

<https://doi.org/10.53656/his2021-6-7-ukr>

Reviews and Annotations  
Рецензії та анотації

## UKRAINIAN-BULGARIAN RELATIONS IN THE FOCUS OF UKRAINIAN HISTORIANS

Matyash, I. & Tertychna, A. & Manasieva, I., 2021. *Ukrayins'ko-bolhars'ki vidnosyny: oficiyna i kul'turna dyplomatiya (1918–1944)*. Kyiv, Sofia: Instytut Istoriyi NAN Ukrayiny. 372 p.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Artem Papakin**

*Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine)*

Nowadays, the issue of regional cooperation between countries is becoming relevant – it can solve some problems that are not on the agenda of major international organizations. Contemporary Ukraine's need for support from Central and Southeastern European states is somewhat reminiscent of 1918, when the young Ukrainian state sought allies to support its own independence and fight Russian aggression. Ukraine's war for independence in 1917 – 1921 ended with the defeat and establishment of a Soviet totalitarian regime, resulting in forcing many Ukrainians to flee into exile in countries that supported Ukrainian independence. Kingdom of Bulgaria was one of the first states to establish diplomatic relations with Ukraine in 1918, and later sheltered a large number of Ukrainian emigrants. Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations in the interwar period were brought to the attention of scholars relatively recently. However, lately the number of scholarly publications on the relations of the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Ukrainian State with the Kingdom of Bulgaria in 1918 – 1919, as well as on Ukrainian emigration to Bulgaria between the two world wars increased. The monograph by Iryna Matyash, Anna Tertychna and Inna



Manasieva is a comprehensive study of diplomatic and cultural ties between the two countries from 1918 to the 1940s.

In the introduction, the authors try to justify the term "cultural diplomacy" used in the title, which have had a propagandistic connotation since its invention. According to I. Matyash, A. Tertychna and I. Manasieva, the concept of "cultural diplomacy" instead means "a wider range of bodies, organizations, even individuals", designed to implement "official diplomacy" (which, in turn, they understand as "activities of governments and special bodies of foreign relations").

The 1st Chapter of the monograph is devoted to historiography and sources of research. The authors depict the historiography of Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations in 1918–1944, from the first Ukrainian publications by direct participants in diplomatic contacts to contemporary historians from both Ukraine and Bulgaria. The authors note that Bulgarian scholars generally paid less attention to this problem. An important component of the reviewed monograph is the Chapter 1, "Source base of research...". In it, the authors tried to present the complete picture of the sources of Ukrainian-Bulgarian diplomacy and cultural contacts of 1918–1944. The list of sources in this section not only shows where the authors got the data for their book, but it's also able to guide a researcher interested in the topic in finding archives and their particular funds where it should be searched.

Despite the significant richness of content, the section lacks a systematic presentation of the material. First, it begins with a mention of the most important documents for Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations in 1918. Among them are fragments of the ratification letter of Tsar Ferdinand, the ratification letter of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky and the text of the Brest Peace Treaty, stored in the Central State Archives of Bulgaria (CSA of Bulgaria). Then, the authors mentioned important documents on the history of Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations in 1918, which are stored in the archives of Ukraine: Central State Archive of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (TSDAVO of Ukraine), the Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, the State Archives of Odessa region and the Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of Ukraine. It's worth mentioning that the information potential of the TSDAVO of Ukraine is not limited to the three funds of the Ukrainian Ministries of Foreign Affairs mentioned there. Some documents on trade between the Ukrainian State and the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Ministry's proposals to open consulates in Bulgaria are also stored in f. 1118 "Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Ukrainian State" of this archive. Also, the authors mention documents from the life of the Bulgarian national minority in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) in the 1920s and 1930s (which is beyond the scope of the study), but the sources for this topic are not limited to the funds of the State Archives of Odessa region. The following section provides valuable information about the memoirs and diaries of Ukrainian participants in the diplomatic communication between Bulgaria

and Ukraine in 1918 – 1919 and Ukrainian periodicals covering diplomatic and cultural Ukrainian-Bulgarian contacts.

After that, the authors return to the description of documents from the Bulgarian archives. This part of the section actually retells the content of Olena Kosenko's article "Archival Ucrainica of the interwar period in Bulgaria" (Kosenko 2011), which, in turn, is mostly written on the basis of information from the catalog "Ukrainian emigration in Bulgaria after the First World War" (Moskalenko, Khakova 2000). The authors of the reviewed monograph also provide information on printed documents, but later return to the archival documents, this time the Scientific Archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Bulgarian Historical Archive at the Cyril and Methodius National Library. This part is followed by extremely valuable data for Ukrainian researchers of Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations: information about Bulgarian memoirs and Bulgarian newspapers and magazines with publications on this issue. At the end of the section, the authors turn again to the Ukrainian emigrant periodicals of the interwar period.

Chapter 2 of the book is devoted to the preconditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Ukraine, namely the Ukrainian question during the First World War and the circumstances of the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Central Powers. The author of the first section, Inna Manasieva, provides a broad picture of the activities of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, supported by Germany, including activities of its emissary Lev Hankevych, and analyzes the Ukrainian issue depicted in Bulgarian periodicals during the First World War. The next section by Iryna Matyash focuses on the signing of the February 9, 1918 agreement – the first document in which the UPR acted as a subject of international law. The author concludes that, despite the activities of Ukrainians in Bulgaria during the First World War, the "Ukrainian question" for Bulgarian society arose only in December 1917, and by mid-January 1918 most newspapers had already written about the new state, often on the first columns. Based on archival and published documents, this section described the reasons for Bulgaria's interest in Ukraine, the course of negotiations, contacts between Bulgarian and Ukrainian delegates, as well as the circumstances of the signing of the Brest Peace Treaty on February 9, 1918 and the Ukrainian-Bulgarian annex on February 12, 1918.

The next, 3rd Chapter covers in detail the activities of the Embassy of the Bulgarian Kingdom in Ukraine. Although, according to Iryna Matyash, Ferdinand wanted to be the first monarch to recognize the new state, and quickly appointed Ivan Shishmanov the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, the latter arrived to Ukraine, but not in the UPR. On April 29, 1918, the Ukrainian State was proclaimed after the coup of Pavlo Skoropadsky. Based on documentary sources, Ivan Shishmanov's route to Kyiv and his work in the Ukrainian capital are described

almost day by day and address by address. The author also describes the activities of the Bulgarian Embassy in Ukraine during the next change of power – the uprising of the Directory of the UPR, and the departure of members of the Bulgarian mission to Vinnytsia after the capture of the capital by the Bolsheviks, as well as the fate of the embassy. The 4th Chapter tells about the work of the Ukrainian embassy in Sofia and its head, Oleksandr Shulhyn. In addition to archival documents, the memoirs of Ukrainian diplomats and the press materials contributed to the coverage of these aspects of the problem. Due attention was paid to “cultural diplomacy” explained as “informal” work, which consisted in informing the Bulgarians of the desire of Ukrainians to exist as an independent nation" after January 1919, when the embassy was left without its head.

In the next, Chapter 5, Iryna Matyash traces the steps of the Soviet governments to bring their puppet, the Ukrainian SSR, to the international level. Despite the fact that by 1920 the Ukrainian SSR had already participated in the signing of agreements with the Baltic countries and Austria (and the following year – with Poland as well), the attempts of Soviet Ukraine to establish relations with Bulgaria were unsuccessful for some time. Replacing the influence of the UPR in Bulgaria with the Soviet one was one of the main reasons for the Ukrainian Bolsheviks to make these attempts. However, the need to address the issues of repatriation and trade forced Bulgaria to start relations with Soviet Ukraine. In the next section of this Chapter, Anna Tertychna explored the activities of Ukrainian emigration groups in Bulgaria during the interwar period. And although the information content of this part of the book is at a high level, its sources were mainly the works of other researchers: Valeriy Vlasenko, Emine Khakova and Vitaliy Moskalenko. Archival documents on this issue, which were reported in the relevant section 1.2., were not basically used.

Additions are an extremely valuable part of the publication. Archival documents prepared by the authors for publication (from the collections of the TsDAVO of Ukraine and the CSA of Bulgaria) and memoirs of the participants of the events are placed here. Among the most important documents are: the text of the Brest Peace Treaty of February 9, 1918, the Bulgarian-Ukrainian treaty of February 12, 1918, the diary of Ambassador Ivan Shishmanov from April 1918 to June 1919, speeches by diplomats and correspondence about the last days of work of Ukrainian Embassy in Bulgaria. Valuable information on the activities of diplomatic missions and the perception of Ukrainians in Bulgaria is provided by Ivan Shishmanov's interview with the “Kambana” newspaper, which he gave on the eve of his trip to Kyiv; the memoirs of diplomats Yulian Nalysnyk and Oleksandr Lototsky, and the Kost' Matsievych's report are of high value as well; Petar Neikov's memoirs from 1918 make it possible to feel the attitude of one of the Bulgarian diplomats sent to Kyiv. Some of these documents were published for the first time. The documents in Bulgarian have been translated into Ukrainian.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned documents and memoirs lack comments in the footnotes, in some cases errors appear in the texts, and the arrangement of text happen be not well thought out: for instance, Petar Neykov's memoirs were added by a comment from publishers, which is in no way visually separated from the text of memoirs.

In general, the book “Ukrainian-Bulgarian relations: official and cultural diplomacy (1918 – 1944)” is the authors’ significant contribution to the Ukrainian and Bulgarian historiography of relations between the two countries in the interwar period. Its first Chapter can serve as a guide for anyone who wants to explore some aspects of this problem. Written on the basis of archival sources, the remaining chapters have a remarkable scientific novelty, and the appendices contain the full texts of important sources on the research topic. The publication is illustrated with photographs of documents, periodicals and characters of the story. The book has an annotation in Bulgarian and English, as well as a nominal index.

## REFERENCES

- Kosenko, O., (2011). Arkhivna ukrayinika mizhvoyennoho periodu v Bolhariyi. *Arkhivy Ukrayiny*. 2 – 3 (273), 204–211.
- Moskalenko, V. & Khakova, E., (2000) *Ukrainskata emigratsiya v Bulgariya sled purvata svetovna vojna: dokumentalen katalog*. Sofia.

✉ **Dr. Artem Papakin, Assoc. Prof.**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7251-2388>

Web of Science Researcher ID: AAE-4585-2020

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

60, Volodymyrska St.

01033 Kyiv, Ukraine

E-mail: [artempapakin@knu.ua](mailto:artempapakin@knu.ua)