian citizens entered the UK within the framework of the support to Ukrainian refugees (during the same period, about 170,000 Ukrainians received British visas for all visa routes). In addition, in June 2022, 170,062 visas were issued to Ukrainian citizens on all UK visa routes, of which 111,464 were issued in the last quarter (April-June 2022). Table 2 shows that 78% (132,123) of these applications were submitted through one of the two new visa routes, the "Visa Scheme for Ukraine", introduced in response to the war in Ukraine, and 22% (37,939) through existing immigration routes (National statistics. Statistics on Ukrainians..., 2022). Since the UK's exit from the EU, relations between Ukraine and the UK have been strengthened as the two countries have signed bilateral agreements and cooperated in a more flexible manner. The UK will also continue to support Ukraine in ensuring security in the region.

Discussion

Many scholars have investigated the UK and the European Union. Specifically, the research focused on such topics as the impact of Brexit on the UK and European countries, economic cooperation between countries, foreign policy, security and defence, migration, etc.

Researchers L. Scott & J. Laible (2020) believe that Brexit could be an essential step to strengthen the European Union and force it to focus on reforms to become more effective and attractive to its citizens. In their turn, J. Curtice *et al.* (2020) believe that the UK is an important partner for Europe, and therefore the country's withdrawal from the European Union could have a negative impact on the region's economy and politics. They also believe that Brexit could increase separatist sentiment in Europe and push other countries to leave the European Union.

There are also other views among scholars who see Brexit as an opportunity for Europe to change its economic and political structures to become more competitive and attractive to investors. For instance, A. Gissa-Ivanovic & Ya. Kybich (2020) believes that the UK's withdrawal from the European Union could help expand the free trade area in Europe and strengthen cooperation between the countries of the region and other world leaders. It considers Brexit as a crisis in the European Union and a problematic aspect of UK-EU relations, but it can also be viewed as a window of opportunity. Following the breakdown of old political, economic, and cultural agreements between the UK and the European Union, new opportunities have emerged for Brexiteers and third countries. New agreements can be more efficient and beneficial for all parties. In this regard, the UK can enter into new agreements with other countries, which will increase its trade opportunities and strengthen its geopolitical position. Third countries

may also consider this as a chance to develop cooperation with the UK and increase their export opportunities. New agreements can be concluded not only in the trade and economic sphere, but also in the political and cultural spheres. There may also be new opportunities for cooperation in the scientific and technical fields.

Brexit has become an example of how negative socio-political and economic processes have affected integration processes in Europe and called into question their feasibility. As noted, the active dissemination of disintegration slogans in some EU countries may contribute to the aggravation of relations between member states and threaten the solidarity of the entire association. As for the financial aspects, it is true that the UK contributed a significant amount to the European budget, while receiving less money back. After the country leaves the EU, other member states will have to increase their contributions to ensure that the union is funded. However, this issue is more complex, and along with increasing the contributions of other member states, other solutions are possible to help maintain the EU's financial sustainability. Thus, Y. Motoyasu (2022) opinion on the UK's influence on Europe is different, as they see Brexit as a complex and ambiguous phenomenon that could have important consequences for global politics and the economy. Brexit could push the European Union to reform and change its political and economic structures. They also believe that it could help strengthen trade and economic ties between Asia and Europe as the UK looks for new markets for its goods and services.

The study showed that the main reasons for this decision were the desire to maintain control over migration to the country, preserve the independence and sovereignty of the UK, and reduce contributions to the European budget. After leaving the EU, the UK is forced to reconsider its trade, economic, and political relations with EU countries and other countries of the world. Based on the April 2021 report on the state of UK-EU relations, it can be said that the UK has become less influential in the international arena since leaving the EU. The loss of access to the EU single market and the loss of visa-free travel for UK citizens have become problems for the British economy and citizens. On the other hand, the UK has been given some freedom to make its own trade arrangements with other non-EU countries. Furthermore, after Brexit, the UK became more independent in making its own political decisions and legislation, without the need to coordinate them with EU member states. Common ideological views on Britain's existence in the EU were put forward by scholar D. Rodrik & A. Subramanian (2009). He did not argue that Britain's existence in the EU was some kind of inventive claim, as the UK was indeed a member of the EU until 2020. But Rodrik might agree that the challenges facing Britain when leaving the EU can be complex and unpredictable, and he would probably analyse them from an economic perspective.

An interesting position in the study of the problem of Britain's European integration is that of A. Kyzym (2020), who drew attention to the declarative features of the European Union's Common Foreign and Defence Policy. The author supports this view with the conceptual

foundations of the historical origins of European integration, which are related to the reconciliation of different national interests of the EU member states through the search for a European identity. At the same time, the EU's strategic ideas are being applied in adapting new member states and supporting others, resulting in a shortage of capacity within the European Union.

According to S.R. Asirian & O.O. Mandrikova (2018), the main factors that led to Britain's refusal to join the EU were the economic crisis in 2008 and the arrival of D. Cameron. Cameron's government, which has increased the desire for the state's independent existence. The development of European integration depends on the ability of EU member states not only to understand common values and interests, but also to demonstrate political will and consistently defend them in the international arena. The capacity and international strength of Britain's policy helped to gradually defend the interests of the state and preserve its integrity and cultural identity in the eyes of European states. At the same time, they managed to maintain close ties in various areas, including trade and education, as noted by M.J. Kleibert (2020).

The researchers mainly focus on the facts and trends in Ukrainian-British relations without considering the influence of internal and external factors, and there is a lack of substantiation of their conclusions by archival materials. This necessitates a more detailed analysis of the preconditions, trends, and directions of foreign policy. Therefore, the study of Ukrainian-British relations has shown that it is precisely because Ukraine has chosen the course of European integration that Britain is more actively cooperating with the Ukrainian government, and that understanding of a peculiar identity contributes to a better understanding of state problems. The scholarly works, written mainly by Ukrainian researchers and practitioners, examine the relations between Ukraine and the UK in 1991-2004, and contain different ideas, differ in the style of presentation and the scope of the issues addressed. Thus, A.I. Vasylevskyi & I.V. Kulish (2009) article shows that as a result of a bilateral meeting in 1992, the UK moved away from a policy of restraint to a policy of international cooperation with Ukraine. P. Wintour & N. Watt, (2014) noted that after the UK leaves the EU, Ukraine will lose one of its strongest partners in European integration. We should disagree with this, because despite the past year, this has not happened in Ukrainian-British relations, but rather there is more active cooperation between the two governments, underlined by international agreements on trade and visa regimes for citizens. As the findings suggest, the level of assessment of Ukrainian-British relations is described as "very fruitful", and the UK is defined as one of the main partner states of Ukraine on the path to European integration.

The studies describe political relations between the countries, focusing on Ukraine's European integration aspirations and the UK's dedicated support. The author examines essential elements of interstate economic cooperation and identifies the main areas of cooperation in the military sphere. The UK is a fairly active partner of Ukraine, which is powerful in the context of ensuring

European security and emphasises the UK's consistent support. According to many researchers, it is crucial for Ukraine to maintain the current level of support from the UK. It is also worth considering the EU's goals in the defence and security sector, which should serve as an added incentive for Ukraine to join NATO. Notably, the UK and the EU should maintain close trade ties, while others believe that the UK should focus on developing more global trade links outside the EU.

Conclusions

For the first time, based on historical and economic analysis, the problems of Britain's participation in the European Union were highlighted, and this study provides a comprehensive examination of the factors that influenced the UK's withdrawal from European integration and led to the formation of strong mutually beneficial relations with Ukraine. The research revealed a set of interrelated factors that influenced Britain's exit from the European Union. It is determined that the main lever of influence on Britain's European integration was the economic factor, the state demanded to replace the "regional free trade system" in the EU with a "global free trade system" and to find new markets and growth points for profitable industries in the UK.

The UK's exit from the EU has its own preconditions, which are determined by geopolitical, historical, and economic factors. The study concluded that the presence of all countries with different socio-economic levels within the same association reduces the effectiveness of the EU, causing crises and problems. The author analyses the main problems that have arisen between the UK and the EU. The UK had to adopt EU rules and regulations, and this goes against the conservative nature of Britain. The desire to preserve its national and cultural identity and the sovereignty of an independent state has led to contradictions in Britain's European integration and foreign policy. In general, the economic crisis and the uneven distribution of Europe's resources have added to the divergent views. Britain's withdrawal from the EU led to a decline in

economic productivity in Europe and increased migration movements, but a separate trade agreement between the EU and Britain helped stabilise the economic environment in the European Union.

The United Kingdom is a powerful European state that seeks to maintain its geopolitical influence on the European continent. The author examines the development of Ukrainian-British relations, in which Britain's role was to provide security and ideological support. It was Britain that helped convince Western partners of Ukraine's ability to take part in European integration. The UK has played an important role in establishing Ukraine's official relations with the EU. It is proved that Ukrainian-British relations in 1991-2016 have gone through a generally difficult but necessary path of formation and development of international, comprehensive work.

The United Kingdom stays one of Ukraine's main political allies in implementing reforms, protecting its sovereignty from external threats, and integrating into Western international associations. Developing and deepening relations with the UK is in Ukraine's national interest. The UK has considerable economic and humanitarian resources and profound influence in international organisations. Therefore, to continue cooperation with the UK, the Ukrainian government needs to follow all agreements, rationally use the opportunities and resources provided, and systematically formulate pro-Ukrainian content in international policy. Given its experience with the UK, Europe should be more active in supporting successful integration projects and helping to implement reforms in Ukraine. Further research could help to shape a national strategy for relations with the UK, as well as improve the effectiveness of cooperation between the two countries.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Чинники впливу виходу Великої Британії з Європейського Союзу на Україну та Європу. Українсько-британські відносини наприкінці XX – на початку XXI століть

Анотація. Функціонування союзу країн з різними політичними, економічними, соціальними та культурними орієнтаціями є важливим питанням, яке полягає в доцільності такого союзу. Сполучене Королівство є однією з країн, яка мала своєрідну національну стратегію розвитку, що стала неузгодженою з загальноєвропейським напрямком. Вирішення проблем, які виникли в рамках співпраці між Великою Британією та Європейським Союзом, є важливим для забезпечення подальшого існування ЄС та збереження стабільності в Європі в цілому. Недоліки та проблеми, що виникли в результаті Brexit, можуть мати значний вплив на ЄС, оскільки Велика Британія була одним з найбільших та найвпливовіших членів ЄС. Метою цього дослідження було вивчення наслідків виходу Великої Британії з ЄС для України та Європи в цілому. А також дослідити потенційні можливості для подальшого розвитку відносин між Україною та Великою Британією, враховуючи нові умови після виходу Сполученого Королівства з ЄС. У дослідженні використано такі наукові методи, як хронологічний, порівняльно-історичний, систематизації, аналізу та синтезу, узагальнення, графічний. Основні результати дослідження теми полягають у визначенні історії існування Великої Британії в Європейському Союзі, обґрунтуванні особливостей політичної поведінки в Союзі, виявленні причин та факторів, що вплинули на вихід країни з Європейського Союзу. Одним із завдань було дослідити спрямованість міжнародної стратегії Великої Британії щодо України. У дослідженні проаналізовано розвиток українсько-британських відносин наприкінці XX – на початку XXI століть. Описано наслідки виходу Великої Британії з Великої Британії для Європи та України. Дослідження показало напрямки зовнішньої політики Великої Британії щодо України у 1992-2016 роках. Розглянуто проблеми та перспективи українсько-британських відносин після виходу Великої Британії з Європейського Союзу. Це дослідження може допомогти фахівцям з комунікацій зрозуміти, як комунікувати Brexit для широкої громадськості в Україні та Європі. Дослідження також може допомогти зрозуміти, як взаємодіяти з британськими колегами, які працюють у сфері міжнародних відносин і торгівлі

Ключові слова: інтеграція; економічна криза; суспільство; історія; політика; міжнародна рівновага

UDC 94:343
DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.27-36

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Problems of researching the history of exile of Ukrainians and of the Baltic peoples in the USSR

Abstract. This study investigated the conditions of exile and interaction between Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners in Soviet camps in the post-war period. The scientific relevance of the subject lies in the investigation of the cooperation of political prisoners of diverse national groups, which led to the camp uprisings of 1953-1954. The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the conditions of exile and the opportunities for contacts between Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners in the context of protest formation using evidence from the camp departments of Vorkuta, specifically Rechlag. To fulfil this purpose, the methods of comparative and retrospective analysis, historical and psychological reconstruction were used. The study identified common and distinctive features inherent in the Vorkuta camps. It was found that the basis for interaction between Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners was their common situation and attempts to improve living conditions in the camp. Therewith, it was stated that the same cultural and educational level and participation in the anti-Soviet resistance improved the establishment of interethnic contacts. The socio-psychological characteristics of Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners of the postwar era distinguished them from others. It was found that the unification into national groups was facilitated by the self-identification of prisoners as captives with a national worldview and experience that opposed Soviet ideology. The main goal was to improve the conditions and release prisoners from places of captivity, and active attempts to achieve this came after Stalin's death. It was proved that political uncertainty and chaotic actions of the camp administration became a catalyst for uprisings that accelerated the transformation of places of captivity. A key role in organising the protests belonged to strike committees representing groups of prisoners on ethnic grounds. Specifically, Ukrainian, and Baltic prisoners took an active part in them. This shows the place and role of these nations in the camp uprisings. The practical significance of this study lies in highlighting the little-studied issue of the ways in which Ukrainian and Baltic political prisoners interacted and the impact of these contacts on the fight against the Soviet repressive apparatus in prison

Keywords: deportations; repression; special settlements; political prisoners; camps

Introduction

The problem of Soviet deportations of the local population of Eastern Europe occupies a special place in the broader context of Stalin's repressive policy of the 1940s and 1950s. These deportations were particularly large-scale in Ukraine and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The emergence of a substantial number of political prisoners from these countries in the Soviet camp system provoked their crisis as an instrument of punitive policy, through the formation of interaction between prisoners of diverse nationalities, which culminated in the uprisings in the camps of Vorkuta, Norilsk, and Kengir in 1953-1954. The historical problematic of this study lies in the understudied interaction of different national groups of prisoners within the camp system and how this influenced the growth of protest sentiments from within the

camp system. Admittedly, at the present stage, the study of Soviet deportations and punitive policies, apart from purely historical issues, is also of great social relevance due to the processes of rehabilitation, restoration of historical justice, and comprehension of the past.

The problem of deportations and exile of Ukrainians and Baltic peoples to places of captivity in the USSR has repeatedly attracted the attention of researchers of the Soviet Main Administration of Camps (Gulag). In monograph E. Epplbom (2006) drew attention to the Rechlag in the context of the camp uprisings that swept the system after Stalin's death. Researcher observed that this was facilitated by both external circumstances that fuelled prisoners' hopes for amnesty and the specific conditions of the internal regime at the time.

Received: 01.07.2023, Revised: 02.09.2023, Accepted: 28.09.2023

Suggested Citation:

Konieczny, M. (2023). Problems of researching the history of exile of Ukrainians and of the Baltic peoples in the USSR. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(5), 27-36. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.27-36.

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In his study of the prisoner uprisings in the Vorkuta camps, Finnish historian Yu. Ryslakki (2015) also examined the influence of prisoners from Ukraine and the Baltic states on the start of the strikes. According to researcher, in the post-war period, a new type of prisoner came to Vorkuta, who began to undermine the foundation of the camp regime from within. A considerable role in this process was played by the emergence of a sense of solidarity between prisoners of different nationalities in captivity. Both scholars noted the impact of camp uprisings on the transformation and decline of the Gulag system.

Some aspects of the history of Soviet deportations and camps have also been found in the studies of Ukrainian researchers. Specifically, I. Pater (2014) investigated the general features of repressions against the population of Galicia. In this context, Pater also mentioned the exile, special settlements, and camps in the far north of the USSR, which were used to imprison various categories of prisoners of the Soviet regime. In his research on post-war deportations, based on archival materials, researcher A. Kogut (2020) examines in greater detail the large-scale deportations of the population, specifically Operation West in 1944–1946. Apart from the course of the operation itself and statistics on the number of deportees, the author pays attention to the historical and legal analysis of Soviet regulations related to this operation. In addition, the legal foundations of the USSR state security agencies often fall into the field of research interests. Thus, L.T. Prystash (2017) describes the formation of the special settlements' regime in connection with the economic complex of the Gulag and the Sovietisation in western Ukraine. In her monograph on Ukrainian women in the Gulag camps, researcher O. Kis (2017) focuses on the situation of women political prisoners according to their memoirs. The study focuses on the everyday survival practices of women in camps and places of exile, including the camps in Vorkuta. The author gives a prominent place to the mechanisms of survival and the formation of ties between Ukrainian women prisoners and women prisoners from the Baltic States, despite ethnic or cultural differences.

From time to time, different researchers address the topic of camp uprisings. For instance, N. Girna (2021) provides an overview of the camp uprisings through the lens of the heroic narrative created by the diaspora tradition, which assigned the main role in organising and leading these uprisings to Ukrainian prisoners from the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). However, this is an overly simplistic approach that does not consider the massive number of interconnections between Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners and their interaction. This approach needs to be correlated through the wider use of sources and testimonies of former prisoners and materials by researchers from the Baltic States.

The purpose of this study was to examine the interaction of political prisoners from Ukraine and the Baltic states during their exile to the Gulag camps. Identification of the specific features of this interaction will help to qualitatively establish the role of certain groups of prisoners during the camp uprisings of 1953–1954.

Materials and Methods

The study used such methods of scientific cognition as analysis and synthesis. The study analysed contemporary publications on the Soviet system of Gulag camps in the post-war period. Due to the considerable amount of published materials and scientific literature on this topic, the study focused on the analysis of the Rechlag camp (Vorkuta) as one of the centres of exile for Ukrainian and Baltic political prisoners. Accordingly, the history of this camp and the conditions of prisoners' exile to it are the object of this study.

The subject of this study is the problematic issues of interaction between prisoners from Ukraine and the Baltic States in the works of contemporary historians. The choice of methods was dictated by the purpose, subject, and object of this study. For this, the analysis method identified key facts and events that had an objective impact on the formation of protest moods, the development of interaction and mutual support between Ukrainian political prisoners and prisoners from the Baltic States. Using the method of periodisation and retrospective analysis, the main stages, and trends in the formation of interethnic contacts were characterised using data from the historical scientific literature.

The study used the historical and comparative method to highlight the specific features and differences inherent in the camps of Vorkuta, which became one of the epicentres of prisoners' protests, inside places of detention and exile, based on historical research. The individual facts and features inherent in the entire system of Stalin's camps identified in scientific studies by the method of comparative analysis were compared with analogous data inherent in places of captivity that became the focus of protests.

Using the historical-typological approach and the method of historical and psychological reconstruction, the study noted common and different explanations of phenomena and processes in historical works on this topic in the context of the post-war period and its impact on the social atmosphere in the camps, and the changes that occurred in the psychological and social type of prisoners at that time. Special historical methods were also used to better understand these issues. Specifically, a comparative analysis of historical facts and evidence from scientific literature from different countries to determine the main approaches to periodisation and description of the phenomena under study.

A retrospective analysis of the typical phenomena of the Gulag camp system during the period of growing crisis in the second half of the 1940s – first half of the 1950s to identify common and distinctive features in the interpretation of research approaches. A historical and psychological method for reconstructing the experience of political prisoners and their expectations, recorded by researchers based on published testimonies, to compare data in the representation of various scientific studies. Specifically, the studies by L. Latkovskis (2015a; 2015b), J.A. Caniglia (2021) and others were extremely useful from this standpoint.

The studies of other researchers and scholars have become materials for research and analysis. Given the poor knowledge of Ukrainian historiography on this topic, the situation and experience of prisoners from the Baltic States, the works of researchers from these countries were

used, and data collected and published by them. The study also used general works on the history of the Gulag camp system, which raise the issue of exile of Ukrainians and Baltic peoples and discuss theoretical and practical issues of research on this topic (Popelyuk, 2021).

Results

After the end of World War II, the USSR not only retained control over the territories of western Ukraine and Belarus, the Baltic states, and Bessarabia, which had been annexed at the beginning of the war as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, but also expanded its influence in several countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The new territories, according to the Soviet leadership, had to be cleared of all potential real and imaginary enemies. This was a standard part of the Sovietisation of new territories, which was supposed to include not only radical transformations in the economic sphere, but also a fundamental breakdown of the social structure. Entire social classes, declared enemy, were to disappear. In practice, repressions in the new territories were intended to ensure the loyalty of the local population to the new government by eliminating undesirable elements, in the opinion of the Soviet state security authorities, who could potentially become organisers of anti-Soviet resistance (Prystash, 2017).

Particular attention was paid to the new western territories of the USSR, specifically western Ukraine, and the Baltic states. The first wave of Sovietisation hit them immediately after the annexation, in 1939-1941, but was interrupted by the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. This pause allowed the formation of local anti-Soviet nationalist forces. Among the most massive groups are the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in western Ukraine and the "Forest Brothers" in the Baltic States (Latkovskis, 2005a; Latkovskis, 2005b). What they had in common was a nationalist outlook and anti-Soviet orientation. Another common feature was the use of small-scale warfare and guerrilla warfare tactics, which made it difficult to establish Soviet order and attract the local population to the side of the communist government. Therewith, anti-Soviet resistance actions relied on the support of the local population, which facilitated their activities.

To deprive anti-Soviet resistance groups of support from the population, the Soviet state security agencies actively used methods of terror and repression. Their scale was supposed to compensate for the low awareness of the real participants in the anti-Soviet movement by increasing the number of arrests of real or potential opponents (Prystash, 2017). Family members, relatives or friends of already identified members of the anti-Soviet underground often became victims of repression. These measures culminated in mass deportations, which had a dual purpose. On the one hand, to break down resistance to Sovietisation measures in the new territories, and on the other hand, to eliminate entire segments of the population that supported anti-Soviet resistance forces. Thus, the deportations were intended to deprive the nationalist guerrillas of their resource base and sources of replenishment.

The methods of fighting the anti-Soviet underground were quite similar. Their obligatory element was to provoke

social and class conflict within the national group. Given that the structure of society in western Ukraine and the Baltic states had signs of a traditional agrarian society, Soviet propaganda tried to foster division by contrasting poor peasants with rich, so-called "kurkuls" (Pauksens, 2020). The same propaganda served as an ideological cover for deportations. At the end of the war, in 1944, the first deportations in western Ukraine began, mostly of family members of insurgents (Kogut, 2020). These deportations culminated in Operation West, when more than 77,808 people were forcibly deported from western Ukraine at the end of October 1947 (Vronska, 2022). The deported population was moved to special settlements in remote areas of Central Asia or Siberia. Analogous in nature was Operation Priboi (25-28 March 1949), which was aimed at suppressing nationalist resistance in the Baltic States. During its implementation, over 90,000 people from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were deported (Streikus, 2022). In implementing deportations, the Soviet state security authorities paid special attention to identifying direct participants in the anti-Soviet resistance and their relatives. These groups were considered particularly dangerous. Instead of special resettlement, they were sentenced to serve long prison terms in Gulag camps (Pater, 2014). Similarly, detained insurgents and persons arrested for anti-Soviet activities were sentenced to imprisonment and detention in camps. Including in cases where links to the anti-Soviet underground were not proven and the investigation materials were fabricated. These deportations increased the number of women and adolescents among the total number of prisoners in the camps (Sagatiene, 2022).

A feature of the functioning of the Gulag camps in the postwar period was the expansion of their structure. Despite the expectations of a part of Soviet society, including prisoners, the authorities were not going to grant a mass amnesty or revise the conditions of detention. The expectations of millions of prisoners for a better life after the war were not met (Epplbom, 2006; Ryslakki, 2015). On the contrary, the opposite trend was the strengthening of the repressive apparatus, an increase in average prison terms from 10 to 25 years, and harsher conditions in camps. The reason for these measures was Stalin's desire to loosen control over society during the war and the annexation of new territories with populations with different social backgrounds. Another reason for the intensification of repression was the ongoing anti-Soviet national liberation movements in western Ukraine and the Baltic states.

The post-war expansion of the Gulag camps affected, specifically the network of correctional labour camps in Vorkuta. According to Order No. 416-159ss of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 21 February 1948, seven special camps were to be established to which "particularly dangerous" anti-Soviet elements were to be transferred from ordinary temporary detention centres and prisons. This transfer applied to prisoners under Article 58 of the USSR Criminal Code who were recognised as persons posing a particular threat due to their anti-Soviet ties and activities. New convicts on this charge were immediately transferred to newly created special camps (Order of the Ministry..., 1948). According to this order, in August

1948, Special Camp No. 6, known as Rechlag (also known by the service names “Rechnoi” and “Reka”), was established on the territory of the Komi Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Komi ASSR) based on the Vorkuta CLC (Ryslakki, 2015). The Rechlag special camp was structurally divided into camp departments. As the number of prisoners increased, the number of these departments grew.

The new, harsher regime of detention in special camps such as Rechlag allowed the state security authorities to strengthen their control over the most anti-Soviet strata of prisoners. Proceeding from their pre-war experience, the camp authorities considered the prisoners’ ability to unite to be low. The mechanisms for preventing consolidation were the intensification of internal contradictions on ethnic and social grounds. The use of one group of prisoners against another was still a widespread practice. Most often, these were criminal prisoners who cooperated with the administration and were kept together with those convicted of anti-Soviet activities as a counterweight. In addition, in the post-war period, convicts for collaboration with the Nazis were used for the same purpose (Ryslakki, 2015).

The harsh conditions of the camp regime and the arbitrariness of criminal prisoners, encouraged by the administration to put more pressure on the rest, created the preconditions for the consolidation of prisoners convicted of anti-Soviet activities (Klements, 2019). At first, the prisoners from the Baltic states were too weak to withstand the abuse of the criminals. When they arrived at the camp, they had personal belongings, such as warm clothes, which often made them victims of robbery and extortion. At the same time, the separation from other prisoners allowed them to unite on a national basis (Humenyuk, 2018). Due to a certain cultural proximity, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians tried to stick together. Ukrainian prisoners united with each other. First of all, to resist pressure from thieves (Caniglia, 2021). This common interest created a basis for understanding between prisoners from the Baltic states and western Ukraine, who constituted the largest national groups. Grouping by nationality was a protective mechanism for prisoners (Pater, 2014). They were undesirable to the camp authorities, and therefore they could exist only in conditions of secrecy.

In addition, one of the areas for cooperation between prisoners of diverse national groups was the organisation of smuggling – the manufacture, storage, and supply of items prohibited by the administration. Smuggling could be both internal within the camp and external when things had to be supplied from outside. In the latter case, prisoners had to take the risk of mediation by unconvicted prisoners or guards. Food and alcohol were universal means of exchange or barter. The latter were in high demand among criminal prisoners who could steal something from camp warehouses or provide a service in exchange for alcohol (Trendafiloff, 2022). Admittedly, in the special camps, to which Rechlag belonged, with their stricter regime and periodic searches, the opportunities for smuggling and bartering were more limited, but they were still possible on occasion.

Another problem for the prisoners was protection from informers who were actively infiltrated by the camp administration. Ukrainian prisoners who had experience of

underground struggle knew how to keep a secret, so it is no coincidence that they were particularly intransigent towards enemy agents. While prisoners from the Baltic states could punish identified informers by beating them, Ukrainian prisoners killed the informers (Ryslakki, 2015). Such radical methods helped to improve the internal atmosphere inside the camps. The administration, without the help of active informers, had less information about the processes within the prison population. The absence of denunciation increased prisoners’ trust in each other and improved opportunities for horizontal solidarity (Savchyn, 2016).

Geographical and social isolation was also used as a tool to control prisoners (Kazulenias, 2011). Rechlag was in the far north, with harsh climatic conditions. The extremely cold Arctic climate with short summers was unfamiliar to the vast majority of prisoners, making escape difficult (Epplbom, 2006). The absence of free settlements outside the control of the camp administration also did not help. Moreover, they were located at great distances (Anstett, 2011). Contacts with the outside world were limited to sending one or two letters during the year. These letters were subject to camp censorship (Popelyuk, 2021). The receipt of correspondence and parcels from the outside was also strictly controlled. The slightest manifestation of disloyalty led to restrictions on correspondence.

News sources included the camp radio, excerpts from correspondence, occasional newspaper articles, and camp rumours. The prisoners were held under an information blockade, which increased their geographical isolation. Searching for and sharing information became another way of interaction between prisoners. Notably, many prisoners from the Baltic states had little or no knowledge of Russian, which was the official language of the Gulag, and thus had fewer opportunities to receive information. In these conditions, Ukrainian prisoners became intermediaries and interpreters. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of prisoners from both the Baltic states and western Ukraine were intellectuals, had a prominent level of education, and spoke one or more foreign languages, which facilitated communication (Latkovskis, 2005a).

The forced labour of prisoners and the related distribution of food became another means of control by the administration. The usual diet was poor in vitamins, proteins, and fats, which led to exhaustion (Pater, 2014). Under these conditions, a reduction in food rations for failure to meet production targets could lead to death due to dystrophy, which was tantamount to another means of punishing prisoners. In turn, the forced labour of male prisoners of Rechlag played a significant role in the mines of Vorkuta, and female prisoners – at the local brick factory (Ryslakki, 2015). The low efficiency of this labour and the unprofitability of the enterprises was clear to the Gulag authorities at that time, but it did not affect the involvement of prisoners in large-scale work. Working and production conditions were harmful to the life and health of prisoners (Burkiciak, 2013).

Prisoners from the Baltic States, who were known for their conscientious attitude towards work, often suffered from exploitation. The heavy labour standards undermined their health. At the same time, the responsibility

and reliability of the work inspired sympathy from the Ukrainian prisoners. The work facilitated contacts between diverse national groups outside the camp, creating opportunities and risks. The attitude towards work and the related distribution of food also revealed the values of the prisoners. Unlike Russian prisoners, Ukrainians and Balts showed more solidarity within the community, the labour norm was fulfilled to preserve the rations for the brigade, but overfulfilment was not welcomed, as it served the interests of the camp and only exhausted the prisoners (Latkovskis, 2015a; Latkovskis, 2015b).

Among other prisoners, prisoners from western Ukraine and the Baltic states were distinguished by their religion. This was officially banned in Rechlag, as well as in other Gulag camps. Religious gatherings, as well as gatherings of more than 3 people, were not allowed. However, this was difficult to control, which allowed the prisoners some space. Religion, precisely because of its forbidden nature, became another means of opposing the camp system. For some, it was a source of hope, for others – a means of opposing the Soviet system (Kis, 2017). Modern research shows that conversion to religion has become part of a defence mechanism for processing the trauma of repression and overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder. This was especially true for female prisoners who were under double pressure (Kolodziejska, 2022). Furthermore, it was a part of the native culture, a reminder of home. This element, as well as the Christian worldview, became another means of understanding between Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners.

Spiritual needs opened another avenue for establishing contacts – cultural exchange. In the camp, prisoners had few opportunities for leisure or artistic reflection. Formally, under the supervision of the camp administration, there was a so-called “amateur artistic activity” and a cultural section. But such structures were permeated with propaganda and included loyal groups of prisoners. For Ukrainian and Baltic political prisoners, involvement in these events was unacceptable for many reasons, exposing them to the scrutiny of the administration. Oral and musical creativity was a kind of outlet. It aroused less suspicion among the guards and was invisible. In case of exposure or denunciation, the accused could deny that the song or melody had any anti-Soviet content. To prove the opposite, one had to understand the context and be familiar with the work itself. Prior to their imprisonment and exile in camps, representatives of the insurgency in the Baltic states and western Ukraine had already created a wide repertoire of their own song and oral art. Modern studies note that songs of various genres were popular among Lithuanian political prisoners in the Vorkuta camps. Singing had a therapeutic value for them, bringing the community together, calming and reassuring them in difficult moments (Zarskiene, 2021). Comparable paths and experiences of exile led to borrowings and the emergence of similar song plots. The common motif is the longing for the homeland, the glorification of struggle, the sacrifice for freedom, the fate of the persecuted exile (Liugaite-Cherniauskiene, 2021). Performing or listening together fuelled cultural exchange, encouraged empathy and understanding between national groups.

The largest manifestation of prisoner interaction was the Vorkuta uprising of 19 July – 1 August 1953, which was centred on the Rechlag. After Stalin’s death, as well as after the end of the war, hopes for an amnesty or the abolition of the camps grew. However, the amnesty affected only a small proportion of prisoners, and did not change the predicament of political prisoners. At the end of June, leaflets were distributed among prisoners at the Kapitalnaya mine, calling for a halt to coal mining until amnesty. A strike broke out at the mine. The mention of these leaflets by eyewitnesses testifies to the existence of an underground organisation among the prisoners of Rechlag. The administration saw it only as an act of sabotage (Burkiciak, 2013).

The arrival of the Ukrainian prisoners in a stage from Karaganda in early July was the catalyst for the protest. On 19 July, they joined the strike at mine No. 7. Soon, this movement covered 6 branches of the Rechlag out of the 17 that existed at the time. As of 29 July, more than 15,000 people were taking part in the protests (Epplbom, 2006). Their actions were coordinated by an underground strike committee consisting of representatives of various ethnic groups. Its existence is evidenced by the nature and sequence of actions, but its organisation and composition are still a matter of debate. Specifically, the role of each member. As members of the committee, Soviet sources listed Felix Kędzierski, a Pole, Yuri Levando, a Ukrainian, Henrikas Jazskunas, a Lithuanian, Helmut Tarandas, an Estonian, Alfons Berzyns, a Latvian, Johannes Urwih-Feri, a German, and Musayev, a Chechen (Ryslakki, 2015). Each of the committee members represented each of the prisoners’ ethnic groups (Fig. 1). The role of the nominal chairman of the committee, Russian Viktor Kolesnikov, is still controversial. Most likely, his representation was necessary for negotiations with the administration to neutralise the argument about the anti-Soviet content of the strike if one of the Ukrainian or Baltic prisoners was appointed as the chairman.

National composition of the Rechlag prisoners (1951)

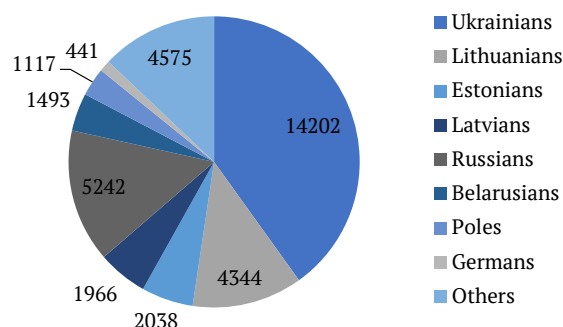


Figure 1. National composition of the Rechlag prison population (data for 1951)

Source: developed by the author on the basis of research Yu. Ryslakki (2015)

At the beginning of the strikes, the prisoners managed to get some concessions from the administration, including the possibility to reduce the working day from 12 to 9

hours, to receive permission to write letters to their families monthly, to remove the numbers from their clothes, etc. These first successes motivated them to continue the protest. At the same time, the administration started trying to isolate the most rebellious prisoners. The 77 people who were isolated by the guards in the punishment cell were liberated by the others. The continuation of the strikes forced the administration to pass on the prisoners' demands to the management. This resulted in the arrival of the commission of General Ivan Maslennikov of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs on 28 July. Members of the strike committee put forward demands to the government commission for an amnesty for political prisoners and the abolition of special camps. The Commission only confirmed the benefits already granted and demanded that the strike be stopped (Barenberg, 2014). The prisoners continued it.

After the negotiations with the strikers reached a deadlock, the camp administration moved to suppress the protests by force. On 31 July, the leaders, and active participants of the strike in the 2nd camp department were arrested. On 1 August, internal troops attacked the 10th camp department and mine No. 29. According to various estimates, between 42 and 53 people were killed in the shootings, and another 135–138 prisoners were injured (Epplbom, 2006; Popelyuk, 2021). Most of those killed were of Ukrainian origin, which is not surprising given their active role in the strikes. Moreover, Ukrainians accounted for 40% of the prisoners in Rechlag (Ryslakki, 2015). According to eyewitness accounts, the number of victims was higher, with hundreds of dead and wounded (Pater, 2014).

Despite the defeat, the Rechlag prisoners' protest prompted the transformation of the camp system. This and other uprisings in the Gulag camps during 1953–1954 proved that the creation of particularly harsh conditions for political prisoners had exhausted the possibilities of control. Even in the harshest conditions of the special camps, which became the highest stage in the development of the Gulag, prisoners of diverse nationalities were able to find ways to cooperate and protest. This factor, in the context of the crisis of the efficiency of the economic opportunities for forced labour of prisoners and the gradual easing of the political regime in the USSR, led to the transformation of the Gulag and the release of a considerable number of political prisoners (Girna, 2021). Thus, objectively, the strikes and protests of the Baltic and Ukrainian political prisoners accelerated the decline of the camp system, demonstrating its inefficiency and vulnerability from within.

Discussion

The problem of interaction and connections between prisoners of diverse nationalities has attracted the attention of many researchers. This topic was of interest in studying the processes that led to the crisis and transformation of the repressive system of the Gulag camps. Many studies have focused on comparing the similarities and differences between prisoners of the pre-war and post-war periods. In his monograph on the Vorkuta camps, Finnish historian Yu. Ryslakki (2015) argues that the psychology

and experience of post-war prisoners differed significantly from that of their predecessors. If one generalises this idea with the research materials used, then the social portrait of a Rechlag prisoner looks as follows: a young man in his 20s or 30s, originally from Eastern Europe, with a secondary education and experience of the Second World War. It is no coincidence that Ann Epplbom uses the term “outsiders” to describe this new type of prisoner, as the vast majority of them were born and lived outside the USSR (Epplbom, 2006). This influenced their personalities, making them more resistant to Soviet propaganda and manipulation by the camp authorities.

Unlike the Russian prisoners who were formed under the Stalinist regime, Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners in special camps such as Rechlag did not consider themselves Soviet citizens. The Lithuanian historian L. Latkovskis (2005a) rightly cites the testimony of Lithuanian prisoners who noted the paradox of being convicted of treason against the homeland. However, at the time of the acts in question, they were not citizens of the USSR. Thus, for them, the question arose as to what they were actually being tried for. Similarly, for most prisoners from the Baltic states or western Ukraine, the closed nature of court hearings and the inability to defend themselves or appeal were unacceptable. All these features of totalitarian justice caused rejection and protest.

The Soviet system of repression and methods of fighting insurgencies in the Baltic states were quite similar to those used in western Ukraine. Researcher K. Pauksens (2020) rightly points out the methods of provoking a split within national groups by creating an internal social conflict – between the poor and the rich peasantry (*kurkuls*) – on the example of Latvia. Or between the proletariat class and the bourgeoisie class in general. The instigation of these social conflicts served to disguise the occupation nature of the Soviet regime. Deportations and exile were justified as helping the exploited classes to fight the exploiters. At the same time, the incitement of the conflict was intended to disrupt social ties within national communities, which, according to the Soviet state security authorities, would deplete and deprive the anti-Soviet resistance movement of support. Her allegations about the creation of artificial social hostility within communities are quite comparable to Soviet policy in western Ukraine. In the conditions of camp life and communication, exchanging life experiences, it was not difficult for the Baltic and Ukrainian political prisoners to establish the identity of the repressions they had experienced and to conclude that the methods of the Soviet authorities towards their homeland were similar. Awareness of these facts increased the sense of injustice and encouraged solidarity with each other, creating the preconditions for cooperation.

Furthermore, a considerable number of Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners of the post-war period belonged to insurgent groups that fought against the Soviet regime in their respective countries. This was the main reason for their persecution and repression. Due to these factors, prisoners from Eastern Europe perceived themselves as prisoners rather than unjustly convicted criminals. R. Popelyuk (2021) focuses on this in her article on the Vorkuta uprising, citing

testimonies from participants in the events. For instance, for Ukrainian prisoners from the UPA, the camp environment was another field of confrontation with the system.

While the prisoners from among Soviet citizens defined their imprisonment as a mistake of Soviet justice, trying to behave as conformists in the camp to adapt and improve their conditions, the Baltic and Ukrainian prisoners knew that the repression against them was targeted. They were placed in the camp because they supported anti-Soviet resistance or had the potential to do so (Kis, 2017). This circumstance and the cultural barriers between them and the prisoners, which were formed personally in the conditions of Soviet society, created obstacles to interaction. The overwhelming majority of Soviet prisoners perceived prisoners from the Baltic states and western Ukraine as strangers, did not understand their values, motivations, and views. Some people, following Soviet propaganda, believed that this category of prisoners was sentenced fairly. This attitude alienated both groups from each other. On the other hand, this very circumstance contributed to the rapprochement between Ukrainian and Baltic political prisoners.

Opposition to Soviet rule, rejection of the occupation and annexation of their home countries, and repression were the sources of rapprochement. In this process, the researchers O. Kis (2017) and R. Popelyuk (2021) note the role of shared values, specifically the Christian worldview and religious practices in the camp. These manifestations of faith existed despite the camp administration, which is why they attracted prisoners as an opportunity to express inner protest. Furthermore, there were many priests of various denominations among the prisoners, as the Soviet authorities considered them to be the ideological inspirers of the resistance (Prystash, 2017). The presence of church ministers in the camp created an opportunity to observe some religious rituals and maintain contact with their own culture. For prisoners from western Ukraine and the Baltic states, faith and Christian values played a vital role in their lives, were part of their upbringing, and in the camp, it was one of the ways to preserve their identity.

A separate, not yet fully covered aspect in the study of the interaction between Baltic and Ukrainian political prisoners is their camp folklore. It combined, on the one hand, insurgent creativity and national culture brought by prisoners, and, on the other hand, included elements that had already emerged in places of captivity, including those related to cultural borrowings. This aspect is important for the study both in terms of the process of forming cooperation between political prisoners of different national groups and in terms of understanding the values, experience, and psychology of their creators. Furthermore, the flexibility of oral art ensured that her works penetrated beyond the camps, later influencing public reflection in Ukraine and the Baltic states on Stalinist repression and the trauma of repression. Estonian folklorist Tiit Jaago focuses on this fact. He approaches this from the perspective of the theory of literary trauma, which reflects the trauma of individuals and social groups. The trauma is reflected in the laconic description of the situation, the restraint of emotions, and the distance between the narrator and the

event. Distancing often takes place through rumours or urban legends (Jaago, 2021).

The importance of researching the literature on the Gulag and using phenomenological methods to understand it is also noted by L. Anden (2021). It highlights the fact that the authors of the first testimonies and works about the Soviet camps were often forced to strike a balance between censorship and self-censorship in their attempts to create a narrative about events that had been erased from public and historical memory. Only its gradual formation made it possible to expand the possibilities of telling stories about the trauma experienced, survival practices, which include the cooperation of prisoners from diverse national groups.

Research on camp life often relies on Soviet regulations and later survivor memoirs, which creates a barrier to understanding what really happened. The material heritage of political prisoners is mostly what has survived, rather than typical items. Household items, personal belongings in the context of the camp acquire dramatic significance, bearing the imprint of their owner, becoming points of memory, says Lithuanian historian D. Budryte (2021).

However, the limited number of material monuments and their low informational value in terms of aspects related not so much to everyday life as to the communication of national groups of political prisoners forces researchers to return to oral history materials, testimonies of victims of repression, former prisoners, and camp folklore. The importance of this approach is evidenced by the attention of Lithuanian researchers R. Zarskiene (2021) and M. Liugaitė-Cherniauskiene (2021) to the study of song folklore and the impact of repression on it. They note similar motifs and themes in insurgent songs, which could be the result of both similar experiences and cultural borrowings in the interaction between national groups during exile in the camps. Camp folklore is an interesting and important source for studying the interaction between Baltic and Ukrainian political prisoners, as it indirectly attests to communication between national groups through the identification of borrowings.

Many researchers pay attention to the specifics of special camps and their emergence. The economic feasibility of the Gulag economic complex and its importance in the development of remote areas of the USSR is still a rather controversial issue. While the historian Barenberg focuses on the impact of forced labour in the development of Vorkuta, he suggests that it was the exhaustion of the camps' profitability that led to the transformation of the system (Anstett, 2011). On the contrary, Yu. Ryslakki (2014), E. Epplbom (2006), and others note that the economic factor in the existence of the camp system played a secondary role from the very beginning. The purpose of establishing special camps like Rechlag in the post-war period in such harsh conditions as in Vorkuta was to completely isolate prisoners and strictly control the administration. The Stalinist regime believed that the boundary between prisoners and the outside world had become smaller during the Second World War, and therefore the system had to regain control.

R. Carmack (2009) points out that in the postwar period, there was a synergy between repression based on

class and national factors. G. Toews & P.L. Vezin (2020) emphasise the long-term consequences of repression. Statistically speaking, political prisoners in special camps were distinguished by a higher level of education and general cultural level. Their exclusion from the national community correlates with the intention to deprive it of potential leaders. After their release, the prisoners faced administrative restrictions from the Soviet state that prevented them from returning to their home communities. This forced them to stay in towns and settlements near their former places of detention. This achieved two goals: the isolation of past and potential insurgents and the settlement of remote areas of the far north of the USSR. The boundary between these motives was rather arbitrary, and in the case of Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners they were closely intertwined. These statements are confirmed by the statistics provided. The number of prisoners of Ukrainian origin was quite high in Rechlag, followed by Lithuanians. In general, the share of Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners in the special camps of the Gulag was disproportionately higher (Ryslakki, 2015). At the same time, paradoxically, it was the excessive concentration of prisoners of national groups that facilitated their cooperation. The psychological factor also played a significant role, as excessively harsh conditions and long sentences encouraged people to seek ways to get out.

The strikes and uprising in the Rechlag reached a certain peak of interaction between national groups. Researchers still debate whether these protests were the result of the existence of underground national organisations among prisoners or were provoked by external factors. E. Epplbom (2006) supports the idea that both factors are combined. Yu. Ryslakki (2015) and R. Popelyuk (2021) note this as a result of the long-term consolidation of prisoners, while external factors such as the confusion of the camps' management in the face of political change only created a favourable background for the outbreak of strikes. It is also possible that the camp leadership sought to present the strikes as evidence of the crisis and inefficiency of the camp economy to the government. However, prisoners tried to use this trend to improve their situation. The ultimate purpose was to achieve liberation.

A. Barenberg (2014) believes that the prisoners sought to achieve reintegration into Soviet society. However, this claim is unfounded regarding prisoners from national groups who did not identify themselves as Soviet citizens. Therefore, it is more correct to suggest that the main purpose was unconditional amnesty, regardless of its external form. There are also contradictory assessments of the consequences of the Vorkuta and other camp uprisings, in which Ukrainian and Baltic people played a key role. Some researchers, such as A. Barenberg (2014), believe that the liquidation of the camp system was caused by Stalin's death. Others, such as the Lithuanian researcher Latkovskis (2005a; 2005b), attribute the leading role in this process to the camp uprisings that shook the system. They proved that isolation and the strict regime of special

camps do not fulfil their purpose of breaking prisoners and losing their self-identity. In general, this issue is still controversial in scientific studies.

Conclusions

The study found that high-security camps, such as Rechlag in Vorkuta, were set up to further isolate prisoners from western Ukraine and the Baltic states. These prisoners perceived their exile in the camp as a form of captivity, and their main desire was to regain their freedom. This fact contributed to their separation from the rest of the prisoners and consolidation into national groups. Solidarity developed through support of fellow citizens, defence of common interests before the administration, and protection from the arbitrariness of criminal prisoners, as identified in this study. It was found that the highest level of interaction between national groups was reached when organising strikes and uprisings in the camps. The study stated that Ukrainian and Baltic prisoners played a driving role in the protests, the main purpose of which was to demand a review of the terms of imprisonment and release. It was established that the political disorientation of the camp authorities after Stalin's death contributed to some concessions, such as negotiations between the administration and the prisoners. The national groups represented by the strike committee saw these concessions as a way towards freedom, as found in the study. However, the investigation found that the subsequent protest was suppressed by force, resulting in the deaths of at least 42 to 53 prisoners, most of whom were Ukrainians. This fact suggests the active involvement of this group of prisoners in the Vorkuta uprising. The study found that performances in special camps like Rechlag, where Ukrainian and Baltic political prisoners were held, demonstrated the crisis of the Gulag camp system. It was established that communication and interaction between prisoners of diverse national groups accelerated the transformation of the camp system, which resulted in the release and partial rehabilitation of victims of repression. At the same time, the existence of the Ukrainian and Baltic national underground in the camps and its influence on the formal strike committees of prisoners is still understudied. The prospect of further investigation of this problem is to find the role and place of underground organisations in shaping the protests of political prisoners. It will be useful to describe their reaction in comparison with the actions of the camp administration. Further research should be related to a more detailed study of the memoirs of political prisoners and camp folklore, which will help to identify more aspects of communication between diverse national groups.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Проблеми дослідження історії заслання українців та прибалтійських народів в СРСР

Анотація. У статті досліджено умови заслання та взаємодію українських і прибалтійських в'язнів у радянських таборах у повоєнний період. Наукова актуальність теми полягає у дослідженні співпраці політичних в'язнів різних національних груп, яка призвела до табірних повстань 1953-1954 років. Метою даного дослідження є визначення характеру умов заслання та можливостей контактів між українськими та прибалтійськими в'язнями в контексті формування протестного руху на матеріалах табірних підрозділів Воркути, зокрема, Речлагу. Для досягнення цієї мети було використано методи порівняльного та ретроспективного аналізу, історичної та психологічної реконструкції. Дослідження дозволило виявити спільні та відмінні риси, притаманні таборовам Воркути. З'ясовано, що основою взаємодії між українськими та прибалтійськими в'язнями було спільне становище та намагання покращити умови життя в таборі. При цьому констатовано, що однаковий культурно-освітній рівень та участь в антирадянському опорі сприяли налагодженню міжнаціональних контактів. Виявлено соціально-психологічні особливості українських та прибалтійських в'язнів повоєнної доби, які відрізняли їх від інших. З'ясовано, що об'єднанню в національні групи сприяла самоідентифікація в'язнів як бранців з національним світоглядом і досвідом, що протистояли радянській ідеології. Головною метою було покращення умов утримання та звільнення в'язнів з місць несвободи, а активні спроби досягти цього припали на період після смерті Сталіна. Доведено, що політична невизначеність і хаотичні дії табірної адміністрації стали каталізатором повстань, які прискорили трансформацію місць несвободи. Ключова роль в організації протестів належала страйковим комітетам, які представляли групи в'язнів за етнічною ознакою. Зокрема, активну участь у них брали українські та прибалтійські в'язні. Це свідчить про місце і роль цих народів у табірних повстаннях. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у висвітленні маловивченого питання про шляхи взаємодії українських і прибалтійських політв'язнів та вплив цих контактів на боротьбу проти радянського репресивного апарату в місцях позбавлення волі

Ключові слова: депортації; репресії; спецпоселення; політичні в'язні; табори

UDC 331.2
DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.37-44

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The role of trade unions in regulating social and labour relations and shaping national policy in Latvia

Abstract. The relevance of this study is dictated by the need to determine the role of trade unions in social and labour relations and their degree of influence on the national policy of the Republic of Latvia. The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of influence of trade unions on social and labour relations within the framework of the current labour legislation of Latvia and to find potential ways to improve the efficiency of national policy, considering the requirements and desires of the working population of the country. The methodological framework of this study was based on the following methods of cognition: generalisation, analysis and synthesis, analogy, and SWOT analysis. The findings of this study are presented in determining the level of influence of trade unions on the lives of working people in the Republic of Latvia. The paper described the existing trend in Latvian society regarding the popularity of joining trade unions, as well as the conditions for the influence of trade unions on the development and reform of the national policy of the Republic of Latvia, considering the needs, desires, and interests of the working population (society) who are members of trade unions. The results of the study determined the potential significance of trade unions in regulating social and labour relations in Latvia along with the country's legislation and reflect the role of trade unions in establishing communications between society and the state (using evidence from the 2022 protests). The practical significance of this study is conditioned upon the possibility of using the results obtained in the future for a more in-depth study of the role of trade unions as a tool for communication between society and the state, a mechanism for regulating social and labour relations and supporting workers in Latvia, through the influence on the formation of national policy

Keywords: protection of the population; employees; employment; improvement of working conditions; wages; rights and freedoms

Introduction

Trade unions are established based on free choice and interest of their members united by common interests or activities. According to the Law of the Republic of Latvia "On Trade Unions", adopted in 2014, representatives of any profession can join trade unions and they should not be clearly limited by territorial, professional, or sectoral principles (Law of the Republic..., 2014). Trade unions are formed on a voluntary basis and are non-governmental organisations. Their main work is aimed at protecting the interests, professional, social, and economic rights of employees, which is explicitly stated in the Law on Trade Unions (Law of the Republic of..., 2014). The right of citizens of the Republic of Latvia to form associations, political parties or public organisations is constitutional and is set out in Article 102 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (The Constitution of..., 2014).

In the 20th century, trade unions were considered as a threat to industry and the development of society (Khan *et al.*, 2019). Back in the second half of the last century, trade unions evoked strongly negative emotions in people, were associated with higher inflation, falling wages, and were considered the main cause of industrial decline and falling living standards (Khan *et al.*, 2019). Currently, people around the world, including in Latvian society, are changing their perception of the phenomenon of trade unions. Modern researchers have concluded that unionised workers have higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of stress, sadness, and loneliness, and a lower risk of depression than non-unionised workers (Blanchflower *et al.*, 2022).

Currently, trade unions, together with Latvian legislation, play a significant role in the protection of the working population. They are one of the tools to protect

Received: 03.07.2023, Revised: 03.09.2023, Accepted: 28.09.2023

Suggested Citation:

Çifligu, E. (2023). The role of trade unions in regulating social and labour relations and shaping national policy in Latvia. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(5), 37-44. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.37-44.

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an employee if they decide to terminate the employment relationship. However, according to Latvian scholars A. Reine & D. Tarasova (2017), the Law on Trade Unions needs to be reformed. The main problem with the current legislation is the insufficient protection of employers, which arises from the lack of regulation of terminating labour relations with employees who are members of several trade unions (Reine & Tarasova, 2017). However, from the perspective of employee protection, this point is even beneficial. Currently, Latvia is the only country with a clause in the Labour Law (Labour Law..., 2001) that prohibits dismissal of a trade union member without the consent of the trade union (or unions).

Another instrument of support for employees by trade unions is the possibility for employees to sign a collective labour agreement, which allows them to receive higher salaries, better working conditions, etc. However, only an employee who is a member of a trade union can sign a collective labour agreement, and if the employer strictly complies with the agreements set out in the agreement, the employee is deprived of the opportunity to take part in strikes or protests to improve labour requirements (Labour Law..., 2001). The head of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Latvia E. Baldzēns (Vakhtyna, 2022) emphasises that trade unions have not only a protective but also an encouraging nature. Thus, employees who are members of trade unions can receive certain bonuses (e.g., discounts) when visiting theatres, museums, or certain retail chains, if such a system is implemented in their union. According to E. Baldzēns, over 70% of court cases on the issue of dismissal of employees are resolved in favour of the employees, with the support of trade unions, which provide their members with a lawyer if necessary (Vakhtyna, 2022).

Thus, the purpose of this study was to identify general trends in Latvian society regarding the desire of employees to be members of trade unions and the need to determine the role of trade unions in the activities of the state, their impact on the legislative framework of Latvia and the overall development of the state.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical framework for this study is represented by the scientific papers of scholars who have investigated the role of trade unions in the context of national policy making and their role in regulating social and labour relations in the Republic of Latvia and other countries (the United Kingdom, the United States of America (USA), Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ukraine, etc.). When analysing the role of trade unions in labour relations and in formulating national policy, the study used scientific publications, expert articles, statistical information and regulatory documents (The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, 2014), the Law of the Republic of Latvia "On Trade Unions" (Law of the Republic of Latvia, 2021b), the Law of the Republic of Latvia "On Labour" (Labor Law..., 2001), which are publicly available.

The methodological aspects of this study consider the degree of influence of trade unions on the national policy of the Republic of Latvia, mainly in the field of labour relations. The methodology of this study was based on a set

of methods of cognition, which included analysis and synthesis, which were used for a detailed investigation of such a phenomenon as trade unions and their tasks, goals, and role in the state and society; the method of generalisation, which was chosen to assess the degree of influence of trade unions of particular working groups involved in the 2022 protests (Vakhtyna, 2022) (healthcare workers and workers in education and science); the method of analogy, which was used to compare the trends in the development of trade unions in European countries (UK, Netherlands) and the degree of their influence on social and legislative processes with the trends in the Republic of Latvia. In addition, the expert assessment of the Head of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Latvia E. Baldzēns was used to assess the degree of influence of trade unions on social and labour relations and to determine the role of trade unions in the formation of the national policy of the Republic of Latvia (Vakhtyna, 2022).

Another method used to determine the role of trade unions in the state and the degree of influence of trade unions on social and labour relations was the SWOT analysis, which helped to identify the main external and internal factors of influence on the trade union movement. The method also helped to identify the strengths and opportunities that trade unions provide for workers and to identify the weaknesses and threats to trade unions. The information on protests among the working population in 2022 helped to analyse the effectiveness of trade unions in the context of finding mechanisms for establishing relations with public authorities in the current environment. As a basis for analysing the activities of trade unions in the Republic of Latvia, two trade unions that took the most active part in the 2022 protests were chosen – the Trade Union of Education Workers and the Trade Union of Healthcare Workers. Considering the conducted analysis, it became possible to determine the role of trade unions in social and labour processes, including in terms of the supporting and protective role of trade unions in the life of the working population of Latvia.

Results

The right of people to associate is one of the key factors in achieving a satisfactory level of working conditions. This is conditioned by the possibility of creating and freely joining trade unions, which serve as a protective and supportive mechanism for the working population. Currently, the humanisation of social and labour relations is a hot topic around the world, while trade unions reflect the principal areas of society's development and help the state choose the most effective social and economic management models (Kaplin, 2021).

Trade unions are essential to the building and existence of any democratic state. Trade unions can act as a link between society and the state. It is trade unions that reflect the main trends, desires, and demands of employees, enabling the state to find the best ways of development. Furthermore, trade unions are a social regulator. Unfortunately, in today's world, there is a negative trend towards the proliferation of positions with low salaries or insufficiently good working conditions. Short-term work

with poor pay is on the rise in Europe (Doellgast, 2018a). The coronavirus infection (COVID-19) that emerged in the world in late 2019 and led to a global lockdown in 2020 also demonstrated the vulnerability and imperfections of European countries' labour policies (Su *et al.*, 2022).

About a third of all jobs in the European Union (EU) are in the most at-risk category. The work of the two employees could be adapted to the new conditions, e.g., by transferring their work to a remote format. However, 30% of employees were almost deprived of this opportunity. Most of these workers were from less developed regions with relatively low wages, and mostly young people who were industrial

workers and migrant workers (Sanchez, 2020). Moreover, the coronavirus pandemic has caused a sharp rise in unemployment across Europe, including the Republic of Latvia. Many businesses were forced to downsize or close, and workers lost their jobs and were unable to find new ones (Su *et al.*, 2022). However, with sufficient funding for trade unions in the EU, it would be possible to offset this scale of the labour market crisis to some extent and protect the working population of the EU countries. In general, the issue of unemployment is still quite relevant today. According to Figure 1, the average unemployment rate in Latvia over the past 5 years has been 7% (Unemployment rates in..., 2022).

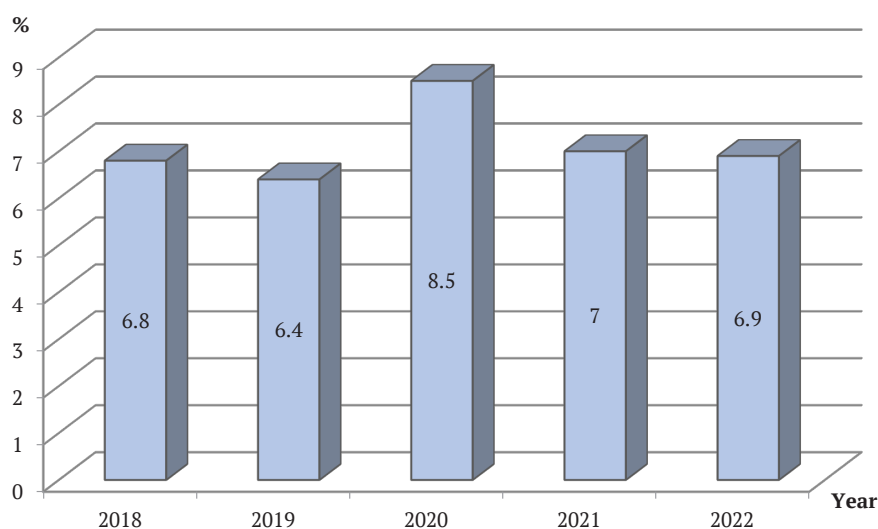


Figure 1. Unemployment rate in the Republic of Latvia for 2018-2022

Source: developed by the authors

According to this data, the highest unemployment rate over the past 5 years occurred during the “COVID” times (2020). At that time, the unemployment rate in the Republic of Latvia reached 8.4%, exceeding the average unemployment rate in recent years by 1.5%. In 2021, the situation began to improve, but even in 2022, the unemployment rate in Latvia did not reach “pre-COVID” levels. The average unemployment rate in the European Union in 2022 is 6%, which is almost 1% less than the unemployment rate in Latvia (Unemployment rates in..., 2022).

However, it was the coronavirus infection that highlighted the real state of affairs, revealing that most countries in the world cannot protect the working population in such crisis situations (McNicholas *et al.*, 2020). One of the biggest conclusions that can be drawn from the crisis during the coronavirus pandemic is that the international occupational health and safety system needs to be reformed. In Latvia, over 22.5 thousand people have lost their jobs since the start of the pandemic. The most affected are workers in the tourism, food and catering, and tourism sectors (Berezovskaya, 2021).

Over time, government restrictions were eased and a greater proportion of people who lost their jobs were able to adapt to the changes and find work in new industries. However, at the time of the loss of their jobs, the employ-

ees received almost no aid. The downtime allowance was paid from autumn 2020 to summer 2021 in the amount of EUR 330 to EUR 1,000 per person per month. However, the amount of the payment did not exceed 70% of the monthly salary, and the employee was not paid sick leave or crisis support payments that had been previously granted (Law of the Republic of..., 2021b). However, unfortunately, not every employer applied for cash benefits from the state for their employees, and many employees were forced to resign, as collective resignations became common (Berezovska, 2021).

Thus, if trade unions were sufficiently funded, workers who are members of trade unions could count on additional payments from their unions during downtime. In this way, trade unions would have the opportunity to further support the working population of Latvia. In 2021, trade unions in the Republic of Latvia, led by the Board of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Latvia, began to fight against amendments to the Law on the Management of the Spread of COVID-19 (Law of the Republic..., 2021b), which gave employers the right to dismiss employees who had not been vaccinated against COVID-19 and did not have a certificate (Shulzhyts, 2021). However, it was almost impossible to defend the right of employees to keep their jobs if they refused to obtain a certificate confirming

the fact of recovery or vaccination against the COVID-19 coronavirus infection. Thus, according to the amendments to the Law of the Republic of Ukraine “On Management of the Spread of COVID-19” (Law of the Republic of Ukraine, 2021b), introduced in July 2021, the employer has the right to dismiss employees who do not have a certificate, subject to the principles of legality and equality. However, this can hardly be considered a victory.

Another area of trade union activity is the fight for higher wages and reduced workloads. In general, in terms of the average salary in the Republic of Latvia, according to official information, it ranges from EUR 580 to EUR 2,325 per month, however, the real figures may be lower. The lowest wages are for people under the age of 24, and the highest for people in the middle age group – 35-44 (Fig. 2) (Salaries in Latvia..., 2022).

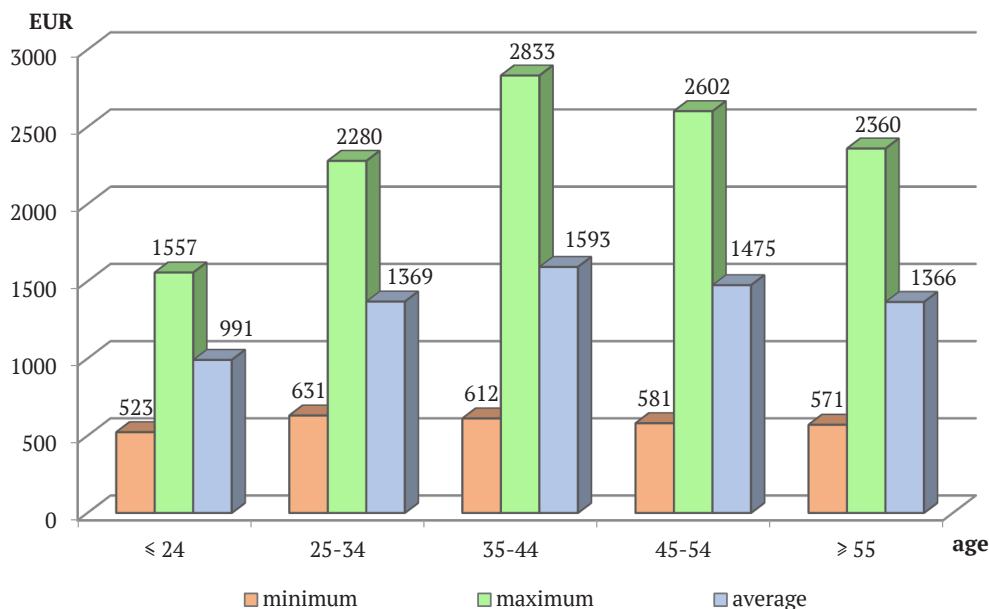


Figure 2. Wage level of the population, breakdown by age (2022)

Middle-aged workers have the highest salaries, which is conditioned by the sufficiency of professional skills, knowledge and abilities, job stability, and clarity of goals for the future. The population of Latvia is dissatisfied with the level of wages and the amount of workload (Avotiņš, 2018). Thus, several large protests by healthcare, education, and science workers were planned for 2022. The Latvian Education Workers' Trade Union and the Latvian Healthcare Workers' Trade Union (Vakhtyna, 2022) represented the interests of workers. As a result of the protests, healthcare workers failed to defend their interests. For example, in 2022, the process of calculating salaries for junior healthcare workers (ambulance drivers, nurses, and physician assistants) was revised in relation to the level of doctors' salaries, which led to a drop in their average salary. Healthcare workers believe that they are paid too little for the work they do and the workload they have, and they are demanding a recalculation of their salaries. However, the protests did not bring any results. Notably, some representatives of the healthcare sector, according to the current legislation of Latvia, are simply not allowed to take part in protests and strikes. Thus, doctors and their unions have a rather small number of people who can be involved in protests. Unfortunately, the protests failed to achieve the demands, and healthcare workers' unions assure that they do not plan to stop fighting and will do everything possible to resolve issues and establish understanding with the state (Vakhtyna, 2022).

The situation with regard to the protests of education and research workers is much better. Education unions were preparing for a major protest action aimed at reducing the workload of teachers (from 37 to 28 hours) and increasing their salaries. However, the strikes did not take place, as the Union managed to establish communication with the authorities and partially meet the teachers' demands (Vakhtyna, 2022). The head of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Latvia, E. Baldzēns, believes that the cancellation of the strike has only led to a positive result. The education workers did not lose their salaries for the potential days of strike action and were able to achieve results because their union had established communication with the state (Vakhtyna, 2022).

Thus, workers trust their trade unions to a certain extent, entrusting them with the authority to negotiate with the authorities in the fight for their rights and improvement working conditions. Trade unions fight to give workers a voice by acting as a focal point between society (workers) and the state (Marino et al., 2019; Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2019). However, in Latvia, apart from low wages, there is also some gender-based discrimination against employees. On average, women earn almost 24% less than men. The average monthly salary of a working woman in Latvia is EUR 1,232, while a man's salary is EUR 1,595 (Salaries in Latvia..., 2022). In general, this situation is not unique to the Republic of Latvia. Thus,

the average monthly salary in Austria is EUR 3,671 for a woman and EUR 4,218 for a man (a difference of about 13%), in Germany the average salary for a woman is EUR 4,069 and for a man EUR 4,936 (a difference of 17.6%), in the Netherlands, on average, a woman earns EUR 3,940 per month, while a man earns EUR 4,585 (a difference of more than 14% (Salaries in Latvia..., 2022). Thus, women earn significantly less than men. This situation is another area of work for trade unions. Their activities are aimed not only at improving working conditions and raising the overall level of wages in the country, but also at eliminating discriminatory employer policies regarding the gender of employees.

In general, the international market is experiencing a trend towards fragmentation and the spread of inequality in the labour market (Jetha *et al.*, 2021). At present, there is a disturbance in the balance, in favour of employers rather than employees. Employers, who receive national support

and almost complete power over leverage over workers, hinder the development of the labour market, artificially lower wages and create an even greater wage gap between employees of different genders (Keune *et al.*, 2020).

In the United States of America, for instance, there is a much higher proportion of women in senior management positions with salaries equal to those of men than in European countries (Germany, Denmark, Latvia), due to the fact that American legislation aims to equalise salaries for the same positions and equal employment opportunities for both women and men (Iversen *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, considering the existing positive practices of developed countries such as the United States, the current European labour market is not normal and needs to be reformed. In general, in terms of the activities of trade unions, they act as a protective and supportive mechanism. Considering the weaknesses and strengths of trade unions, a SWOT analysis was conducted, as presented in Figure 3.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Legal protection for trade union members; • Financial aid (including the possibility of using savings banks); • Help in finding a job; • Social protection; • Information support, training and professional development of trade union members.	• Not always qualified help; • Poor motivation of trade union members and employees; • Unclear formulation of plans and goals (high uncertainty); • Low level of communication with state authorities.
Opportunities	Threats
• Improving working conditions and increasing salaries; • Reducing the level of discrimination; • Introduce additional incentives and bonuses for trade union members; • Establishing close and effective communication with the state; • Improving the quality of life of the population; • Implementation of innovations; • Attracting investment.	• External threats and crisis moments (e.g., coronavirus infection); • Changes in legislation; • Conflicts within trade unions; • Decline in the overall level of trust among the population; • Elevated levels of migration and rising unemployment.

Figure 3. Generalised SWOT analysis of trade unions

Source: developed by the author

Thus, according to the results obtained, trade unions play a rather positive role in developing the national policy of any democratic and developed state, and also have a qualitative impact on social and labour relations. Trade unions serve as an additional tool in the workers' struggle for their rights and improvement of their working conditions.

Discussion

In today's world, preserving human rights and freedoms is a fundamental good and task. Trade unions serve as a tool that provides people with the opportunity to express their opinions, build communication with the authorities, and enable them to defend their rights.

Both Latvian and foreign scholars from the USA, the Netherlands, Germany, Ukraine, Denmark, Italy, and other countries have investigated the role of trade unions in social and labour relations between people, in the fight against inequality, as well as in determining the degree of influence of trade unions on national policy, within the historical context and in the present day. The following scholars have published their studies on the subject: S. Khan *et al.* (2019), D.G. Blanchflower *et al.* (2022), A. Jetha *et al.* (2021), and others.

Earlier, in the last century, trade unions were not popular among the working class at all, and, moreover, participation in trade unions was considered as a negative mark on their members and condemned by society. Trade unions

were considered a threat to society and the development of countries, associated with economic decline and a drop in overall living standards, as noted by scholars in their scientific paper “The Role of Ethical Human Resource Management, Trade Unions, and Situational Moral Will” by S. Khan, T. Bartram, and J. Cavanagh (Khan *et al.*, 2019). Currently, the situation has changed considerably, the popularity of trade unions is not yet very high, but a fairly large number of people are members of trade unions, as noted by scholars R. Gumbrell-McCormick & R. Hyman (2019).

As the findings of this study suggested, Latvian workers increasingly trust trade unions to resolve acute issues. The events of late 2022 with the organisation of protests by education and research workers and healthcare workers also testify to the growing level of public trust in trade unions (Vakhtyna, 2022). Such events demonstrate a positive trend in increasing the role of trade unions in the processes of social and labour relations. Based on the developments, it can be concluded that the Latvian population recognizes potential in cooperation with trade unions in the context of achieving higher living standards, improving working conditions for the working population, and the possibility of establishing communication with the state for its overall development in line with the needs of the population.

A. Trif *et al.* (2023) note that trade unions can achieve considerable results in addressing low wages, giving workers the right to vote, normalising workloads, and addressing irregular working hours. According to the researchers, this situation is possible even in unfavourable conditions. However, for trade unions to achieve this level of influence, they need to improve their internal resources. A similar opinion is shared by V. Doellgast *et al.* (2018b) in their research on the policy of institutional change in Europe) and “From dualisation to solidarity” (Doellgast, 2018a), noting that weak external resources of trade unions are not an obstacle to their development and effective existence, since trade unions can make the most of internal resources in their activities.

That is why the main task of trade unions is to optimise internal processes, plan clearly and ensure the required level of investment. The capacity of Latvian trade unions cannot fully meet the needs of their members. However, they can demonstrate quality results in local areas, e.g., in providing legal support in court cases of trade union members on termination of employment. In a general sense, trade unions act as a tool for reaching consensus between employees and employers, and they are also responsible for establishing a link between employees and the state.

In their research paper “The dynamics of changes in the number of trade unions and COVID-19: what is the importance of social dialogue?”, the researchers O. Otieno *et al.* (2021) identify the following areas of trade unions activities: strengthening the institutions of labour and social relations; ensuring measures for social protection of the working population, protection of the most vulnerable segments of the population (migrants, people with disabilities, etc.); establishing a dialogue with the state to build decent work opportunities; informing the state and society to support enterprises and jobs. All of this is true. Latvian trade unions work in these areas, constantly

improving the efficiency of their work. However, with ineffective internal work of trade unions, insufficient funding and lack of redistribution mechanisms, the activities of trade unions become purely formal and have no applied nature. Therewith, it is advisable for trade unions to create associations and establish communications with each other to achieve common results, which in the future will lead to an improvement in the overall level of labour, higher wages, and a reduction in the stratification of society in terms of reducing the level of discrimination of any kind.

Moreover, researchers note that in today's environment, employees who are members of trade unions have a higher level of job satisfaction and a much lower risk of depression than non-unionised workers (Blanchflower *et al.*, 2022). D. Blanchflower *et al.* (2022) in their paper “Trade Unions and Worker Wellbeing” note that the relationship between job satisfaction and union membership changed only in the early 21st century; before that, union membership was quite burdensome for employees. There is a rather positive trend in the relationship between the psychological state of employees and their level of job satisfaction and their membership in trade unions. Thus, international representatives of trade unions conduct analytical and research activities on possible measures to improve the overall level of employee satisfaction. In the research paper “Shorter working weeks for all: how much paid work is needed for mental health and well-being?”, D. Kamerade *et al.* (2019) propose to consider the possibility of working hours for employees as one of the possible tools for achieving mental health of the working population and increasing life satisfaction. Notably, this issue is quite relevant in Latvia, as, unfortunately, the real amount of workload of employees often exceeds the recommended workload (Vakhtyna, 2022). At present, Latvian trade unions are struggling with this problem, trying to achieve better working conditions from employers and the state.

Furthermore, trade unions are not only protective, but also encouraging. Thus, the head of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Latvia E. Baldzēns (Vakhtyna, 2022) notes that most trade unions have a system of bonuses for trade union members and their families. For example, some Latvian trade unions provide their members with discounts on visits to museums, theatres, and even certain retail chains, as well as discounts on vouchers to tourist destinations in the Republic of Latvia. Apart from the bonus system, several trade unions have introduced a more substantial system of financial aid to employees. Thus, members of some Latvian trade unions can use trade union savings funds to take out a loan on fairly favourable terms. Moreover, trade union members can sign a collective bargaining agreement, which allows them to receive higher wages and more favourable working conditions (Vakhtyna, 2022).

The provision of certain bonuses and privileges by trade unions greatly increases the interest of the working population in joining trade unions. Moreover, employees who receive the support of a community that shares their views, aspirations and goals feel more secure, which has a positive impact on their psychological state and motivates them to better perform their job duties, improve the area in which they work and develop the country as a whole.

Thus, it can be argued that the activities of trade unions in Latvia are only gaining momentum, with trade unions gaining more trust from employees and society and increasing the efficiency of their activities.

Conclusions

The findings of the present study have made it possible to determine the degree of influence of trade unions on social and labour relations and the role of trade unions in shaping the national policy of the Republic of Latvia. The study conducted a historical analysis that provided insight into the positive change in society's attitude towards the trade union movement. In today's world, trade unions have the potential to effectively influence the labour sphere to achieve the basic requirements and wishes of the working population. However, as the study has shown, trade unions in many countries, including Latvia, are currently unable to realise their full potential. Thus, trade unions are only partially able to meet the needs of their members in their struggle for better working conditions and higher wages. However, in terms of legal aid provided by trade unions (e.g., in the context of court cases on unlawful dismissal of employees), trade unions have quite significant achievements and demonstrate high efficiency. Another advantage of trade unions is their positive psychological impact

on employees. According to the information processed, employees who are members of trade unions have a significantly higher level of job satisfaction than employees who are not members of trade unions. Members of trade unions feel fully supported, united, and motivated. They can expect to receive support in defending their rights and freedoms, while non-unionised workers are left to their own devices.

Thus, albeit not to the fullest extent, trade unions can provide comprehensive support to their members. As trade unions gain in importance and popularity among the public, they are becoming increasingly important and effective as a tool for communication between employees and employers, as well as between society and the state in regulating social and labour relations in Latvia. Furthermore, trade unions can broadcast the demands of the working population, taking measures to influence the formation of state policy of the Republic of Latvia, to improve the level of labour and development of the state as such.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Роль профспілок у регулюванні соціально-трудових відносин та формуванні державної політики Латвії

Анотація. Актуальність цього дослідження продиктована необхідністю визначення ролі профспілок у соціально-трудових відносинах та ступеня їх впливу на національну політику Латвійської Республіки. Метою даного дослідження було визначення ступеня впливу профспілок на соціально-трудові відносини в рамках чинного трудового законодавства Латвії та пошук потенційних шляхів підвищення ефективності національної політики з урахуванням вимог і побажань працюючого населення країни. Методологічну основу дослідження склали такі методи пізнання: узагальнення, аналіз і синтез, аналогія, SWOT-аналіз. Результати дослідження полягають у визначенні рівня впливу профспілок на життя працюючих у Латвійській Республіці. Описано існуючу в латвійському суспільстві тенденцію щодо популярності вступу до профспілок, а також умови впливу профспілок на розвиток і реформування національної політики Латвійської Республіки з урахуванням потреб, бажань та інтересів працюючого населення (суспільства), яке є членами профспілок. Результати дослідження визначили потенційне значення профспілок у регулюванні соціально-трудових відносин у Латвії поряд із законодавством країни, а також відобразили роль профспілок у налагодженні комунікації між суспільством і державою (на прикладі протестів 2022 року). Практичне значення дослідження зумовлене можливістю використання отриманих результатів у майбутньому для більш поглибленого вивчення ролі профспілок як інструменту комунікації між суспільством і державою, механізму регулювання соціально-трудових відносин та підтримки працівників у Латвії через вплив на формування національної політики

Ключові слова: захист населення; працівники; зайнятість; поліпшення умов праці; заробітна плата; права і свободи

UDC 330.46
DOI: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.45-51

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Features of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Abstract. The relevance of this study is related to the need to identify and assess the unique characteristics of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In this regard, the purpose of this study was to provide a thorough analysis of the foreign policy activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan over the entire period of the country's independence. The main approach to the study of this problem is the historical and systematic method of research, system analysis, comparison method, logical analysis, methods of synthesis and deduction, induction method, and classification method. The paper presents the findings of the conducted study: it describes the geographical prerequisites for the international relations formed by Kazakhstan with a view to creating the logistics links necessary for the national economy. The study proved the importance of the Central Asian region for global energy security and described the country's role in the "New Great Game", conducted a detailed analysis of the latest Concept of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan presented by K.-J. Tokayev. The study demonstrated Kazakhstan's deep economic ties with China and Russia and identified the factors of Kazakhstan's dependence on the two regional hegemony. The key events in the country's foreign policy activities over the entire period of its independence were presented in a tabular form. The significance of this study is that it sheds light on the current state of Kazakhstan's foreign policy as a leading state in the Central Asian region, which in the future allows predicting trends in the development of new alliances by Kazakhstan and its closest neighbours

Keywords: multi-vectorism; Eurasian integration; energy dependence; diplomacy; cooperation

Introduction

The Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) is the leading country in Central Asia (CA) in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), making it a good example for other Central Asian states. Until recently, the Republic of Kazakhstan had a friendly partnership with the two local leading powers: Russia and China, but with the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the resulting global political and economic crisis, Kazakhstan has begun a gradual move towards rapprochement with China, while not forgetting about cooperation with the United States of America (USA). The multi-vector nature of Kazakhstan's foreign policy is of interest not only in terms of historical and political processes, but also as a leading factor in resolving the issue of spheres of influence in Central Asia.

In her study of Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the field of cooperation development, H. Insebayeva suggested that two main factors have a key influence on the country's behavioural pattern: internal processes (political, economic, and cultural), and the desire to follow the example of leading countries in the international arena. This forms

a hybrid identity for Kazakhstan, which at the same time is not an obstacle to creating an image of a responsible and law-abiding partner (Insebayeva, 2020). Kazakhstan's cooperation with China in the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) was investigated by B. Zogg (2019). From the mid-1990s onwards, Kazakhstan's connections with China have deepened, with a significant push coming from the BRI. While China could have pursued the BRI objectives without Kazakhstan, it would have incurred significantly higher costs, risks, and detours. Nevertheless, the lack of transparency regarding BRI initiatives in Kazakhstan has fostered distrust, raising questions about Chinese intentions and the interests of local elites. Labeling all projects as "perfect", a tendency often seen in the Kazakhstani government, without presenting relevant data or conducting thorough assessments, impedes the projects' effective adaptation based on actual needs.

The denuclearisation of Kazakhstan was considered in the study by J.W. Bourdais Park & D. Cheung (2022). The researchers described the problem of a country that once

Received: 12.06.2023, Revised: 30.08.2023, Accepted: 28.09.2023

Suggested Citation:

Trushaj, A. (2023). Features of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Foreign Affairs*, 33(5), 45-51. doi: 10.46493/2663-2675.33(5).2023.45-51.

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faced the choice of preserving its own nuclear arsenal or establishing positive relations with influential countries. Having made the choice to give up nuclear weapons, the Kazakh authorities received international security guarantees and integrated into the international economy. Thus, the country's international partners received a clear signal about the vector of Kazakhstan's development as a state that intends to resolve conflicts through diplomacy and non-violent methods of influence.

J. Sullivan (2022) discusses the threat to Kazakhstan's national security from Russia and the need to promote Kazakhstan's narratives in the Central Asian region. In his research, the author found that the withdrawal of the US military from Afghanistan in 2021 helped to strengthen Moscow's position in the foreign policy arena. This and the Taliban's extremist rule create a need for more vocal action by the authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The role of Kazakhstan's oil and gas resources in the country's foreign policy was investigated in the study by T. Kamaljanova & P. Gaur (2020). The authors conclude that the Kazakh authorities consider the energy sector as a method of achieving their own goals in the foreign policy arena: using oil and gas to put pressure on some states and support other countries to strengthen their own positions and maximise economic and political benefits. The historical background of the development of the modern foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is considered in the study by O. Demenko (2021). The author argues that the lack of a national policy on covering the negative events of the Soviet and imperial periods has greatly influenced current relations with Russia and the West.

This study aims to describe the trends in the foreign policy activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, identify the preconditions and motives of the country's leadership's actions in the foreign policy arena, and predict the consequences of these actions for the Central Asia region.

Materials and Methods

The specific features of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan are a topic that requires a historical and systematic approach, which has been used to identify the key events for the foreign policy department of the state. This study was theoretical in nature and focused on identifying motives and trends in the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Proceeding from the need to use valid research methods, this study was conducted using the following methods: system analysis, comparison method, logical analysis, synthesis and deduction methods, induction method, and classification method.

Foreign policy in the current economic and political realities of the world is a phenomenon consisting of several equivalent and interrelated elements, which is why the study of this topic required a comprehensive approach. Thus, consideration of the specific features of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan as indicators of the true tasks set by the state leadership for the foreign policy department in terms of a system consisting of several interdependent components that influence both each other and the entire system is the most effective approach to investigating this phenomenon. Systemic

analysis was chosen as one of the methods of this study because its use helped to identify historical, geographical, and economic factors that influenced the development of the current foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It was also used to analyse the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2030. The comparison method was used to compare the foreign policy activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan aimed at the countries of the global West and East. The comparison method was used to identify the essential differences in the theses put forward by Kazakhstan in its communication with representatives of various countries and the initiatives it takes part in. A logical analysis was used to identify terms and concepts important for further research. It helped to provide precise definitions of the following terms: Eurasian integration, "New Great Game", which further simplified the determination and identification of the facts of the influence of third-party players on the affairs in the Eurasian region, and helped to interpret Kazakhstan's influence on the vector of foreign policy activities of other Central Asian countries over the past three decades. The method of synthesis was used to combine the information on the ideas of Eurasian regionalism used by Kazakhstan and the real activities of Kazakhstan in the international arena. Using the method of deduction, a basic statement was formulated, which underlay all further reflections, namely, that the main prerequisites for the development of the specific features of Kazakhstan's foreign policy at one time were the need for economic development and the desire to establish new political ties without losing the old ones. The method of induction in this study is one of the methods used to determine the degree of influence of the two regional leaders (China and Russia) on the political and economic activities of Kazakhstan. The classification method in this paper was used to compile the table.

Results

The main task of the diplomatic service of any country is to protect the national interests of the state. The Republic of Kazakhstan is no exception in this case. The year 1991 was not only the year of the collapse of the Soviet Union, but also became the starting point for the transformation of international conflicts into economic and ideological struggles. Central Asian countries have become key players in the global competition for resources, as they have considerable energy reserves, which are crucial for many countries. After gaining independence, Central Asian countries became the target of Russia's stringent policy. Furthermore, the United States has consolidated its influential position in the region as a leading power in the unipolar world by fighting Islamic terrorism. China has increased its demand for energy resources, which has led to its interference in Central Asian affairs due to the large amount of energy resources that the region possesses (Birkeland *et al.*, 2021).

It was discovered that China and other neighbouring countries, which are fighting economic and political instability and terrorism, create conditions for Kazakhstan's political and economic stability. This is ensured by the availability of vast energy resources and the construction

of pipeline projects aimed at meeting China's massive energy demand. These projects are vital for Kazakhstan, but they also increase Kazakhstan's dependence on China's needs, as Kazakhstan may be at a disadvantage if demand decreases, or new fields are discovered in other countries.

Kazakhstan is in the centre of Eurasia and borders Russia and China. Intensification and diversification of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a necessary strategy for the country's leadership because of the logistical and communication difficulties arising from its geographical location: the Republic of Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country without direct access to the World Ocean (Borbasov & Zhunussova, 2021). This is related to Kazakhstan's control over Russia in international trade and foreign transport. Historical factors, such as the policies of the Russian Empire and the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) towards Kazakhstan's lands, as well as the presence of the Baikonur Cosmodrome and nuclear weapons when Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union, have made Kazakhstan cautious and sensitive in its foreign policy with Russia, its closest neighbour (Kopack, 2021). As a result, the country has limited opportunities for foreign trade and strong competitors in the domestic market. To reduce the impact of these factors on the country's economy, the Government of Kazakhstan has developed and is implementing a comprehensive strategy. Within the framework of this strategy, Kazakhstan aims to develop its transport infrastructure, specifically, to promote the development of international transport corridors that pass through the country. For example, the creation of the Western Europe-Western China transport corridor and the development of the country's transit potential. Kazakhstan is actively working to diversify its foreign economic relations and attract foreign investment. To develop the country's export potential, the government is focusing on developing domestic production and strengthening trade relations with other countries.

Moreover, an essential component of the strategy to reduce the impact of the lack of access to the world's oceans on Kazakhstan's economy is to increase the country's competitiveness in the global marketplace. In this context, the state is actively developing its own technological potential and promoting innovation. Other areas of development under study and considered by the Government of Kazakhstan include the development of transit routes through the country, including the opening of new border crossing points with neighbouring countries and the signing of new trade agreements with regional partners. Kazakhstan continues to develop its own transport facilities, including roads, railways, and airlines, which helps to reduce dependence on other countries in the transport sector and support the stable development of the country's economy.

After formulating internal reforms, the Kazakh government sought to balance its foreign and domestic policies, maintaining relations with Russia, the European Union, China, and other states in the region. The government prefers to develop economic relations, which is important for a country that has become a stable state in terms of domestic and foreign strategy, including energy policy. Kazakhstan

has weakened Russia's pressure by focusing on developing its economy through rapid integration into the global economy, specifically through hydrocarbon production and diversification of pipelines in the region through various export networks (Khvostenko *et al.*, 2019).

The importance of the Central Asia region has increased substantially in recent years and has become a large chessboard for local and external players. This geographical entity comprises five "stans" – Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan – and the Caspian Sea region, with recent oil and natural gas discoveries promising big changes in the area of untapped hydrocarbon reserves in Central Asia. The Central Asian region offered great opportunities and became attractive to countries experiencing an energy crisis as a new potential supplier of hydrocarbons from outside OPEC (The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries). The "New Great Game" that is unfolding before our eyes means a fierce struggle for energy security and a revision of energy suppliers. The most interested and aggressive participants in the "New Great Game" are the United States, China, the European Union, Japan, Israel, Iran, Pakistan, and India, and the main motive for taking part in this political struggle is to manage hydrocarbon reserves (Pradhan, 2020).

Turning to the motives of the Kazakh authorities in implementing and pursuing a multi-vector strategy in foreign policy, it is worth considering the political and economic realities of 1991, when the Republic of Kazakhstan declared its independence. The emerging split in society and the desire of the elites to maintain their position led the country to establish partnerships with Russia as a representative of the "old and familiar reality", as well as with China, India, the European Union (EU), and the United States as promising trading partners, which helped improve the living standards of the population of Kazakhstan. It is in these circumstances that Kazakhstan has formed its own concept of Eurasian regionalism, the main purpose of which is to strengthen Kazakhstan's position in the international arena and preserve its territorial and national integrity (Heller, 2022).

Eurasian regionalism, to which the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is subordinated, has changed its characteristics over time to meet the demands of other states in the Central Asian region. Thanks to relations with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan's Eurasian regionalism has become more individualistic and has adopted a policy of non-interference. The ideas of regionalism, originating in Europe and Asia, have gradually found their way to post-Soviet countries and have spread to China and the EU. Consensus-based Eurasian regionalism enables participating countries to challenge the legitimacy of each other's actions and strengthen the principles of their sovereignty based on equality. Notably, the idea of multi-speed and multi-level Eurasian regionalism did not originate in Russia, but in Central Asia. By challenging the norms of regional leaders, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have made a considerable contribution to the development of Eurasian regionalism (Karabayeva, 2021).

Kazakhstan is one of the key players in Eurasian integration, to which it devotes significant efforts and

resources. The country is a founding member and active member of the Eurasian Economic Union and a co-founder of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Kazakhstan has developed bilateral and multilateral relations with the CIS countries (Commonwealth of Independent States), China, Turkey, the European Union, the United States, and other countries (Gurcan, 2020).

Within the framework of its Eurasian integration, Kazakhstan is working to strengthen economic cooperation and expand trade and economic ties with partner countries. The signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and Iran, Vietnam, Serbia, and Singapore, as well as the launch of negotiations with Egypt on similar agreements, are important achievements of Kazakhstan in this area. Within the framework of its Eurasian integration, Kazakhstan is also working to harmonise its legislation with the EAEU member states, improve its infrastructure and promote cross-border relations. Kazakhstan actively cooperates with other countries and regional organisations to strengthen security and stability in the region. Over the past decade, Kazakhstan has made great strides towards integration with the CIS and Russia.

The goals and objectives set out in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2030 are generally aimed at strengthening the country's independence and sovereignty, preserving the independence of its foreign policy direction and creating international and regional stability. These goals reflect the country's strategic interests and its geopolitical position in the region and the world. Through its foreign policy, the Republic of Kazakhstan seeks to strengthen its leadership position in the Central Asian region, demonstrate its responsibility as an active member of the international community and increase the competitiveness of its economy. The concept of Kazakhstan's foreign policy envisages maintaining friendly, predictable, and mutually beneficial relations

with foreign states, as well as developing comprehensive cooperation with interstate associations and international organisations. Particular attention is paid to strengthening the unity of the multinational people of Kazakhstan and turning the practical interests of Kazakhs and national business into the main area of the country's foreign policy.

There are several tasks set by the Kazakh leadership to achieve its goals. The first task is to strengthen international peace and cooperation. This can be achieved by improving the effectiveness of global and regional security and cooperation, as well as the sustainable development of this area. To this end, it is planned to formulate and implement innovative approaches to the main issues of foreign policy at the bilateral and multilateral levels, considering the promotion and protection of the state's long-term strategic interests. The second task is to step up efforts to create a politically stable, economically stable, and secure space around Kazakhstan. These actions will also have a positive impact on the country's global goals. The third task is to intensify "humanitarian diplomacy" and promote the country's positive image in the international community. For this, it is necessary to establish a system of effective relations with the Kazakh community on foreign policy issues, as well as to ensure the protection of national rights and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities.

One of the main tasks is to strengthen international peace and cooperation, increase the effectiveness of global and regional security and cooperation, and develop this area in the international arena. To this end, it is planned to develop and implement innovative approaches to foreign policy, considering the long-term strategic interests of the state (Tokayev, 2020). Kazakhstan's foreign policy has been quite intense and multifaceted over the past three decades. Table 1 presents the key events in Kazakhstan's foreign policy since the country's independence.

Table 1. The key events in Kazakhstan's foreign policy in 1991-2022

Year	Event
1991	Kazakhstan declares independence from the USSR
1992	Kazakhstan's accession to the United Nations (UN) Signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Russia
1994	Signing of the Budapest Memorandum, according to which Kazakhstan renounced nuclear weapons
2001	Joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
2002	Signing of an agreement with Russia to establish a joint venture, KazRosGas
2013	Conclusion of an agreement between Kazakhstan and China on cooperation within the framework of "One Belt, One Road"
2014	Participation in the launch of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)
2017	Switching from Cyrillic to Latin alphabet
2020	Adoption of the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2030 by President K.-J. Tokayev
2022	Signing an agreement on border demarcation with Uzbekistan

Source: compiled by the author of this study

These developments reflect the major influence of foreign policy on the development of Kazakhstan, which is constantly striving to strengthen relations with its neighbours and other countries in the world. In recent years, Kazakhstan has been actively working to develop its foreign economic relations and diversify its economic

partners, specifically by developing trade relations with the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, and the United States. On the one hand, Kazakhstan seeks to develop partnerships with the European Union and NATO by signing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union. On the other hand, Kazakhstan is developing economic

relations with Asian countries, specifically with China and Russia, by becoming a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Kazakhstan continues to take an active position in international organisations and initiatives as a member of the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. In general, Kazakhstan's foreign policy is focused on maintaining stability and peace in the region, promoting economic development and supporting international cooperation.

Discussion

The role of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Central Asian region was studied by S. Insebayeva (2023). The paper describes in detail such a factor of influence on Kazakhstan's foreign policy as the Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme, which is considered by the leadership of Kazakhstan as a reference model in the field of foreign aid. The author also addressed the development of anti-Western, anti-Chinese, and anti-Russian sentiments among the elites and population of the state, which at this stage of the country's foreign policy development has in a sense shaken its ability to counteract the influence of major players on the world stage. Trying to simultaneously resist the influence of the West, China, and Russia is exhausting for Kazakhstan. The information reviewed indicates that both the government and the people of Kazakhstan are striving to form a positive image and a "legitimate" foreign policy without being tied to the opinions of China, India, Russia, the EU, and the US. This may, however, be a difficult goal to achieve in practice given the realities of the Central Asian region, which is heavily influenced by China, India, and Russia.

G. Shakhanova & D. Gardik (2020), in their study on the position of Central Asian countries in the situation of opposition to the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" and the Russian project "Eurasian Economic Community", conducted interviews with representatives of the Kazakh elite to assess attitudes and narratives regarding the implementation of the above-mentioned initiatives and their impact on the country's actions in the foreign policy arena. Having analysed the interviews, the authors of the study conclude that the Kazakh elite is more interested in the One Belt, One Road initiative, arguing that it is more financially beneficial for the country. Dissatisfaction was expressed with Moscow's intrusive position, which treats Kazakhstan as its own province, refusing to negotiate on equal terms. As a result of the interviews, only one of the sixteen respondents expressed a negative or neutral opinion on China's initiative. Thus, Kazakhstan's political elite is interested in a mental separation from Moscow in favour of partnership and mutually beneficial relations with international partners. To confirm this hypothesis, it is worth expanding the sample of respondents and evaluating the results of the interviews in the dynamics, considering the political situation on the international scene.

R. Isaacs (2020) studied the model of multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan. In an environment where the country could be economically absorbed by a stronger player, Kazakhstan has chosen a strategy of hedging its

contacts with Russia and China. Such a balanced policy has allowed Kazakhstan to maintain the status quo of its own multi-vectorism and receive economic benefits from both Russia (EAEU) and China (BRI), as well as from the United States, which provides financial support to the country to keep the most developed state in Central Asia from finally joining one of the local dominant powers. The multi-vector strategy of Kazakhstan described in this paper, on the one hand, reflects the reluctance of China and Russia to engage in an open conflict for the redistribution of influence in the Central Asian region, and on the other hand, it may indicate that the Kazakh authorities do not consider local hegemony as a reliable partner. Nevertheless, at the moment, there is a redistribution of spheres of influence between Moscow and Beijing in favour of the latter, as evidenced by Astana's actions in its unwillingness to open close contact with Moscow after 24 February 2022 and its strategy of action similar to China's in response to Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

A. Aujanova (2022), while studying the issue of Eurasian integration in the focus of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, concluded that the multi-vector nature of the country's foreign policy has become an objective necessity. This multi-vector approach contributed to the successful development of the country, which easily attracted Western, Eastern, and Northern investments, helping Kazakhstan to fulfil its ambitions to become a leader among Central Asian states, set innovative trends in the region and create its own spheres of influence. A. Aujanov's (2022) study is based on the idea that Kazakhstan acts as a link between Asia and Europe, which imposes certain responsibilities on the country's leadership, which can be manifested in taking the initiative in digital change, attracting new markets, etc. Currently, the challenges facing the concept of Eurasian integration are more complex than after the collapse of the USSR, when the Eurasian region was just forming in its current form, and the necessary actions for the Kazakh foreign ministry require increasingly more effort. Given that all the "simple" steps towards Eurasian integration have already been taken, the question of the feasibility of Kazakhstan's efforts to ensure a sustainable pace of Eurasian integration in the face of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine stays relevant.

K. Masabayev (2022) study on China's foreign policy risks for Central Asian countries argues that Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy is now at the end of its life, as the high degree of confrontation between Russia and the countries of the "collective West" as a result of Russia's military actions in Ukraine requires Kazakhstan to choose a side. As Kazakhstan has already distanced itself from Russia to some extent, it will have to make a choice between the West and the East as global political tensions escalate. Thus, the people and authorities of Kazakhstan are facing a choice not only of an economic partner, but also of an ideological one: a step towards closer cooperation with China would be a sign that Kazakhstan is tacitly supporting Russia in its aggression and would also help to entrench authoritarianism in the country. Joining the US-led Western Coalition would mean supporting democratic forces and would help create the first Western enclave in

the Central Asian region comparable to Japan (but not Taiwan or South Korea), which is geographically close to Russia, North Korea, and China.

The position of Kazakhstan in the international arena in relation to the Russian-Ukrainian war is considered in the study by L. Abdrazakova & J. Zhabina (2022). The quotes of state political figures presented in this paper suggest that the Kazakh authorities do not intend to recognise the independence of the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics (L/DPR), as well as the Russian status of Crimea. Having read the speeches of Kazakh ministers and President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, one can conclude that the issue of Ukrainian sovereignty, like many others, is not an obstacle to Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy. While not recognising Moscow's desire to appropriate Ukrainian territories, the Kazakh authorities are not joining the anti-Russian coalition but are instead pursuing a wait-and-see strategy to support the winner of the conflict at the end of the war, while receiving economic preferences. An example is Astana's support to Moscow in supplying sanctioned goods.

Based on the reviewed studies, Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy still is the main foreign policy strategy of the state, but every year it requires increasingly more efforts from the country's leadership to maintain a balance. Previous studies have also highlighted the aspirations of Kazakh politicians to a Western model of interaction in the international arena. Meanwhile, the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan are showing a mood of extreme individualism, which may later affect the country's foreign policy.

Conclusions

With the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan gained its independence and began to establish ties in the international arena. The geographical location of the country has left a substantial imprint on Kazakhstan's foreign policy: the proximity of two hegemonic countries (China and Russia) forced Kazakhstan to consider the vector of its neighbours' development from the very beginning. Therefore, one should not forget about the prerequisites for the

development of the foreign policy institution of the Republic of Kazakhstan: the historical continuity of the autocratic tradition, national composition, Islamic religion, and economic interests. These factors can be considered the main ones in the formation of close ties between Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia, namely Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, as the proximity of cultures, languages, religions, and political systems served as a fruitful basis for the creation of a "coalition" to counter China and Russia, which would prevent the absorption of Central Asian countries individually.

The study found that the main motivations in Kazakhstan's foreign policy are to ensure national security, strengthen economic and political relations with countries around the world, and recognise Kazakhstan in the international arena. One of the key features of Kazakhstan's foreign policy is the balancing act between Western and Eastern vectors of development. Kazakhstan takes an active position in the international arena on renewable energy, combating the consequences of nuclear tests and reducing the nuclear threat, fighting terrorism and extremism, reducing the number of weapons, protecting human rights, and other global issues.

Until the beginning of 2022, the multi-vector approach described above showed a positive side, but changes in the balance of power, redistribution of spheres of influence and increased confrontation that provoked Russia's actions require Kazakhstan to revise its strategy in the international arena.

It is recommended that future studies of Kazakhstan's foreign policy focus on the prospects for energy cooperation with China, which will help to predict or prevent Kazakhstan's excessive economic dependence on China's hydrocarbon consumption.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Особливості зовнішньої політики Республіки Казахстан

Анотація. Актуальність даного дослідження пов'язана з необхідністю виявлення та оцінки унікальних характеристик зовнішньої політики Республіки Казахстан. У зв'язку з цим, метою даного дослідження стало проведення ґрунтовного аналізу зовнішньополітичної діяльності Республіки Казахстан за весь період незалежності країни. Основним підходом до вивчення даної проблеми є історико-системний метод дослідження, системний аналіз, метод порівняння, логічний аналіз, методи синтезу і дедукції, метод індукції, метод класифікації. У статті представлені результати проведеного дослідження: описані географічні передумови формування міжнародних зв'язків Казахстану з метою створення логістичних зв'язків, необхідних для національної економіки. У дослідженні доведено важливість регіону Центральної Азії для глобальної енергетичної безпеки та описано роль країни в «Новій великій грі», проведено детальний аналіз останньої Концепції зовнішньої політики Республіки Казахстан, представленої К.-Ж. Токаєвим. Дослідження продемонструвало глибокі економічні зв'язки Казахстану з Китаєм і Росією та визначило чинники залежності Казахстану від двох регіональних гегемонів. У табличній формі були представлені ключові події у зовнішньополітичній діяльності країни за весь період її незалежності. Значення цього дослідження полягає в тому, що воно проливає світло на сучасний стан зовнішньої політики Казахстану як провідної держави в Центральноазіатському регіоні, що в майбутньому дозволяє прогнозувати тенденції розвитку нових союзів Казахстану та його найближчих сусідів.

Ключові слова: багатовекторність; євразійська інтеграція; енергетична залежність; дипломатія; співробітництво

**Журнал
«ЗОВНІШНІ СПРАВИ»**

**Том 33, № 5
2023**

Відповідальний редактор:
О. Короткий, О. Таукач

Редагування англomовних текстів:
К. Касьянов

Комп'ютерна верстка:
М. Кришталь

Підписано до друку з оригінал-макета 01.11.2023
Ум. друк. арк. 6,2
Наклад 300 примірників

Видавництво: Громадська спілка «Редакція журналу «Зовнішні справи»
01001, пров. Рильський, 6, м. Київ, Україна
E-mail: officeua.foreign.affairs@gmail.com
www: <https://uaforeignaffairs.com/uk>

**Journal
“FOREIGN AFFAIRS”**

**Volume 33, No. 5
2023**

Managing Editors:
O. Korotkyi, O. Taukach

Editing English-language texts:
K. Kasianov

Desktop publishing:
M. Kryshthal

Signed to the print with the original layout 01.11.2023
Conventional Printed Sheet 6.2
Circulation 300 copies

Publisher: Public Union Editorial Board of the Journal “Foreign Affairs”,
01001, 6 Rylskyi Ln., Kyiv, Ukraine
E-mail: officeua.foreign.affairs@gmail.com
www: <https://uaforeignaffairs.com/en>