

8 Great Britain and the 1917 revolution in Ukraine¹

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The news of the February Revolution and the abdication of Nicholas II were received on the Thames with satisfaction. An alliance with the autocratic regime had long been a cause of embarrassment for British liberal public opinion, with the inept Tsar and his camarilla being blamed for Russia's defeats on the battlefield and its internal chaos. The newly formed government was widely expected to launch a series of thorough reforms that would release new energy and inspire enthusiasm among Russians, thus offering hopes for a continued effective conduction of the war.² These hopes, though, materialised only in part. Also, as a "side effect" – something few observers actually expected – the Petrograd revolution aroused emancipation sentiments among peoples of the Empire, and therefore developments in non-Russian peripheries were to take a different course than those at the heart of the country. This is especially true of Ukraine where the Central Rada (Central Council) was formed in March 1917, a civic committee comprising representatives of various parties and social organisations who would quite unexpectedly turn into a real power centre, throwing down the gauntlet to the Provisional Government.

It must be emphatically stated that neither the ruling circles nor public opinion on the British Isles were intellectually prepared to follow and correctly interpret the events taking place on the Dnieper. Despite attempts to arouse British interest in the Ukrainian cause, taken in the lead-up to the World War, Eastern Slavs continued to be perceived by London as a monolith. A certain separateness of the Ukrainians was indeed noticed, but they were seen just as part of the pan-Russian nation, an ethnographic group speaking a regional dialect of Russian. Nor was it clear how far the borders stretched of what was known as Ukraine, but the British unquestionably interpreted that notion much more narrowly than the Ukrainian nationalists did. On the British mental map, Ukraine was confined to the area of Russia's Southwestern Krai plus two governorates on the left bank of the Dnieper: Poltava and Chernigov. Occasionally the term "Austrian Ukraine" would make it to the British discourse, describing the eastern part of Galicia, but its traditions and present situation were seen as quite different, its inhabitants being referred to as Ruthenians, unlike the Little Russians living in the Russian Empire.

Following the outbreak of the war, Britain began to treat Ukrainians with a still greater distance than before. The Ukrainian lobbying effort on the international scene was widely perceived – and not entirely wrongly – as a case of anti-Russian subversion backed by the Central Powers.³ The Ukrainians could count as their friends on the Thames just a handful of personalities with rather limited political clout. They included the House of Commons' *enfant terrible*, liberal pacifist Joseph King, and a respected Slavic scholar, the founder of *The New Europe* magazine, Robert William Seton-Watson.⁴ The latter, in October 1916, named the Ukrainian question among the three main causes of the European conflict, and he described Taras Shevchenko as a "Ruthenian Burns" – and yet he saw no other future for the Ukrainians as a close, harmonious union with brotherly Russia. The fortunes of the Ukrainian cause in Great Britain declined further towards the end of 1916, with the British government banning pro-Ukrainian publications in November, on the grounds that "the Ukrainian agitation is favoured by the Austrian Government in order to embarrass Russia."⁵

Keeping track of the 1917 events on the Ukrainian soil was quite difficult for the British because of the shortage of vantage points. A large portion of the reports reaching London – written by Ambassador George Buchanan and his aides – reflected Petrograd's point of view. In Ukraine proper (or rather on the territory which began to be so named in 1917), Britain had a consulate general, headed by John Picton Bagge, which however, was located far from centre stage, in Odessa. In these circumstances, an increasingly important source of intelligence was provided by reports of people occasionally sent to Kiev, including officers on various kinds of military missions and the renowned historian, Professor Bernard Pares, serving as British observer on the Russian front. Given the dispersal and incompleteness of data received from Ukraine, an important role was played by analytical work conducted in London, especially by the Department of Information's Intelligence Bureau (DIIB), an independent government agency whose reports were sent to the top state officials: the prime minister, the foreign secretary, and other members of the War Cabinet. The DIIB recruited Seton-Watson (in May 1917), and with him also a group of other contributors to *The New Europe* – young Oxbridge graduates at the beginning of their respective careers – among them Arnold J. Toynbee, Lewis Namier, the brothers Allen and Reginald (Rex) Leeper.⁶ The Intelligence Bureau's "Weekly Reports on Russia" exerted considerable influence on Cabinet members' opinions about Russian affairs. Starting in June 1917 they included a regular section on Ukraine, with Rex Leeper the chief writer, occasionally substituted by Professor J.Y. (James Young) Simpson and, very likely, Seton-Watson himself.

The incoming information was very much delayed. Probably the first detailed account of the Ukrainian movements' demands came from John Picton Bagge, whose report of 30 April 1917 reached London only after a month.⁷ The Odessa consul wrote about resolutions of the Ukrainian

National Congress of 19–21 April, convened by the Central Rada, which left no doubt as to Ukrainian aspirations for a great deal of autonomy within a federal Russian state, and also for a presence at the future peace conference (“at the coming peace congress not only should belligerents be represented but also those nations whose territory, including the Ukraine, had been fought over”). Bagge also reported on a teachers’ congress in Kiev, where demands were made for a radical Ukrainisation of education at all levels. A Foreign Office’s clerk, in his commentary on the Bagge’s report, noticed the very wide territorial extent of the envisaged autonomous Ukraine, which was to stretch from the ethnically mixed, Polish-Ruthenian counties in the governorates of Lublin and Siedlce in the West to lands on the Don and the Kuban in the East.⁸

It was probably only in June 1917 that London began to fully realise the magnitude of the problem which the rising national awareness among peoples of the former Empire posed for the Provisional Government.⁹ But Britain’s Russia watchers made no mistake in naming the two most urgent issues waiting for solution: Finland and Ukraine. While the weight of the Ukrainian question aroused no doubts, the real potential of the national movement remained an enigma. As Rex Leper put it, “[i]t has always been a matter of great difficulty to judge the extent of the Ukrainian national movement in Russia, as every manifestation of it was sternly suppressed under the old regime.”¹⁰

The fault lines of the increasingly pronounced conflict between the Petrograd government and the Central Rada were identified correctly on the Thames, where analysts realised that – notwithstanding the outward acceptance of the self-determination principle – none of the Russian parties (with the significant exception of the Bolsheviks) was able to bear the thought of political autonomy for Ukraine. The Provisional Government’s mantra was that the decision on the matter could only be taken by an All-Russia Constituent Assembly, and they reacted allergically to the ideas, emerging in Kiev, about an earlier convocation of a Ukrainian Constituent Assembly. Plans for separate Ukrainian armed forces provoked a still stronger reaction and resistance, which the authorities in Petrograd put down to fears of disorganising the army just ahead of a planned new offensive. But according to British assessments, the most important motive was the apprehension of Russian socialists, believing that “the formation of a national army would greatly strengthen the chauvinistic elements in the Ukraine and might be used by the Russian counter-revolutionaries in order to organise a movement against Petrograd.”¹¹ The authors of British reports seemed to share some of the charges levelled on autonomists by the Russians. They repeated without a comment the accusations about the Rada’s intention to build a “Ukraine for the Ukrainians” and about an unrepresentative nature of that body, which initially did not include representatives of ethnic minorities. They also pointed to the Ukrainians’ anti-Semitism, purportedly much stronger than the Russians’.

In talks with British diplomats, members of the Provisional Government sought to downplay the Ukrainian movement and its demands. On 29 June, the day when Russian forces launched an offensive on the Galician front, Foreign Minister Mikhail Tereshchenko told Ambassador Buchanan that the Ukrainians would keep loyal to Petrograd and that the autonomy movement “would [not] take separatist shape.” Tereshchenko said that he was a Ukrainian himself, knowing his people well, and that the radical slogans in Kiev were only aired by a small bunch of “Austrian agents.”¹² But British observers would very soon conclude that such narrative was made only for Western allies. Intelligence Bureau analyses include a quite accurate description of the clash that broke out between the Provisional Government and the Central Rada at the turn of June and July 1917. It led to the collapse of negotiations, the Rada’s unilateral declaration of autonomy (First Universal), and the formation in Kiev of a Secretariat-General, as the nucleus of a future Ukrainian government. London concluded correctly that these developments were underpinned by the Provisional Government’s erroneous assessment of the Ukrainian situation, in addition to its overall weakness.¹³

The situation was retrieved by ministers Aleksandr Kerensky, Mikhail Tereshchenko, and Irakli Tsereteli who arrived in Kiev on 12 July and negotiated a compromise with the Central Rada. The agreement was a matter of necessity, most notably due to developments on the front, but it soon provoked a political crisis at the national level, when its terms were protested by the Kadet Party who withdrew their ministers from the Provisional Government. Lviv historian Roman Syrota rightly points out that the fall of the first coalition cabinet in Petrograd exerted a decisive influence on Great Britain’s position on the Ukrainian question. As this question made it to the political agenda in Russia, London could no longer pretend not notice it. The British themselves began to realise that the events unfolding in Ukraine, and in Finland, too, followed a different logic than the developments going on in Russia proper, in that they signified a revolution founded on nationalism. There is another important point noticed by Syrota. As he further notes, by July 1917 the Foreign Office understood that the Ukrainians, having been disappointed by Petrograd, might seek support from the Central Powers. That had to be prevented.¹⁴

The fears began to materialise in the latter half of the month, when the Kerensky offensive broke down and the Germans launched a counterattack. In early August 1917, Kiev’s proximity to the frontline came to London’s attention. As Professor Simpson reported, “the country presents no great difficulties to a successful advance and the recent agitation in the Ukraine may weaken the defence.”¹⁵ Orders to put up resistance to the enemy, given to Ukrainian troops by the Rada’s secretary for military affairs, Symon Petliura, were well received in London but it could not be ruled out that these only served as a smokescreen. Rex Leeper warned that it was “not impossible that the Ukrainian leaders are reinsuring themselves with Germany in case the German army succeeds in overrunning the country.”¹⁶ The

British were worried by rumours of preliminary peace talks allegedly held in Switzerland by Central Rada representatives. They originated from a private letter sent from Vevey to a *Daily Mail* editor in which the author – sparking a panic in Whitehall, after the mail was intercepted by censors and disclosed to quite a few government offices – averred that “[t]he Ukrainian news I sent you was something more than mere propaganda,” adding that “Ukrainia [sic] in the present time is the crux of the situation in the East.”¹⁷

In these circumstances London was ready to back far-reaching arrangements that would meet the political ambitions of the Ukrainians without destroying the Russian state and the common anti-German front. A trusted person was sought, with the highest hopes pinned on the Head of the Central Rada, Professor Mykhailo Hrushevsky, described by Leeper as the proponent of a federation with Russia who distanced himself from “the extreme separatists.” Hrushevsky was said to believe that the “position of the Ukraine should be much the same as that of Bavaria in the German Empire, except that the Ukraine must have better guarantees for her economic rights.”¹⁸ Little wonder then that reports from Professor Pares, who met Hrushevsky in person in Kiev, aroused a great deal of enthusiasm in London. The Central Rada leader assured his interlocutor that advocates of Ukrainian independence and sympathisers of the Central Powers were in minority, with most activists supporting a union with Russia: “The Ukrainians [sic] are all for the continuance of the war in full union with the Alliance till peace is secured on the basis of the frontiers of peoples.”¹⁹ The Intelligence Bureau workers, Rex Leeper, Simpson, and Seton-Watson, found Pares’ report highly satisfactory, and they proposed to publish an account of the conversation with Hrushevsky in the British press.²⁰ That coincided with the final removal – as late as July 1917 – of the British ban on publications about Ukraine, which incidentally came as a result of behind-the-scenes endeavours by Seton-Watson. In the weeks to follow, Seton-Watson and Leeper published extensive articles in *The New Europe*, sympathetic to the Ukrainian cause.²¹

In late August and throughout September 1917, the British saw the situation in Ukraine as fairly stable. The Congress of the Peoples of Russia, held in Kiev in late September and widely covered in British reports,²² seemed to confirm the appraisal that the Ukrainians played the key role among national movements on the territory of the former Empire, and that these movements sought not so much a separation from the Russian state as its transformation in a federalist spirit. In the final effect, Russia was expected to morph into a kind of United States of Eastern Europe, a scenario which seemed optimal for Britain.

Until the autumn of 1917, the Foreign Office was focused on Ukrainian battles for nationalist concessions, which somehow diverted attention from the agrarian question in Ukraine, even though its importance and certain specific features were indeed realised. As early as May 1917, it was assessed in London that peasants throughout Russia found the parcelling out of

large estates a foregone conclusion, which meant they would keep calm for some time, at least in the several months to come. "If there is trouble among the peasantry," Rex Lepper wrote,

it is likely to become serious after the harvest especially in the South of Russia among the Ukrainians who are much more excitable than the Great Russians of the North. Owing to their ignorance peasants can easily be excited by all kinds of false prophets and agents, and the real danger zone in the future may be in the country between Kiev and Odessa together with Bessarabia.²³

Ukraine's idiosyncrasies were again taken up by Leeper in a late August 1917 report. In describing the Provisional Government's agrarian programme, he noted that it was based on the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party's (SR's) idea of distributing landowner estates among village communities. That programme, Leeper argued, did not suit the Don Cossacks and the Ukrainians, who valued private land property, and was among the factors provoking their enmity towards the Provisional Government.²⁴ An indirect conclusion from these comments was that in "the South of Russia" the success of any authority – whatever its political or national hue – might be contingent on understanding the specific interests of local peasantry.

The events in Ukraine picked up pace following the Bolsheviks' coup in Petrograd. An unavoidable clash between competing power centres in Kiev initially ended up with a victory for the Central Rada. Rejecting the authority of the Council of People's Commissars, it announced on 20 November 1917 its Third Universal and proclaimed the formation of the Ukrainian People's Republic – staying, for the time being, within a Federal Republic of Russia. British watchers directly reported these developments, and they were impressed by the effective takeover of power on the Dnieper. They also appreciated the circumstance that the Ukrainians – even if taking steps that *de facto* led towards independence – left a door open to federalist arrangements in the future.²⁵

Initially, the Bolsheviks' final victory seemed improbable. Several days after the coup in Petrograd British analysts concluded that "it may be taken for granted that the Bolshevik Government is probably already on its last legs."²⁶ Although that assessment soon had to be revised, it was long believed in London that the Bolsheviks would not try and would not be capable of taking Ukraine by force – and this despite the realisation of a growing conflict between the Lenin government and the Central Rada.²⁷ The Bolsheviks launched military activities against the Ukrainian People's Republic in mid-December 1917, but the British observers downplayed their scale at least until early January. "Neither side has any real desire to fight, and it is not unlikely that they may soon come to terms, the Ukrainian Government being given permission to manage its own affairs without molestation," wrote an Intelligence Bureau worker.²⁸

Keeping the Eastern front alive was key to the Entente Powers, and therefore the attitude toward continuation of the war proved to be the chief criterion for either friendliness or enmity of the Allies towards individual political centres in the former Empire. The British cherished no illusions as to the potential for resuming anti-German operations in Russia, but it was important that the benefits of Germany and its allies from probable cease-fire be as small as possible. In respect to the front's south-western – or Ukrainian – section, the Allies were mostly interested in protecting the rear positions of the Romanian army, which found itself in increasingly dire straits.²⁹ That is why the declarations by the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic seemed so promising to the British. It is true that these declarations spoke of starting peace talks – but in consultations with the Entente.³⁰ The Central Rada's proclamation read unequivocally: "Until peace [...] is concluded every citizen must stay at his post both on the Front and in the rear."³¹

Consequently, in early December 1917, London opted to support the Ukrainians and Don Cossacks under Ataman Aleksey Kaledin – "the soundest elements of the nation," with whom to start the process of Russia's restoration.³² The support was financial in nature, but there were also plans for raising mutual political relations to a higher level. Following the agreement of 23 December 1917, by which Great Britain and France delineated their respective spheres of activity in Southern Russia, Ukraine found itself in the French zone. The British, though, did not give up on their interests in the area, and it was so arranged that the French commissioner, General Georges Tabouis, was to be accompanied in Kiev by the British representative, Consul Bagge (transferred from Odessa).³³

It remained an open question whether Great Britain – or, more broadly, the Entente – should engage more actively in Ukraine. Major Rome (a member of the General Frederick C. Poole's mission to Russia) on his return from Kiev, where he stayed in late November and early December 1917, had mixed feelings. Having closely watched the local situation, and after a long conversation with Symon Petliura, the minister for military affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic, he reported: "I gathered the impression that the Ukraine were playing a double game and waiting to see which way the cat jumped." He also wrote: "It might be worth the allies' while to throw their weight into the scale, but it would be a big gamble."³⁴ Major J. K. L. Fitzwilliams, dispatched to Kiev two weeks later, had similar thoughts but, against all his doubts, he recommended a *de facto* recognition of the Ukrainian government in an attempt to bring it around to the Allied side.³⁵ On the other hand, influential quarters in London expressed doubts about such a move. An Intelligence Bureau analysts argued, and not without reason, that

there is always a danger that any recognition on the part of the Allies might be used by the Ukrainians simply to get better terms out of the

Germans, while the Germans on their part might use it in order to complicate still further the relations between Britain and Russia.³⁶

As a result, the instructions given to Bagge on his departure for Kiev as an unofficial British envoy to the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic were fairly cautious:

You should let the Rada know that His Majesty's Government cannot at present recognise officially the independence of the Ukrainian Government but they are anxious to assure them of their goodwill and to assist them in the maintenance of order and good Government in the Ukraine and in resisting attack by the Central Powers.³⁷

The Foreign Office's dilemmas were aggravated by doubts about the actual strength of the Ukrainian national movement. Major Rome, on his return from Kiev, saw it as "one to be taken seriously, at any rate the desire for 'Ukrainism' is there," but he also doubted if the Central Rada had sufficient support to stay in power. He was particularly critical of the value of the purportedly Ukrainised army of the People's Republic.³⁸ Rome's report and an almost simultaneous analysis by the Intelligence Bureau³⁹ had one thing in common. The British authors, while noticing the clear differences between Ukrainians and Russians in terms of language, culture and customs, concluded that the Ukrainian masses did not have any sense of national identity, but only of provincial distinction. Consequently, the British observers reasoned, the Ukrainian nationalism remained a minority current, its influence confined to a handful of intellectuals who drifted further and further away from the sentiments shared by the mainstream of the community.

The Central Rada did achieve short-term success, the British writers pointed out, with its November 1917 land reform, which was of "the most sweeping character, expropriating the landlords and handing their estates over to the peasants."⁴⁰ That generated countryside support for the government at a critical moment, but the Britons doubted its durability. From December 1917 on, London increasingly realised that the paths of an intelligentsia-led national revolution and a peasant agrarian revolution were getting further and further apart. That was manifested, for example, in a widespread wave of attacks on large land estates – especially in Right-bank Ukraine – which the Kiev government was unable to prevent.⁴¹

The David Lloyd George Cabinet's position on Ukraine finally crystallised in January 1918. While at the beginning of that month the Foreign Office informed its ambassador to Paris that Great Britain was ready to recognise the Ukrainian government if the French did so and actually found such a move desirable,⁴² the middle of January saw a withdrawal from such declarations, with the British agent in Kiev concluding that an official recognition of the People's Republic was inopportune.⁴³ The sudden reversal in

London's, and also in Paris's, sympathies was caused by Ukraine's decision to send its own delegation to Brest-Litovsk for separatist peace negotiations with Germany. Towards the end of January, there emerged in British analyses of a bizarre claim that the Bolsheviks were the strongest anti-German force in Russia. The Intelligence Bureau wrote in its weekly report that "the spread of Bolshevism to the Ukraine would be a blow to the Central Powers and an advantage to the West."⁴⁴

The i's were dotted by the British prime minister himself, when he told his Cabinet at the session of 8 February that "the Ukrainians, whom we had regarded as our friends, had failed us."⁴⁵ On the next day Central Rada delegates signed in Brest-Litovsk a peace treaty with the Quadruple Alliance. The move had important consequences, both short- and long-time. In particular, the treaty was to seriously affect the subsequent attitudes to Ukrainian independence aspirations on the part of Great Britain and the other Entente Powers. Interestingly, the separatist peace reached on 3 March by Soviet Russia was received with apparently a greater dose of understanding, with much of the blame put on the Central Rada whose actions, it was claimed, had weakened the Bolsheviks and forced them to seek agreement with Germany.⁴⁶

Britain's attitude towards the young Ukrainian state was also visibly influenced by that latter's weakness, exposed by the easy victories of "the Reds" in January and February 1918. When Central Rada envoys were signing the treaty in Brest-Litovsk, Kiev was already in the hands of the Bolsheviks, who were to be repelled only by an intervention of Austro-German forces. That strengthened London's conviction about a limited extent of the nationalist movement and separatist sentiments on the Dnieper. The lesson to be drawn from the unfolding events was that political control of Ukraine was contingent on winning over the local peasantry, which was however an unpredictable, anarchistic-leaning, and self-centred element. From then on, the Ukrainian countryside was to be in the centre of British analyses examining the situation in the south of the former Empire.

In conclusion, mention should be made of several aspects related to Great Britain's interest in the revolutionary developments on the Dnieper, which largely – as previously noted – took London by surprise. It was not until the summer of 1917 that the British noticed a different pattern of events taking place in Ukraine, compared to those in ethnic Russia. The breakthrough came with the July 1917 crisis over the Provisional Government's position on Ukrainian demands for autonomy. From then on, Kiev's efforts in favour of a federal Russia elicited sympathy in Britain. The weight of the Ukrainian question increased after the Bolsheviks coup in Petrograd, with an intense discussion about a possible British recognition for the Ukrainian People's Republic taking place in late 1917 and early 1918. But the key factor was Ukraine's position on the continuation of war, and therefore the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty by Central Rada representatives was bound to prevent London from backing the Ukraine cause for quite a

long time. Further developments only provided more arguments to convince the British that the Ukrainian national movement had a limited following, and that the major revolutionary current on the Dnieper drew its strength from anarchic peasantry.

In fairness, it must be noted that London at that time neglected most of the national movements in Eastern Europe. A Foreign Office analyst wrote in May 1918:

The power or influence of the Ukrainian Radas, Lithuanian Tarybas, or Polish National Councils is exceedingly small, even of those on the spot, to say nothing of their counterparts abroad. They rise if they succeed in adjusting themselves to the circumstances of the moment; they thrive if they find a foreign government to finance them. If used as mere tools they may occasionally prove useful. But they never count at home. ... [T]he upper classes in Eastern Europe, the intelligentsia and its politicians are mere flies on the wheel.⁴⁷

It was only the developments of the autumn of 1918 that forced western observers to partially revise this opinion.

Notes

- 1 I would like to express my gratitude to the De Brzezine Lanckoronski Foundation for supporting my research stay in London, which enabled me to prepare this chapter.
- 2 According to a British writer, “the March Revolution [New Style calendar] was conceived at first in Britain as a revolt, not against the war, but against Tsarist inefficiency in conducting it.” See F.S. Northedge, *1917–1919: The Implications for Britain*, “Journal of Contemporary History” 1968 (4), p. 195. The idea that a democratised Russia would be a more effective and more trusted ally of the Entente had long, and successfully, been instilled in British diplomats by representatives of Russia’s liberal opposition. See L.P. Morris, *The Russians, the Allies and the War, February–July 1917*, “The Slavonic and East European Review” 1972 (118), pp. 29–31.
- 3 D. Saunders, *Britain and the Ukrainian Question (1912–1920)*, “The English Historical Review” 1988 (406), pp. 40–59; see also A.A. Zięba, *Lobbying dla Ukrainy w Europie międzywojennej. Ukraińskie Biuro Prasowe w Londynie oraz jego konkurencji polityczni (do roku 1932)*, Kraków, 2010, pp. 66–67, 69–76.
- 4 On Seton-Watson and the role played during the war by the paper he founded, see H. Seton-Watson, Ch. Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe. R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, Methuen, London, 1981; H. Hanak, *The New Europe, 1916–20*, “The Slavonic and East European Review”, 1961 (93), pp. 369–399; P. Сирота, *‘The New Europe’ i британський дискурс України 1916–1920 років: перепроєктування Європи*, “Записки Наукового Товариства ім. Шевченка”, т. CCLI: Праці Історично-філософської секції, Львів, 2006, pp. 240–302.
- 5 Quoted from D. Saunders, *Britain and the Ukrainian Question*, p. 59.
- 6 The Intelligence Bureau was established in April 1917, and its activities have yet to be chronicled in an extensive monograph – unlike those of its successor, the Political Intelligence Department (PID), operating within the Foreign Office

- from March 1918. Most of Intelligence Bureau analysts continued their job at PID, with a significant exception of Seton-Watson himself, who stayed with the Department of Information. See E. Goldstein, *Winning the Peace. British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916–1920*, Oxford, 1991, pp. 57–61.
- 7 As indicated by a note on the document's file, the report was registered in Foreign Office on May 26th, and DIIB analysts read it only in late May/early June 1917.
 - 8 Bagge's report No. 31 of 30 April 1917, The National Archives of the UK [hereafter: TNA], FO 371/3012, ff. 531–534. For a summary of this document see: P. Сирота, *Роберт Вільям Сімон-Вотсон і Українська революція (З історії британської політики у Східній Європі в 1917–1918 роках)*, “Вісник Львівського університету: Серія історична”, 2002, вип. 37, ч. 1, p. 428; J. Regina-Zacharski, *Sprawa ukraińska w polityce Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1917–1923*, Toruń, 2004, pp. 43–44.
 - 9 This was reflected, e.g., in an in-depth analysis provided by Rex Leeper who – in an introductory part of his remarks on the national question in Russia – wrote this to his superiors: “The attitude of the non-Russian nationalities may have an important effect upon the Central Government in Petrograd.” R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. IX*, 18 June 1917, TNA, CAB 24/16/87, f. 307.
 - 10 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. XIV*, 23 July 1917, TNA, CAB 24/20/92, f. 409.
 - 11 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. VIII*, 11 June 1917, TNA, CAB 24/16/13, f. 31.
 - 12 Buchanan's cypher telegram No. 985, Petrograd, 29 June 1917, TNA, FO 371/3012, f. 536.
 - 13 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. XIV*, 23 July 1917, TNA, CAB 24/20/92, ff. 406–411.
 - 14 P. Сирота, *Роберт Вільям Сімон-Вотсон і Українська революція*, p. 429.
 - 15 J.Y.S., *Weekly Report on Russia. XVI*, 4 August 1917, TNA, CAB 24/22/18, f. 74.
 - 16 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. XVIII*, 20 August 1917, TNA, CAB 24/23/89, f. 481.
 - 17 Excerpted from a letter by Harold Challinor James to F. Macpherson, Vevey, 7 August 1917, TNA, FO 371/3012, f. 547A.
 - 18 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. XIV*, 23 July 1917, TNA, CAB 24/20/92, f. 411.
 - 19 Excerpts from Pares' letters, attached to Ambassador Buchanan's report of 12 July 1917, TNA, FO 371/3012, ff. 538–541. Also see D. Saunders, *Britain and the Ukrainian Question*, p. 61; J. Regina-Zacharski, *Sprawa ukraińska w polityce Wielkiej Brytanii*, p. 44.
 - 20 DIIB memo of 28 July 1917, TNA, FO 371/3012, f. 542.
 - 21 Intelligence Bureau collaborators wrote their articles under aliases: Seton-Watson as “Rubicon”, and Rex Leeper as “Rurik”. For more about the rescinding of the ban on pro-Ukrainian publications and about articles in *The New Europe*, see D. Saunders, *Britain and the Ukrainian Question*, pp. 61–62; P. Сирота, *Роберт Вільям Сімон-Вотсон і Українська революція*, с. 432–433; *idem*, “‘The New Europe’ і британський дискурс України”, pp. 273–277.
 - 22 See J.Y.S., *Weekly Report on Russia. XXIII*, 1 October 1917, TNA, CAB 24/27/74, f. 313; R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. XXVI*, 23 October 1917, *ibid.*, CAB 24/29/75, ff. 308–309; R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. XXVII*, 29 October 1917, *ibid.*, CAB 24/30/42, ff. 272–274.
 - 23 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. VI*, 28 May 1917, TNA, CAB 24/14/65, f. 312.
 - 24 R.A.L., *Weekly Report on Russia. IX*, 27 August 1917, TNA, CAB 24/24/68, ff. 242–243.
 - 25 Consul Bagge's cypher telegrams No. 144 and 150, Odessa, 15 and 21 November 1917, TNA, FO 371/3012, ff. 553, 555; *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXI*, 3 December 1917, *ibid.*, CAB 24/34/60, ff. 256–258; *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXII*, 18 December 1917, *ibid.*, CAB 24/36/30, ff. 115–117.

- 26 *Weekly Report on Russia. XXIX*, 12 November 1917, TNA, CAB 24/31/89, f. 453.
- 27 See e.g. Ambassador Buchanan's cypher telegram No. 2086 of 22 December 1917, conveying information from the British military attaché in Petrograd, TNA, FO 371/3012, f. 574.
- 28 *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXIV*, 1 January 1918, TNA, CAB 24/37/63, f. 180.
- 29 Sir George Head Barclay, the British Minister to Romanian government, wrote in his telegram to London: "I quite understand that our first object is to assist to establish some power or force in South of Russia as for instance Ukraine Rada, on which the Roumanian Army can then retire." See Barclay's cypher telegram No. 810, Jassy, 22 December 1917, TNA, FO 371/3019, f. 313. The question was formulated even more emphatically during simultaneous Franco-British talks in Paris: "In Southern Russia our principal object must be, if we can, to save Roumania." See *Memorandum prepared by Lord Milner and Lord R. Cecil on Suggested Policy in Russia, and accepted by M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon on 23 December 1917* (appendix to the minutes of the War Cabinet session of 26 December 1917), TNA, CAB 23/4/80, ff. 270-270v.
- 30 Ambassador Buchanan's cypher telegram No. 2060, Petrograd, 18 December 1918, TNA, FO 371/3012, f. 571.
- 31 Consul Bagge's cypher telegram No. 152, Odessa, 22 October 1917, TNA, FO 371/3012, f. 561.
- 32 For more on the subject, see J. Regina-Zacharski, *Sprawa ukraińska w polityce Wielkiej Brytanii*, pp. 48-52.
- 33 For the agreement of 23 December and its consequences, see *ibid.*, pp. 55-57.
- 34 Major Rome's report, n.d. (appendix to Ambassador Buchanan's letter of 7 December 1917), TNA, FO 371/3012, ff. 585-588.
- 35 D. Saunders, *Britain and the Ukrainian Question*, p. 63; P. Сирота, *Роберт Вільям Сітон-Вотсон і Українська революція*, p. 440.
- 36 *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXII*, 18 December 1917, TNA, CAB 24/36/30, f. 117.
- 37 Key to understanding the intentions behind the British actions on the Dnieper is the next sentence in the brief: "Every effort must be made to prevent the Ukraine giving assistance to the Central Powers or allowing supplies to reach them by Odessa and Constanza or Constantinople or in any other way." Foreign Office cypher telegram No. 164 to Consul Bagge, 26 December 1917, TNA, FO 371/3019, f. 366.
- 38 Major Rome's report, n.d. (appendix to Ambassador Buchanan's letter of 7 December 1917), TNA, FO 371/3012, ff. 586, 588.
- 39 *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXI*, 3 December 1917, TNA, CAB 24/34/60, ff. 256-258.
- 40 From the Political Intelligence Department's document summarising the course of revolutionary developments in Ukraine as of May 1918, *Memorandum on the revolt in the Ukraine*, 7 May 1918, TNA, CAB 24/52/30, f. 93.
- 41 On this subject, see e.g. *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXVIII*, 5 February 1918, TNA, CAB 24/41/41, ff. 242-243.
- 42 Foreign Office cable No. 37 to Lord Francis Bertie, 5 January 1918, TNA, FO 371/3283, f. 32.
- 43 Consul Bagge's cypher telegram No. 4, Kiev, 19 January 1918, TNA, FO 371/3283, f. 299.
- 44 *Weekly Report on Russia. XXXVII*, 25 January 1918, TNA, CAB 24/40/52, f. 203.
- 45 He went on to say: "The only people in Russia who could definitely be regarded as our friends were those who were willing to fight, not against the Bolsheviks, but against the Austrians and Germans." Minutes of the War Cabinet's session of 8 February 1918, TNA, CAB 23/5/33, f. 92v.
- 46 An PID analyst wrote:

Ukrainian delegates ... negotiated with the Central Powers at Brest Litovsk behind the backs of the Russians, and on February 9 concluded a separate peace, thus leaving the Russians in a much weaker position during the final stages of the peace negotiations.

Memorandum on the revolt in the Ukraine, 7 May 1918, TNA, CAB 24/52/30, f. 92.
47 PID Report, *The position in the Ukraine*, 17 May 1918, TNA, CAB 24/52/36, f. 118v.