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## **The Ukrainian People's Republic Directorate – The State Centre of the Ukrainian People's Republic in Exile (1919–1926): A Study of Military and Political Activity in Ukraine and Poland**

### **Abstract**

The article provides insight into the main aspects of the military and political activity of the Ukrainian People's Republic Directorate and, particularly, its confrontation against “red” and “white” Russia, which aimed to destroy Ukrainian statehood. The study also presents Polish-Ukrainian interstate relations in military and political spheres after the Treaty of Warsaw in April 1920 and focuses on the specific features of how the UPR State Center functioned in exile on the territory of Poland as an institution that consistently upheld the ideas of independence and sovereignty of the Ukrainian People's Republic and constantly supported the interned UPR Army.

Keywords: the Ukrainian People's Republic Directorate; Symon Petlura; army; Poland

### **Introduction. Historiography of the Problem**

The period of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) Directorate occupies a special place in the history of the Ukrainian National Revolution of 1917–1920. This was conditioned, on one hand, by the struggle of some Ukrainians for their rights and national power, and, on the other hand, by the transformation of Ukrainian lands into an arena of confrontation between powerful states, which had not unsuccessfully tried to subordinate Ukraine (or part of it), and use it as a source of resources and, in the future, incorporate some of its territories into their structure. Consequently, from 1919 to 1920, Ukrainian lands became a battlefield for several armies (first of all, the Volunteer and Bolshevik armies). Moreover, the situation grew more complicated, as separate parts of Ukraine were controlled by the forces of partisan otamans (Nestor Makhno, Nykyfor Hryhoryev, Zelenyi (Danylo Terpylo), and others), and Greek-French troops landed in Odessa, taking Kherson and Mykolaiv under their control (December 1918 – March 1919). The proclaiming of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic

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(WUPR) on 19 October 1918 caused its military confrontation with the newly created Polish State. It was active until the beginning of the summer of 1919.

Due to this set of circumstances, systematic and consistent state-forming endeavours by the UPR Directorate were impossible, as all its resources were being used for the struggle against Bolshevik Russia conducted by the UPR Army with limited success. One of the main tasks of the UPR Directorate was to replenish and coordinate UPR Army units and connections. The most complicated issue for the UPR Directorate was the blockade of the UPR imposed by the Entente, which in 1919 was actively supporting the idea of restoring a “one and indivisible” non-Bolshevik Russia. Lack of weapons, ammunition, and medicines, which were impossible to purchase and transport to Ukraine in time, caused enormous military and civilian casualties in the autumn of 1919 and forced the decision to liquidate the regular front and transit to partisan methods of warfare.

The first attempts to conceptualize various aspects of the UPR Directorate’s activity were carried out in the 1930s–1950s by direct participants in those events.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later, a seven-volume edition with a detailed account of the UPR Directorate’s history was issued.<sup>2</sup> A brief essay about the 20 years of the UPR State Centre’s activity in exile was created by Mykola Livytskyi.<sup>3</sup> From the beginning of the 1990s, this issue attracted a good deal of Ukrainian researchers, resulting in several articles, theses, and monographs.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the development of this issue has started to interest Polish historians.<sup>5</sup> The process of studying and comprehending the events concerning the Treaty of Warsaw in 1920 continues up to now.<sup>6</sup> Of prevailing concern are the various aspects of the military organization of national armed forces during the UPR Directorate period in Ukraine and its first years in exile.<sup>7</sup> The emigration period of the UPR State Centre was covered in research by Vasyl Yablonskyi.<sup>8</sup> Coherent and objective reconstruction of this issue can be carried out only by using multiple

1 Mazepa 1950; idem 1951; idem 1943.

2 Stakhiv 1962–1965.

3 Livytskyi 1984, 72 p.

4 Troshchynskyi 1994, p. 260; Sribnyak 1995, p. 216; Yablonskyi 2001, p. 160; Karpus / Sribnyak 2002, pp. 212–216; Yanevskyi 2003, p. 767; Piskun 2006, p. 672; Parandiy 2012, p. 19.

5 Bruski 2000, p. 600; Wiszka 2004, p. 752; Pisuliński 2004, p. 480.

6 Sribnyak 2004, pp. 333–344; Mykhaylova 2005, pp. 154–175; Serhiychuk 2010, p. 264; Bruskyi 2020, pp. 22–37; Doroshko / Matviyenko 2021, pp. 122–135.

7 Karpus / Sribnyak 2000, pp. 81–89; Krotofil 2002, p. 225; idem 2011, p. 224; Mykhaylova 2007, pp. 198–220; Rukkas 2013, p. 480; Sribnyak 1997, p. 187; idem 2018 (2), pp. 151–176; idem 2020 (2), pp. 86–102.

8 Yablonskyi 2020, p. 646.

sources, in particular archival materials, epistolary,<sup>9</sup> and collections of documents.<sup>10</sup>

## The UPR Directorate's Rise to Power and Search for Rapprochement with Poland (1919)

As a result of the national uprising led by the Ukrainian National State Union, the Ukrainian State of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyyi fell in the middle of December 1918 and power was transferred to the Ukrainian People's Republic Directorate. On 26 December 1918, the Directorate appointed the Council of People's Ministers of the UPR headed by Volodymyr Chekhivskyyi and publicized the political program of the new government. On 22 January 1919, the Labour Congress was convened in Kyiv as a temporary legislative body aimed at defining the form of state government in Ukraine. The delegates of the Congress were peasants, workers, and intelligentsia elected from the majority of the Ukrainian regions and West-Ukrainian territories. On 22 January 1919, the Congress delegates ratified the Act of Union of UPR and WUPR into one state and the *Law on Provisional Power in the Ukrainian People's Republic (Zakon pro tymchasovu vladu v UNR / Закон про тимчасову владу в УНР)*. Due to the Bolshevik troops' advancement on Kyiv, the Congress was suspended, temporarily passing supreme power in Ukraine to the UPR Directorate, namely Volodymyr Vynnychenko (head of the Directorate), Chief Otaman Symon Petlura, Andrii Makarenko, Fedir Shvets, Panas Andrievskyyi, and Yevhen Petrushevych.

It should be pointed out that the UPR Directorate lacked unity – Vynnychenko was looking for a way to consolidate with Soviet Russia, and Petlura and his supporters were Entente-oriented. This duality ruled out the elaboration of a common political approach in Ukrainian statehood formation, as the headlines of the UPR Directorate proposed different formats: a Ukrainian type system of councils (*radas*) (Vynnychenko) vs parliamentary democracy (Petlura). Bolshevik Moscow made use of this situation to inspire the creation of a puppet “Ukrainian” Soviet government in Kharkiv and started a military offensive on Left-Bank Ukraine. At the beginning of February 1919, the UPR Directorate was forced to evacuate from Kyiv to Vinnytsia (later to Proskuriv), while Bolshevik troops entered the Ukrainian capital.

In this situation, Vynnychenko resigned from his position as Directorate leader and went abroad. After that, Petlura was elected a Chairman of the Directorate, and he made every effort to stabilize inter-state relations with Poland.

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9 Petlura 1956; idem 1979, p. 627; Fayzulin 2019, p. 688.

10 Vynar / Pazunyak 1993, p. 494; Hunchak 1984, p. 478; Yablonskyi 2012, p. 840.

In particular, for this purpose, he sent Colonel Borys Kurdynovskiy on a secret mission to Warsaw on 19 February 1919. The mission resulted in a confidential military and political agreement signed between Kurdynovskiy and Polish Prime-Minister Ignacy Jan Paderewski on 24 May 1919. Following this agreement, the UPR Directorate confirmed the transfer of Ukrainian territories – Eastern Galicia and Volhynia (Wołyń, Volyn’) – to Poland. The Polish State, in its turn, agreed to recognize the UPR as a sovereign state and provide support in its struggle against Bolshevik troops.<sup>11</sup>

It is noteworthy that the signing of this agreement (in fact, it was not carried out because of the continuing war between Western-Ukrainian People’s Republic and Poland) was conditioned by the Bolsheviks capturing Right-Bank Ukraine in the spring of 1919. So, Petlura tried to secure a reliable back front or at least a neutral one for withstanding “red” Moscow. He had to take into account that the Entente did not support the Ukrainian drive for independence and continuously maintained its postulate of restoring a “One and Indivisible Russia”.<sup>12</sup>

Notwithstanding, the positions of Bolsheviks in Ukraine were precarious because of the strong mass partisan and insurgent movement there, in the rear of the “reds”. Owing to this, the position of the UPR government stabilized. Besides, of great significance was the opportunity to unite the forces of the UPR Army and Ukrainian Galician Army (*Ukraińs’ka Halyc’ka Armija / Українська Галицька Армія*, UGA), which had been forced to leave Galicia under the pressure of Polish troops and retreated to the east from the Zbruch river. With support from insurgents, the United Army of the UPR went on the offensive and managed to liberate large territories of Right-Bank Ukraine from the Bolsheviks. At that moment, Petlura realized the critical importance of stabilizing inter-state relations with Poland. He kept unofficial contacts with the Polish government through his representatives, and on 9 August 1919, for the first time, the Chairman of the UPR Directorate addressed a personal letter directly to Józef Piłsudski.

In that letter, Petlura drew the attention of the Head of the Polish State to the disunity of the Poles and Ukrainians in resisting the common enemies “that caused the temporary decay of the Polish and Ukrainian States”,<sup>13</sup> and that the struggle of the Ukrainian people against Moscow, which imposes “forms of a communist regime alien to Ukraine”,<sup>14</sup> could hardly fail to evoke compassion from the Polish side. The negative circumstance impeding the struggle of the Ukrainian people according to Petlura was “isolation from neighbours and first

11 Stakhiv 1965/7, pp. 158–159.

12 Kosyk 1980, p. 33.

13 “[...] спричинилась до тимчасового занепаду Польської і Української Держав” [all translations of quotations by Liubov Pikulia], Petlura 1979, p. 358.

14 “[...] Україні чужі їй форми комуністичного ладу”, *ibid.*

of all, from Poland”,<sup>15</sup> considering the aspirations shared by Poland and Ukraine, meanwhile, as “strategic interests that demand coordination and coaction”.<sup>16</sup> In this regard “the ultimateness of certain agreement becomes obvious”<sup>17</sup> between the military commands of both countries. Petlura also expressed hope, that “returning the Ukrainian war prisoners from Poland to Ukraine, adequately armed, could be the first step to further acts of friendship between Polish and Ukrainian people, acts that are of mutual interests of both peoples”.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, the military and the political situation continued to favour the UPR Army. On 31 August 1919, it entered Kyiv having been abandoned by the Bolsheviks. That year it was the greatest achievement of the UPR Directorate. But the Volunteer Army of Anton Denikin also participated in the military defeat of the Bolsheviks and its detachments entered the Ukrainian capital on the same day. Petlura could not reach any agreement with “white” Russia, because the latter unaccepted the legal personality of the UPR as an independent state. Consequently, the UPR Army was forced to take military action against Russian volunteers. As ousting them from Kyiv was already impossible, which encouraged Petlura to double his efforts towards rapprochement with Poland. On 26 September 1919, the UPR Directorate elaborated and adopted directives for the UPR diplomatic mission (headed by Andrij Livytskyi), which came to Warsaw two weeks later and started the negotiation process.<sup>19</sup>

In the meantime, in the autumn of 1919, the state of the UPR Army considerably deteriorated because of a typhus epidemic and lack of medicines due to the blockade by the Entente. Lack of food and medical care soon nudged the Ukrainian fighters towards the brink of survival; the Army was rapidly losing personnel and combat readiness. In this desperate situation, trying to save the Ukrainian Galician Army from total destruction, its Commander, General Myron Tarnavskiy took a controversial step – he subordinated the Galicians to the Volunteer Army command.

The UPR Army was also in a dramatic situation, being isolated in the so-called “death triangle”, it tried to hold the front against volunteers, Bolsheviks, and Polish troops. Most of the soldiers had typhus, which reduced their numbers to 8,000–10,000. In mid-November 1919, the UPR Army’s position was so compli-

15 “[...] ізольованість від сусідів і насамперед від Польщі”, *ibid.*

16 “[...] інтереси стратегії вимагають координації та співділання”, *ibid.*

17 “[...] стає очевидною konieczність певного порозуміння”, *ibid.*

18 “[...] повернення на Україну перебуваючих у Польщі наших полонених, відповідно озброєних, було б першим кроком до слідуючих дружніх актів польського та українського народів, які, я певен в цьому, лежать в обопільних інтересах обох народів”, *ibid.*

19 Mykhaylova 2011, pp. 229–252.

cated that upon the request of the Ukrainian government, Polish troops took Kamianets-Podilskyi and nearby territories under their control.<sup>20</sup>

Notwithstanding, even in such circumstances, Petlura did not accept the idea to stop fighting against the Russian Bolshevik regime, because just the very act of struggle was positive evidence of the state-making potential of the Ukrainian nation. His confidence in the strong forces of the Ukrainian society gave him grounds to claim the following on 26 November 1919: “[...] we have entered the arena of history in times when the whole world did not know what Ukraine is [...] nobody considered our people as a separate nation. With united struggle, persistent and non-compromising, we have shown the world that Ukraine exists, its people live and fight for their rights, their freedom, and state independence.”<sup>21</sup>

Along with that, Petlura understood that further struggle against Moscow required political agreement with the Polish State. To intensify the process of negotiation, the Chairman of the UPR Directorate ordered the head of the diplomatic mission Andriy Livytskyi to sign a unilateral declaration in Warsaw (2 December 1919) which confirmed a cease-fire from 1 September 1919 in exchange for territories – Poland received Eastern Galicia, thus opening the way for the UPR Army’s retreat. The declaration also contained a request to the Polish side to officially recognize the UPR’s independence and provide it with military support.<sup>22</sup>

On 4 December 1919, the Chairman of the UPR Directorate Petlura called a military meeting in Chortoryi, where all the division commanders and ministers of the UPR government were present. The meeting resulted in the decision to eliminate the regular front and conduct a raid in the rear of the enemy (Volunteer and Bolshevik armies). This raid is better known in history as the First Winter Campaign of the UPR Army and lasted from 6 December 1919 to 6 May 1920.

## Polish-Ukrainian Consolidation to Withstand the Spread of Bolshevism in Europe (1920)

On 5 December 1919 the Chairman of the UPR Directorate Petlura left for Warsaw to agree on the issue of providing military aid to Ukraine with the Polish government, which confirmed the validity of the declaration from 2 December 1919. Petlura was deeply convinced that Poland – with its well-trained and nu-

20 Bruskyi 2020, p. 28.

21 “[...] ми виступили на арену історії тоді, коли весь світ не знав, що таке Україна [...] ніхто не вважав нашого народу за окрему націю. Єдиною боротьбою, упертою і безкомпромісовою, ми показали світові, що Україна є, що її народ живе і бореться за своє право, за свою свободу й державну незалежність.” Petlura [2022].

22 Lisevych 1997, pp. 85–87; Pisuliński 2004, pp. 169–188; Matviyenko 2004, pp. 502–507.

merous army, equipped at the expense of the Entente – could become one of the most important allies for Ukraine. But reaching the corresponding agreement would inevitably have foreseen territorial concessions from the side of the UPR, and this not only concerned the territory of Galicia. In his letter of 15 March 1920 to the Prime Minister of the UPR government, Isaak Mazepa, Petlura wrote: “Poland has to recognize us, but, obviously, at a high price – it wants to take 5 Volhynia counties: Kovelskyi, Lutskyi, Dubenskyi, Rivenskyi and part of Kremenetskyi. Today they don't speak of this officially but tomorrow or after tomorrow can firmly state this.”<sup>23</sup>

Simultaneously, Petlura came to the reasonable conclusion that “anyway, without some agreement with Poland we cannot renew our state labour [...]”<sup>24</sup> Further in this letter, Petlura emphasized the importance of trade relations between the UPR and Europe: “Without trade exchange, we can neither form an army nor restore state life”,<sup>25</sup> but this would only be possible with Romania and Poland. Romania, though, had no adequate transport capacity. So only Poland remained, “the only broader window to Europe in the context of transport and relations [...]. The way I look at it is that we will have to make concessions to the Poles with the fact that the final word on these decisions [...] will be said by our future parliament”.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, the core of the Polish-Ukrainian agreement in 1920 was supposed to be a military union of the two states opposing Bolshevik Russia. In support of this are the words from Petlura's letter to the UPR Military Minister, Colonel Volodymyr. Salskyi, on 31 March 1920, the Directorate Chairman explained the content of the agreement stressing that the union should be achieved “to resist Moscow”.<sup>27</sup> In Petlura's opinion, new relations between the two neighbouring countries required “corrections to the former policy from the Polish side as well”,<sup>28</sup> and above all “Poland's vital interest compels it to have an independent Ukraine”.<sup>29</sup> The UPR Directorate Chairman insisted that Polish political leaders, namely Józef Pilsudski, “have to fight in Poland as well for the

23 “Польща має визнати нас, але очевидно за дорогу ціну – 5 повітів Волині хоче собі взяти: Ковельський, Луцький, Дубенський, Рівенський і частину Кременецького. Про це офіційно сьогодні не говорять, але завтра-позавтра можуть рішуче заявити.” Central'nyj Deržavnyj Archiv Vyščych Orhaniv Vlady ta Upravlinnja Ukraïny (hereinafter: CDAVO Ukraïny): sig. f. 3696, op. 1, spr. 124, fols. 23–26.

24 “[...] в кожному разі без того чи іншого порозуміння з Польщею ми не можемо одновити нашої державної праці [...]”, *ibid.*

25 “Без товарообміну ми не можемо армії формувати, ні життя державного відновити”, *ibid.*

26 “[...] як єдине ширше вікно до Європи в смислі транспорту і зносин [...]. Я дивлюсь на справу так: нам прийдеться йти на уступки полякам з тим, що остаточне снова про ці рішення [...] буде говорити наш майбутній парламент”, *ibid.*

27 “[...] щоб перед Москвою устояти”, Petlura 1956, p. 263.

28 “[...] і з боку польського корективів до минулої політики”, *ibid.*, pp. 267–268.

29 “[...] життєвий інтерес Польщі примушує її мати самостійну Україну”, *ibid.*

idea of our statehood”<sup>30</sup> because only the existence of a sovereign and democratic Ukraine could create a reliable barrier against the penetration of the bolshevism “bacillus” into Poland and Europe.

In fact, before signing interstate agreements, the Polish military took measures to organize units and formations of the UPR Army manned by the Ukrainian soldiers interned in Poland. From the Ukrainian side, this task was performed by the UPR Military mission headed by General Viktor Zelinskyi. The mission started by forming the 6<sup>th</sup> (Sich) rifle division in the Lantsut Camp under the command of Colonel Mark Bezruchko. In early March 1920, the division was transferred to Berestia for some intensive one-and-half-month military training and recruitment of Ukrainian soldiers from other Polish camps to replenish the cossacks and senior staff.<sup>31</sup> At that time the organization of another military formation also started – the future 3<sup>rd</sup> Iron rifleman division under the command of Colonel Oleksandr Udovychenko.<sup>32</sup>

The difficult negotiation process lasted more than four months and finished on 22 April 1920 with the signing of the Polish-Ukrainian interstate agreement in Warsaw. In its provisions, the Polish government recognized the UPR’s independence, and the UPR agreed to transfer Galicia, Western Volhynia, part of Polesia (Polesie, Polissia), and some other borderline territories under Polish jurisdiction. The parties agreed to guarantee the national and cultural rights of Ukrainians in Poland and Poles in Ukraine. An integral part of the Polish-Ukrainian agreement in 1920 became the secret military convention signed on 24 April. It contained 17 articles. According to its provisions, the Polish State was bound to provide the formation of three divisions of the UPR Army on its territory and supply them with appropriate weapons and necessary military equipment. Signing this convention allowed the UPR government to continue the struggle against Bolshevism with the help of the common Polish-Ukrainian front against Soviet Russia.

The beginning of the anti-Bolshevik campaign of the united Polish-Ukrainian army was quite successful. Within two weeks the allies conquered almost all of Right-Bank Ukraine. Successful operations by the UPR Army headed by General Mykhailo Omelianovych-Pavlenko in the rear of the Bolshevik troops facilitated the military campaign run by the Polish-Ukrainian forces. Carrying out the orders of Chief Otaman Petlura, the army advanced westwards to unite with the Polish-Ukrainian main attack forces. On 6 May 1920, the UPR Army broke the

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30 “[...] повинні боротися в самій Польщі за ідею нашої державності”, *ibid.*

31 Karpus / Sribnyak 2000, pp. 81–89.

32 Mazepa 1943, p. 6.



Bolshevik front and moved to the liberated Ukrainian territory, thus finishing its raid in Yampil.<sup>33</sup>

On 7 May 1920, Polish troops together with the 6<sup>th</sup> Sich division of the UPR Army in avant-garde took over Kyiv. But this Polish and Ukrainian success in May was temporary. Due to the breakthrough in the front by Semyon Budyonnyi's First Cavalry Army, on 10 June, the Ukrainian capital was abandoned by the UPR Army. Though it was desperately defending its positions on the extreme right flank of the Polish forces, it was impossible to stabilize the front. During the summer of 1920, Bolshevik troops advanced to the line of the Zbruch river and occupied large swathes of territory in Right-Bank Ukraine, Galicia, and Volhynia. They could only be defeated in the battle near Warsaw and its successful conclusion positively changed the strategic position of the allies. All this time Poland was providing the UPR Army with all necessary aid, both military-technical, and organizational.<sup>34</sup>

The haphazard retreat of the “reds” facilitated the advance of the Polish-Ukrainian troops further into Ukrainian territory, but the forces of both parties were almost exhausted. For that matter, Polish diplomats started negotiations with Moscow in September 1920 which resulted in the signing of the Polish-Soviet Treaty on 12 October 1920. Despite this, the Directorate and the UPR government did not cease their legislative and military organization work, aiming to form the basis for further development of the Republic's armed forces. For this purpose, the Chairman of the Directorate and Chief Otaman of the UPR Armed Forces, Petlura passed the *Law on High Military Regulation (Zakon pro vyshche viyskove upravlinnya / Закон про вище військове управління)* on 12 November 1920, approved by the UPR Council of People's Ministers. According to this law, the Chairman of the Directorate “exercises high command over the UPR land and sea forces”.<sup>35</sup> He was also given the right “to determine the structure of the army and the navy; he gives orders and directives as for deployment of troops, placing them in combat position, training, military service of the personal staff of the army and navy and everything that refers to [...] the defence of the UPR.”<sup>36</sup> This law defined the boundaries of the senior officials' jurisdiction in the UPR Army – the head of the General Staff, general inspector, and military minister.<sup>37</sup>

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33 Shankovs'kyi 1958, p. 241.

34 Sribnyak 2020 (2), pp. 86–102.

35 “[...] зверхне керування всіма сухопутними і морськими силами УНР”, CDAVO Ukrayiny: sig. f. 1075, op. 1, spr. 59, fols. 2–6.

36 “[...] визначати устрій армії і фльоти, від нього виходять накази і розпорядження відносно дислокації військ, переведення їх у бойовий стан, навчання їх, проходження служби персонального складу армії і фльоти і всього, що торкається [...] захисту УНР.” Ibid.

37 Karpus / Sribnyak 2002, pp. 212–216.

## Specific Features Regarding How the UPR State Centre Functioned in Poland (End of 1920 to 1926)

It should be noted that legislative innovations were made as the UPR Army fought hard against the prevailing Bolshevik forces, and unable to resist the pressure, it had to retreat behind the line of the Zbruch river on 21 November 1920. Weapons and military property were given to the Polish authorities, and personal staff had to be interned according to the international norms. The political and military leadership of the UPR took all the measures so that the retreat from different territories did not provoke the spread of anarchy and discord in the army. Already on 23 November 1920, following the order signed by the Chief Otaman of the UPR Armed Forces Petlura and Commander of the Acting Army, General Omelianovych-Pavlenko, it was prohibited to dismiss any military detachments that had to be concentrated “on general requirements of internship for the organization and preparations to return to Ukraine.”<sup>38</sup>

On the same day, Petlura (through the intermediary of the Deputy Head of the UPR Diplomatic mission in Warsaw, Leonid Mykhailov) addressed a letter to the Polish government, where he stressed the need to preserve the UPR Army, which crossed the border without losing its unity and combat readiness, and was in good moral standing. In Petlura’s opinion, the main condition for keeping up the army’s morale was the close connection between the army detachments and the UPR State Centre. “Continuous contact between them”, he said, “is the basis of the future strength of the army and the key to preventing discord and provocations.”<sup>39</sup>

Only a legitimate and effectively active UPR Government could take care of the army’s needs and represent its interests abroad. Sustainment of the Government’s adequate functioning in exile was of vital importance for the international representation of the UPR, and for uniting all the Ukrainian emigration. Thus, addressing Mykhailov directly concerning diplomatic support for the functioning of the UPR State Centre, Petlura emphasized:

The Government of the UPR, its apparatus, and army, though under changed circumstances, are not subject to and cannot subject to liquidation as it contradicts the international law and threatens public law organization of the Ukrainian people, who provided military aid to Poland in difficult circumstances.<sup>40</sup>

38 “[...] на загальних умовах інтернування в цілях організації і підготовчої праці для повернення на Україну”, CDAVO Ukrainy: sig. f. 1429, op. 2, spr. 32, fol. 69.

39 “Постійний контакт між ними, – вважав він, – база майбутньої сили армії і запорука того, що в її лавах не буде місця розбрату та провокаціям.” Ibid., fol. 70.

40 “Уряд УНР, його апарати і військо, хоч і в змінених обставинах, не підлягають і не можуть підлягати ліквідації, бо це б йшло попри всі норми міжнародного права та унеможливило

In his letter from 28 November 1920, addressed to the UPR Government Prime Minister Andriy Levytskyi, Petlura presents his understanding of the last political and military events and described in detail the tasks that had emerged before the Council of People's Ministers after he escaped Ukraine. He qualified the unfortunate for the UPR Army course of war events "not as liquidation of [...] statehood, not as liquidation of our state efforts, but as liquidation of one of the military attempts against occupational forces in Ukraine".<sup>41</sup> Petlura believed that

[considering] the public mood of the Ukrainian people and their desire for Ukrainian statehood combined with their hostility towards the Bolsheviks, the Government, fully aware of its responsibility on behalf of the republic and the people, should work to improve their future destiny. We should use all our efforts, all our state wisdom, and energy [...] so that the people's faith in the bearers of statehood would not weaken but remain stable.<sup>42</sup>

For this purpose, the UPR government, according to Petlura, had to realize "a complex of political and diplomatic tasks aiming at interesting the global political elite in the fate of Ukraine",<sup>43</sup> and "reorganize the government itself to adapt it to the needs of future struggle",<sup>44</sup> consolidate all the public efforts "into a solid and monolithic whole, with an overwhelming understanding of state needs and feeling of duty in front of the State".<sup>45</sup> The primary task for the government was supposed to be the implementation of a set of measures "directed towards preserving the army [...] and its reorganization".<sup>46</sup>

Petlura's addresses resulted in the elaboration of a certain plan for the UPR State Centre and Army to stay in Poland. First and foremost, the legal status of the Ukrainian warriors was rationed by the Instruction of the Polish Ministry of Military Affairs from 2 December 1920; thereby the UPR Army was interpreted as friendly and allied. The instruction also obliged Polish authorities to provide

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правно-державну організацію українського народу, котрий у тяжких умовах надав Польщі збройну допомогу." Ibid., fol. 70.

41 "[...] не як ліквідацію [...] державності, не як ліквідацію наших державних зусиль, а як ліквідацію однієї з мілітарних спроб з окупантською владою України", *ibid.*, fol. 71.

42 "[...] настрої населення України і його прагнення до створення Української Державності, його вороже ставлення до більшовиків, Уряд, у повному розумінні тієї відповідальності, яка припадає на нього, який ім'ям Республіки і народу працює для поліпшення його долі у майбутньому, повинен напружити всі свої сили, весь свій державний розум і енергію [...] щоб та віра народу в нас, як носіїв державності не послабла, а навпаки, як швидше дала доказ про ґрунтовність тієї віри." Ibid., fols. 71–72.

43 "[...] комплексу певних заходів політично-дипломатичного характеру, маючих своєю метою зацікавити долею України вирішальні світові чинники", *ibid.*, fol. 72.

44 "[...] реорганізацію самого уряду в цілях пристосування його до потреб майбутньої боротьби", *ibid.*, fol. 72.

45 "[...] в суцільне і монолітне ціле, пройняте однаковим розумінням державних потреб і почуттям обов'язку перед Державою", *ibid.*, fol. 72.

46 "[...] скерованих на збереження армії [...] і її реорганізацію", *ibid.*, fol. 72.

adequate conditions for the interns in the camps: organize food supplies and medical care, and prepare the necessary number of barracks for living.<sup>47</sup> Ukrainian troops were located in six camps: Aleksandrów Kujawski, Piotrków, Piłkule, Łañcut, Wadowice, and Kalisz. Besides that, government officials and chief officers of the military ministry and the General Staff of the UPR Army were placed on civilian status in the city of Częstochowa.<sup>48</sup>

Trying to unite all the centres of Ukrainian emigration in Poland, the Chairman of the UPR Directorate signed on 9 January 1921 a *Law on the Council of the Republic (Zakon pro Radu Respubliky / Закон про Раду Республіки)* approved by the UPR Council of People's Ministers, where the Council is defined as the provisional supreme body of peoples' power with full authority. This decision was vitally important because by the end of 1920, almost all the UPR Army and the UPR State Centre were in Poland without sufficient material and financial means. Living in camps, interned Ukrainian soldiers urgently needed full assistance, and only collaboration between all the Ukrainian political emigration centres in Poland and all conscious Ukrainian emigrants in the struggle for the restoration of the national independence might it be possible to resist Bolshevik Russia.

At first, the Polish authorities approved the convening of the Republic Council, which started up in Tarnów, on 4 January 1921, because at that time the relations between Poland and Bolshevik Russia were uncertain. Though preliminary agreements had been signed in October 1920, the Polish party did not exclude the opportunity to use the interned UPR Army members during the armed resistance against Moscow in the event of a collapse in the negotiation process. Therefore, the UPR state institutions and ministries legally stayed in Tarnów, almost completely occupying the main local hotel "Bristol".

In his speech, while opening the first session of the Republic Council, Petlura drew the attention of the Council delegates and the UPR government members to the urgent need to support the Ukrainian soldiers interned in Poland:

[...] our first thought, our first thorough business is the care of the army. The primary task is to preserve its unity, protect against extraneous harmful influences, provide it with food, and [...] satisfy cultural and educational needs so that the army may be morally and physically fit. It is necessary to carry out its reorganization [...] we have to revise all the military system [...]. When we do, we will have a strong apparatus for the management of military affairs, we will have a ready corps for the future great Ukrainian Army.<sup>49</sup>

47 Ibid.: sig. f. 1075, op. 4, spr. 28, fol. 159.

48 Hunchak 1984, pp. 421, 427.

49 "[...] перша наша думка, перша найпильніша справа наша – це турбота про армію. Перше завдання – зберегти її єдність, захистити її від сторонніх шкідливих впливів, забезпечити її харчування і [...] культурно-освітні потреби, щоб вона була морально і фізично здорова.

Nevertheless, the legal existence of the UPR State Centre and the Council of Republic did not last long because, after the Polish-Soviet Riga Treaty in March 1921, the activities of the UPR government have been subjected to certain restrictions (due to the ban on the stay of anti-Bolshevik organizations or paramilitary units on the territory of Poland). But it did not stop Petlura from visiting camps of the interned UPR Army soldiers; he did so twice – in April and May 1921 – thus encouraging and inspiring the interned.

At that time the UPR State Centre conducted active organizational work to continue its struggle against Bolshevik Moscow. For this purpose, already in February 1921, the State Centre created a secret Partisan Rebel headquarters under the main command of the UPR Troops. The headquarters served as a mobilising factor for all the interned UPR Army and received a maximum of possible resources from the government. The existence of the Headquarters also became a vivid signal for the Polish authorities that Poland's ally – the UPR – continued the fight against bolshevism, and its liquidation did not mean a complete surrender to Red Moscow.<sup>50</sup>

The unfortunate course of the Second Winter Campaign (raid) of the UPR Rebel Army in the autumn of 1921, which ended with the encirclement and capturing of the remaining of the Volhynia group of rebellions (359 of them were shot in the town of Bazar), increased political pressure from Bolshevik Russia on Poland, which continued to retain interned Ukrainian military units and UPR State Centre structures in exile. As a concession, in November 1921 Warsaw was forced to expel the former commander of the UPR Acting Army, General Omelianovych-Pavlenko, and the Chief of the Ukrainian military liquidation commission, General Viktor Zelinskyj. In order to remain in Poland, the Chairman of the UPR Directorate Petlura left Tarnów and switched to an underground position, secretly living in Warsaw.

State institutions of the UPR had to switch to a semi-legal position, thus being limited in their powers to conduct political affairs in Poland. Official representation of Ukrainian political emigration to the Polish State, after the UPR Diplomatic mission was liquidated in Warsaw, belonged to the Ukrainian Central Committee of Public Assistance headed by Andrij Lukashevych. The Ukrainian Military Liquidation Commission headed by Colonel Oleksandr Danylchuk took care of the interests of the interned UPR Army in Poland. Despite all these restrictions, Petlura continued state and organisation work, looked after the needs of the interned army, and intensified correspondence. The opinion he

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Треба обов'язково провести реорганізацію її [...] треба переглянути всю систему нашої військової справи [...]. Коли це зробим, то будемо мати міцний апарат для керування військовою справою, будемо мати готові кадри для майбутньої великої Української Армії." CDAVO Ukrainy: sig. f. 1078, op. 2, spr. 198, fol. 22.

50 Sribnyak 2001, pp. 107–120; idem 2020 (1), pp. 492–507.

expressed in a letter to the UPR government Prime Minister Andrij Livytskyi, on 14 May 1922, is as relevant today as ever before:

The biggest obstacle to recognizing Ukraine's sovereignty is the hypnosis of the name "Russia" itself. This hypnosis needs to be dispelled, especially in America (its Northern States) and in France. The issue of Russia's disintegration should be presented as an issue of peace for the whole world, as the issue of European equilibrium and real material profit for the countries established in the boundaries set after the Versailles Treaty.<sup>51</sup>

From 1922 to 1923, Bolshevik intelligence agents tried to track down Petlura's location in Poland, to accuse Poland of failing to fulfil its obligations and to have grounds for increasing political pressure. Petlura realised that in this situation he could not stay in Poland any longer, and at the end of 1923, he decided to leave the country. In late December, he went to Hungary through Vienna. In the spring of 1924, Petlura moved to Zurich, then to Geneva, awaiting permission to enter France. Only in October 1924 did he finally receive a French visa and settled in Paris, where he continued his political activity, defending the interests of the UPR and uniting Ukrainian emigrants in France. With this aim, he made every effort to create a publishing house for UPR emigration, which could serve the purpose of developing a "programme of state-building" and conduct "certain systematic work towards the creation of Ukrainian state ideology".<sup>52</sup>

The first issue of *Tryzub* [Тризуб; Trident], a weekly edition about politics, culture, art, and public life was published on 15 October 1925. The front page presented an article by Petlura, where the fundamental grounds of the UPR political emigration were formulated:

We consciously stand under the sign of Trident, as a symbol of Ukrainian statehood [...]. In Ukrainian statehood we trust, Ukrainian statehood we profess and believe in its imminence. For us, it is a certain reality of life because we bear its idea in our hearts. After all, all our life is filled with its spirit and needs [...]. Our ideological work will consist in unfolding and defining the idea of Ukrainian statehood.<sup>53</sup>

51 "[...] найбільшою перешкодою для визнання суверенності України є гіпноз самого імені Росія. Цей гіпноз треба розв'язати, особливо в Америці (Північні Штати) та Франції. Справу поділу Росії треба поставити як справу покою цілого світу, як справу європейської рівноваги та реально-матеріальної вигоди держав, у тій конфігурації їх, що уклалась після Версальського трактату." Serhiychuk 1996, p. 118.

52 "[...] певної систематичної праці в напрямку створення української державної ідеології", Petlura 1956, p. 446.

53 "Ми свідомо виступаємо під знаком Тризуба, як символа української державності[...]. в українську державність ми віруємо, українську державність ми ісповідуємо, - в її неминучості ми переконані. Для нас вона є до певної міри живою реальністю, бо ідею її ми носимо в серці, бо її духом, потребами овіяне все життя[...]. Наша ідеологічна праця полягатиме в розгорненню й обґрунтуванню ідеї української державності." Idem 1925, pp. 1-3.

Petlura's attempts to consolidate Ukrainian political emigration and direct it towards a sustained and uncompromising fight against Bolshevism attracted the attention of the Soviet secret services, and their agents managed to collect enough information, including in the personal circle of Chief Otaman.<sup>54</sup> This was fatal for Petlura, on 25 May 1926, he was shot by Samuel (Sholem) Schwartzbard who had proven connections with Bolshevik agents in Paris and pretended to be an avenger of the Jewish pogroms for which Moscow groundlessly pointed the guilt at Petlura. Although, instead of spreading disbelief in the circles of Ukrainian emigrants, the death of Petlura became an impetus for their unity and integrity around the name of the Chief Otaman. His work was continued by Andrij Levytskyi, who took over the duties of the Chief Otaman and Chairman of the UPR Directorate (UPR president), thus heading the State Centre in exile.

## Conclusions

From its inception, the UPR Directorate, having come to power in the wake of a national uprising against Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyj, had to face some extremely complicated challenges both in internal and external politics. Some of the issues were resolved successfully – for instance, the legitimization of power (by convening the Labour Congress), uniting all the Ukrainian lands into one state body (*via* Act of Union), and also the formation of government and administrative structures in the Ukrainian cities. But Bolshevik Russia's aggression considerably undermined those achievements and forced the UPR government to evacuate from Kyiv. Since February 1919, the UPR Directorate headed by Petlura resisted the Bolshevik offensive with all their might, thus forming a national regular Ukrainian army. A considerably smaller section of UPR troops were deployed westwards to support the Ukrainian Galician Army in the battle with Poland. The failure of the united Ukrainian troops to withstand the Bolsheviks on the one hand, and the retreat of the UGA under the pressure of the Polish Army on the other, positively contributed to regrouping the Ukrainian forces, who managed to conduct quite a successful offensive in the direction of Kyiv and Odessa in the summer of 1919.

The “Russian castling”, whereby “red” Russia was temporarily replaced by the “whites” (Volunteer Army of General Denikin) who fought alongside the Bolsheviks against the UPR even despite the perspective of self-destruction, crushed the plans of the UPR Directorate to gain a foothold on the Naddniprianshchyna (Ukrainian territories over the Dnipro river). The worst in that situation was the Entente's blockade of the UPR, which supported “white” Russia and did not

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54 Sribnyak 2018 (1), pp. 6–13.

allow the UPR to buy weapons, ammunition, and medicines in Europe. As a result, in late November 1919, the UPR Army was in a disastrous state, unable to hold the regular front against the opposing forces. And only due to the decisive actions of Petlura and his government was it possible to save the core of the army, and those who were combat-ready went on the First Winter Campaign to continue fighting for the statehood of Ukraine. The key to its continuation was the political and military rapprochement with Poland embodied in the Warsaw Agreement in April 1920. Its signing, along with the secret Polish-Ukrainian military collaboration, enabled the UPR Army to continue its development as a reliable stronghold and basis for the state.

The aforementioned agreement was to be the greatest achievement of UPR Directorate Chairman Petlura in the field of external politics, and, at the same time, it was his sole decision as all other members resigned from the Directorate. Nonetheless, this circumstance did not affect Petlura's policy. He firmly held the flag of Ukrainian statehood, inspiring the low-spirited and disbelieved, giving strength and confidence to all the national state elements of Ukrainian society. The Chairman of the UPR Directorate did not betray his principles even after the military defeat of the UPR Army in the battle against Bolsheviks in September 1920. He made every effort to organize an all-Ukrainian resistance movement regulated by the Partisan and Rebellion Headquarters under the Chief Command of the UPR Troops. Though all attempts made by these headquarters to organize urban underground and partisan units had little effect, and the raid conducted by three rebellion groups did not lead to a general armed uprising in Ukraine, the mere fact that armed struggle continued under the UPR flag and that secret national underground resistance existed until 1924 had tremendous meaning. This struggle stood as stark proof of the nation's potential and manifested its drive towards independence and statehood.

In connection with the above, we should pay particular attention to the anti-Bolshevik approach of the UPR Directorate's external policy and namely, the Directorate's Chairman, Petlura. This aspect remained significant from the very beginning of Soviet Russia's war against Ukraine. Only by having occupied Ukrainian lands and feeding the hungry proletariat with requisitioned Ukrainian crops could the Bolsheviks have had any chance of holding on to power. A historical parallel to the present is inevitable: independent Ukraine in a deadly conflict with the Russian Federation, whose criminal leader (Vladimir Putin) sanctioned a full-scale war to occupy Ukraine and physically destroy the Ukrainian people. But in modern times to repeat the century-year old *Blitzkrieg* and conquer Ukraine is an impossible task, since now Ukraine enjoys almost unanimous support from the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the USA – support, that the UPR lacked in its time, leaving it unable to adequately supply its army in the autumn of 1919.



Another significant difference is that in 2022, Ukrainians are demonstrating their readiness to take up arms for their motherland *en masse*, unlike a hundred years ago. Then, only a small number of idealistic Ukrainians joined the military defence of the UPR in 1919, but the vast majority of Ukrainian peasants and workers were committed to the principle that “it is none of my business”, which the Bolsheviks exploited. This time, a greater number of Ukrainian citizens have declared allegiance to the Ukrainian flag and have taken up arms to defeat Russia definitively, eroding its military and political status, and, under favourable conditions, to prepare and contribute to the division of the modern Russian Federation into separate state entities. This is the end that befits Putin’s Russia of today, the country against which UPR Directorate Chairman Petlura fought consistently and persistently.

[Translated by Liubov Pikulia]

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