

THE IMAGE OF UKRAINE IN THE US PUBLICATIONS of 1920s–1930s

Danylo Kravets

Institute of the Humanities and Social Sciences
Lviv Polytechnic National University
Davydiw@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1963-9678>

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The paper is based on English language book editions printed in the USA during 1920-1930s about Ukraine, or where Ukraine been mentioned. It deals with non-fiction publications by the Ukrainian diaspora in the US, the books of American authors, and editions translated from other languages into English. Ukraine was mentioned in a general history books about Europe during and after World War I, and also in a writings dedicated to the situation in the USSR. Ukrainian-Americans produced at least dozens of books in English about their Homeland. Special attention been paid to editions written by those who travelled through Ukraine during interested period. These publications helps to understand what was the image of Ukraine and Ukrainians in interwar America.

Key words: Ukraine, 1920–1930s, United States, books, USSR.

ОБРАЗ УКРАЇНИ У ПУБЛІКАЦІЯХ США 1920–1930-х рр.

Данило Кравець

Інститут гуманітарних і соціальних наук
Національний університет «Львівська політехніка»
Davydiw@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1963-9678>

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У пропонованій статті охарактеризовано образ України в англomовних публікаціях Америки (США) 1920–1930-х рр. Взято до уваги книги (non-фікшн), опубліковані стараннями української діаспори, американськими авторами та видані в США переклади, у яких згадано Україну. Проблема громадської думки про Україну у Сполучених Штатах міжвоєнного періоду досі на стала предметом дослідження вітчизняних і зарубіжних науковців. Для англomовного читача українці були однією з найменш відомих націй у Європі. На початку 1920-х рр. в американських публікаціях частіше вживався термін «русин», а не «українець», а мешканців Наддніпрянщини ідентифікували як «малоросів». Статті про Україну з'являлись у різних енциклопедіях (Encyclopedia Americana) та атласних виданнях (An Atlas of current Affairs). Українське питання часто порушували у книгах, присвячених загальній історії Європи під час та після Першої світової війни, зокрема у дуже популярному виданні професора Університету Індіани Л. Бенса «Європа після 1914», яке використовували у навчальному процесі десятки вишів США. Українці Америки долучились до видання книг англійською мовою про свою батьківщину. Найбільше діаспору турбувала репресивна політика окупантів щодо українців у 1930-х рр., а особливо польська Пацифікація 1930 р. та Голодомор у Радянській Україні 1932–1933 рр. До популяризації цих тем серед американських читачів приклались Л. Мишуга та Е. Рев'юк – головні редактори «Свободи» – найпопулярнішої української газети Америки. Особливу увагу у пропонованій статті звернуто на книги авторів, що побували в Україні у 1920-х чи 1930-х рр. Зокрема завдяки матеріальній і технічній підтримці діаспори мандрівку Західною Україною здійснив журналіст Г. Тілтман, який описав побачене у відомій книзі «Селянська Європа». У кінці 1920-х та на початку 1930-х рр. для багатьох західних інтелектуалів Радянський Союз видавався чудовою альтернативою капіталістичній системі. Тоді ж СРСР, як і радянську Україну, відвідали американські туристи, які опублікували побачене там у своїх книгах. До таких належали В. Дюранті, Г. Нікербокер, Е. Вілсон та ін. Аналіз цих видань допомагає зрозуміти, яким же був образ України та українців в американській громадській

дмуці міжвоєнного періоду. Українське питання щораз частіше піднімалось у американських виданнях напередодні та на початку Другої світової війни, особливо у контексті загарбницьких планів гітлерівської Німеччини.

Ключові слова: Україна, 1920–1930-ті рр., Сполучені Штати, СРСР, книги.

Introduction. Ukraine was always a place of interest for a foreign scholars and travelers. This land and its people were mentioned in different written sources starting from Homer's «Odyssey». Little however is known about the image of Ukraine in the interwar United States. Thanks to American journalists, scholars, historians Ukraine appeared in the US agenda during 1920s–1930s. Ukrainian diaspora also played significant role in promoting Ukrainian case between Americans.

Ukrainians constitute a large and influential national minority group in the United States. The first wave of Ukrainian immigration to the United States started in the early 1870s and ended in 1914 with the onset of World War I. The second mass immigration has often been called the “military” immigration and what it lacked in numbers, it made up in quality. Most immigrants were educated, some with college degrees [Kuropas, 1996. 96]. Interwar Ukraine was divided between four occupants that didn't respect national and political rights of Ukrainians and, usually, used terror to suppress their national demands. In the Soviet Ukraine, Stalin's policy of forced collectivization through terror created a famine that claimed the lives of millions of men, women, and children. At the height of the Great Famine in Ukraine, and only a few months after assuming office, the US President F. Roosevelt decided to reverse the policy of every American president since World War I and to recognize the Soviet Union.

Goals. The aim of this paper is to describe the image of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the American writings during interwar period. Analyzing the public and political opinion in the US towards Ukraine – is a new and perspective direction in historiography and its result could be useful both in Ukraine and America.

Results. During 1920s–1930s information on Ukraine and Ukrainians in the US was very incomplete and sometimes there was a considerable misinformation with the traces of russophilism, the old all-Russia-unity notion persists. That's how American peace activist and sociologist Jerome Davis define Russians and Ruthenians (Ukrainians) in his book about their minorities in the US (1922): «By Russians, as used in this study, is meant the Great Russians, inhabiting central Russia, the White Russians, living between Poland and Russia, and the Little Russians, from what was formerly South Russia. By Ruthenians are meant those Little Russians who come from Galicia, Bukovina, and the Carpathian Mountains in Austria Hungary» [Davis, 1922. 1]. J. Davis understood the Ukrainian homeland (without using this term) as dark background of misery, poverty and ignorance, and Ukrainians according to him were forced into the maelstrom of wars to become

cannon fodder over «issues about which they cared little, or not at all» [Davis, 1922. 19].

The situation in understanding Ukraine changed in one decade. Editor of «Svoboda» the most influential Ukrainian newspaper in the US Luka Myshuha wrote: «Ukraine has been the subject of many reports in the American press and publications ... Yet quite often these reports have been not only inaccurate, far from the truth, but grossly distorted as well» [Myshuha, 1939. 17]. But still Ukraine was mentioned in different respectful dictionaries and encyclopedias. The *Encyclopedia Americana* (1934) stated: «Despite the varied names they [Ukrainians – D. K.] represent a homogenous group. In the country which they came from the Vislok to the Kuban and from Pripet to the Black Sea the Ukrainian people constitute a uniform anthropological type» [Klein, 1934. 258]. The US series called *An Atlas of Current Affairs* (1937) included an article about Ukraine, but only about the Soviet one «The Russian part of it [Ukraine – D. K.] was constituted an independent state by the Treaty of Brest Litovsk (1918), was overrun by various «white» invaders and «nationalists» leaders after the Russian Revolution, was reconquered by the Red Armies ... It is a vitally important of the Soviet economic system» [Horrabin, 1934. 17]. The author J. F. Horrabin also added Russian cities of Rostov and Novorossiysk to the territory of Ukraine. According to the article “food shortage” (probably the author meant Great Famine) led to developing of counter-revolutionary movement supported by circles in Western Europe and in America.

Ukrainian topics also appeared in American books dedicated to the general history of Europe during and after World War I. Herbert Adams Gibbons was an American journalist who wrote about international politics and European colonialism during the early 20th century. In a book «*Europe Since 1918*» he describes Ukraine as a rich land with the fiction of separate national existence from Moscow, but still struggling for it: «Ukraine had her own delegation at peace conferences and in whatever dealings Russia had with the outside world» [Gibbons, 1923. 200]. Frank Lee Benns was a history professor at the University of Indiana. His book: «*European History since 1914*» (1930) sold over 100,000 copies and was used in over 300 colleges in the United States and Canada. The author described Ukrainian case in Czechoslovakia. L. Benns argues that the local Ukrainians were almost illiterate because of pre-war Magyar oppression. He also stated that the Czechoslovak government feared that Ukrainian district, if established at once, would be dominated by the well-organized Magyars and Jews rather than by Ukrainians,

and therefore delayed establishing it [Benns, 1930. 616]. Ukrainian problem in Poland was mentioned too, but less attention was paid to development of the Soviet Ukraine.

The memoirs of those who travelled through Ukraine in 1920s and 1930s are priceless sources for our topic. Few such books were published in the US during interwar period. An American writer and critic Edmund Wilson published his impressions after visiting USSR in early 1930s. Despite that the author didn't separate Ukraine from Russia he left some interesting details about everyday life in the Soviet Kyiv and Odesa: «The people in Kiev gave me the impression of being happier than any others I had seen in Russia... The couples were all talking to one another in a manner much more lively than in the North [*Russia – D. K.*]; yet their voices were so low that I could hardly hear them» [Wilson, 1936. 315]. The author got sick during his Ukrainian trip, so he ended up in one of Odesa's hospital leaving his depiction of a facility and a people outdoors. E. Wilson frostily praised his hospital diet (potatoes and fruits) and was complaining about absence of «real coffee». We could hardly find any mentions about starving peasants or on-going repressions in this book, in return the author stated that the Five-Year Plan gave to the people if USSR more sense of time.

E. Wilson wasn't the only American who praised USSR and didn't see human suffering behind Stalin's modernization. Soviet Union won over many sympathizers in the West. Soviet propaganda portrayed the USSR as a leader of a «progressive humanity», as the world's only socialist state, and as its main hope against the fascist threat. This was a time when Western intellectuals (the so-called «fellow-travelers») allowed their left-wing sympathies and fears of fascism to cloud their judgment of Soviet political realities. They saw progress in the Soviet Union, but were blind to the famine and terror [Figes, 2014. 211]. American artist Frank A. Warren had written: «Most liberals had been vaguely sympathetic to Russia during the twenties, but they had not felt its impact directly. Significantly the Five-Year Plan did not generate intense excitement until 1930 – two years after it had begun. What happened to cause this excitement was 1929 and the depression, the real impetus in turning the liberals eastward toward Russia». The diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by Roosevelt in 1933 was made possible «... by the early thirties, open-mindedness had finally, surpassed hostility toward the USSR» [Hollander, 1981. 77]. Perhaps the most famous American who had sympathized USSR was Pulitzer journalist Walter Duranty [Duranty and others, 1932].

Though not everyone who travelled in the USSR was blind to real situation there. Hubert Knickerbocker – an American journalist who have been to the USSR and published his reports. «*The Red Menace*» one of the most important book of this Pulitzer author was noticed by Ukrainians on West. Eugene Onatsky – former diplomat of Ukrainian People's Republic and «Svoboda»

correspondent in Rome wrote to his chief-editor in New Jersey: «Have you seen the book that was published in German, French and English under the title «*Red Menace*». This is a very good composed book with a lot of statistic material that proofs that the world crisis and especially American crisis on a big scale depends from the Soviet menace. It was written by an American journalist Knickerbocker, but this is a pseudo. In fact the book was written by one Jesuit who spent few years in Soviet Union and have analyzed data from many European countries» [Onatsky E. 1932, IHRCA, UMn, E. Onatsky papers, Box 42].

Two chapters from mentioned book were dedicated to industrialization of Ukrainian SSR. Part expressively called «The largest power plant in the world» was dedicated to the construction of Dnipro Hydroelectric Station. American engineers played very important role on site, actually there was the oldest of the American colonies in the Soviet Union. They were the only Americans in this country who have been able to create for themselves an almost 100 percent American living environment: «The group of brick cottages each with six rooms, kitchen and bath, central heating, hot and cold water would grace an American garden city development. Their food, imported by the shipload through Odessa» [Knickerbocker, 1931. 179]. Chapter «In a Soviet Coal Mine» informs about author's personal experience during visiting Donbas region. The journalist underlined the prominent role of the Ukrainian Communist Youth International in developing the Don Basin, «which was the only place in the Soviet Union where the workers can buy all the cigarettes they want without limit» [Knickerbocker, 1931. 195]. Even more details about Stalin's modernization in Ukraine could be found in a book «I Search the Truth in Russia» by Walter Citrine – president of the International Federations of the Trade Unions (1928–1945). Despite the author didn't separate Ukrainian nation from Russian one he left some interesting description of Ukrainian landmarks, when he entered the republic on his way from Moscow in 1935: «Once we were in the Ukraine we noticed that the peasant's houses became smarter with their thatched roofs and lime-washed walls» [Citrine, 1937. 166]. On the Ukrainian soil he had visited Kharkiv, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, Zaporizhia and Dnipro Dam.

One of the most prominent authors who wrote about Ukrainian problem in Europe was Hessel H. Tiltman. Among Ukrainians on West one of his books was very well-known – «*Peasant Europe*» (1934). Ukrainian Bureau in London mentioned this edition in a letter to Eugene Skotzko – a founder of Ukrainian Informational Bureau in Washington: «About Tiltman's book ... «*The Peasant Europe*» represents Ukrainian case in the best way, and by the way it appeared thanks to our efforts, because the Mr. Tiltman's

trip to Europe was sponsored by Mr. Makohon and last in his vehicle» [Ukrainian Bureau in London 1939, IHRCA UMn, E. Skotzko papers, Box 2]. Chapter about Ukrainians called «The nation that nobody knows». H. Tiltman described the people in quite romantic way: «Those Ukrainians, more numerous than the Poles, more virile and cultured than the Romanians, more loyal to their national ideals even than the Czechs, form the most romantic nation in Europe – nation that nobody knows» [Tiltman, 1934. 192]. The author only pays attention on the situation of peasantry in Western Ukraine excluding Soviet farmers. H. Tiltman made a detail description of nature and life in Galicia (he was fascinated by the beauty of Zalishchyky region (the «Galician Riviera» [Tiltman, 1934. 198]) and the organizing of Prosvita libraries in a villages: «I made a point, when making random and unannounced visits to these all-peasant stores in various parts of the Ukrainian regions, of inspecting the books. Without exception all were in perfect order, and, for the previous quarter, had been «audited and found correct» by working peasants» [Tiltman, 1934. 200]. One of the chapters in H. Tiltman's other book: «*The Terror in Europe*» dedicated to Polish Pacification policy towards Western Ukrainians in 1930. The author specifically described the international reaction on those tragic events. Among others Mary Sheepshanks was remarked as a person who had discovered the truth about the terror in the Ukraine. Her report was the first considered document prepared by one experienced in such work [Tiltman, 1932. 358]. This part of Tiltman's book was based on a publication «*Polish Atrocities in Ukraine*» (1931) [Revyuk, 1931] by Emil Revyuk («Svoboda» paper editor in 1927–1933). The author's negative attitude to Polish authorities could be seen in both of his books. H. Tiltman's and E. Revyuk's writings weren't the only books dedicated to the Pacification [Western Ukraine under Polish yoke, 1931].

During all XX century till nowadays diaspora played a very important role in forming positive image of Ukraine in the world. In 1920s–1930s American Ukrainians published dozens books in English about Ukrainian case, but still a former member of Central Council of Ukraine Mykyta Shapoval criticized their efforts: «Ukrainian pseudo-intelligentsia in the US has no idea about current historical and social situation of our people, don't know and don't understand the program of Ukrainian resurrection» [Шаповал, 1925. 8]. These thoughts were expressed in the middle of 1920s, but situation had changed during next decade. Ukrainian minority in the US supported publications about Polish pacification in Western Ukraine, 1932–1933 Great Famine, Stalin's repression in USSR, Ukrainian cultural development etc. United Ukrainian Organizations of United States (UUOUS) published in New York book called «*The Famine in Ukraine*» (1934) which included:

a Resolution relative to famine, submitted in the House of Representatives of the US Congress by Hamilton Fish Jr.; Memorandum by UUOUS, reports on famine by William Chamberlin (Moscow correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor) and The Boston Post's editorial comment on his report [Famine in Ukraine, 1934]. This Ukrainian tragedy among with the others Communist and Polish repressions was described in Walter Bukata's «*Ukrainian Case*» [Bukata, 1938]. There is need to say that USSR authorities tried to fight the information about Famine. The edition «*Soviet Ukraine Today*» has been released in New York under the authorship of Soviet Ukraine leaders Piotr Postyshev and Stanislav Kosior. The authors though didn't even try to hide that terror being taking place in the Ukrainian SSR: «We organized the purging of the ranks of the C.P. of the Ukraine of hostile class elements, of Petlura, Makhnov and whiteguard elements and of bourgeois degenerates» [Postyshev, Kosior, 1934. 10].

There was a big problem on West with identifying USSR as Russia only, without mentioning Ukraine and other republics. Mykola Haydak, a Ukrainian scientist and professor of the University of Minnesota wrote to different American editions and publishing houses trying to fix this misunderstanding. This is his letter to the editors of Biographical Directory of American Men of Science: «Please omit the name «Russia» in the sketch because it is «scientifically» incorrect. At the present, Ukraine is the second largest member of the Union of SSR and, according to the Soviet constitution, has a right to secede anytime from the Union. Commonly the name «Russia» is applied to the whole U.S.S.R., because the people are used to think of that territory as «Russia». However, there is no Ambassador of Russia in this or any other country, but the representative of the U.S.S.R» [Haydak Mykola, 1937, IHRCA, UMn, Haydak M. papers, Box 2]. Of course M. Haydak received replies from the editors concerning his issue: «Thank You very much for kind note about An Atlas of Current Affairs. I quite agree that it is a little confusing to use the term «Russia» as synonymous to U.S.S.R. The difficulty, of course, is that «Russia» has two or three centuries use behind it and just as one occasionally speaks of America instead of the U.S.A., it is quite convenient to have an alternative name» [Haydak Mykola, 1934, IHRCA, UMn, Haydak M. papers, Box 2]. The author Maria Gambal with the support of Ukrainian Workingmen's Association released a book about origins of the name «Ukraine» and «Rus». Polish, Romanian and even Czechoslovakian governments didn't list their major minorities as Ukrainians: «Although Polish scholarly writers discuss the Ukrainian problem in Poland, the Polish Government persists in listing the Ukrainians officially as Rusiny. In Czechoslovakia they continue to be referred to as Rusiny. In Romania the situation is, if anything worse» [Gambal, 1937. 21].

Stephen Davydovych translated into English the book «*Russia and Ukraine*» by Mykola Sciborsky (ideologist of Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)). The edition was published in New York thanks to Ukrainian-American nationalists from the Organization for the Rebirth of Ukraine (ODWU). The author analyzed all major processes that took place in the Soviet Ukraine during 1920s–1930s [Sciborsky, 1940]. Another book that told about Stalin's regime was «*Bolshevik Misrule in Ukraine*» (Detroit, 1933). Despite that the book was published in 1933 it already had some information about Great Famine: «How well Moscow meant is evidenced today by the hundreds of deserted Ukrainian villages...» [Bolshevik misrule..., 1933. 12].

Ukrainian Press Service in New York published a brochure with a big article of Italian journalist Enrico Insabato (from the February, 1938 issue of «*L'Economia Italiana*», Rome). In publishing the following article in English translation, American Ukrainians have been motivated by the value of its thorough information on the Ukrainian problem, particularly on the population and the economic resources, especially Eastern Ukraine. The article, although written from the Italian viewpoint in some sections is all the more valuable because it was prepared by a non-Ukrainian author. E. Insabato as a representative of fascist Italy accused Moscow bolshevism that he compared with ultra-nationalism and imperialism, in ruining Ukraine [Insabato, 1938. 27].

Despite all the efforts of diaspora in promoting Ukrainian case there was still great lack of books about Ukraine even in the late 1930s. The OUN member Dmytro Andrievsky wrote in his letter to professor Alexander Granovsky: “Dealing with public opinion of Europe and America must be one of the tools of our international policy. We have a big insufficiency of literature about Ukraine in foreign languages. Without it it's hard to achieve support of masses and even governments” [Granovsky A., 1940, IHRCA, UMn, Granovsky A. papers, Box 150]. Some American papers have lent themselves to a deliberate defamation of Ukrainian leaders who in the past led their people towards freedom. For example Bohdan Khmelnytsky, whom even the Communists respected for his liberation of the «poor and the oppressed», was labeled in a feature article in a New York daily as «Hitler no. II». And Symon Petlura, was similarly labeled in this article as “Hitler no. III” on account of the charges made against him that he was responsible for the pogroms in Ukraine during the war [Myshuha, 1939. 19].

To correct presented above misunderstanding of Ukrainian past Dmytro Doroshenko's “*History of Ukraine*” have been translated into English with and introduction of Canadian professor George Simpson

[Doroshenko, 1940]. Mentioned professor of History at the University of Saskatchewan was a big friend of Ukraine and the diaspora in America published all his articles and radio addresses about this country [Simpson, 1939]. Well-known in America was another history book written by Hugh Vowles «*Ukraine and its people*» (1939). Despite that this is not deep scientific research the author tried to show the origin of Ukraine and struggle of its people for freedom during ages [Vowles, 1939]. Very popular among both Ukrainian and even by American scholars was a book by Dmytro Snowyd about Ukrainian contribution to world's culture [Snowyd, 1935]. For example at the University of Minnesota library this edition has been borrowed at least dozens of times during 1970s–1980s.

Conclusions. There was no national group among the Slavic peoples so little known to the English-speaking world as the Ukrainians. As we might see there was a great misunderstanding among many journalists, scholars and intellectuals about what Ukraine is and who Ukrainians are. American historians mentioned Ukrainian case only briefly. Encyclopedias and dictionaries gave a little information about its geography and history. Americans who have been to Ukraine (especially Soviet one) couldn't separate Ukrainians from Russian nation, though almost everyone felt a difference between these two territories. Efforts of Ukrainian diaspora in the US were aimed to fill this gap and to make Ukrainian question a part of agenda. Dozens of books were published and spread all over the United States. Ukraine became a place of interest only before World War II. Despite the paper's limitations we tried to mention all major American books regarding Ukraine, but of course we didn't cover all of them.

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