

DISPLACE OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO POLAND DURING THE THIRD DECADE OF THE XXTH CENTURY

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The paper explores the displace of Polish archives from the Soviet Union that was performed in 1920s according to the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921 and other international agreements. The aim of the research is to reconstruct the process of displace, based on the archival sources and literature. The object of the research is those documents that were preserved in the archives of Belarus and together with archives from other republics were displaced to Poland. The exploration leads to clarification of the selection of document fonds to be displaced, the actual process of movement and the explanation of the role that the archivists of Belarus performed in the history of cultural relationships between Poland and the Soviet Union. The articles of the Treaty of Riga had been formulated without taking into account the indivisibility of archive fonds that is one of the most important principles of restitution, which caused the failure of the treaty by the Soviet part.

Key words: displaced archives, restitution, cultural values, Belarus, Treaty of Riga of 1921.

I. THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PROBLEM

Since 1918 much attention has been paid to the restitution of cultural values on the territory of the USSR in the Polish historiography. Primarily it is defined by the immensity of these attitudes. Upon 23 largest acts of interstate documents return on the territory of the USSR Poland is second to Hungary (relatively 5 and 7 facts) (Козлов, 1999, p. 279). Transferring of the documents were held in 1918, 1922–1924, 1925, 1945, 1954, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1961, 1963, and 1967.

The first scientific studies in Polish historiography highlighting this problem appeared during the implementation of Art. XI of the Treaty of Riga of 1921, which presupposed the return of Polish archives. First the problem was raised by K. R. Sochaniewicz (Sochaniewicz, 1921), and the documents of the Polish-Soviet commission on restitution were published in 1922–1923 (*Dokumenty dotyczące akcji delegacji polskiej, 1922–1923*). Then the results of the activity of mixed commissions have been described by K. Tyshkowsky

(Tyszkowski, 1924; Tyszkowski, 1925; Tyszkowski, 1926), S. Rygiel (Rygiel, 1924), W. Suchodolski (Suchodolski, 1927), E. Siemiński (Siemieński, 1927), L. Białkowski (Białkowski, 1927), P. Bankowski (Bańkowski, 1937; Bańkowski, 1948), S. Ptashycki (Bańkowski, 1930), Ya. Warezak (Wareżak, 1931) at different times.

The October crisis of 1956 became the following stage of the research in Polish historiography when Poland's dependence on the Soviet Union began to weaken. During these years the attention of historians was directed to the research of the fate of cultural values seized during World War II. K. Wróbel-Lipowa's research is the most significant study among the works published in this field (Wróbel-Lipowa, 1982).

The Polish science was given a new impulse because of the opportunity to explore previously banned aspects after September 12, 1989 when III Rzecz Pospolita was formed. The fate of Polish cultural values which were on the territory of the USSR, as well as the states formed after the collapse of the USSR (especially in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania) have come to the foreground since that time. The first study in this field was published in 1992 by W. Stępnia (Stępnia, 1992; Stępnia, 1995). Later the works by E. Froncki (Frącki, 1993; Frącki, 1997) and B. Woszczyński (Woszczyński, 1993; Woszczyński, 1997) were released. The reference book about Polonika in the archives of SARF and RSMA was published under the editorship of W. Stępnia (Archiwalia polskiej proweniencji, 2000). The director general of the state archives in Poland J. Skowronek made a large contribution to the development of the problem of archival restitution during 1993–1996 (Skowronek, 1993; Skowronek, 1995). Y. Miler in his turn introduced the result of the work of the Bureau of authorized administration studying the problems of cultural heritage abroad (Miler, 1999). Besides scientific research works a number of documents related to restitution of Polonika from the USSR were published with the participation of J. Kumaniecki (Kumaniecki, 1991).

In spite of a number of studies the publications by D. Matelski (Matelski, 1973; Matelski, 2003) and E. Rozowska (Rozowska, 2003) say that the problem of archival cooperation between Poland and the Soviet Union continues to be relevant. E. Rozowska in her article points out that it is necessary not only to make the lists of archival systems more exact but to research the process of division of the Polish archival fund in territorial and institutional aspects nowadays which will help to retrace the history of material movement and find out their fate during their presence on the territory of the Soviet Union. Moreover the

problem of the Polish archival heritage hadn't become the object of a thorough study on the part of the Soviet science except for the E. Starostin's publications especially, as well as of the modern Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian science (Старостин, 2001; Старостин, 2003). This situation creates not only the tendentious coverage of the events, but omits the essential aspects of a restitution process. One of these aspects is the problem of Belarusian archival heritage as a part of Polish claims to return and the ways of resolution of the problem of storage for documentary values related to the history of several states.

In this article we deal with the history of that part of archival collections which had been stored in the archives of Belarus and then together with the available fonds of the other republics of the Soviet Union were displaced to Poland. We aimed to find out how the fonds for the transferring were determined and how this work was held and what role the Belarusian archivists played in cultural relations between Poland and the USSR.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE DISPLACE OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

The legal basis for the displace of the Polish cultural heritage was made on the initiative of the decree of the Soviet government "On the restitution of cultural values", which was adopted in 1917 because of the difficult political situation and the war with Germany (Старостин, 2001, p. 155). However, the issue on this matter was solved later under Article XI and Annex № 3 to the Treaty of Riga Peace of 1921 (Ольшанский, 1969, p. 221–225). Special Mixed Soviet-Polish commission headed by A. Olshevsky on the Polish part and O. Schmidt (who was replaced soon by P. Voykov) on the Soviet part was established mostly for making a list and a storage area of cultural values.

In 1921 the Polish Commission directed the memorandum to the Soviet delegation about the returning of the State Archive of the Republic of Poland (the Crown Archive, also called the Krakov Archive, the Crown Archive from Warsaw, Archive of the Crown Register, Lithuanian Metrica and Lithuanian archives), the archive of Stanislav August Poniatovsky, materials on the Kostiushko Uprising, and the President of Warsaw Zakrevski, the Permanent Council, the commission of police and jurisdiction of the marshalka, the Commission of National Education, the Archive of Historical Records in Warsaw (the State Council, the Administrative Council of Duchy of Warsaw, the Provi-

sional Government, the Deputy of the Kingdom of Poland, Governor-General of Warsaw, Field Army Audytariat in the Polish Kingdom, Extraordinary Investigation Commission of 1832, district military commandants of 1863–1864 (Matelski, 2003, p. 77).

The archives of provincial establishments “Kongresówki” and the Association of Mutual Assistance in Case of Fire were partially displaced to Poland in 1922 (Dokumenty dotyczące akcji Delegacyj Polskich, 1922, p. 38; Kowalski, 1998, p. 19). At the same time, the Soviets part refused to return the Lithuanian *Metrica* (Archive of the Ministry of Justice in Moscow) and the so-called metrics of Volyn (Archive of Foreign Affairs in Moscow). V.Picheta, later the first rector of the Belarusian State University, which at that time was a member of the Russian-Ukrainian commission, played an essential role in the case (Докладная записка В. Пичеты, 1921, lap. 25–30; Протоколы комиссии для выяснения вопросов, связанных с передачей документов Польше, 1921). The chairman of the CEC SSRB A.Chervyakov addressed himself to Glavarkhiv with the statement about the failure to issue Lithuanian *Metrica* to the government of other country on May 31, 1921 (Протоколы комиссии, 1921, lap. 19.). The Russian part was also interested in keeping these archives. Moreover Prof. M. Lyubavsky gives some interesting arguments in his memo informing that “Poland takes scientific orientation of Belarus capturing Lithuanian *Metrica* and this is not desirable for Russia” (Протоколы комиссии, 1921, lap. 51–53).

Only a catalogue of the Lithuanian *Metrica* (composed during the period of 1747–1750 in Crown Chancery) which was kept in the library of the General Staff in Leningrad was displaced to the Polish side. But at the official level it was explained by the fact that the materials of the Metrics don’t refer to Poland according to the Treaty of Riga (Пичэта, 1999, p. 34).

On October 30, 1922 the Commission finished the work having raised a point about returning to Poland the manuscripts from the public library and having adopted a resolution dealing with the matter of the acts from the archives of His Imperial Majesty’s own Chancellery on Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland, as well as state archives of Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth of Stanislav Poniatovsky period.

Thus by the end of 1922 3,000 manuscripts, 7,193 manuscripts from the Zaluzskyhs’ library, Seim diaries and various private collections were displaced to Poland, and the Permanent Council acts for the period of 1775–1788 (Akta Rady Nieustajacej, 1928) and evacuated in 1915 acts of the town Byala Podlaska were displaced in 1923 (Magier, 1997).

As a result of the following negotiations the Polish-Soviet consular convention that marked the relations between Warsaw and Moscow and gave the possibility for following research of Polish cultural heritage was signed on July 18, 1924.

In the framework of this Convention the identification of Polish documents was started in the Central Archive of Belarus. Basis for it was the claim by an expert of the Soviet delegation at the Special Mixed Commission S. Bogoyavlensky. He had revealed that under the supervision of Central Archive of the Byelorussian SSR were a large number of documents related to the territory of Poland, and formerly part of the Minsk province (or to be exact Pinsky uyezd and Novogrudsky uyezd) (Опись дел, книг и чертежей тех уездов Минской губернии, которые отошли в ведение Польского правительства, лар. 48).

According to the catalogue of those materials Central Archive started working on the fonds selection that was to be displaced (Опись дел, книг и чертежей тех уездов Минской губернии, которые отошли в ведение Польского правительства, лар. 9–11). However, during the work it became clear that if Poland would be displaced all archival materials related to the territories ceded to Poland, it would cause a huge damage to the “cultural construction” in the BSSR, because the documents of Pinsky uyezd and Novogrudsky uyezd were in all fonds of provincial institutions which were kept in the Minsk Historical Archive. The allocation of these materials was not only contrary to the principle of the indivisibility of fonds, but also put Belarusian science in a difficult position. All of these materials were under active study of the Institute of Belarusian culture, Belarusian State University, Belarusian State Academy of Agriculture, a number of local history organizations and individual researchers at that time. And taking into consideration the fact that there were very few historical documents in Belarus, it becomes clear that this issue had caused controversy and a desire to preserve as much as possible for the history of the Byelorussian SSR. Naturally in those political conditions the Byelorussian SSR could not refuse the displace. Therefore, archival management used to seek support to prevent the Polish representatives in archival institutions and displace only those materials which had no great historical significance.

Besides the archives of province institutions Belarusian archivists were concerned about the documents related to judicial bodies for the period 1800–1872. They were to be completely displaced to Poland but as the deputy manager of the Central Archives M. Meleshko noted “they had some connection with other

materials remaining in Belarusian archives”. For this reason it was decided that the least valuable materials that had been subjected to be displaced to Poland (300 poods) would be put in a separate room outside the Historical Archive for not to allow the Polish representatives to question the comprehensiveness of selection.

At the same time the Belarusian archival leadership understood that the character and components of fonds which were stored in Minsk are known in Poland. During the occupation Usas was the head of the Minsk archive, as well as Barantsevich, who were both in Poland at that time. Besides that, that archival information has been published at various times.

The General Treaty between Poland and the Soviet Union concerning the return of the cultural values, which had been taken away during the period of the Russian Empire, was signed in Warsaw on November 16, 1927. It concerned 32 cases which had not been solved by the Mixed Commission and became the foundation for the activation of restitution processes. For instance, under it the archive and library of Branitski family which contained so called “Gomel Collection” that was kept in Katkovsky house in Moscow (removed by field marshal Paskevich from Warsaw for his Palace in Gomel) and the property of Branitski family from the estate of Ros’, Grodno province (kept after evacuation in Gomel in the building of Azovo-Donsky commercial bank) were returned. If the “Gomel Collection” could relate to the evacuated values then the collection from the estate of Ros’ had a completely different character and its composition also belonged to the Belarusian land but at that time the question was not raised that way.

At that time in distinction from the previous years the Soviet state was not in such a desperate international position as at the time of the Treaty of Riga and could afford not to give the archival complexes considered as important for it. As, for instance, it happened with the diplomatic acts of the Office of the Vicar of the Kingdom of Poland (taken away after 1864 from Warsaw), among which was the final act of the Treaty of Vienna on June 9, 1815 about the formation of the Kingdom of Poland. The Soviet part did not want to give these materials as they contained the information about spies and informants of Tsar’s secret police on the territory of Poland. For this reason when the Polish delegation visited the Historical Museum in the Archive of the History of the Revolution in Moscow it saw only the empty covers of the cases and the cartons.

The work in the Byelorussian SSR went in a different direction: basically the questions which had been raised in 1924 were only solved and they re-

ceived a new development based on the item 3 of the General Treaty on November 16, 1927. The meeting on this subject was held in Minsk on November 22, 1928 and concerned the archives of the former Minsk province. On the Soviet side there were D. Zhilunovich and I. Vitkovsky and on the Polish one was Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Minsk G. Yankovsky and an expert of the Polish delegation V. Veytko. A list which had been provided by the Central Archive of the BSSR was accepted as a basis catalogue for future apportionment as there were not inventories and registers in which the work should be done (Дневник работы экспертов Смешанной советско-польской комиссии, 1928, lap. 62–63).

The experts revealed 29 archival fonds in the amount of 7,621 books, files and sheaves during the work on 23 November – 8 December 1928 (Дневник работы экспертов Смешанной советско-польской комиссии, 1928, lap. 60–61). Taking into consideration the unwillingness to return a number of fonds by the Central Archive in 1924, it can be supposed that a number of materials was hidden. For example, in previous years the Belarusian archival management concerned about the documents of the judiciary. During the work of the Polish delegation the fonds of uyezd governments, magistrates and zemsky's chiefs were not found. As M. Meleshko explained that a significant portion of these materials had been removed from Minsk during the war and the other one had been plundered during the occupation (Дневник работы экспертов Смешанной советско-польской комиссии, 1928, lap. 67–68). It can be presupposed that the answer of the deputy chairman of the Polish delegation W. Suchodolski about the absence of acts concerning the Minsk district court was not true. However, the Polish experts selected some of the materials and added them to the original list. The list was formed and confirmed at the second meeting and according to it the materials were displaced to Poland. Also on 7 December, 1928 the Polish part took the materials of Plotsk province on Peasant Affairs (67 sheaves and books) that had been stored in the Byelorussian SSR (Дневник работы экспертов Смешанной советско-польской комиссии, 1928, lap. 64–65).

CONCLUSIONS

As a result, we consider that the restitution processes between Poland and the USSR in the 20's of the 20th century were not always regular and implemented

within the terms of agreements. However, for our part we should notice that the actions of archival management were in contradiction with the implementation of international agreements but in the context of archival restitution were fully justified as the articles of the Treaty of Riga had been formulated without taking into account that the indivisibility of archive fonds is one of the most important principles of restitution. Moreover the problem of disputable fonds was not discussed during the activity of the Mixed Commission and for this reason this agreement cannot be considered as directed for restoring historical justice.

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DOKUMENTINIO PAVELDO JUDĖJIMAS IŠ SOVIETŲ SĄJUNGOS Į LENKIJĄ TREČIAJAME XX A. DEŠIMTMETyje

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SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje aptariama Lenkijos archyvų fondų restitucijos XX a. trečiajame dešimtmetyje problema, susijusi su Rygos taikos sutartimi ir kitais tarptautiniais susitarimais, vykdančiais Lenkijos archyvų grąžinimą Lenkijai iš Sovietų Sąjungos. Pagrindinis straipsnio tikslas – remiantis archyviniais dokumentais ir literatūra, pamėginti rekonstruoti dokumentų perdavimą. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama tiems dokumentams, kurie buvo saugomi Baltarusijos archyvuose ir vėliau kartu su kitų Sovietų Sąjungos respublikų archyviniais fondais buvo perduoti Lenkijai. Pabandyta išsiaiškinti, kaip buvo nustatoma, kokie dokumentų fondai turėtų būti perduoti, kaip vyko šis perdavimas ir kokį vaidmenį jame ir apskritai Lenkijos ir Sovietų Sąjungos kultūrinių ryšių istorijoje suvaidino Baltarusijos archyvai.