

**UKRAINIAN ORIENTALIST V. DUBROVSKY AND
HIS ESSAY “TÜRKİYE BETWEEN DEVIL AND
DEEP SEA” (1947)**

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ABSTRACT

The contribution deals with Ukrainian Orientalist V. Dubrovsky and his scientific heritage especially with his essay “Türkiye Between Devil and Deep Sea” (1947). The essay was devoted to the very complex issue of Soviet-Turkish relations immediately after WWII when the Turkish Republic became an object of enormous pressure from the USSR that brought forward its claims for Kars, Ardagan, Artvin and Olta and other demands especially concerning the Straits. V. Dubrovsky scrupulously recorded all the major and less important events of the diplomatic battle between the Western countries and the USSR on the international arena including the UN. He stressed the importance of US support to Türkiye to avoid disintegration of the national territory of the Turkish Republic and to preserve internal peace in the country. He considered that the firmness of Turkey was very important for future Ukraine because in such a way an exclusive doorway to the West was provided, the other avenues being blocked by Soviet satellites.

Key Words: Turkey, Ukraine, Oriental Studies, international relations.

Ukrainian scholar Vasyl Dubrovsky (1897-1966) unfortunately today is not well known in his country and abroad. During the years of the Ukrainian national Renaissance of 20^{ies} - beginning of 30^{ies} of the XXth century he was an appreciable person in culture and Orientalist-Turcologue. He published a series of articles on history of Turkish-Ukrainian relations trying to present oftentimes complex pages of our common history with all objectivity, because generally relations between the two countries were described through stereotypes taken from the epoch of Romantism. One of his articles was entitled “Ukraine and the Near East in historical relations”. It is like a short enumeration of problems for possible history research. Rather than underlining importance of facts relating to political and military history he stresses such details as “1) technical borrowings, i. e. influences via material culture; 2) blood mixing, i. e. Metisization of population; 3) borrowings of ideological character – folklore, beliefs, habits, languages”. (Dubrovsky, 1928; 157) In his opinion materials of research in such fields will make possible “to define relations of peoples among them” in the best way. No less important from methodological point of view was his article

“On study of relations between Ukraine and Türkiye in the second half of the XVIIIth century”. In this paper V. Dubrovsky explores Ukrainian-Turkish relations in the period when they became, as he puts it “the most active and mobile in the field of politics”(Dubrovsky, 1928/2; 172). Especially he stresses the necessity to use archive materials not only from Moscow and Poland but Turkish as well, for fruitful exposition of the history of the two countries.

At the second Congress of Ukrainian Orientalists (November 2, 1929) he presented a paper entitled “Ukraine and the Crimea in historical relations”. But as the author writes himself: “It was not permitted to be published in the USSR as anti-Marxist. . .”(Dubrovsky, 1946; 2). It is interesting to note that a large synopsis of it was printed maybe because of censorship mistake in a special issue of the journal “Chervony shlahk” (The Red Path) (1930, #2), consecrated to Ukrainian-Turkish relations, in an article by A. P. Kovalivsky “From the history of Turco-Ukrainian relations” (Kovalivsky, 1930). But V. Dubrovsky’s paper was published only in 1946 in emigration, and in 1956 a solid part of it was published in Turkish in the journal “Dergi” (Munich).

After the crushing of Ukrainian science at the beginning of the 30ies many Orientalists were persecuted including Vasyl Dubrovsky. Five years he passed at hard labors in the Far East camps of GULAG, before WWII he was released but it was impossible for him to find a job. So after the war he turned up in Western Germany where he participated together with others in organizing intellectual life of refugees from the USSR who were a target for Soviet special services which with the help of their American and British friends hunted for them. That’s why on the printed materials of Ukrainian scientists-refugees, in order to mislead Soviet “head-hunters”, such places of print like Geneva, Odessa, different German towns or even Vladivostok were indicated.

Living conditions of refugees were difficult but Vasyl Dubrovsky continued to work. An important moment of his biography was his collaboration with Turkophone journal “Dergi”, which was published in several languages in Munich by the American Institute of Soviet Studies. When studying life and creative work of this prominent Orientalist we’ve read his papers which were published in Ukrainian in emigrees’ media. Quite recently we had some fruits of Ukrainian-Turkish science cooperation: a Turkish scientist Dr. Sabahettin Şimşir organized a re-edition of the articles of V. Dubrovsky which first were published in “Dergi”, this time in Almatı, Kazakstan (also in Turkish) (Şimşir, 2006). Thus his scientific heritage will not be lost in ancient journals and can be useful for nowadays researchers.

In this collection there are eight articles, first of which appeared in the first issue in 1955, and the last one in 1966, i. e. in the year of his death.

The first article is entitled “Creation and destruction of Ukrainian Orientalistics”. There we find a concise history of Ukraine-Türkiye relations, in

particular, known facts of friendly sentiments between Bogdan Khmelnytsky and a Crimean general Tugay-bey, of Zaporozhian Cossacs with Crimean Tatars. Then it goes about organization of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and All-Ukrainian scientific association of orientalistcs, about a prominent role played by A. Krymsky in coming into being of Oriental Studies in Ukraine.

The second article is also of ideological character: it goes in it about views of contemporary Soviet historians on the Turkik world. Making several positive remarks concerning Ukrainian historians belonging to M. Hrushevsky school, further he attacks the first volume of "A history of the Ukrainian SSR" (1953) which presents the history of Turkish-Ukrainian relations from the point of view of Russian imperialism. In particular reveals the stereotypes produced by Moscow concerning our Southern neighbors, for example, "Türkiye – brigands' country", "Türkiye – Ukraine's enemy", "Bogdan Khmelnytsky – an enemy of Türkiye", "Ukrainian and Tatars are eternal enemies". Russia's policies with regard to the Crimea and Caucasus are shown in a distorted way. Evidently, as an objective researcher, he condemns such a treatment of themes important to Ukraine's history.

The big (biggest in the collection) article "Historical sources and research works on Turk Crimea" still hasn't lost its significance. In practice it is a shortened presentation of the bibliography part of his paper "Ukraine and the Crimea in historic relations" which as a manuscript copyright edition appeared in 1946 in Geneva in a primitive printing technique. The place of edition was taken as we mentioned above in order to conceal the real place of Ukrainian political emigrants activities in West Germany. It is impossible to overestimate this work for Turkish researchers: in the best traditions of A. Krymsky it contains more than a hundred titles of different sources and research papers in Russian as well as in Western European languages. Quite naturally he also enumerates turcological literature in Ukraine that was available at the time, including numerous works by acad. A. Krymsky and his own, old and recent, for example published in "The Black Sea Collection" (vol. X and vol. XI) articles "The Crimean Autonomous Republic (a necrologue) and "The Liquidated Republics".

The question of the situation in Central Asian republics of the USSR is the subject of the article "Concerning some data on Soviet Turkestan". Here we see after a short historical introduction a review based on recent Soviet publications on economic and social situation in the mentioned countries. A colonial character of Russia's domination in the region is stressed.

No less important and sharp was the article on Azerbaidjan. It was practically a detailed review of the book by F. Sh. Shybanov "Development of Soviet statehood in Azerbaidjan. -Moscow, 1959". As an abstract signed "A historian" he published it in the journal "The Ukrainian Historian" abroad. In

this article he reveals the hypocrisy of the Soviet national policy taking as an example Azerbaidjan and debunks the apology of such a policy, which Soviet propaganda imposed on the world opinion. He compared the situation in this country with the fate of Ukraine.

He deals in detail with the historic events in the South Caucasus during the October Revolution and the Civil War. Motives and phases of creation of the USSR – “a false cover” as he named it “(except for Russian Federation!), what hides colonial dependence of the AzSSR and other non-Russian republics from the RSFSR”.

The sixth chapter of V. Dubrovsky’s paper has the title “Constitutional tricks of the bolsheviks”. The scientist called forming of the Soviet delegation to the Genoa conference a “rush trick”, then revealed the farce of the creation of the Trans-Caucasian Soviet Socialist Federal Republic (which by the way existed for 14 years) (Şimşir, 2006; 90).

Besides articles of general political character the collection contains also cognitive articles. One is entitled “The Turks Yakuts”, the second described distribution of Soviet State-owned enterprises on the eve of WWII (it goes about Union and autonomous republics of the USSR), the third article is a review of the book by Natalia Vassilenko-Polonska “Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. A historical outline. Vol. I”. All these materials provided for Türkiye’s public truthful information about genuine colonial policy of the Soviet Empire.

For the reasons unknown to us his large actual elaborate “Türkiye between Devil and Deep Sea” did not appear on the pages of “Dergi”. The first seven chapters of it were printed in emigrants’ newspaper “In a Foreign World” in 1946. In full it was published as a manuscript in “The Black Sea Collection”, vol. 11 and as separate off-print in 1947 in Mainz Kastel (West Germany). It means it was written immediately in hot footsteps of events which were taking place around Türkiye at the time of and after the end of WWII.

This paper of V. Dubrovsky merits attention because it is not a reporter’s commentary but a profound penetrating research of really a hot topic of world politics. It is a research of actuality but it is written in such a way as the best specialist in history write about events of ancient history – fundamentally, completely in an academic manner, one may say it responds to a demand of one German professor who considered that only when *Gegenwart* is explored *als Geschichte* it will be knowledge of History.

Because of well-known reasons Soviet historians did not go deep into this episode of Turkish-Soviet relations or acted as apologists of Russian expansionism, even for this reason V. Dubrovsky’s work is a valuable contribution to the historiography of after-war international relations.

The author immediately puts the problem of after-war Soviet-Turkish relations in a large international and geopolitical context. He writes: "One of the most complicated international issues after WWII is solving the claims forwarded in a sharp way by the Soviet Union to Türkiye. This problem is not a direct result of the WWII (because Türkiye kept during the war its neutrality), but it was tightly connected with that principal result of the War that the victory of the Soviets over Germany and its allies so changed the balance of power in Europe to the benefit of the Soviets that gave them audacity to put forward such maximalist claims which tsarist Russia never would dared to present" (Dubrovsky, 1947; 11). As we know Kars, Ardagan and some other localities in Eastern Türkiye which according to the decisions of the Berlin Congress of 1878 were in Russian possession after 1918 they were returned to Türkiye and the Soviet Government in 20^{ties}-30^{ties} did not raise question about their return. In March 1945 the Soviet Government informed Türkiye that it will not prolong its Friendship Treaty and the Non-Agression Pact. In June it was declared that the USSR Government will forward questions not only about revision of the Montreux Convention (what intended to do all concerned countries) but also about the return of the territories which belonged to the Russian Empire and produced some other claims.

At the same time "the public" of Georgian SSR and of Armenian SSR started to demand in media returning the territories which in remote days belonged to these countries. All such declarations were re-produced in Central Moscow press. V. Dubrovsky wrote about these claims: "Altogether it composes all East Anadolu, exactly a quarter of present Turkish territory" (Dubrovsky, 1947; (Dubrovsky, 1947; 14). Naturally the Turkish Government did not agree and pressure mounted. It seemed clear from everything that by its actions in the Balkans and by its interference in Greek affairs, by demanding to hand them over bases on the Dodecanese Islands and furious pressuring of Türkiye the USSR wants to create a strong position in the Mediterranean and in general in the Near East plus the USSR supported a serious uprising in the "Iranian Azerbaidjan". "The situation in the Near East was complicated and acute as never before", -- wrote V. Dubrovsky (Dubrovsky, 1947; 5).

The researcher analyses in detail the situation inside the country, pinpoints its weak points which enabled the USSR through its Komintern agents to undermine the Turkish state pushing it to concessions to the benefit of the aggressor. The Turkish Government did not agree with the Soviet proposal to protect the Dardanelles "jointly" being aware of the real meaning of such a proposal. The US and Great Britain supported the Turkish position and reminded to the Soviet Union that there is the UN Security Council which can help Türkiye in a case of necessity. But the Soviet Union insisted that the question of protection of the Straits were the matter of only two countries what was clearly against the spirit and letter of the Montreux Convention. Further V.

Dubrovsky enumerates American military actions and precisely reproduces the content of the declaration delivered by prime-minister Recep Peker on Türkiye's foreign policy in which he rejected the Soviet claims. The US position articulated by President H. Truman in his speech on Army Day and shown in an article of prominent political observer W. Lippmann in "The New York Herald Tribune" on October 11, 1946 was of great importance for solving this conflict because the situation was getting dangerous. Subversive activities by the Soviet Union on Turkish territory were going on, the Soviet diplomacy insisted on starting of bilateral negotiations. At the same time pressure on Greece continued too.

The Ukrainian scientist when analyzing the situation shows really a strategic vision, writing that Türkiye "is a natural bastion that protects oil sources of the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia etc) which contain principal world reserves of this powerful liquid and are so important for American and British industry and transportation" (Dubrovsky, 1947; 19). Further he analyses "a step of exclusive importance of the US President", namely a declaration at the joint sitting of both chambers of the US Congress on March 12, 1947 with a proposal to render assistance to Türkiye and Greece in order to save democratic regimes there. Among other things he spoke about military aid in arms, training of personnel, restructuring of armed forces. After debates that were heated at times a necessary Law was adopted and owing to it territorial integrity of Türkiye was preserved. Great Britain followed the United States.

Vasyl Dubrovsky as a historian very highly appreciates this American initiative: "By this act the United States: 1) resolutely stepped out of the state of self-isolation on the Western Hemisphere, renounced from their traditional Monroe Doctrine and started to direct all the World Politics; 2) took on themselves from Great Britain the main burden of protecting the Mediterranean and the Near East in interests of all concerned countries; 3) openly recognized division of the World into hostile spheres – bolshevik and democratic; 4) tied up the Turkish problem with all international politics, making of it one of the principal cornerstones" (Dubrovsky, 1947; 19-20). I would like to remind that it was written in 1947.

In his work V. Dubrovsky shows in detail all the process of discussion on the question of aid to Türkiye and Greece in the Senate and in the House of Representatives of the United States, mentions also the reaction of the USSR on such an American initiative, in particular, at the UN. He devoted an important place to presenting the reaction of the media to the events connected with adoption of the Law about assistance to Türkiye and Greece which were threatened by the Soviet Union.

The author of the paper stresses urgency of all actions to provide an aid to the two states because the danger from the Soviet Union was a real one and

might have had unforeseen consequences for the whole world. That's why the study of problems of rendering military aid to Türkiye started even before the signing of the pertinent law by President H. Truman, what happened on May 22, 1947.

The program of a new lend-lease was not only a military support for Türkiye. It had as well a great international political significance: it provided Turkey a moral force to oppose the Soviet Union and opened the possibility to obtain credit at international financial agencies. So Premier R. Peker while supporting the policy of good neighborly relations with the USSR was in a position to say that he does not want to have friendship "on Munich conditions" (Dubrovsky, 1947; 27). Besides that, V. Dubrovsky stressed, a precedent of a contra-action in form of assistance to Türkiye and Greece "pushed the United States to develop this work genuinely on an American scale" (Dubrovsky, 1947; 27), one may say now that it was a prototype of the "Marshall's Plan".

In a conclusion of his work the professor stresses the great importance of effective and timely American aid which saved Türkiye from dismemberment.

In this he finds as well a geopolitical importance of American initiative for his enslaved Motherland – Ukraine, he ends his paper with such words: "From the point of view of the interests of the Ukrainian people it is clear that in a case when the Soviets locked with their armies and bases the Black Sea - Aegean Straits it would have meant the closing of the last safety-valve of Ukraine to the external world (after the Soviets with a ring of vassal Balkan states had shut the Ukrainian window from the West of Europe). In the case whether the Straits remained free and Türkiye independent from Soviet influence – salvation for Ukraine could had come more easily from the Black Sea, South, not from Baltic, North" (Dubrovsky, 1947; 27).

In our opinion Prof. V. Dubrovsky's work is topical and can serve as a historic lesson for Türkiye as well as for Ukraine.

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