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## **FORMATION OF POLISH PUBLIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN UKRAINE IN THE LATE 1980S – 1990S.**

The article is devoted to the study of the main stages and trends of development of the Polish national minority in Ukraine in the period from the late 1980s to the 1990s, identifying key aspects of the legislative formation and development of Polish public and cultural organizations, participation of Poles in Ukrainian cultural, educational and socio-political processes. Therefore, the level of development of civic maturity and political culture of the Polish community in Ukraine has been analysed.

The main directions of development and peculiarities of activity of Polish public organizations in Ukraine are analysed from the time of restoration of independence of Ukraine till the end of 1990s. The study is based on an analysis of the activities of Polish public, cultural, educational organizations, the development of the press and education, promotions, festivals and events that were organized and held in the context of meeting the public and cultural needs of the Polish minority in Ukraine. The contribution of Polish cultural and public organizations to the development of Ukrainian-Polish relations is estimated. The study focuses on the research of the range of areas of interaction among the Polish minority in Ukraine, the state of Ukraine and Ukrainian society, their participation and influence in the interethnic development of Ukrainian society and the nature of interethnic relations. The analysis of processes is conducted in the context of educational, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and political transformations in Ukraine (UkSSR) from the late 1980s to the 1990s. The study found out that during and after the collapse of the USSR and the withdrawal of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland from the influence of communist ideology, a new era of Ukrainian-Polish intercultural and interethnic cooperation began. Since then, various public, cultural, educational institutions, newspapers, magazines, and media channels were established, a number of cultural and educational events were initiated, organized and held. An important role in these processes relies on the development and formation of civil society in both countries. The author also traces the main achievements that have arisen in the process of significant work of cultural and public organizations of the Polish minority in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, intercultural interaction, Polish national minority, Polonia, cultural and educational activities, Ukrainian-Polish relations, public organization.

The restoration of Ukraine's state independence and the collapse of totalitarianism in Poland launched a new stage in Ukrainian-Polish relations, cooperation and partnership, as well as a new status for Poles in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Poland. The legal basis for this status was the Law of Ukraine "On National Minorities" (1992) and the "Agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland on Good Neighbourliness, Friendly Relations and Cooperation", ratified in 1992, the second article of which states that the parties act in compliance with international standards for the protection of national minorities, recognition of their right to preserve ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity<sup>1</sup>. Late 1980s-1990s is characterized by the achievement of a qualitatively new level of Ukrainian-Polish relations, expanding cooperation of neighbouring nations in all spheres of political, economic, scientific, technical, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, an active factor of which is people's diplomacy in the face of the Polish minority in Ukraine and Ukrainian one in Poland.

<sup>1</sup> *Договір між Україною і Республікою Польщею про добросусідство, дружні відносини і співробітництво, 1992* (Верховна Рада України, Уряд Республіки Польща). *Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України* <[https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/616\\_172#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/616_172#Text)> (2021, May, 17).

The number of Poles in Ukraine due to natural and artificial demographic processes and mass emigration to the historical homeland, which peaked in the crisis of 1995-1997, decreased from 219 thousand<sup>1</sup> in 1989 to 144 thousand in 2001<sup>2</sup>. They continue demonstrate their ethnic advancement and occupy one of the dominant positions among the non-ethnic groups of Ukraine. The Polish community is one of the most integrated ethnic minorities in the Ukrainian society, which, despite assimilation and urbanization, has retained the basic peculiarities of its identity, actively participating in the national and cultural revival and became a major link in relation to Ukrainian-Polish cooperation and partnership. According to opinion polls, the Polish population not only most actively supported the Act of Proclamation of State Independence of Ukraine in the All-Ukrainian Referendum of December 1, 1991 and almost unanimously accepted Ukrainian citizenship, but also directly participated in the transformation of post-Soviet society through democratic transformation, European choice initiative and economic reforms in Poland. Unlike some other ethnic groups, Poles supported Ukraine's integrity and the demarcation of its state borders with Moldova, Poland, the Russian Federation, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary. Poles live in all regions of Ukraine, but most of them are associated with traditional areas of settlement: Galicia, Volhynia, Podillia, Polissia, Kyiv and Kyiv region. Thus, 38.4 thousand Poles lived in Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Volyn and Rivne regions at the beginning of 2001, in Khmelnytsky and Vinnytsia – 26.8 thousand, in Zhytomyr, Kyiv and Kyiv – 58, 8 thousand people, which is 86% of the total Polish population of Ukraine. It should be noted that a relatively large share of Poles remains in the South of Ukraine: in Odessa, Kherson, Mykolaiv regions and in the Crimea, as well as in Donbass, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia and Kharkiv regions, which are the most Russified region, hence negatively affecting their linguistic and cultural development. The national-cultural and spiritual revival of the Ukrainian Poles took place simultaneously with the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and independence, the adoption of the Law on National Minorities<sup>3</sup>, the formation of the Council of National Societies. Relying on the constitutional guarantees of equal civil and national rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities to preserve their identity, create public associations, prevent any national and religious discrimination and state support from Ukraine and Poland, Poles joined the socio-political and cultural life, consolidating around their national-cultural societies and the newly formed national media. The ethnic linguistic and cultural mobilization of Poles started simultaneously with the restoration of state sovereignty and full independence of Poland and then Ukraine. In the late 80s of the twentieth century in many cities of Ukraine, along with the reform of Soviet-Polish societies, which performed mostly ideological functions and paid little attention to the problems of the Polish population in the USSR and the UkSSR, Polish national and cultural societies began to be established. During 1990-1991 two congresses of Ukrainian Polonia took place where the Union of Poles of Ukraine – ZPU (chairman S. Kostecki, now G. Yurkowska) and the Federation of Polish Organizations in Ukraine – FOPU (chairman E. Khmelov) were founded. At the initiative of the Federation, the Sejm of Poles in Podillia was held in 1996, which approved a program of national and cultural revival of the Polish minority and increasing its role in the Ukrainian-Polish dialogue. Among the regional associations, the A. Mickiewicz Kyiv Cultural and Educational Society (chairman I. Gilov), Kyiv National Cultural Society "Consent" (chairman R. Malowski), Polish Cultural Center in Odessa, Polish houses in the Crimea, Dubno, Chernivtsi, in the village of Yakymivka, Zaporizhia region, as well as centers of the Polish culture in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Mykolaiv, Dnipro were the most active in terms of social activity during that period. Valuable experience was gained by the Polish House in Kyiv, which was inaugurated in April 1995. It has various sections, including a senior club, a youth club, a Catholic discussion club, a business contact club, and a medical counselling centre. The number of Polish national and cultural associations is growing every year, and their work is being diversified. In the autumn of 1990, there were 8 Polish national and cultural societies, while at the beginning of 2006 there were almost 50, which has expanded their influence on Polish communities, diversified forms of work, established themselves as legitimate representatives of the Polish people, protectors of its national and cultural values. The most notable of them are the A. Mickiewicz Society of Polish Culture in Zaporizhia (E. Rosenbaum), in Rivne (V. Bukleryvych), the branch of the Union of Poles of Ukraine in Dnipro (R. Verbitsky), in Odessa (B. Zayachkovsky). The Poles welcomed the

<sup>1</sup> Дані Всесоюзного перепису населення СРСР 1989 року (1991). *Національний склад населення України*. Київ, I, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Дані Всеукраїнського перепису населення 2001 року (2003). *Національний склад населення України та його мовні ознаки*. Київ, 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Закон України про національні меншини в Україні, 1992* (Верховна Рада України). *Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України* <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2494-12#Text>> (2021, Мау, 17); Курас, І. Ф. (ред.) (1994). *Національні відносини в Україні у XX ст.* Київ: Наукова Думка.

restoration of old and the creation of new periodicals, the increase in the number of Polish books in Ukraine. In 1990, after a 46-year break, "Gazeta Lwowska" was published again, and in 1993 "Dziennik Kijowski" which specializes on the past and current events in life of Poles in Ukraine, Ukrainian-Polish relations and at the same time it contains information about the reforms in Poland. Since 1997, the newspaper of national minorities "My Family", founded by the East Ukrainian Academy of Business, has been published in Kharkiv. The editorial board member is a representative of the Polish Culture Society E. Zaritsky. Along with "Gazeta Lwowska", "Dziennik Kijowski" the abovementioned media is dedicated to detailed highlighting the life of Poles in Ukraine and their problems. Another bright sample of the Polish minority media is "From the pedigree of Ukrainian Poland" aimed at developing the cultural level, language training and national consciousness of Poles. The problems of the Polish minority in terms of television and radio are dealt by broadcasting studios in Lviv and Zhytomyr which have Polish-language programs and channels. For instance, "Lwowska Fala Radiowa" broadcasts two-hour programs every Thursday and four-hour programs every Friday. The Institute of Polish Culture operating in Kyiv was established as a representative office of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote national cultural heritage and the research centre of Polish studies at Ivan Franko Lviv National University and National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy". At Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and the National University "Ostroh Academy" students learn Polish in the departments of history, cultural studies and economics, in addition, "Ostroh Academy" has a Polish college. Students regularly visit Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz and other Polish cities<sup>1</sup>. On the basis of the D. Furmanov library in Kyiv created the A. Mickiewicz library, in the funds of which a large selection of fiction, political, popular science and educational literature in Polish is presented. The Ukrainian authorities are sympathetic to the initiative of Polish public associations, which put the issue of national education and schooling at the forefront of their activities, due to the educational and language situation inherited from the totalitarian regime not only among children but also among adult Poles.

Considering the difficult language and educational situation for Poles in Ukraine, Polish societies have put forward the revival of national education in its various forms. During the years of independence, the foundation of the Polish education system in Ukraine was set, which includes: schools and classes with teaching in Polish, schools and classes in where the Polish language is studied optionally; Sunday schools for children and adults. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in 1995, 3,047 students studied in Polish in 88 schools, 239 classes and groups. 1241 students studied Polish as a subject<sup>2</sup>. In addition, thousands of pupils and students study Polish as an optional subject. There are departments and training groups for teachers of Polish language at Kyiv and Lviv universities, Drohobych Pedagogical University. Since 1996, the Association of Polish Teachers in Ukraine has been active, with more than 60 teachers from Poland. Hundreds of graduates of secondary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums and colleges go to Poland to study permanently or temporarily in Polish universities and Polish language courses. Since 1991, a purposeful revival of Polish schooling in the Zhytomyr region has started. A Polish school and separate classes in Zhytomyr and Berdychiv are successfully operating while a new Polish school building is under construction in Dovbysh<sup>3</sup> and Maryanivka. Local and all-Ukrainian Olympiads play an important role in the promotion and dissemination of the Polish language, at one of them, which took place in Khmelnytsky in March 1995, the winners were Irena Galka, Oleksandr Simayev and Tetyana Lisna<sup>4</sup>. At the initiative of the "Zghoda" Society, Polish language courses for adults were established in Kyiv under the leadership of N. Sydyachenko<sup>5</sup>. Regarding the opening of new Polish schools and classes in Ukraine, this process is constrained by a number of objective factors, including the dispersed resettlement of Poles, personnel and financial difficulties, conservatism of some parents who do not see the need for their children to learn Polish accepting the dominance of Russian and Ukrainian. The Polish community is very interested in scientific and cultural cooperation between Ukraine and Poland, as it is widespread and most conducive to its national and cultural development. Through contacts of intellectuals, cultural and artistic dialogue, negative layers and stereotypes of the past are overcome, national consciousness is deepened, and ethnic identity is affirmed. This cooperation is based on the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland "Towards

<sup>1</sup> *Gazeta Lwowska* (1996), 7, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Dziennik Kijowski* (1995), 5, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Dziennik Kijowski* (1997), 9, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Калакура, О. (2007). Мовно-культурний розвиток сучасної польської меншини в Україні. *Наукові записки Інституту політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень ім. І. Ф. Кураса НАН України*, 34, 243. <[http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Nzipiend\\_2007\\_34\\_24](http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Nzipiend_2007_34_24)> (2021, May, 17).

<sup>5</sup> *Dziennik Kijowski* (1995), 5, 3.

Understanding and Unity" (1997), a number of intergovernmental agreements<sup>1</sup> and has a positive impact on the state and prospects of socio-political, economic and humanitarian relations between Ukraine and Poland. Already in the mid-1990s, there were 87 direct agreements on joint scientific researches, 38 Ukrainian and 62 Polish research institutions took part in it<sup>2</sup>. Among the key joint research projects, in addition to technical and natural, there are such as: "Ukraine and Poland in the European integration process", "Problems of Ukrainian-Polish border relations", "Polish-Ukrainian language border", "Problems of Ukrainian history Polish relations of the 16th-20th centuries" and others. Mutual exchange of publications continues, bilateral and multilateral scientific conferences, symposia, seminars are held regularly. In November 1997, Kyiv hosted an international scientific conference "Polish culture in the life of Ukraine: history, today", where more than 50 reports were presented by leading historians and culturologists, scientists of both countries. The impetus for further intensification of these ties was the holding of Poland in Ukraine in 2004 and the year of Ukraine in Poland in 2005. In the context of socio-cultural development of the Polish minority, cooperation in the field of cinematography, professional and amateur arts, festival, club, museum, archival and library affairs is important. Under the patronage of President A. Kwasniewski, Polish documentary filmmakers created the film "Difficult Brotherhood" about Simon Petliura; due to the Polish-Ukrainian collaboration, the films "With Fire and Sword", "Prayer for Mazepa" were released. There are about a hundred Polish amateur groups in Ukraine: choirs, dance ensembles, orchestras of folk instruments, vocal groups, many of which take part in the annual art festivals of national minorities "We are all your children, Ukraine!" and festivals of Polish culture and art such as "Rainbow of Polissya" in Zhytomyr and similar events in Kyiv, Lviv and Gorodok in Khmelnytsky region. The Polish National Theatre and the Polish "Lytunia" Choir in Lviv are very popular, and in addition to performances in various regions of Ukraine, they have repeatedly toured in Poland. Folk ensembles and groups "Pierwiosnek", "Jaskółki", "Kantyezki" at the A. Mickiewicz Kyiv societies and "Zghoda", "Polissya Falcons" at the "Union of Poles of Zhytomyr Region" and other ethnographic community of Polonia are noted for their high performing skills and popularity. Polish Community in Ukraine joined the World Council of Polish Folklore established in December 1995 and took part in the Polonia Festival in Rzeszów in 1996. Positive resonance among the Polish people is caused by measures to preserve Polish architectural and artistic monuments and cult buildings in Ukraine. The compromise solution to the confrontational issue over the Polish Orlat Cemetery in Lviv was made, some cultural and archival historically important items were returned to Poland, but still the Polish community draws attention to shortcomings and difficulties in organizing national, cultural and religious life and lack of support from local authorities. As rightly noted in 1997 by Consul of The Republic of Poland E. Jablonski, some Poles complain that the media provide little material about the life of the Polish people, its problems and difficulties<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, the Polish minority in independent Ukraine, on the one hand, gradually revives its ethno-national characteristics, including native language, church attendance, develops traditional folk culture and mentality, and on the other hand, increasingly integrates into Ukrainian society, joins the public life of the state and being an effective factor in the Ukrainian-Polish partnership, which in the context of globalization goes beyond bilateral cooperation. For Ukraine, a strategic partnership with Poland is an important condition for its European integration. To replace some cooling of Ukrainian-Polish interstate relations which happened during the last term of President Leonid Kuchma, who supported the eastern vector of foreign policy, after the "Orange Revolution", the political achievements of which were also due to the support of Republic of Poland in the person of the President A. Kwasniewski and Ex-President L. Valensa, a new Poland's role in lobbying Ukraine's interests in the international arena was understood. Reviving the national-cultural and linguistic traditions of their ancestors, Poles in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Poland act as a reliable bridge of Ukrainian-Polish understanding, cooperation and partnership.

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