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A little-known biographic episode: V. I. Vernadsky and Ukrainian hetman monarchists

In the biography of even such a well researched figure of Ukrainian and Russian science as Volodymyr Vernadsky, there are still “gaps” that need clarifying and proper analysis. Besides, in our opinion, the famous scholar’s social and political views and orientations in different periods of his life are still poorly understood. Therefore, elucidation of a biographical episode, throwing light on the scientist’s interest to Hetman monarchist movement that spread among the Ukrainian political emigrants in the 1920s, seems to be extremely topical and interesting.

By this time in the national and foreign scientific literature there were no mentions of V. I. Vernadsky’s contacts with Ukrainian Hetman monarchists. The only publication, briefly mentioning the fact of such relationships existence, is the monograph written by the author of this article and devoted to the leader of the Ukrainian State Grain Growers Union — Vyacheslav Kazymyrovych Lypynsky¹. So, the offered exploration is marked in this respect by the absolute scientific novelty. Actually, it was the work at the above monographic research, which has led us in the process of scientific research to revealing this fact, which could not but draw interest and stimulate further research.

Our **purpose** was the attempt of reconstructing the hitherto unknown biographical page of the prominent personality’s life. To achieve the purpose we set the following **tasks**: to clarify the circumstances of the contacts establishment between V. I. Vernadsky and the leaders of the Hetman monarchist movement; to analyze the implication of his interest to ideology of this political movement.

It is well known that Volodymyr Ivanovych Vernadsky descended from Lithuanian and Ukrainian gentry Cossack family and for the whole of his life felt close links with his motherland: he dearly loved Ukraine, was taking great interest in and knew its history, was fascinated by its nature, has done a great deal for the development of Ukrainian science and culture².

Being associated with Ukraine by family and friendly relations since childhood, he deeply understood the backgrounds of the Ukrainian national movement and

¹ Perederiy I. G. Vyacheslav Lypynsky: ethnical Polish, political Ukrainian: Monograph/Iryna Grygoriyivna Perederiy. – Poltava: PolNTU edition, 2012. – 622 p.

² Apanovych O. Ukraine in the spiritual world of V. I. Vernadsky/Olena Apanovych//[Electronic resource]. Access mode: <http://ukrlife.org/main/apan/apan.html>

sincerely sympathized with it. His flat position as to impermissibility and fallacy of suppressing Ukrainian patriotism by the Russian Government is grounded in the article "The Ukrainian Problem and the Russian Public" where he asserted: "The danger for Russia lies not in the Ukrainian movement as it is, but in interpreting it as harmful and borrowed phenomenon in the state and national body"¹. He expressed this opinion in summer, 1915, i. e. shortly before the tsarist regime downfall.

The scholar took a positive view of February Revolution and was even occupying the position of the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Education of the Provisional Government. Against the background of Bolsheviks terror in St. Petersburg and Moscow, he enthusiastically appreciated the news about the complete independence of Ukraine, declared by Centralna Rada². However, later he was disillusioned with Ukrainian vain attempts of independence because he did not believe that independence can be won by foreign bayonets. Thus, at the time of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, when according to the treaty Ukraine was divided into zones of influence between the Germans and Austro- Hungarians, Volodymyr Vernadsky said: "My impressions from Ukrainian government < ... > is impotence and incompetence < ... > Ukrainians are playing the sad role of puppets which have invited foreigners oppressors into their country"³. However, at the same time of Skoropadsky's Hetmanate, the outstanding scholar together with a historian M. P. Vasylenko plunged into the organizational activities at establishing the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and later became its first President.

After the final establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine, V.I. Vernadsky was working for some time in Ukraine and Russia, and in 1922 at the invitation of the Sorbonne he delegated to France by the Russian Academy of Sciences for delivering a course of lectures on geochemistry. There he remained until early 1926.

It should be noted, that the scholar did not appreciate socialist ideas. In his diaries of 1917, a record remained, where he asserted: "Socialism is an inevitable enemy of freedom, culture, free spirit and science"⁴. V.I. Vernadsky was convinced in the rapid collapse of the Soviet regime. While abroad, he was maintaining his unflinching interest to development of science and culture in Ukraine, showing continuous concern in all aspects of the Ukrainian people's life including the persons, which came to be in

¹ Vernadsky V.I. The Ukrainian problem and Russian public /Volodymyr Ivanovych Vernadsky //Vitchyzna. – 1988. – No.6. – P. 175.

² Sytnyk K., Bagnyuk V. He could see through centuries/K. Sytnyk, V. Bagnyuk//NAS of Ukraine Bulletin. – 2003. – No.2.//[Electronic resource]. Access mode: <http://archive.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/all/herald/2003-02/8.htm>.

³ Vernadsky V.I. Diaries (October 1917 – January 1920)/Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky. – K.: Naukova dumka, 1997. – P. 65.

⁴ Ibid. – P. 55.

emigration after the defeat of the national liberation movement of 1917–1921. It was this very period, a little-known episode of the famous scientist's life referred to. It expresses, in particular, his interest to the conservative movement in the Ukrainian political emigration of 1920s, represented by Hetman monarchist movement. This movement had a coherent science-based ideology created by the famous Ukrainian historian and politologist of Polish origin Vyacheslav Kazymyrovych Lypynsky.

Early in February, 1926, V.I. Vernadsky was returning from Paris to the Soviet Union. His way was lying through Prague, where his daughter was studying. Prague is known to be one of the largest Ukrainian emigration centers of that period. In the Czech capital many Ukrainian public, scientific and cultural organizations, associations and institutions were performing their activities. At that very period, at the Ukrainian Free University, there worked one of the closest associates of Lypynsky and his ideas popularizer, historian Dmytro Doroshenko. From the correspondence of D. Doroshenko and V. Lypynsky it is known that Dmytro Doroshenko met with V.I. Vernadsky twice. Doroshenko characterized the eminent and elderly scholar as a “lively” person “interested in everything”. During the meeting, the luminaries discussed separate aspects of Hetman ideology. It seems that the academician took interest in the ideas set forth by V. Lypynsky. The latter is known to consistently reject the idea of foreign intervention factor in the struggle for Ukrainian independent state and considered reliance on the country's own state formation forces (which he saw in the conservative elements) the only possible way to achieve it. He particularly relied on the grain farmers class.

Doroshenko handed a number of hetman publications to Vernadsky for review, including several copies of the fifth book from the non-periodic collection “Grain Farmers' Ukraine”, brochure by Dmytro Doroshenko “Vyacheslav Lypynsky and his thoughts about the Ukrainian nation and the state” (published under the pseudonym “M. Zabarevsky” in 1925 in Vienna to promote the theory of the outstanding Ukrainian conservative mediator, presented by him in his “Letter to Fraternal Farmers”), various proclamations of the Ukrainian State Grain Growers Union. Interested in the Ukrainian Hetman monarchists' ideas, Vernadsky also intended to send the mentioned publications to his friend M. P. Vasylenko for review¹. To easily import hetman literature to the Soviet Union, the academician sent its main bulk by mail to the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, which had the right to receive books from abroad without censorship².

¹ Dmytro Doroshenko's letters to Vyacheslav Lypynsky/Lypynsky Vyacheslav. Works, Archive, Studies/V.K. Lypynsky East European Research Institute. – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1976. – V.6. Archive/Editor I. Lysyak-Rudnytsky. – 530 p. – P. 202.

² Ibidem. – P. 204.

Probably such an attention to his scientific and theoretical works on the part of the prominent representatives of national scientific thought weighed a lot to V. Lypynsky, because among the various political trends in Ukrainian emigration circles this scientific work remained underestimated. During the years, when the “Letters” were being published in “Grain Farmers’ Ukraine” the author hadn’t seen at least any thoughtful analysis or constructive criticism from them. This fact, in particular, was pointed out by D. Doroshenko. His was disappointed by the fact, that the work which was to cause “live exchange of opinions among our society, causing high-pitched debates” especially among the ideological opponents — the socialist intellectuals belonging to different parties — was not properly evaluated and studied, because the superficial criticism that appeared in the hostile print media did not testify to any serious analysis of the “Letters”. Doroshenko bitterly remarked that if the “work of such ideological depth and value <... > had appeared somewhere <... >, among the Czechs or the Poles, it would probably have caused a lively exchange of ideas and have created a whole literature layer; in our case this work has dropped like a stone among morass: no call, no response ...”¹. So, when some reputable scholar demonstrated not superficial, but the real scientific interest to the works of Lypynsky he rejoiced even in criticism and gladly entered into debate².

The news of the fact, that V. I. Vernadsky had to carry the hetman’s editions to Soviet Ukraine and apropos to hand them to M. P. Vasylenko and to Ukrainian scientists in St. Petersburg [6, 204], infused in V. Lypynsky the hope for wider understanding of his theory among people. The opinion of M. P. Vasylenko, one of the leading Ukrainian scholars, was extremely interesting to the theorist of Ukrainian conservatism. The luminaries had known each other since 1901, when they attended Trebinska’s group in Kiev. V. Lypynsky was then still a grammar-schoolboy, and belonged to the group’s younger generation. It was just then that the historical works of M. P. Vasylenko, based not on ethnic and language, but on the territorial principle of the Ukrainian history coverage, became one of the most powerful factors to V. Lypynsky for maturation of his territorialism and joint Ukrainian political nation theory, which he would keep to for the rest of his life³. According to this theory, all the people inhabiting Ukrainian lands, regardless of ethnicity, had to position themselves as the “political Ukrainians” and work for prosperity of the Ukrainian land and further for Ukrainian independent state.

Perhaps it had been the mentioned ideas of V. Lypynsky that found an echo in the heart and mind of another prominent representative of the Ukrainian science —

¹ Spudey. – Prague, 1926. – No.4. – P. 57.

² Perederiy I. G. . Vyacheslav Lipinsky: ethnical Polish, political Ukrainian: Monograph/Iryna Grygoriyivna Perederiy. – Poltava: PoltNTU edition, 2012. – 622 p. – P. 461.

³ Ibidem. – P. 65.

Volodymyr Ivanovich Vernadsky. The offered exploration is not meant as the final clarification of the problems raised in it, but it is only an attempt to study them in the context mentioned in this article and to encourage other researchers to the broader scientific discussion

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