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Review of Zhvanko Lyubov Mykolaivna's Publication “Diplomatic Missions of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv (1921-1937): Review of Issues and Author's Reflections of Contemporary Polish Historiography”

The current situation of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022 requires Ukraine to concentrate maximum efforts in all spheres of life. Victory requires not only a powerful patriotic, military, or economic component but also an active and convincing diplomatic front. It is he who must and can provide comprehensive international support for Ukraine's fair war for independence and full sovereignty over the entire territory, for freedom, dignity, democracy, and other universal human values, for the European and Euro-Atlantic choices. Most of the countries and peoples of the modern world are our allies in this war, and, first of all, the member states of the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. A prominent place among them is occupied by the Republic of Poland, which since the border of the 20th-21st century. received the semi-official honorary status of “advocate” of Ukraine in united Europe. In the conditions of treacherous and brutal total Russian aggression, Poland provides comprehensive support to the Ukrainian state and its citizens, both politically, diplomatically, militarily, and humanitarian. During the four months of the large-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, more than 4.5 million Ukrainians crossed the Polish border as forced emigrants who need and seek protection from the war.

At the same time, Polish diplomacy launched active activities in support of Ukraine in all international spheres, using the potential and opportunities of both traditional classical and public diplomacy. Of course, this is not only a significant factor but also a huge help in raising the international image of Ukraine and conveying the truth about Russian aggression as a threat to peace and security not only in Ukraine but also in Europe and the world. Especially because it was Europe that became the “cradle” of two bloody world wars, the “battle for Ukraine” has not only hybrid signs of a new global conflict but also threatened to turn into a third world war. Hence, additional motivation in the scientific-theoretical and applied interest in the history of Polish diplomacy in Ukraine and Ukrainian-Polish cooperation in this field in the 20th-21st century.

The scientific work of Lyubov Zhvanko, professor, doctor of historical sciences, the leading specialist in the research department of the Kharkiv State Veterinary Academy, and member of the International Association of Humanitarians and the Scientific Society of the History of Diplomacy and International Relations, is dedicated to the activities of diplomatic missions of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv during 1921-2020. The edition was prepared as part of an internship at the Ivan Vyhovsky Award under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda. The scientific internship took place in Lublin at the Maria Skłodowska-Curie University (October-December 2017) and in Krakow at the Jagiellonian University (January-March 2018).

In terms of structure, the book includes an introductory speech by the Consuls General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv, Piotr Stahanczyk and Janusz Jablonski, the author's foreword, chapters on the origins of diplomatic relations between Poland and Ukraine, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv in 1921-1924, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv in 1924-1934, Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv in 1934-1937, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv in 1995-2020 and cooperation with Polonia, information about Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and employees of diplomatic missions in Kharkiv in 1921-1939, biographical records of the heads of Polish diplomatic missions in Kharkiv in 1921-1937, 1995-2020, a list of used sources, a list of abbreviations and information about the author.

L.M. Zhvanko briefly focused on the origins of Ukrainian-Polish diplomatic relations at the beginning of the 20th century. and the initial stage of activity of diplomatic missions of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv. This is fully justified, as the active foreign policy and diplomatic activities of various Ukrainian states – the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), the Ukrainian State of the Hetmanate era, the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR),

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the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR), as well as the beginning of the creation of foreign diplomatic missions falls on the final period of the First World War and the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1921. At the same time, the restoration of Polish statehood was accompanied by the active development of international relations by official Warsaw.

First of all, it should be noted that throughout 1918, the Department of Political Affairs created based on the Decree of the Regent's Council of the Kingdom of Poland operated (since January 23, 1918 – the Department of State). Among his tasks was the study of various topics in the field of foreign policy and consular guardianship. At the same time, the priority task of the State Department was considered to be the creation of a diplomatic mission in the Ukrainian capital. On October 12, 1918, a Polish diplomatic mission headed by Stanislaw Vankovych arrived in Kyiv and held long negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian State, Dmytro Doroshenko. On November 5, 1918, S. Vankovych presented Hetman Pavel Skoropadskyi Virch with a letter expressing hope for the establishment of diplomatic relations as soon as possible. The development of a network of consular institutions, in particular Polish diplomatic missions in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Yelisavetgrad, was declared a priority task. At the beginning of February 1919, the Polish Consular Agency was even functioning in Kharkiv, headed by a lawyer and a well-known figure in the local Polonia, Volodymyr Kwiatkowski. But first, the fall of the Ukrainian State, and then the weakness of the power of the Directory, Bolshevik aggression, and the Polish-Bolshevik war slowed down the development of Ukrainian-Polish diplomatic relations until 1921.

At that time, the victory of the Bolshevik state project on the majority of Ukrainian lands and the relocation of the capital of Ukraine to Kharkiv intensified his involvement in international affairs. It was here that for a long time – from 1921 to 1937 – the Embassy of the Republic of Poland (1921-1924), then the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland (1924-1934), and, finally, the Consulate of the Republic of Poland (1934-1937) operated here.) in the USSR. The peer-reviewed edition presents numerous historically significant data and materials about the nature and forms of work of Polish diplomatic missions, their leaders, and employees in Kharkiv in the 1920s and 1930s in a scientific reference and informational style. In particular, it contains important original information about the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland Republic and employees of diplomatic missions in Kharkiv from 1921-1939, and biographical records of the heads of Polish diplomatic missions.

Of great importance is the appeal to the complex and even tragic aspects of the activity of Polish diplomats in Kharkiv after the transfer of the capital of the USSR to Kyiv (1934), in particular during the period of Bolshevik purges and Stalinist repressions. At that time, the Polish consular institution in Kharkiv was headed by Stanislaw Sosnytskyi and Tadeusz Brzezinskiy. In the end, the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv was forced to

stop its work as a result of the so-called “Polish operation” – operation No. 00485, which was carried out by the Soviet authorities from August 11, 1937, to November 17, 1938, which was aimed at eliminating Polish sabotage and espionage groups, which allegedly belonged to the phantom Polish military organization. It went far beyond the limits of an anti-diplomatic action, the innocent victims of which were numerous representatives of the Polish minority, Catholic parishioners, leaders of the Roman Catholic clergy (in particular, priest Leonard Gashynsky, who in 1927 replaced the repressed priest Vincent Ilgin, was tortured), former members of the Polish Socialist Party, former Polish prisoners of war and even Soviet citizens who maintained contacts with Polish diplomatic, consular, commercial, and economic representations in the USSR. The Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat, which turned into a tool of Stalinist mass terror, not only limited the practical possibilities and made life difficult for Polish diplomats and consular employees, but also led to the termination of the activities of the Consulates of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv on December 16, 1937.

From the point of view of a comparative-historical approach and the significance of the work of the Polish diplomatic institution in Kharkiv at the current stage of Ukrainian statehood, the peer-reviewed publication contains material on the multifaceted activities of the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv in 1995-2020, as well as information about the leaders and current realities of the Polish diplomatic mission in Kharkiv. After the Republic of Poland recognized independent Ukraine on December 2, 1991, and established interstate diplomatic relations on January 8, 1992, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ukraine was opened in Kyiv and a decision was made to establish Consulates General, in particular in Kharkiv (1994). Zdzislaw Nowicki was appointed the first Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv at the current stage. The book especially noted the role of the Polish Consulate General in Kharkiv not only of a diplomatic and protocol nature but also in participation in public-political, scientific, and cultural-artistic life and the implementation of relevant projects. Thus, it is about his cooperation with local Polonia, involvement in the presentation and exhibition of works of Polish literature and art, participation in popularizing the role and importance of Poles in the historical development of Kharkiv, as well as active assistance in the preparation and publication of ten issues of the “Polish Almanac” (2004-2020), where numerous scientific materials on the Polish history of the Slobozhan region were presented.

We especially want to emphasize that the inclusion in the book of such detailed information about the composition and activities of diplomatic missions of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv was made possible thanks to the author's processing of documents and materials from the funds of the Archive of New Acts and the Central Military Archive in Warsaw, as well as from the repositories of the National Library in Warsaw. The Scientific Library of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, the Scientific Library of the Maria Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin, and the V.G. Korolenko State Scientific Library in Kharkiv.

The edition is distinguished by a highly artistic design and contains a large number of various photos. In particular, the illustrative material was provided by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv, borrowed from the collections of the Digital National Museum in Warsaw, published sources, and the Internet. The extensive illustrative base helped, on the one hand, to enrich the content of the reviewed work, and, on the other hand, to raise the level of perception of the original historical materials of a documentary nature presented by the author. At the same time, we note that the pioneering nature of the work and the motivating desire of L.M. Zhvanko to show the common and different in the activities of diplomatic institutions of Poland in Kharkiv in different historical periods prompted

the author to expand the chronological framework of the research subject up to the beginning of the 21st century. However, this was not reflected in the title of the work, where the upper chronological limit is defined as 1937.

In general, the edition, and here we agree with the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv (2016-2020) Janusz Jablonski, allowed remembering dozens of diplomats and consular employees who created conditions for a better common future. Prepared by L.M. Zhvanko's book became a new landmark publication on the history of Ukrainian-Polish diplomatic relations, which expands the horizons of cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland, and contains new knowledge about its local and regional, in particular, memorial and everyday aspects.