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Petro IVANYSHYN

PhD hab. (Philology), Professor, Head of the Department of Ukrainian Literature and Theory of Literature, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, 24 Ivan Franko Street, Drohobych, Ukraine, postal code 82100 (pivanyshyn@gmail.com)

ORCID: 0000-0002-9624-0994

Ihor ROZLUTSKY

PhD (Philology), Associate Professor of the Department of Ukrainian Literature and Literary Theory, Director of the Library of the Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, 24 Ivan Franko Street, Drohobych, Ukraine, postal code 82100 (rim2007@ukr.net)

ORCID: 0000-0002-3905-3914

Петро ІВАНИШИН

доктор філологічних наук, професор, завідувач кафедри української літератури та теорії літератури, Дрогобицький державний педагогічний університет імені Івана Франка, вул. Івана Франка, 24, м. Дрогобич, Україна, індекс 82100 (pivanyshyn@gmail.com)

Ігор РОЗЛУЦЬКИЙ

кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри української літератури та теорії літератури, директор бібліотеки, Дрогобицький державний педагогічний університет імені Івана Франка, вул. Івана Франка, 24, м. Дрогобич, Україна, індекс 82100 (rim2007@ukr.net)

**UNION FOR THE LIBERATION OF UKRAINE AS A MODEL
OF THE UKRAINIAN-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION**

(peer-review on the monograph: Pater Ivan. Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (1914-1918). Personalities / NAS of Ukraine, I. Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Lviv, 2024. 404 p.)

СВУ ЯК МОДЕЛЬ УКРАЇНОЦЕНТРИЧНОЇ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ

**(рецензія на монографію: Патер Іван. Союз визволення України (1914–1918).
Постаті / НАН України, Інститут українознавства ім. І. Крип'якевича.
Львів, 2024. 404 с.)**

The monograph by the famous historian Ivan Pater, as the editor-in-chief and author of the foreword, Professor Ihor Stoliar, rightly notes, focuses on the scientific popularization of an important national organization of World War I period, the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, which operated during the period of 1914 – 1918. The monograph consists of a series of conceptual essays-biographies and offers a reader information about twenty-six figures of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, “prominent politicians, scholars,

cultural and educational figures – representatives of the best Ukrainian national political and intellectual circles, the elite of the nation, which considered a duty to its people to bring the national idea to life” (p. 5). These are V. Lypynsky, D. Dontsov, M. Zalizniak, V. Doroshenko, A. Zhuk, M. Melenevsky, O. Skoropys-Yoltukhovsky, O.-I. Bochkovsky, M. Vozniak, I. Krypiakevych, Z. Kuzelia, Stepan and Roman Smal-Stotsky, Ye. Levytsky, B.-N. Lepky, V. Pachovsky, I. Puliuy, L. Tsehelsky and the others. That is, in the monograph there are collected essays about the most prominent and active of the two hundred and fifty members of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, approximately forty of whom came from Galicia and Bukovyna, and the majority – from the Dnieper region.

In the monograph, despite the academic style, there is thoroughly traced the process of formation, change of leadership and functioning of the organization: the formation of struggle idea for the liberation of the Dnieper region and the creation of an independent Ukrainian state, popularization of the Ukrainian issue at the international stage, cultural and educational work in the northwestern territories liberated from the Muscovites, educational and training work among the Ukrainian prisoners of war in the camps of Austria-Hungary and Germany, which had a specific national ideological and military result (the change of Malorosiyska, Muscovite consciousness to Ukrainian and the creation of two divisions – synio- and siro-zhupannyky). However, the peer-reviewed monograph has another important feature. In the monograph the issue is illustrated, on the examples of real intellectuals, how involvement in an important national cause while working in the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine often forced intellectuals to adjust their beliefs, subordinating their own scientific, religious, ethical, political, party, class, and other ideas, which could be often of a non-national, imperial or cosmopolitan, or partially national nature, to the core national idea – the idea of freedom of people and statehood of the Ukrainian nation. Although before his stay in the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine and after the dismissal of this organization, a person’s activities could not be always determined by such a basic nationalistic worldview. Unfortunately, to a greater or lesser detrimental effect to the national cause.

This extremely relevant and important idea for our time, the continuation of the Muscovite-Ukrainian war, is flexibly, unobtrusively, but very consistently, in our opinion, conveyed by the author throughout all the essays within three sections: “The First Leaders of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine” (V. Lypynsky, D. Dontsov, M. Zalizniak), “Presidium of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine” (V. Doroshenko, A. Zhuk, M. Melenevsky, O. Skoropys-Yoltukhovsky), “Prominent Members of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine” (O.-I. Bochkovsky, M. Vozniak, M. Havrylko, K. Danylenko, P. Dubrivny, R. Dombachevsky, V. Kozlovsky, I. Krypiakevych, Z. Kuzelia, Ye. Levytsky, B.-N. Lepky, Ya. Ostapchuk, V. Pachovsky, V. Prokhoda, I. Puliuy, V. Simovych, S. and R. Smal-Stotsky, L. Tsehelsky). Moreover, the historian does this by focusing on various political and ideological trends of the Ukrainian independence.

An example is the position of the forerunner of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, a famous Ukrainian historian, ideologist and political figure, representative of the national conservative (conservative nationalist), monarchical hetman trend in the Ukrainian politics, Viacheslav Lypynsky (1882 – 1931). Ethnically belonging to the Polish Volyn gentry, early V. Lypynsky realized himself as a Ukrainian (“Ukrainianism attracted me with its greatness even in my early youth”) and did everything to convert his Polish peers to work in the Ukrainian field. The author clearly emphasizes this: “Having realized himself to be a Ukrainian patriot, he not only did not break ties with the Polish gentry of the Right Bank, but

also tried to attract them to Ukrainianism. (...) The idea of returning his class to Ukrainian state life became a life guideline for Lypynsky" (p. 14).

In March of 1911, at a secret meeting in Lviv with the participation of political emigrants from the Dnieper and Galician figures, V. Lypynsky formulated the idea of the state independence of Ukraine clearly, which was welcomed by Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and very cautiously by Mykhailo Hrushevsky (pp. 15–16). V. Lypynsky was convinced that the separation of Ukraine from the Muscovite Empire and its accession to Austria-Hungary could only be "a stage towards the state independence of Ukraine" and could not replace the main goal – the statehood of the nation. Because – "without a state there is no nation" (p. 17). Another important ideological conviction of V. Lypynsky, as indicated by I. Pater, was the orientation towards one's own forces and the rejection of socialist democracy, which "could only work for the Russian Empire", becoming a form of the left-wing Muscovitism (p. 17). In some period, time proved this political thinker was right.

Another important material that significantly influenced the emergence of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine was the "Memorial to the Ukrainian Committee", sent by V. Lypynsky to Lviv in December of 1912, in which there were formulated the main principles of the struggle for the Ukrainian state under the conditions of a possible world war. These principles were also completely nationalistic. In the "Memorial to the Ukrainian Committee" it was stated that the Ukrainian nation had the full right to a free national political life on its own ethnic land, that the lack of its own strong elite prompted political democratization and social reforms, that the Muscovites and the Poles were clearly hostile to the Ukrainian cause, and Austria was not a reliable ally, the goal of the Ukrainian national liberation movement was to create an independent state with a constitutional monarchical form of government (p. 20). To implement the idea of state independence, the historian suggested creating the Union of Ukrainian Statesmen, which was later to some extent realized in the creation of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine in 1914, although without a direct participation of V. Lypynsky.

Another expression of the position of Ukrainian independence was the social worldview of Ukrainian nationalism, the strong-willed (or "active") version of which was developed in the political and philosophical system by the thinker, publicist, political figure, literary critic, publisher and editor Dmytro Dontsov (1883 – 1917), a native of Melitopol and a representative of a Russified Cossack family. This Ukrainian intellectual and revolutionary evolved from socialism (a member of the USDRP since 1905, but with an independent position) to thoughtful nationalism rapidly. I. Pater gives the example of D. Dontsov's anti-clerical speech "School and Religion" before the Galician students in 1909, which demonstrates a social democratic worldview mainly. But later (as various experts believe, from 1911) national ideas began to clearly dominate in D. Dontsov's worldview.

As evidence of this, the author cites the brochure "Modern Muscovite" (1913), in which the publicist formulates warnings about the widespread mental illness of the Ukrainians – spiritual and political Muscovite, dependence on Moscow worldview, culture, and politics: "...the author warned the Ukrainian society against the harmful influences of Russian culture and Russian political ideas, pointing at "the boundless respect for Russian culture widespread in certain circles of our intelligentsia and some strange spiritual dependence on the views prevailing in progressive Russian circles". And he cites the following quote of the thinker, which has not lost its relevance today: "...many so-called conscious Ukrainians have still not solved the old question for themselves: what kind of soul do they have – "Khakhliatskaya or Russian?" (p. 30). D. Dontsov considered salvation not only the return of the Ukrainians

to their natural spiritual roots, to the cultural tradition of the West, not only the rejection of the “theory of apolitical-cultural-sentimental Ukrainianness”, but also the development of own “clear programme of Ukrainian politics”, “free from such influences of foreign concepts that are undesirable to us and do not meet our needs” (p. 30). Thus, Westernization of the Ukrainians and the need to rely primarily on their own strengths are affirmed.

Another significant pre-war brochure by D. Dontsov, which is placed alongside Mykola Mikhnovsky’s “Independent Ukraine”, was the publication of the essay “Modern Political Situation of the Nation and Our Tasks” (1913). In this publication, D. Dontsov suggested a specific programme of political activity that would lead to a complete separation of Ukraine from Muscovy. And this political separation would have to take place in two stages: 1) separation of Ukraine (or part of it) from Muscovy and creation on its basis within the borders of Austria-Hungary of the “Ukrainian Crown Land”, in order on this basis 2) subsequently to prepare the ground for the complete political liberation of all Ukrainian lands (p. 31). At the same time, in the brochure, the Ukrainian thinker clearly warned the Ukrainians about the approaching new political situation, which must be used to their advantage, and that the Ukrainian politics should decisively break with Moscow’s democratic and liberal circles, because they are “guided and will be guided by the interests of Russian imperialism” (p. 31). The above mentioned issue shows how much D. Dontsov was able to distinguish between political ideology and basic worldview that determines it.

D. Dontsov’s ideas, as I. Pater emphasizes, caused sharp rejection both by Moscow imperialists of various political orientations (P. Miliukov, V. Lenin), and the majority of Ukrainian democrats and socialists of the Little Russian type, especially the Social Democrats, who were outraged by his so-called “chauvinism”. The publicist finally breaks with the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party (USDLP) (pp. 32–33). All this led to initiating a meeting of political émigrés by D. Dontsov, at which on August 4, 1914, the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party was formed, and the thinker was elected its chairman. Although in September, due to an internal conflict, D. Dontsov left the party, it continued to be inspired by the ideas of the organizer, especially his main nationalist postulate – the independence and unity of Ukraine (p. 34).

These ideals proved acceptable to a number of political émigrés from the Dnieper region, who belonged to the most numerous current of political Ukrainianism at the time, which also became the most numerous in the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. These are the Socialist Democrats (USDLP), who split from the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, but generally gravitated towards internationalist and Little Russian ideals within the framework of Moscow Marxism. An example is Volodymyr Doroshenko’s activity (1879 – 1963), a public and political figure, literary critic, bibliographer, and historian, who belonged to a Russified Cossack-starshyn family and, as secretary, became a co-founder of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. Later Volodymyr Doroshenko was a member of the collective Presidium, which led the organization after M. Zalizniak, and was responsible for publishing activities.

I. Pater cites a characteristic article by V. Doroshenko, “A Brief Overview of the Development of Political Thought and Organization in Ukraine” (1914), where he conceptualizes the problem not from class or internationalist positions (which is typical of socialists), but from the position of the Ukrainian-centric worldview. I. Pater traces how the Ukrainian national idea developed after the abolition of the Hetmanate in patriotic Masonic lodges, Decembrist societies, literary romanticism, and later in the Cyril and Methodius

Brotherhood, the Ukrainian communities, the first national parties, etc. (p. 60). In other publications, the author constantly emphasized the need for the collapse of the Muscovite empire as a “prison of peoples”, for the demythologizing of Muscovite imperial policy towards conquered peoples, and for the affirmation of the Ukrainians as a modern nation: “In our time, Ukrainianism in Russia has already regained its feet. The Ukrainian people are transforming, overcoming all obstacles, into a modern nation” (Ukrainianism in Russia (1916)) (p. 65). However, the historian does not notice the obvious lack of consideration by V. Doroshenko of the Galician nationalistic experience, which makes his scheme not entirely complete.

For a short time after D. Dontsov, Mykola Zalizniak (1888 – 1950) was elected the head of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, the representative of the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), who was born in Feodosia, a representative of a Moscowization Cossack family. The national idea also played a significant role in his worldview. I. Pater recalls M. Zalizniak’s participation as a student in the struggle for Ukrainian departments at Kyiv University, a rapid evolution of his national consciousness in emigration to Galicia, combination of a certain Austrophilism with a belief in the “national independence” of the Ukrainians (p. 49). Even after leaving the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, while serving in Vienna as head of the foreign committee of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party, he was engaged in active nationalistic publishing activities and wrote a number of politically important publications. For example, as the historian notes, in the brochure “Is Independent Ukraine a Non-Socialist Slogan?” (1915), M. Zalizniak emphasizes the need to separate Ukraine and Poland from the Muscovite Empire during World War, and destruction of Muscovy as a prerequisite for the existence of free democratic Europe: “With iron and blood, life teaches the peoples of Europe reason. The current war is another lesson. And the meaning of the lesson is that as long as the Russian Empire exists, one cannot think there... about the safe development of democracy... Without the defeat and destruction of Russia, there is no point in thinking about European progress... And the destruction of Russia is impossible without the liberation of Ukraine from its domination” (p. 53).

Naturally, a strong nationalistic thinking was present among Galician national democrats, who also worked in the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine quite actively. In this context, I. Pater quite carefully analyzes the activities and dramatic fate of the famous Ukrainian philologist, a proponent of Francophilology, Academician Mykhailo Vozniak (1881 – 1954), a native of Lviv region, who, while not being a member of any party, clearly gravitated towards a national democratic worldview. M. Vozniak was the editor of the “Vistnyk of Union for the Liberation of Ukraine”, which was an influential wartime publication, and the author of a number of important Ukrainian-centric publications, including “Our Native Language” (1916) and “Ukrainian Statehood” (1918). The intellectual resolutely emphasized the lack of alternative to the national idea for the liberation of Ukrainians and resolutely polemicized with those Ukrainian parties that stood for federalism with Muscovy, because “to think about such a federation means to drive the national organism of the Ukrainian people into the grave consciously”. M. Vozniak emphasized that chauvinistic, Ukrainophobic beliefs were inherent not only to Moscow elite, but also to the majority of imperial society: “...to prevent the Ukrainian people from rising, getting out of such a grave, today it is no longer the tsar, not Moscow liberals, but the entire Moscow people who were guiding it” (p. 138). The Ukrainians will be convinced of this profound observation correctness during the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Despite its obvious advantages, the peer-reviewed monograph also contains some minor shortcomings, which may need to be corrected in further development of this important issue. For example, when covering the figure of D. Dontsov, obviously it would be worth taking into account the thorough research by Ya. Dashkevych, O. Bahan, S. Kvit, and H. Svarnyk. It would also be useful to avoid not always correct use of the term “nationalism”, which in the monograph is sometimes politicized, mythologized, and then acts as a synonym for opposite phenomena, as we have in the phrases “Black Hundreds nationalists” (instead of “Black Hundreds chauvinists”) (p. 32) or “Russian nationalists” (instead of “Russian imperialists”) (p. 33). In some places, there are obvious factual errors (for example, in 1915, the 101st anniversary of the death of T. Shevchenko could hardly have been celebrated (p. 66)) or there is a lack of a linguistic editing (obviously, it is more appropriate to use the term “outstanding” rather than “evident figures”).

However, overall, Ivan Pater’s monograph convincingly shows that a powerful national idea can become the basis for effective unification of people of different character and political orientation. That is, it can become a conceptual, worldview core of thinking and activity in the interests of national freedom, for the benefit of the common cause – achievement of an independent Ukrainian state. No matter what the members of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine did before joining the organization or after its self-dissolution, no matter what political ideologies they professed (conservatism, social democracy, national democracy, socialist revolutionism, etc.), during their stay in its structures they demonstrated the best human qualities, competing for the main refuge of the people – their own national state. Therefore, the author seems to conclude that the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, unlike many parties and public associations of that time, became an effective Ukrainian-centric organization, whose experience in one way or another influenced subsequent Ukrainian organizations.

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