

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. “Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations”, URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/>

***Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history
of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations***

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The war that Russia started against Ukraine in 2014 became a challenge for all European countries. Countries that were not directly affected by the aggression faced a powerful wave of migrants from Ukraine fleeing the war. This was a unique and further test for the democratic institutions of these countries.

In particular, Luxembourg, with its traditions of relatively peaceful interactions between different cultures, has hospitably welcomed thousands of new migrants from Ukraine, a country unfamiliar to most of its residents. However, these interactions are not always free of conflict.¹ It is worth noting that for the vast majority of Ukrainians, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has also been a kind of *terra incognita* until now.

In this regard, we felt a need to introduce Ukrainians to Luxembourg society through the prism of historical events. It wants to highlight the attention of Ukrainian society to the historical traditions of Luxembourg's support of political migrants and refugees, including those from Ukraine.

This project, as an act of memorialization, aims to honor women who dedicated their lives to a noble cause - serving their people, overcoming difficulties and supporting their families. The project focuses on two women from different countries, representatives of the same generation that survived two world wars. Let us retrace their life stories against the backdrop of global historical events, to draw parallels and show key differences.

One is Charlotte of Nassau-Weilburg, born a princess and later Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. The other is Sophia Fedak, originally from Ukrainian Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later living in exile in Luxembourg. At first sight, everything opposes them. Yet they have much in common.

Charlotte was in the center of attention of a wide range of people from childhood and remained a public figure on a global scale until the end of her life. Sophia was fortunate enough to be born into a well-known, influential, and wealthy Lviv family, raised in Ukrainian traditions by caring parents, but had to avoid excessive publicity for most of her life and retained this status even after her death. However, time often sheds light even on historical shadows.

Let us cross perspectives of the countries where the two biographies. Though very different in terms of size, both countries are historically characterized by a situation at the crossroads of different spheres of influence, languages and political systems. The Duchy of Luxembourg was part of a composite monarchy ruled by the House of Luxembourg in the Middle Ages, then by the Habsburgs.

¹ Online : <https://cefis.lu/etude-racsime/>

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It was part of the Holy Roman Empire but often coveted and conquered by France before gaining statehood in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna (in personal union with the Netherlands until 1890).²

Ukraine was the center of the medieval Rus but was later divided between Poland-Lithuania and the Moscow-centered Russian empire. In the nineteenth-century strong independence and national language movements were emerging, contrary to Luxembourg, which became independent due to the decision of larger powers.³

In the course of the twentieth century, both Ukrainian and Luxembourgish nation-building occurred but in very different contexts: one within the framework (often resisting) the Soviet Union, the other within a sovereign state, declared "perpetually neutral" in 1867, yet twice invaded by Germany.⁴ When faced with an occupying power, people were torn between resistance, collaboration and the struggle to survive. For a long time, Ukraine was virtually unknown in the West, closed off by the totalitarian Soviet regime. Even after gaining independence in 1991, historical research on Ukraine mostly did not go beyond its neighboring countries, remaining little known in the rest of Europe. Today, the situation has changed. Due to the war, Ukraine has become known all over the world. And Ukrainians are learning more about Luxembourg, feeling its strong support in various fields and at all levels every day.⁵

GROWING UP IN THE BELLE EPOQUE

Any era is subtly reflected in its literature. People in creative professions have a special way of perceiving the world and defining their own place in it. For example, the famous Austrian writer Stefan Zweig described the events of the early and mid-twentieth century quite vividly. His "Yesterday's World," which can be easily extrapolated to the modern world, leaves no illusions. The book is largely autobiographical, but it is also an account of an entire generation that saw their world crumble; it is a kind of hymn to Europe written by an exile on another continent, sent to his publisher in February 1942 – two days before his suicide. *"...If I try to find some useful phrase to sum up the time of my childhood and youth before the First World War, I hope I can put it most succinctly by calling it the Golden Age of Security... But for all the sobriety of people's concept of life at the time, there was a dangerous and overweening pride in this touching belief that they could fence in their*

² Online : https://sip.gouvernement.lu/en/publications/minist-etat/sip/brochure/a-propos/A_propos_Histoire.html

³ Szporluk, Roman. "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State." *Daedalus*, vol. 126, №. 3, 1997. P. 85–119. Online : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027443>

⁴ Online : <https://orbi.lu.uni.lu/handle/10993/2052>

⁵ Szporluk, Roman. "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State." *Daedalus*, vol. 126, №. 3, 1997. P. 85–119. Online : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027443>

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existence, leaving no gaps at all. People no more believed in the possibility of barbaric relapses, such as wars between the nations of Europe, than they believed in ghosts and witches; our fathers were doggedly convinced of the infallibly binding power of tolerance and conciliation. They honestly thought gradually flow into a sense of common humanity, so that peace and security, the greatest of goods, would come to all mankind." ⁶

Charlotte

It always seems to ordinary people that the life of monarchs resembles a vividly illustrated fairy tale. The biography of Princess Charlotte of Luxembourg comforts this myth. Her life story is like a drama, but with a happy ending. On the one hand, it was the life of an ordinary person, in which sadness and joy, happiness and suffering alternated. It was the life of a woman whose father died early and was raised by her mother – together with her five sisters. At the same time, her life was regulated by her special status, which imposed certain responsibilities and limited her personal freedom.

The Nassau dynasty was one of the oldest European noble families with great wealth and possessions. It was in this family that Princess Charlotte was born on January 23, 1896. She was the second of six daughters in the family of Crown Prince Wilhelm of Luxembourg and his wife Princess Maria Anna of Portugal of the deposed Braganza dynasty. The girl had an older sister, Maria Adelaide, and younger sisters, Hilda, Antoinette, Elizabeth, and Sophia. The country was ruled by her grandfather Adolphe I. After his death in 1905, the princesses' father inherited the Luxembourg throne. Grand Duke Wilhelm was worried that in the absence of a male heir, his family might lose not only power but also their home. Therefore, he managed to agree with the government on changes to the Nassau-Weilburg family charter. This meant that the Luxembourg princesses would have a preemptive right to the throne in the Grand Duchy in order of birth. It is worth noting that the Duke's worries were not in vain. Unexpectedly, a contender of Russian descent, Count Georg von Merenberg, a descendant of the Grand Duke's brother Adolf by a morganatic marriage with the daughter of the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, declared his right to the throne. However, after a heated debate, the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies approved a law changing the succession to the throne in favor of princesses.⁷ Meanwhile, Count von Merenberg managed to have his claims silenced with a substantial annual pension.

⁶ Stefan Zweig. The World of Yesterday: Memoirs of a European. / Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. Pushkin Press Classics, London, 2009. P. 23-26.

⁷ Paul Lafontaine. Unsere Dynastie: die Ursprünge der Nassauer und die Herrschaft der Nassau-Weilburger im Grossherzogtum Luxemburg (1890-1990), Sankt-Paulus-Druckerei, 1990. P.78.

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Grand Duke William IV was seriously ill from the moment he inherited the throne until the end of his life. His wife, Regent Maria-Anna, took care of her seriously ill husband herself, so Charlotte and her sisters' childhood was not very happy. For example, the family was forced to move frequently because most of the existing residences were unsuitable for a comfortable life and their father's health. The lives of the princesses were strictly regulated and controlled, accompanied by various restrictions. Parliament, the government, church officials, and the press were closely monitoring all events in the life of the monarch's family, taking into account his health. Thus, sisters Charlotte and Hilda were not allowed to celebrate their First Communion in a lavish manner, as was customary in ordinary families. Deprived of the opportunity to attend school, to communicate freely with their peers, and to grow up like ordinary children, the princesses were brought up in isolation, limited to the family circle, teachers, and governesses. Meanwhile, the government and the general public were dissatisfied with the monarch's long absence from the country. Researchers noted the "alienation" of the ruling family, which eventually had critical consequences for the dynasty.⁸

The governments of different countries used their ambassadors to monitor the behavior of the princesses. Newspapers described in detail the princesses' lives and various rumors related to their possible marriage. Moreover, statesmen discussed possible partners for the princesses' future marriages, which would be beneficial primarily to the state.

Princesses Mary Adelaide and Charlotte began their representative duties early on, given their difficult family circumstances. At her mother's request, Charlotte accompanied her sister everywhere, preparing to take over the monarch's duties if necessary. The sisters attracted attention by their opposites. Mary Adelaide was characterized by restraint, shyness, and piety. Charlotte, on the other hand, was cheerful and open. The German ambassador to Luxembourg, Count Schwerin described Charlotte in his report: *"The princess is as gifted as her older sister, but fortunately does not suffer from such embarrassment. She makes every effort to fulfill her official duties. But she feels much more comfortable in a private circle, where her lively, cheerful temperament comes through. Everyone praises her for her special, cordial kindness... this friendliness is the main feature of her character, and her very elegant appearance is in perfect harmony with it..."*⁹

According to her biographers, Princess Mary Adelaide was not ready for the role of Grand Duchess. First of all, because she was too young and inexperienced when she lost her father and inherited the throne.¹⁰ The lavish funeral of her father,¹¹ the oppressive atmosphere of mourning, and the burden

⁸ Online : <https://history.uni.lu/research-luxembourg-4d/>

⁹ Quoted by Josiane Weber. Großherzogin Marie Adelheid von Luxemburg. Eine politische Biografie (1912-1919), Éditions Guy Binsfeld, Luxemburg, 2019, S. 94. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁰ Josiane Weber. Großherzogin Marie Adelheid von Luxemburg... S. 75-81.

¹¹ Arthur Klein. Zum Ableben von Großherzog Wilhelm IV: Ein Beitrag zur 150-Jahrfeier der Luxemburger Eisenbahnen. 2009. P. 5-20.

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Sofia

In contrast, the childhood of the other protagonist of our project, Sofia Fedak, was calm and carefree. She was born in Lviv (at that time part of Austria-Hungary) on October 30, 1901 as third of eight children. Her father, Stepan Fedak, was a prominent Lviv jurist, lawyer, and one of the richest Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia. Some contemporary Ukrainian researchers call him "*one of the then oligarchs of Austria-Hungary*".¹³ His eldest daughter jokingly called herself "*the daughter of a wealthy Lviv patrician*".¹⁴

It is worth noting that in the second half of the nineteenth century, Galicia became the center of the Ukrainian national movement, and was dubbed the "Ukrainian Piedmont."¹⁵ Ukrainians gradually realized the injustice of their situation, especially in comparison with other ethnic groups in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Social protests were combined with political slogans that eventually became radicalized. Along with the demands for autonomy and universal suffrage, the idea of gaining independence was voiced. The leadership of the Ukrainian national movement at the turn of the century gradually passed from the Greek Catholic clergy to the progressive intellectuals. However, Stepan Fedak tried to avoid politics and concentrated on his professional activities. He opened his own law office in Lviv, which provided legal assistance to both individuals and Ukrainian institutions. For some time, he headed the Union of Ukrainian Advocates, contributed to the establishment and operation of various Ukrainian financial and economic institutions, which were also centers of public life. The lawyers of Stepan Fedak's generation were vividly characterized by their contemporary, Ukrainian politician Lev Hankevych: "...*This is a new generation of Ukrainian palestra. These are no longer "defenders of the gentry, bourgeoisie, and industrialists," but defenders of the entire nation. All of them are already nationally conscious, people of European culture...*".¹⁶ Being a strong and

¹² Josiane Weber. Großherzogin Marie Adelheid von Luxemburg... S. 75-81, 96-99.

¹³ Quoted by Bohdan Savchuk. Public Activity of Stepan Fedak (1861-1937): PhD thesis: 07.00.01 - History of Ukraine / V. Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. Ivano-Frankivsk, 2019. 276 p. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁴ Quoted by Zoya Baran, "Olena Sheparovych's Memoirs as a Source for the History of Lviv in the First Third of the Twentieth Century", Lwów: miasto - społeczeństwo - kultura 9. 2014. p. 119. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁵ Inna Vivsiana. The Formation of the Idea of "Ukrainian Piedmont" in the Domestic Social and Political Thought (Late XIX - Early XX Centuries) // Scientific Notes of Kirovohrad Volodymyr Vynnychenko State Pedagogical University. Series: Historical Sciences. 2009. Issue 12. P. 76-87. Online : http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Nz_i_2009_12_11

¹⁶ Quoted by Zoya Baran. Participation of Stepan Fedak's family in the Ukrainian national liberation movement // Lviv University Bulletin. Historical Series. 2017. Issue 53. P. 214. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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even authoritarian man in any matters related to his professional interests, Stepan Fedak left the house and upbringing of his children entirely to his wife Maria Fedak-Sichynska, who was the daughter of a Greek Catholic priest, Father Lukian Sichynsky, a cousin of one of the most famous Ukrainian politicians, Oleksandr Barvinsky. Maria's mother, Natalia Brylynska, was the sister of the famous lawyer Yevhen Olesnytsky. Maria Fedak-Sichynska was active in the women's educational movement in Galicia. From a young age she was the treasurer of the Ruska Zahoronka Society, which took care of children from the poorest families. She was one of the organizers of holiday homes for such children. The educational concept of these institutions was based on national and religious principles through the use of the native language, poetry, songs, and games. This approach contributed to the formation of children's national consciousness. And the same went for her own children. According to the historian Olha Bezruk, "*Mrs. Maria, a small woman, always calm, unspoken, kept the house on Sykstuska Street in Lviv in exemplary order with a strong hand and took care of the decent upbringing of all eight children. And the children were brought up as conscious Ukrainians, participating in the political life of their land...*".¹⁷ Maria was one of the first to focus on the role of women in society. According to archival data, Maria Fedak had the right to participate (together with her husband) in the election of deputies to the Lviv City Council for the period from 1913-1914.¹⁸ This detail shows the equality of Stepan Fedak's wife not only in the home but also in public affairs. It is not surprising that their children were brought up as "conscious" Ukrainians, taking an active part in the political life of their land.

Sofia's parents maintained friendly relations with famous Lviv families such as the Shukhevychs, the Nahirni, and the Levytski. They also befriended Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and writer, scholar and public and political figure Ivan Franko. At the turn of 1921-1922, the well-known organizer and leader of the Ukrainian women's movement, the teacher and literary critic Sofia Rusova lived in the Fedak household. Moreover, the young Roman Shukhevych (the future leader of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army), a brilliant storyteller and virtuoso pianist, repeatedly visited the Fedak house for youth meetings, attracting the attention of all the girls present, including those from the host's family. There are two memoirs written by members of the Fedak family: Sophia's oldest sister Olena and her niece Olga Kuzmowycz. The latter described the traditions of the Fedak family in an extremely vivid way as she had spent her childhood years in her grandparents' home. She recalled that in the courtyard of the Fedak family home there was a separate room for "*mademoiselle*", a governess who taught the children German and French. There was also a watchman who guarded the house and locked the

¹⁷ Quoted by Olha Bezruk. Women's stories of S. Fedak's family // Scientific Bulletin of the Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology named after SZ Gzycki. Vol. 17, № 4 (64), 2015. P. 368. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁸ Olha Bezruk. Women's stories of S. Fedak's family... P. 369.

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heavy metal "*brama*" (gate) at night, making the house seem like a reliable fortress.¹⁹ Her memoirs reveal a whole world of a wealthy Lviv family with detailed descriptions of everyday life, traditions, and customs. Particularly touching are her memories of Christmas, which was celebrated in the Fedak family with great solemnity, observing the traditional rite.

The example of the Fedak family illustrates the impact of global political events on the everyday life of Galician Ukrainians. In particular, Sofia's older sister Olena recalled how her parents discussed the resonant event that took place on April 12, 1908: the assassination of the Polish governor of Galicia, Andrzej Potocki, by a student of Lviv University, Myroslav Sichynskyi. Sichynskyi was a relative of Maria Fedak, and she "*as the greatest 'revolutionary' of us all was outraged by Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky's condemnation of this act*".²⁰

This example demonstrates the high level of tension in Ukrainian society at the time, if an educated woman from a traditional patriarchal family, a civic volunteer who was widely involved in charity work, actually approved of a terrorist attack, and expected a similar reaction from the metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church. At the same time, her husband seemed to approve of Sheptytsky's "*political tactic.*" Stepan Fedak "*by his nature was inclined to live in harmony with everyone and reconcile everyone rather than to fight with opponents of other views.*"²¹ It is also known that after 3 years of imprisonment, Myroslav escaped from prison and emigrated to the United States via Western Europe. Researchers claim that his rescue was organized and financed by the family of Stepan Fedak.²²

In addition, Olena Fedak described in detail the leisure activities of her parents' family. The children attended all the children's parties in the city, concerts and performances in Ukrainian and Polish theaters. In winter, they skated on a frozen pond, and in summer they went swimming and played tennis. Vacations were spent either in the Ukrainian Carpathians (Kosiv, Yaremche, Vorokhta) or abroad (Belgium, Switzerland). For the then 20-year-old Olena, the prewar year remained in her memories as "*one big leisure time: dances, balls, home 'fife' (tea parties), theater, concerts, parties...*".²³

¹⁹ Olga Kuzmowycz. *This and That. Collected Short Stories and Essays*, New York, 2000. P. 14.

²⁰ Quoted by Zoya Baran. "Olena Sheparovych's Memoirs as a Source for the History of Lviv in the First Third of the Twentieth Century". *Lwów: miasto - społeczeństwo - kultura*, Vol. 9, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków, 2014. P. 119. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

²¹ Quoted by Bohdan Savchuk. *Public Activity of Stepan Fedak (1861-1937): Candidate of Historical Sciences (07.00.01 - History of Ukraine)* / V. Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ivano-Frankivsk, 2019. P. 130. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

²² Olha Bezhuk. *Women's stories of S. Fedak's family* // *Scientific Bulletin of the Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology named after SZ Grzycki*. Vol. 17, № 4 (64), 2015. P. 369.

²³ Quoted by Zoya Baran. "Olena Sheparovych's Memoirs..." P. 119. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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WORLD WAR I

*"If today thinking it over calmly we wonder why Europe went to war in 1914, there is not one sensible reason to be found, nor even any real occasion for the war. There were no ideas involved, it was not really about drawing minor borderlines; I can explain it only, thinking of that excess of power, by seeing it as a tragic consequence of the internal dynamism that had built up during those forty years of peace, and now demanded release...".*²⁴

For Ukraine, the First World War was a tragedy. Because there was no common state, Ukrainians were forced to fight against each other in the armies of the warring parties. Millions of Ukrainians died for someone else's interests, and these interests were hypothetical even for the leaders of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, who ruled over Ukrainian lands at the time. At the same time, it is important to know that in the course of this war, in 1918, Ukraine briefly gained independence, an important historical experience that fueled later resentment and a quest for revenge.²⁵ The national liberation struggle in Ukraine during the Great War gave rise to future fighters for the independence of the Ukrainian people.

Meanwhile, Luxembourg also experienced serious upheaval. Contrary to international law, which was supposed to ensure Luxembourg's "eternal" neutrality, the country was occupied by German troops. The German government ignored diplomatic protests. Officially, the occupation of Luxembourg was not considered hostile: the state and local administration remained intact, and political life continued. However, the German military authorities constantly interfered in the governance of the state. Thousands of Luxembourgers volunteered for the French Foreign Legion.²⁶ The paradox was that the then German Emperor Wilhelm II was an uncle to the Luxembourg princesses. Grand Duchess Maria-Adelaide may have tried to preserve the country's independence by meeting with Wilhelm II in Luxembourg during his visit to the Western Front and by corresponding with him throughout the war.²⁷ On the advice of the Minister of State, an unofficial secret meeting was arranged, but the information was leaked to French newspapers.²⁸ The Grand Duchess's actions seriously damaged Luxembourg's reputation in France. In addition, she tried to impose her political views which led to many cabinet reshuffles and profound resentment of the liberal elites. After a

²⁴ Stefan Zweig. *The World of Yesterday: Memoirs of a European*. / Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. Pushkin Press Classics, 2009, London. P. 220.

²⁵ Serhii Plokyh. *The Gates of Europe. History of Ukraine from the Scythian Wars to Independence*. KSD, 2016, P. 65. Online : <https://readukrainianbooks.com/>

²⁶ Online : <https://hdl.handle.net/10993/48662>

²⁷ Josiane Weber. *Großherzogin Marie Adelheid von Luxemburg. Eine politische Biografie (1912–1919)*, Éditions Guy Binsfeld, Luxemburg, 2019. S. 190-229.

²⁸ Pol Weitz. *Charlotte von Luxemburg: ein Lebensbild*. Druckerei J.M. Watgen, Luxemburg, 1990. S. 212-213.

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short-lived Republic, suppressed by the French occupation army, Marie-Adelaide abdicated in favor of her younger sister, Charlotte.

Charlotte

With the outbreak of the Great War, Princess Charlotte and her sisters helped in the newly established Red Cross.²⁹ The princesses also participated in the work of public kitchens during the crisis, charity concerts, etc.³⁰ On the eve of the war, at the wedding of her cousin Zita Bourbon-Parma (whose mother was also an Infanta of Portugal) to Archduke Charles of Austria, Princess Charlotte met Zita's brother Felix, whom she later married. It is appropriate here to elaborate on the biography of the future Prince Consort of Luxembourg.

The Bourbon-Parma family lived in Schwarzau Castle in Austria after the Duke of Parma lost his throne in 1859. Although their father considered the family primarily French, Felix and his siblings grew up speaking Italian, French, Portuguese, English, German, and Spanish, reflecting their mixed ancestry and cosmopolitan upbringing.³¹

Despite the family's wealth, Felix's personal possessions were quite modest. As the youngest son, he had a small inheritance, which forced him to make his own way in life. As a child, Felix received a primary home education, and from the age of 10 he studied at the Jesuit school Stella Matutina in Feldkrich (Austria). This institution was characterized by strict discipline. He continued his education in Brixen (Tyrol) and at a Jesuit school in Vienna. He received his high school diploma at a school in Mödling, Lower Austria. He then studied in England at Stonyhurst College to prepare for admission to Oxford. But the war changed all his plans. Felix graduated from the Vienna Military Academy before joining the Austrian army with his brother René. He served as an officer in the Austrian 15th Dragoon Regiment, participating mainly in battles in Italy. The war divided his family. Two of his brothers served in the Belgian army, at a time when Belgium and Austria were at war. Sources indicate that Felix distinguished himself with particular bravery at the front, including saving the life of his brother-in-law, the Austrian Emperor Charles. He left the army because of his engagement to Princess Charlotte shortly before the end of the war.³²

²⁹ Gaby Sonnabend, *Eine Geburt des Krieges. Das Luxemburger Rote Kreuz*, in: *Guerre(s) au Luxembourg 1914 1918 Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*, ed. by Benoit Majerus et al. Luxembourg: Cappybarabooks, 2024. P. 163-164.

³⁰ Josiane Weber. *Großherzogin Marie Adelheid von Luxemburg...* S. 225-226.

³¹ E.T. Melchers E.T. und U. Melchers-Schmol. *Unvergessene Gestalten unserer Dynastie. Band II. Charlotte und Felix*. Sankt-Paulus-Druckerei, A.G., Luxemburg. 1998. P. 51.

³² E.T. Melchers E.T. und U. Melchers-Schmol. *Unvergessene Gestalten unserer Dynastie. Band II. Charlotte und Felix*. Sankt-Paulus-Druckerei, A.G., Luxemburg. 1998. P. 56-145.

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His level of education and life experience suggest that Felix was better prepared for the role of monarch than Charlotte, who had been home educated only. Coming from a family destitute of their throne (Duchy of Parma), he made every effort to preserve the Luxembourg monarchy. His influence on Charlotte's political decisions is difficult to assess, as the grand-ducal archives are closed to researchers but it is certain that thanks to his title, his large family, and his military career, Felix had valuable connections in wide political circles, which he successfully used in difficult situations.

Sofia

Throughout the war, Ukrainian Galicia was the main battlefield on the Eastern Front. The population suffered from destruction, damage, and abuse by both imperial armies. Persecution of nationally conscious Ukrainians began. The occupation by Russia was accompanied by mass deportations and executions. This wave of violence naturally provoked strong resistance. Not a single Ukrainian family remained unaffected by the political and social changes that were taking place at the time. Sofia's family also became closely involved in the national liberation movement of Ukrainian Galicia. This involvement came to influence her entire life.

When the war started, Sofia was just a child. She was brought up at home, where she received her primary education. Then she followed the path of her sisters, who attended: a prestigious women's gymnasium and completed their education at the Przemyśl Institute or at universities in Austria-Hungary or Germany. For example, her older sister Olena first studied at a private Polish women's gymnasium in Lviv, where - she recalled - *"the monthly tuition fee was equal to the monthly salary of an average government official, and most subjects were taught by university professors."*³³ Many of the gymnasium's graduates later became well-known public figures in Galicia. After graduating from Lviv University, Olena studied journalism in Berlin and philosophy in Vienna. During the war, she was involved in the Ukrainian Women's Committee for Aid to Wounded Soldiers, which provided charitable support to Ukrainians in Austrian hospitals. During this difficult time, Olena married Lev Sheparovych, a cadet in the Austrian army. It came as a surprise to many in her circle that *"the richest and most desirable bride in Lviv chose a young man without wealth or rank"*,³⁴ but *"with the quiet blessing of her parents."*³⁵ Sofia had a special relationship with her other sister, Olha, who studied violin in Lviv, and graduated in 1915 with honors from the Vienna Conservatory. Olha was predicted

³³ Quoted by Zoya Baran, "Olena Sheparovych's Memoirs as a Source for the History of Lviv in the First Third of the Twentieth Century," *Lwów: miasto - społeczeństwo - kultura* 9. (2014), p. 117. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

³⁴ Quoted by Olha Bezduk. Women's stories of S. Fedak's family // *Scientific Bulletin of the Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology named after SZ Gzhytsky*. Vol. 17, №. 4 (64), 2015. P. 371. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

³⁵ Quoted by Olga Kuzmowych. *About This and That*. New York, 2000. P. 12. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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to become an outstanding violinist, but her musical career ended after her first solo concert in Vienna. Olha was said to be no longer able to perform in public because of a painful incurable "tremor". Only much later, Olha told her niece that at that concert, while performing Paganini's variations, a string broke on her violin. The panic and fear that literally paralyzed her at that moment endured for the rest of her life.³⁶ As for Sofia's primary education, it is only known that she graduated from the Lysenko Music Academy in Lviv. At the beginning of the war, on the eve of the occupation of Galicia by Russian troops, the entire Fedak family, except for the father, moved to Vienna. Unfortunately, there is no information about this period of their lives. Stepan Fedak remained in Lviv as vice president (deputy mayor) of the city. According to Lviv newspapers of the time, he publicly expressed "*a statement of loyalty and allegiance of the Ukrainian people to the Austrian dynasty and monarchy*."³⁷ It is also known that in August 1914, Dr. Fedak attended a secret meeting chaired by Metropolitan A. Sheptytsky with the participation of Ukrainian politicians and representatives of Austrian government circles. The meeting discussed "*the creation and provision of a separate Ukrainian military legion called the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen*."³⁸ In Russian occupied Lviv, S. Fedak used all his connections and professional qualities to be as useful as possible to Ukrainians in such a difficult period. However, he could not escape repression. In 1915, he became a hostage of the Russian authorities and was taken to Kyiv along with other civic activists in Lviv. While in Kyiv as an internee, Stepan Fedak founded the Society for the Care and Assistance of Ukrainians from Galicia, which supported deported Galicians in various parts of the enemy empire. In the summer of 1916, S. Fedak was able to return home. The circumstances of his release are currently unknown. Researchers claim that Dr. Fedak and two other Galician hostages "*were exchanged for a captured Russian consul and after a long trip through Finland, Sweden, and Germany he returned to Lviv*."³⁹ At any rate, this confirms that Sofia Fedak's father was very well connected politically.

As for the Legion of Sich Riflemen, such a unit was indeed created. Its existence allowed Ukrainians to train personnel and acquire weapons and military experience to use in the war for independence. It was in this legion that Sofia's future husband, Andriy Melnyk, served during the war. Although they only got married after the war, his upbringing is worth mentioning here. His complex biography would deserves a separate study.

³⁶ Olga Kuzmovycz. About This and That... P. 146.

³⁷ Quoted by Bohdan Savchuk. Public Activity of Stepan Fedak (1861-1937): Candidate of Historical Sciences (07.00.01 - History of Ukraine) / V. Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. Ivano-Frankivsk, 2019. P. 136. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

³⁸ Quoted by Bohdan Savchuk. Public Activity of Stepan Fedak (1861-1937): PhD thesis: 07.00.01 - History of Ukraine / V. Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. Ivano-Frankivsk, 2019. P. 136. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

³⁹ Quoted by Bohdan Savchuk. Public Activity of Stepan Fedak (1861-1937): Candidate of Historical Sciences (07.00.01 - History of Ukraine) / V. Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. Ivano-Frankivsk, 2019. P. 144. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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Melnyk was born on December 12, 1890, in a small village in the Lviv region. He lost his parents early on, who died of tuberculosis. His adoptive parents took care of his health, paying for his long and complicated treatment, as well as his education. Andriy Melnyk first studied at elementary schools in Sambir and Drohobych. He continued his education at the Franz Josef I Gymnasium in Drohobych, where he lived in the gymnasium dormitory from the age of 10. Later, he graduated from the prestigious gymnasium in Striy, where Ukrainian language classes were offered from 1906 to 1918.⁴⁰ Many well-known members of the Ukrainian national liberation movement and ministers of the Greek Catholic Church studied at this gymnasium at different times. In particular, Stepan Bandera and his two brothers. In 1910, Andriy Melnyk was among 5 graduates who graduated from high school with honors and received a diploma with the right to enter higher education. When the First World War broke out, Andriy studied at the Vienna University of Natural Resources (K.u.k. Hochschule für Bodenkultur), Faculty of Forestry. Apparently, *"...tuition was paid and quite expensive, so Melnyk's family sold part of their land to provide their stepson with the opportunity to study."*⁴¹

In the summer of 1914, Andriy Melnyk abandoned his studies and returned to Lviv to start a military career in the Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (USR) as part of the Austro-Hungarian army. During the battles in the Carpathians, he was taken prisoner by Russia and spent almost a year in prisons of war camps. It was there that Melnyk met Yevhen Konovalets, whose friendship had a dramatic impact on his future life.

At the end of the war, in the fall of 1918, the entire Fedak family gathered at home again and became actively involved in the social and political life. At that time, the events of the November Uprising (the uprising of Ukrainian national forces to establish the Ukrainian state) were unfolding in Lviv. Later, Olena Fedak/Sheparovycz recalled: *"I could not be just a passive spectator on those great days; I wanted to be active with all the cells of my mind and heart..."*. After the defeat of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, Olena accompanied her husband, who was retreating to the Naddniprianshchyna (Dnieper Ukraine) as part of the Ukrainian Galician Army. She stayed near the front line *"not out of personal ambition, but out of a deep sense of duty."*⁴²

⁴⁰ Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / Compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 201. P. 48.

⁴¹ Quoted by O. Kucheruk. Andriy Melnyk 130. Collection of materials of the All-Ukrainian Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to the famous Ukrainian statesman, politician, and military figure - Colonel Andriy Melnyk. 20 - 21 November 2019, Truskavets. P. 51. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁴² Quoted by Olha Bezruk. Women's stories of S. Fedak's family // Scientific Bulletin of the Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology named after SZ Gzycki. Vol. 17, №. 4 (64), 2015. P. 372. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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INTERWAR PERIOD

«The past is never dead. It's not even past.»⁴³

In the interwar period, the territory of Ukraine was divided between 4 neighboring states.⁴⁴ The situation of Ukrainians was complicated by the fact that the central and eastern Ukrainian lands were part of Soviet Russia and experienced all the consequences of the totalitarian Bolshevik regime. While the western Ukrainian territories, divided between Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, had a different experience. This solution to the "Ukrainian question" had severe consequences for the Ukrainian people. While for most European countries, this short period meant a return to peaceful life, it remains in the collective memory of Ukrainians as a period characterized by repression and genocide by the Soviet regime,⁴⁵ and by the Polish government's harsh chauvinistic assimilation policy, which was accompanied by deportations of the population and oppression of the Ukrainian language and church. A similar anti-Ukrainian policy, albeit in a somewhat milder form, was pursued by the governments of Romania and Czechoslovakia, respectively, in relation to Bukovina and Zakarpattia. Such a rigid and sometimes brutal policy made Ukrainians perceive the new governments as occupying powers and provoked active resistance. Residents of the western part of Ukraine resisted especially hard fiercely, using both legal and underground methods of struggle. This included terror as strategy.

Throughout the stateless period, the interests of Ukrainians in the world were represented by Ukrainian emigrants. The main flow of political emigration occurred in the early 1920s. In 1921, the number of Ukrainian emigrants in Western European countries reached almost 100. 000 people.⁴⁶ A significant part of the emigrants were members of the national liberation movement who did not want to accept defeat and continued to fight for Ukraine's independence.

The end of the war did not bring peace to Luxembourg either. After the signing of the Armistice of Compiègne, the country was gripped by revolutionary fever. The workers' and peasants' council, supported by the crowd, demanded the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of a republic. The newly formed French League also wanted to establish a republic in Luxembourg under the protection of France. Belgium put forward its own territorial claims. The fate of the dynasty hung in the balance. At this difficult time, the Minister of State Emil Reuter proposed a referendum in which

⁴³ William Faulkner. Requiem for a Nun. Penguin Random House, UK, 2015. P. 85.

⁴⁴ Online : <http://www.infoukes.com/history/ww2/>

⁴⁵ Anne Applebaum. Red Famine. Stalin's War on Ukraine. Penguin Random House, UK, 2017.

⁴⁶ Deshchynskyi L.E. et al. History of Ukraine and its Statehood. A course of lectures: Study guide / L.E. Deshchynskyi, S.V. Terskyi, I.Y. Khoma, V.M. Taraban, R.D. Zinkevych, Y.Y. Denisov, I.O. Havryliv, I.V. Bukovskyi, A.Y. Nahirniak - Lviv: Lviv Polytechnic National University Press, 2009, 476 p.

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> the people would choose the form of government.⁴⁷ Maria-Adelaide accepted to abdicate in favor of her sister. The short, but eventful and rather tragical biography of Grand Duchess Maria Adelaide is thoroughly reflected in the work of Dr. Josiane Weber. Her research, based on historical sources, balances the bias of her foes and her supporters and reassesses her importance in the history of Luxembourg.⁴⁸ A summary of her research results is presented in Weber's public conference (in Luxembourgish).⁴⁹

Charlotte

Princess Charlotte became the head of state on January 15, 1919. The diplomatic situation remained strained and threatened Charlotte with the loss of her throne and the state with the loss of independence. Difficult negotiations with the French government resulted in an agreement to grant Charlotte the duchy and consent to her marriage to Felix, who held the title of French Bourbon.⁵⁰ Thus, it can be assumed that Prince Felix's title had an indirect impact on the preservation of both the country's independence and the monarchy.

The referendum ensured internal stability. On September 28, 1919, almost 80% of the population of Luxembourg voted in favor of preserving the monarchy, headed by the Grand Duchess Charlotte. At the same time, a new constitution was adopted that declared the nation sovereign and clearly regulated the powers of the monarch. It is often assumed that the monarchy had been saved by women, who were granted the right to vote for the first time on the eve of the referendum – the actual voting pattern according to gender is not known, but it is clear that the industrial south was much less in favor of the monarchy than the rest of the country.⁵¹

In that context, the marriage of the Grand Duchess Charlotte and Felix of Bourbon-Parma deserves special attention. From the memoirs of the American-born Papal Privy Counselor (Chamberlain) Francis Augustus MacNutt, it emerges that this marriage was concluded by proxy and out of the public eye on March 24, 1919 in Switzerland at the Wartegg Castle. If we take into account the civil wedding ceremony that took place on the morning of November 6 of the same year in the Grand Ducal Palace of Luxembourg, it turns out that Charlotte married three times to the same man. Why was the first marriage handled so discreetly? A marriage between relatives required special

⁴⁷ Quoted by Michel Pauly, „1918-1919 - ein Krisenjahr mit langfristigen Folgen“ // *Ons Stad.* 120 (2019), p. 8-11. Online : <https://onsstad.vdl.lu/>

⁴⁸ Josiane Weber. *Großherzogin Marie Adelheid von Luxemburg. Eine politische Biografie (1912–1919)*, Éditions Guy Binsfeld, Luxemburg, 2019.

⁴⁹ Online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOwo5WA4EGQ>

⁵⁰ Quoted by Pol Weitz. *Charlotte von Luxemburg: ein Lebensbild*. Druckerei J.M. Watgen, Luxemburg, 1990, S. 48.

⁵¹ Quoted by Pol Weitz. *Charlotte von Luxemburg...* S 64.

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permission from the Pope, which Prince Felix managed to obtain. Difficulties, however, arose in Charlotte's homeland. The Luxembourgers were wary of the future prince, who had fought in an enemy coalition.⁵² However, the young couple overcame all obstacles. In the following years the couple had six children: Jean, Elizabeth, Marie-Adelaide, Marie-Gabrielle, Charles, and Alix. The whole country celebrated the birth of their first child, the heir to the throne. In response to the congratulations, Charlotte said a phrase that became the royal motto: "*Ich dien*" ("I serve"). At one time, her father, William 4, swore allegiance to his country with the same words, inherited by the monarchs of Luxembourg from Count John the Blind.⁵³

It is worth noting that by giving birth to a son and choosing the name Jean for him – a reference to the national hero John the Blind, king of Bohemia, the Grand Duchess won the symbolic "battle" with the opponents of the monarchy, significantly strengthening the throne. Prince Jean became the first male heir to the throne born on Luxembourg's soil. The dynastic crisis had been overcome. However, a new war was looming.

Sofia

The Riga Peace Treaty of 1921 recognized Poland's right to Eastern Galicia. This decision of the Entente countries, aggravated by various types of discrimination by the restored Polish state, caused active resistance among Western Ukrainians. They tried to get rid of this occupation by any means, using both legal and underground methods of struggle that included terror.

The participants of the national liberation struggle who survived the hell of war, refusing to accept the defeat of their idea. Many left their homeland to continue the fight from abroad. A typical example of a Ukrainian of this era was Stepan Fedak, Sofia's younger brother, who joined the Ukrainian Insurgent Army at the age of 14 and fought in the Ukrainian Galician Army. Fedak was a member of the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO), created by Yevhen Konovalets, and became famous for his assassination attempt of the head of the Polish state, Józef Piłsudski, in September 1921. A Polish court sentenced the young man to six years in prison, but he was released in 1924 and left the country. According to Olga Kuzmovycz's memoirs, mother, Maria Fedak, quietly but firmly stated after a nighttime search of the house: "*I am proud that it was my son who did this attentat.*"⁵⁴ At the same time, Stepan's actions had unpleasant consequences for other family members. In particular, his father, Stepan Fedak (senior), made every effort to reach an understanding with the new government

⁵² Quoted by Georges Hellinghaue, Hat Grossherzogin Charlotte zweimal geheiratet?, in: Hémécht 59/1 (2007), p. 5-18. Digitized by the National Library of Luxembourg, <https://persist.lu/ark:/70795/z0r1k4j8t/pages/7/articles/DTL903>

⁵³ Quoted by Arthur Klein. Zum Ableben von Großherzog Wilhelm IV: Ein Beitrag zur 150-Jahrfeier der Luxemburger Eisenbahnen. 2009. S. 3.

⁵⁴ Quoted by Olga Kuzmovycz. This and That. A Collection of Stories and Essays. New York. 2000. P. 16. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> and reconcile the opponents. According to his contemporaries, he belonged to the conservative wing of Ukrainian politicians who hoped to achieve the desired result through negotiations, and was "*more inclined to live in harmony with everyone and reconcile everyone than to fight with opponents of other views.*"⁵⁵ However, Dr. Fedak's stance that "*Poles and Ukrainians are people, and people can find common ground*"⁵⁶ did not find support among young people of that time. This shows the differences in political views between representatives of different generations, which has been observed more than once in the public life of Ukrainians. After the attack on Piłsudski, Dr. Fedak was arrested too and spent two months in prison. His eldest daughter Olena recalled that "*the whole Fedak family felt the consequences of the attentat.*"⁵⁷ Her husband, Lev Sheparovych, lost his job; they were forced to leave Lviv and moved to Germany for several years.

During this difficult period for the family, Sofia studied at the Trade Academy in Vienna. After graduating in 1923, she worked at the Audit Union of Ukrainian Cooperatives in Lviv. In 1924, she got engaged to Andriy Melnyk. It is likely that Andriy Melnyk was introduced to the Fedak family, similar to Metropolitan Sheptytsky, by another well-known Ukrainian politician and public figure, Yevhen Olesnytskiy, Maria Fedak's uncle. Olesnytskiy had taken care of Andriy from the time he studied at the Striy Gymnasium. In 1924, Melnyk was sentenced by the Polish authorities to four years in prison for underground pro-Ukrainian activities. Sofia went to the prison with packages to her fiancé every day for four years. It is also known that it was thanks to Andriy Melnyk that Yevhen Konovalets met and later married Olha Fedak. As the leader of an underground pro-Ukrainian organization (UVO), it was dangerous for Konovalets to remain in Ukraine. In December 1922, his wife and him emigrated to the West. They lived in exile in various European countries until the end of their lives, but never stopped fighting for Ukraine's independence (see below). After the end of his imprisonment, Andriy was able to marry Sofia. The wedding took place on February 28, 1929, in the chapel of the Theological Seminary in Lviv. The couple had no children. Perhaps this was the result of the torture he suffered in Russian and Polish captivity. Melnyk later recalled his time in the Polish prison: "*they beat me so much that it reached the League of Nations.*"⁵⁸ As a lawyer Sofia's father Stepan Fedak participated in the trial of a case of beating prisoners in the same Lviv prison in September 1925. The lawyer ensured that the matter was considered by the Polish Sejm and that a

⁵⁵ Quoted by Zoya Baran. Participation of Stepan Fedak's Family in the Ukrainian National Liberation Movement // Lviv University Bulletin. Historical Series. 2017. Issue 53. P. 216.

⁵⁶ Zoya Baran. Participation of Stepan Fedak's family... P. 218. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁵⁷ Quoted by Zoya Baran. "Olena Sheparovych's Memoirs as a Source for the History of Lviv in the First Third of the Twentieth Century". Lwów: miasto - społeczeństwo - kultura, Vol. 9, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków, 2014. P. 126. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁵⁸ From the memoirs of Andriy Melnyk / Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. K., 2011. P. 158. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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note of protest was sent to the League of Nations, as well as that the horrific abuse was widely covered in the domestic and foreign press.

After his release, Sofia and Andriy stayed in Galicia. Sofia continued her work at the Audit Union and, together with her mother and sisters, initiated the creation of the Ukrainian Society of Women with Higher Education, which promoted feminist ideas. Andriy, who had the military rank of who held the rank of colonel in the UPR army during the liberation struggle of 1918-1920,⁵⁹ first completed his education in Vienna and then started to work as a forestry engineer in the estates of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky. These forests were famous far beyond the borders of Galicia. It is known that at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries European aristocrats came to the Carpathians to hunt deers. In particular, Ukrainian archives contain references and photographs of Prince Rudolf of Habsburg-Lorraine, Miguel of Braganza, the former king of Portugal and his daughter Princess Maria Teresa, hunting in Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia).⁶⁰ This tradition continued after the war. Melnyk, who had a university degree and spoke foreign languages, met "high" guests with whom he could easily communicate. The memoirs of one of Melnyk's future political associates reveal an interesting detail, possibly heard from the colonel himself, about his acquaintance with Prince Felix, the Consort of Luxembourg. *"Felix Bourbon-Parma, the brother of the Emperor's wife Zita, and thus a Habsburg relative, served in Przemyśl. From the garrison he knew Ukrainians and the Ukrainian problem. As a relative of the Habsburgs and having memories of his youth in Galicia, he often came to Lviv and to Berehynia Forest for hunting. It was here that he initiated the acquaintance and friendship with Mr. Melnyk. That is why Colonel Melnyk was able to settle in Luxembourg so easily after the war ended."*⁶¹

Meanwhile, Sofia's family faced new challenges. On January 6, 1937, her father, Stepan Fedak, suddenly died. A year before his death, he had prepared a will, according to which his wife, Maria Fedak born Sichynsky, was appointed the *"universal heiress"* of all the family's property. The lawyer appointed his daughter Sofia as the second main heir, provided that *"she would not keep the property for herself, but would give it to those in her family who would need it when they needed it."*⁶² As the newspaper Dilo wrote, *"...a grand memorial service on January 9, 1937, with the participation of 25*

⁵⁹ Andriy Melnyk 130. Collection of materials of the All-Ukrainian Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to the famous Ukrainian statesman, politician, and military figure - Colonel Andrii Melnyk. 20 - 21 November 2019, Truskavets. P. 68.

⁶⁰ Online : <https://localhistory.org.ua/texts/statti/ertsgertsoginia-na-poliuvanni-v-karpatakh/>;
<https://karpaty.localhistory.org.ua/osmoloda-i-pidlyute.html>

⁶¹ From the memoirs of Oleg Zhdanovych / Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. K. 2011. P. 53. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁶² Quoted by Olga Kuzmovych. This and That. A Collection of Stories and Essays. New York. 2000. P. 20. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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clergymen and citizens blocked the movement of the main artery of Lviv and ended with the burial of S. Fedak in Lychakiv without speeches, wreaths, or flowers, in view of the last will of the deceased."⁶³

In May 1938, Olga's husband Yevhen Konovalts was assassinated in Rotterdam by a Soviet secret service agent. Since February 1929, he had been the head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), an underground movement founded in Vienna to unite pro-Ukrainian groups that had been scattered after the war. Andriy Melnyk had joined when completing his education in Vienna, and from the beginning of 1937 he was the organization's treasurer. In his will, Colonel Konovalts appointed Colonel Melnyk, as his successor as head of the organization in the event of his death. This heavy responsibility had an impact on the Melnyks, who left for Berlin in September 1938 - Austria having been incorporated into the Reich in March that year. They didn't know that they would never return to their homeland.

Looking back at the interwar years, Sofia's niece, who was born in 1917 and spent a lot of time in the care of her grandmother, wrote: *"My childhood in the Fedak family was neither cheerful nor simple... It was constantly associated with some kind of danger, cowards, arrests, escapes abroad, and political trials in which our family members were also defendants, and my grandfather, Dr. Stepan Fedak, was the defense attorney..."*⁶⁴

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND LIFE IN EXILE

*"... But that in itself was no great cause for complaint; the homeless, more than anyone, are free in a new way, and only those with no more ties can afford to cast consideration to the winds. So I hope that I can fulfil at least one of the main requirements of every proper account of a certain era, and look at it with honest impartiality... For I have indeed been torn from all my roots, even from the earth that nourished them, more entirely than most in our times... So I belong nowhere now, I am a stranger or at the most a quest everywhere... Against my will, I have witnessed the most terrible defeat of reason and the most savage triumph of brutality in the chronicles of time. Never – and I say so not with pride but with shame – has a generation fallen from such intellectual heights as ours to such moral depths...."*⁶⁵

⁶³ Quoted by Olha Bezduk. Women's stories of S. Fedak's family // Scientific Bulletin of the Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology named after SZ Gzycki. Vol. 17, № 4 (64), 2015. P. 366-376. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁶⁴ Quoted by Olga Kuzmovycz. This and That... P. 25. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁶⁵ Stefan Zweig. The World of Yesterday: Memoirs of a European. / Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. Pushkin Press Classics, London, 2009. P. 17-18.

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When the Wehrmacht troops occupied Luxembourg on May 10th, 1940, the Grand Duchess and members of the government fled to France, and after its surrender, they created a government in exile, first in London

and then in Montreal.⁶⁶ From exile, the Grand Duchess Charlotte called on citizens to disobey the new regime. In the course of the war, many of them joined the French Resistance movement or formed underground movements in occupied Luxembourg. In October 1941, a census was organized by the Gauleiter to prove that the population's citizenship, ethnicity and mother tongue were all German. The resistance encouraged people to reply "three times Luxembourgish" and the census was cancelled.⁶⁷

Unlike the occupation during the First World War, during the Second World War, Nazi Germany pursued a policy of total assimilation, including the ban on the French language, the dissolution of political parties, and the abolition of the Luxembourg state. Although Luxembourg was not formally annexed into the Reich, its young men were drafted into the Wehrmacht in August 1942, which fueled resistance and led to many strikes in the industry as well as schools. However, the Luxembourg historian Vincent Artuso argues that resistance did not begin immediately and did not generally reach a significant scale. On the contrary, thousands of Luxembourgers agreed to cooperate with the Germans, although many of them changed their minds during the war.⁶⁸

It is worth mentioning that after the Nazis came to power in Germany, Luxembourg became a "country of exiles" where opponents of the regime and other categories of refugees sought refuge. In particular, at the time of the German invasion, about 3,700 Jews lived in Luxembourg, half of whom were refugees. Most of them were deported and later killed in concentration camps. Only 40 people returned after the war. Some of the survivors emigrated to the United States.⁶⁹

According to Vincent Artuso, luxembourgers, including members of the resistance movement, massively supported the anti-Semitic policies of the occupation authorities. Even the anti-German residents were anti-German. Measures aimed at limiting the presence of Jews in the country were especially popular. In general, the attitude towards Jews was not too hostile. They were perceived

⁶⁶ Paul Schmit «Mon cœur dit oui, mais ma tête dit non.» La Grande-Duchesse Charlotte et le gouvernement luxembourgeois sur le chemin de l'exil en 1940, éditions gey binsfeld, Luxembourg, 2024. 463 p.

⁶⁷ Quoted by Benoit Majerus and Elisabeth Hoffmann. Nation branding' avant la lettre. Le 10 octobre 1941 dans la mémoire collective luxembourgeoise // Luxemburger Wort. Die Warte, 2016, p. 2-4. Online : <https://hdl.handle.net/10993/28582>

⁶⁸ Quoted by Vincent Artuso. La collaboration au Luxembourg durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale (1940-1945) : Accommodation, Adaptation, Assimilation. Peter Lang Edition, Frankfurt am Main, 201. P. 18.

⁶⁹ Quoted by Goetzinger, Mannes, and Marson: Exilland Luxemburg, 1933 - 1947: Schreiben - Auftreten - Musizieren - Agitieren - Überleben. Mersch: CNL, 2007, S. 10-14.

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> primarily as an "unassimilated foreign community whose way of thinking and interests were opposed to the "masters".⁷⁰

The researcher himself explains the participation of Luxembourgers in the persecution of Jews as a mixture of indifference and blindness, ignorance and misunderstanding of classical anti-Semitism, and, for some, a commitment to National Socialist racial ideas.⁷¹ Moreover, Vincent Artuso believes that the German regime would not have been able to hold out in Luxembourg until September 1944 without the support of the local population and the participation of 4,000 Luxembourgers in the NSDAP. In addition to serving in various repressive authorities responsible for maintaining order and discipline within the country, nearly 1,500 collaborators served the Reich in the occupied territories of Eastern Europe. After the war, more than 10,000 Luxembourgers loyal to the Nazis left the country with their families. Fear of reprisals at home forced them to take German citizenship.⁷²

The number of victims in relation to the total population puts Luxembourg in the first line of Western European countries affected by the war.⁷³

In September 1944, the Allied forces liberated Luxembourg and the government was able to return from exile to its homeland. However, during the offensive in the Ardennes, the northern regions of Luxembourg were again captured by German troops and finally liberated only in January 1945. The policy of denying the very existence of the Luxembourgers as a nation strengthened national identity.⁷⁴

During the Second World War, Ukraine once again found itself in the epicenter of hostilities. Its territory, divided by 4 neighboring states, was additionally encroached upon by the fascist governments of Hungary and Germany. On the other hand, the Soviet totalitarian regime was making plans to expand its borders by annexing western Ukrainian territories.⁷⁵

During the war, Ukrainians fought on different sides of the conflict. The vast majority fought in the Soviet army. More than 7 million Ukrainians of various nationalities were mobilized into its ranks - every fifth or sixth Soviet soldier came from Ukraine. According to some estimates, out of the 1 million Soviet citizens who served in the auxiliary units of the Nazi army, Ukrainians and people of

⁷⁰ Quoted by Vincent Artuso. *La collaboration au Luxembourg durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale (1940-1945) : Accommodation, Adaptation, Assimilation*. Peter Lang Edition, Frankfurt am Main, 2013. P. 115. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁷¹ Quoted by Vincent Artuso. *La collaboration au Luxembourg...* P. 116.

⁷² Quoted by Vincent Artuso. *La collaboration au Luxembourg...* P. 366-368.

⁷³ Online : <https://ww2.lu/>

⁷⁴ Trausch, Gilbert. *Du particularisme à la nation : essais sur l'histoire du Luxembourg de la fin de l'Ancien Régime à la Seconde guerre mondiale = Vom Sonderbewusstsein zur Nation : Beiträge zur Geschichte Luxemburgs vom Ende des "Ancien Régime" bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*. [Réimpr.]. Luxembourg: Impr. Saint-Paul, 1989.

⁷⁵ *History of Ukraine and its Statehood. A course of lectures: Study guide* / L.E. Deshchynskyi et al. Lviv: Lviv Polytechnic National University Press, 2009. P. 345.

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Ukrainian descent accounted for about a quarter.⁷⁶ At the same time, the Second World War triggered a new wave of national liberation movement of Ukrainian patriots, whose goal was to create an independent state. It is worth noting that most Ukrainians, after Stalin's "Great Terror" policy of 1936-1940, were deprived of the ability to put up much resistance to the regime. Thus, in 1941, many greeted the Nazi troops as an army of "liberators," agreeing to cooperate with the new government for various reasons. Very quickly, Ukrainians had the opportunity to see that their reasoning was wrong and paid severely for it. According to Serhii Plokhyy, "*...those who had such hopes for the Germans soon became convinced of their falsity, often absolute groundlessness, regardless of the reasons that fueled their hopes for a better life under German occupation.*"⁷⁷

Also, emigrant centers of nationalist forces were intensively preparing for a new stage of struggle. Desperate for support from the former Entente powers, which had ignored the "Ukrainian question" after the end of World War I, nationalist organizations sought support from reactionary circles of the Nazi government in Germany. Despite the similarity of their ideologies, the German Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists had different goals, but tried to use each other to their advantage. However, this cooperation, as time has shown, was short-lived and led, among other things, to the split of the OUN in 1940. The leaders of both factions, Andriy Melnyk and Stepan Bandera, were imprisoned by the Nazis, and hundreds of OUN members were shot.⁷⁸

As Serhii Plokhyy aptly noted: "*Ukraine under German occupation became a large-scale model of a concentration camp. As in the camps, the line between resistance and cooperation, the role of victim and complicity in the regime's crimes became blurred and invisible. Everyone made a personal choice, and the survivors had to live with their decisions after the war, some in harmony and some in pangs of conscience. But almost everyone suffered from guilt for surviving.*"⁷⁹

In 1942-1943, about 2.2 million Ukrainians were detained and sent to Germany. Residents of Ukraine accounted for about 80% of all Ostarbeiters deported from the occupied territories of Eastern Europe to Germany during the war. Those who survived and were released at the end of the war were often

⁷⁶ Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. *The Gates of Europe. History of Ukraine from the Scythian Wars to Independence*. 2015. P. 89. (Translated with the help of DeepL). Online : <https://readukrainianbooks.com/page-84-1490-brama-yevropi-istorija-ukrayini-vid-skifskih-voyen-do-nezalezhnosti-sergij-mikolajovich-poganiij.html>

⁷⁷ Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. *The Gates of Europe*... P. 83. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁷⁸ Himka, John-Paul. "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd." *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes*, vol. 53, № 2/4, 2011, pp. 209–43. Online : <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41708340>. Accessed 6 June 2025.

⁷⁹ Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. *The Gates of Europe*... P. 84. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> considered traitors. Upon returning home, a significant number of former Ostarbeiters were imprisoned in the Soviet Gulag.⁸⁰

The Holocaust was the most horrific episode of the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, which was already full of horror. One in six Jews who perished during the Holocaust (about 1 million people in total) came from Ukraine. According to Serhii Plokhyy, *"The Holocaust in Ukraine and the rest of the western territories of the Soviet Union not only destroyed the Jewish population and its social life, as it did in Europe as a whole, but also traumatised and brutalised those who witnessed it."*⁸¹ Some contemporary biographical studies of combatants only reinforce the tragedy of this period of history. Examples of collaborationism, anti-Semitism, and chauvinism occurred among Ukrainians, just as they did among representatives of other countries that were involved in the war.⁸² As Serhii Plokhyy aptly put it: *"The war was long, and some people had the time and opportunity to change from one role to another several times."*⁸³

Globally, Ukraine became one of the main victims of the war. The country lost up to 7 million of its citizens, which was more than 15% of the population.⁸⁴

To this day, Ukrainians are unable to cope with the division of their own history. The one-sided and ideologized coverage of the events of the Second World War, the demonization of participants in the national liberation movement, the failure to recognize and condemn the crimes of the totalitarian communist regime - all of this emphasizes the terrible consequences of false historical narratives today.

Charlotte

According to some sources, international events on the eve of the war prompted Prince Felix to plan the possible emigration of the Grand Ducal family. He established the first contacts with U.S. President FD Roosevelt and prepared the establishment of a Luxembourg mission in Washington.

⁸⁰Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. The Gates of Europe. History of Ukraine from the Scythian Wars to Independence. 2015. P. 86. Online : <https://readukrainianbooks.com/page-84-1490-brama-yevropi-istorija-ukrayini-vid-skifskih-voyen-do-nezalezhnosti-sergij-mikolajovich-poganiy.html>

⁸¹ Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. The Gates of Europe... P. 84-85. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁸² Yuri Radchenko 'The Biography of the OUN(m) Activist Oleksa Babii in the Light of his "Memoirs on Escaping Execution" (1942)', Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society, vol. 6, no. 1 (April 2020). P. 239-279.] Online :<https://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/doslidzhennya/2764-yurij-radchenko-z-zhitomira-mene-perekinuli-na-front-do-m-vasilkova-dlya-poshuku-komunistiv-i-zhidiv-piznishe-banderivtsiv-biografiya-aktivista-oun-m-oleksi-babiya-v-svitli-spogadiv-pro-vtechu-vid-rozstrilu> ; Yuri Radchenko, 'The Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Melnyk Faction) and the Holocaust: The Case of Ivan Yuriiv', Holocaust and Genocide Studies, volume 31, issue 2, autumn 2017, pp. 215-239. Online : <https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcx038>

⁸³ Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. The Gates of Europe... P. 88. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁸⁴ Quoted by Serhii Plokhyy. The Gates of Europe... P. 91. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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When the Wehrmacht violated Luxembourg's neutrality and invaded the country on May 10, 1940, the Grand Duchess, accompanied by her family and government, left for France. The Nazis offered her to stay in the country, promising to preserve her status, but she refused. Millions of refugees in today's world can relate to and understand the phrase Charlotte used to answer: *"My heart says yes, but my mind says no."*⁸⁵ She remembered the trap that her sister Maria Adelheid had fallen into and decided not to repeat this mistake.⁸⁶

After the surrender of France in June 1940, the grand-ducal family fled to Portugal, then, via the UK, to the United States, finally settling in Canada. The Grand Duchess stayed in London for a while, rejoining her family in October of that year. Obviously, this difficult decision of the Duchess was dictated by concern for the safety of her own family, for the reputation of the monarchy, and the lessons learned during the reign of Maria Adelaide. Contrary to the German Empire, the Nazi regime had no regard for noble titles and social status in the persecution of their opponents. Prince Felix's younger brother Luigi Bourbon-Parma was imprisoned with his family in the Nazi concentration camp Sachsenhausen. Their older brother Xavier survived the Dachau concentration camp. Princess Antonia, the younger sister of the Grand Duchess Charlotte, had also been deported to Dachau due to the anti-Nazi views of her husband, Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria, and returned seriously ill after the war. However, these facts became known to the public only much later. And at the beginning of the war and during the occupation, when the population felt in dire need of protection and support, the monarch's emigration was perceived as a betrayal of national interests.

Nevertheless, throughout her exile, Charlotte maintained her duties as head of state as much as possible. In 1941, she visited Luxembourgish emigrant groups and associations in the United States. Over the next two years, she traveled the United States on so-called "Goodwill Tours." In 1943, she settled in London, from where she supported her people by speaking on the BBC radio. Witnesses to the events of the time claimed that in this way the Grand Duchess helped to strengthen the patriotic feelings of the Luxembourgers and their cohesion in opposing the invaders.⁸⁷ The Grand Duchess Charlotte began each of her speeches with the words "Léif Lëtzebuerger" ("Dear Luxembourgers"), a phrase that later became the title of a documentary film by filmmaker Ray Tostevin about her five years in exile.⁸⁸ Charlotte was the sovereign of the country, but beyond her duties, she personified a

⁸⁵ Quoted by Pol Weitz. *Charlotte von Luxemburg: ein Lebensbild*. Druckerei J.M. Watgen, Luxemburg, 1990. S 82.

⁸⁶ A. Collart. *Sturm um Luxemburgs Thron, (1907-1920)*, Druckerei Sankt-Paulus, Luxemburg, 1991.

⁸⁷ André Linden, « Léif Lëtzebuerger, ... dir dohém a mir hei baussen ... : les allocutions radiophoniques de la grande-duchesse Charlotte de l'exil (1940-1944) ». ... *et wor alles net esou einfach : Questions sur le Luxembourg et la Deuxième Guerre mondiale : contributions historiques accompagnant l'exposition : Fragen an die Geschichte Luxemburgs im Zweiten Weltkrieg : ein Lesebuch zur Ausstellung. - (Publications scientifiques du Musée d'histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg ; t. X)*. 2002. P. 208-231.

⁸⁸ Charlotte A Royal At War. Online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Emye7Ku6ho8>

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beautiful, elegant, and maternal figure, as well as a hope for the people. She became *"the symbol of the Luxembourg Resistance."*⁸⁹

By the way, in the spring of 1942, while her family was in exile in the United States, the Grand Duchess Charlotte bought a farm of about 100 hectares near Newton, Pennsylvania. The whole family spent summers there, and the children were eager to join in the work on the farm.⁹⁰ This fact suggests reflections on how the Duchess cared about the future of her family while forced to stay overseas. In the midst of the war, with no hope of returning to Europe soon, she tried to set up a new home for her children, choosing a place that reminded them of their homeland. An interesting parallel can be seen here in the fact that during that difficult period, the family of the Grand Duchess Charlotte also received support from senior government officials, including U.S. President FDR and his family. One of the key and fateful decisions of the Luxembourg government in exile was to join the anti-Hitler coalition from the moment it was created. Many officers of the former Luxembourg army fought alongside the Allies. In 1942, Prince Felix and Crown Prince Jean decided to join the British army as volunteers to liberate Luxembourg with the Allies. From November 1942, Prince Felix served in the British Army's Northern Command. The future Grand Duke Jean personally participated in the Allied landings in Normandy. The Grand Duchess also returned home on April 14, 1945 - before the war officially ended. The grand-ducal family was greeted with much enthusiasm, as shown in an archival footage.⁹¹

Despite the advantages of the existing form of government for Luxembourg in the past, and the undoubted merits of the Grand Ducal family in preserving the state during geopolitical upheavals, modern Luxembourgers often reflect critically on the monarchy. In particular, there is a discussion about the symbolism of the monarchy, the role of the monarch in history, the expediency of preserving this form of government, etc. The movie Léif Lëtzebuurger provoked particularly lively discussions.⁹²

Sofia

The Melnyks were caught up in the war in Berlin. On the eve of the war, at the end of August 1939, the Second Great Assembly of Ukrainian Nationalists took place in Rome, which approved A. Melnyk as the head of the OUN leadership. It is worth mentioning here that Yevhen Konovalets left behind a significant

⁸⁹ Quoted by Pol Weitz. Charlotte von Luxemburg: ein Lebensbild. Druckerei J.M. Watgen, Luxemburg, 1990. S. 87, 93, 125-126.

⁹⁰ E.T. Melchers E.T. und U. Melchers-Schmol. Unvergessene Gestalten unserer Dynastie. Band II. Charlotte und Felix. Sankt-Paulus-Druckerei, A.G., Luxemburg. 1998. P. 344.

⁹¹ Charlotte, Großherzogin von Luxemburg, kehrt 1945 aus dem Exil zurück. Online : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBKdr9ts-x0I>.

⁹² Online : <https://www.forum.lu/issue/onst-charlotte/>

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legacy. In the mid-1930s, OUN cells operated in many countries, including overseas. The organization had 17 separate press organs in 6 countries. However, there were also serious problems. Konovalets's friends recalled how in private conversations he said that *"in the OUN, 'outlying' movements, intrigues, and the ego of individuals are increasingly manifested."*⁹³ The most acute problem was the staffing. There was a particular lack of people with leadership qualities who shared the ideas of the Ukrainian nationalist movement. At the same time, Yevhen Konovalets himself remained true to his own beliefs. Andriy Melnyk recalled their last family meeting in the Slovak Tatras a few months before Konovalets' death: *"In my eyes, both of them (Yevhen and Olha) were cheerful, full of faith in the righteousness of the Cause they both served, ready to carry on the cross that God's Providence had placed on their shoulders, no matter how heavy it was and how thorny the path of their emigrant life."*⁹⁴

Taking responsibility for the Organization, Melnyk began to prepare patriotic forces for rematch. The main goal of his activities was to fight for the restoration of Ukrainian statehood. According to contemporaries: *"His vision of the Ukrainian state was largely shaped by the experience gained and the years of national liberation struggle. The colonel opposed 'half-hearted' concepts of building the Ukrainian state. His ideal was a sovereign and united Ukraine."*⁹⁵

Sofia accompanied and supported her husband everywhere, sharing with him the difficulties of emigrant life and often acting as his personal secretary. In her memoirs Sofia later recalled that *"...it was not an easy decision for us, and especially for me, to voluntarily emigrate, to leave our family, our somewhat orderly life and work. No one was thinking seriously about the war at that time, although a year later emigration became a sad necessity for Western Ukraine."*⁹⁶

Her life in exile can be likened to that of her sister Olha Konovalets, who described it as follows: *"Our life was one of perpetual movement, change, and anxiety. Eternal arrival and departure, because my husband was more on the road than at home, and we often did not see him for months. We also often changed our homes for various reasons..."*⁹⁷ Living with the OUN leader had radically changed Olha. She turned from a reserved, fragile domesticated woman into *"a woman of amazing endurance, with her ability to navigate the situation with lightning speed, courage that bordered on desperation."* She

⁹³ Quoted by Kucheruk O., Cherchenko Y., Kovalchuk M. Yevhen Konovalets. The story of an unsolved murder. - K.: Vihola, 2024. P. 65. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁹⁴ Quoted by Kucheruk O., Cherchenko Y., Kovalchuk M. Yevhen Konovalets... P. 69-70. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁹⁵ Quoted by Anna Siromska / Andriy Melnyk 130. Collection of materials of the All-Ukrainian Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to the famous Ukrainian statesman, politician, and military figure, Colonel Andrii Melnyk. November 20-21, Truskavets, 2019. P. 120. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁹⁶ Sofia Melnyk. Memories of Our Departure Abroad in 1938 and Life in Emigration. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. - Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. 568 p., illus. P. 313. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁹⁷ Kucheruk O., Cherchenko Y., Kovalchuk M. Yevhen Konovalets. The story of an unsolved murder. - K.: Vihola, 2024. P. 58, (translated with the help of DeepL).

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provided comfort in the home, raised her son Yurii, took care of her husband's health, and controlled the family budget. She also supported the OUN cause in some way. For example, when funds were urgently needed for organizational needs, Colonel Konovalts ordered his supporters to contact his wife. On one occasion, the financial issue was resolved positively within one day: "...Mrs. Polkovnykova sent the money by telegraph, without even asking for any security."⁹⁸

It can be assumed that the Melnyk couple's lifestyle in exile did not differ significantly from the example of the Konovalts family. But while after the death of her husband, Olha and her 14-year-old son settled in Rome, where they lived the rest of their lives at the same address, Sofia and her husband faced serious trials.

Being in the various European capitals on the eve of World War II, Andriy Melnyk was well aware of the current political situation. With this in mind, the OUN, under his leadership, began to develop plans for the restoration of an independent Ukrainian state in the face of the inevitable coming war. The work became more complicated after the organizational split in 1940. Among other reasons for the OUN split, which had been brewing for several years, Ukrainian historians who study this period today also identify dissatisfaction among a significant part of the organization's members with the new leader. Despite all the virtues that, according to the memories of his supporters, A. Melnyk was endowed with, he lacked the leadership talent of Y. Konovalts.⁹⁹ The split not only weakened the organization, but also had a negative impact on the national liberation movement as a whole. A. Melnyk underestimated the consequences of the split and instead called on all pro-Ukrainian forces to unite and continue the struggle.¹⁰⁰

One of the former Sich Riflemen, a centurion in the UPR army, Yevhen Malaniuk, who had known Melnyk since the Ukrainian National Liberation Revolution, recalled how in the summer of 1941 he received a phone call from colonel Melnyk in his Warsaw apartment: *"It has begun. Mr. Centurion, your place is in Kyiv."* However, Malaniuk did not respond to the call. During the twenty years of emigration, his life had changed. He had a family, earned his living by writing, and did not want to return to Kyiv with a foreign army whose goals he did not share. At the same time, he later noted in his memoirs that *"...when Andriy Melnyk became the head of a revolutionary organization after the murder of Yevhen Konovalts, it was not because he felt like a revolutionary or a politician. In my opinion, the decisive factor here was a purely military sense of duty: to replace a fallen comrade and*

⁹⁸ Olha Bezruk. Olha and Yevhen Konovalts: Interdependence of Feminine and Masculine. Hzhitskyi. Vol. 17 №. 1 (61), Part 4, 2015. P. 265-266. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

⁹⁹ Online : <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/do-130-richchya-andriya-melnyka-uinp-proviv-naukovyy-kruglyy-stil>

¹⁰⁰ Online : <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2021/08/3/159941>

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : [https://mhid.netlify.app/former-commander... And if it were not for the regiment. Andriy Melnyk, maybe today there would not be the name of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.](https://mhid.netlify.app/former-commander...-And-if-it-were-not-for-the-regiment.-Andriy-Melnyk,-maybe-today-there-would-not-be-the-name-of-the-Organization-of-Ukrainian-Nationalists.)"¹⁰¹

According to Oleksandr Skrypnyk, a researcher of the history of Ukrainian intelligence, as early as 1923, the leaders of the UVO (i.e., Y. Konovalts, A. Melnyk, and others) signed a cooperation agreement with the leaders of German counterintelligence. Members of the UVO conducted intelligence activities on the territory of Poland in favor of the Reichswehr, and in return, the organization received monthly financial assistance and assistance in training covert warfare personnel. As a result, an effective and extensive intelligence network was created, which was eventually inherited by the OUN. The OUN leadership, headed by A. Melnyk, had a special intelligence group for relations with the German special services. O. Skrypnyk believes that *"intelligence activities were considered by the OUN leaders as one of the important prerequisites for the armed overthrow of the occupation authorities and the restoration of the Ukrainian state."*¹⁰²

At the same time, the OUN leadership was establishing ties with the intelligence services of other countries. According to O. Skrypnyk, in 1931-1937, emissaries of the UVO-UN established contact with representatives of the British Secret Service (SIS), met with Japanese intelligence officers in Vienna, and traveled to Spain, Italy, France, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Finland for the same purpose. Melnyk's personal attitude toward the Nazis remains unknown. He could not have been unaware of the discussion that took place at the Berlin conference of the OUN in 1933, a few months after they came to power in Germany. At the conference, Yevhen Konovalts spoke out against establishing ties with the National Socialists, citing their negative attitude toward the peoples of Eastern Europe. He argued his conclusions sharply but convincingly, quoting Hitler's book "Mein Kampf."¹⁰³ However, despite Konovalts' outspoken position, Melnyk faced difficult challenges during the war and decided on a different course. The German Nazis were the only ones who agreed to arm Ukrainians, and this was the most important thing for the OUN at the time, which was preparing for a new stage of the struggle for an independent Ukraine. For the same purpose, Melnyk tried to develop contacts with representatives of the German government, business circles, and the Abwehr, hoping for their assistance in restoring Ukraine's independence.¹⁰⁴

Attempts by A. Melnyk and his opponent S. Bandera to overcome differences within the OUN did not bring the desired results. From September 1940, the conflict escalated into an open internal

¹⁰¹ From the memoirs of Yevhen Malaniuk / Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / Compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. - Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. P. 102. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁰² Oleksandr Skrypnyk. Ukrainian Intelligence. 100 years of struggle, confrontations, achievements. - Kyiv. "ADEF-Ukraine", 2020. – 344. P. 162-163. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁰³ Kucheruk O., Cherchenko Y., Kovalchuk M. Yevhen Konovalts. The Story of an Unsolved Murder. - K.: Vihola, 2024. P. 64.

¹⁰⁴ Online : <https://szru.gov.ua/history/stories/andrii-melnyk-pid-shchilnoyu-opikoyu-nkdb-ursr?>

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> conflict, which was deepened by the intervention of the Soviet and German secret services. By this time, Melnyk and his wife were living in Florence, Italy. As Sofia recalled, it was easier to rent a house there and live under false names, going unnoticed among the many tourists.¹⁰⁵ Maria Sichynska-Fedak, Sofia's mother, also moved there from Vienna and settled with them. However, after Italy entered the war in the summer of 1940, the family was forced to move to Berlin. At that time, they all used German issued passports for stateless persons. The Italians, as allies of the Nazis, refused to extend their visas.

This was in the context of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa) on 22 June 1941, which effectively ended Hitler's agreement with Stalin on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact). The conquest of the Soviet Union was to help the Nazis turn Germany into a superpower.¹⁰⁶ This may have motivated Melnyk's appeal to Ukrainians on June 30, 1941, calling on them to *"unite under one flag, under one leadership for the sake of the election of an independent, united Ukrainian state."*¹⁰⁷ The other wing of the OUN, led by Stepan Bandera, had a similar goal, seeing the Germans as allies. However, from the first days of the invasion, the Nazi policy on Ukrainian lands showed the futility of these hopes.¹⁰⁸

In early July 1941, A. Melnyk still called on Ukrainians to cooperate with Germany in the name of Ukraine's independence. But already on July 28, 1941, in a letter to Heinrich Himmler, he protested against the inclusion of eastern Galicia in the Polish governorate.¹⁰⁹ At the end of July 1941, on the order of Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller, Melnyk and his wife were placed under house arrest in Berlin. In January 1942, along with other well-known Ukrainian activists, Melnyk signed a memorandum to Adolf Hitler demanding that he stop his destructive policy on the territory of Ukraine. The content of the letter and the authenticity of Sheptytsky's signature on it were analyzed by Liliana Hentosh, a researcher of the Metropolitan's activities.¹¹⁰

The OUN leader probably foresaw the possible consequences of active political activity that contradicted the Nazis' plans. Therefore, for security reasons, the Melnyk/Fedak couple secretly left

¹⁰⁵ Sofia Melnyk. *Memories of Our Departure Abroad in 1938 and Life in Exile*. Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. *Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence* / Compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. - Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. - 568 p., illus. P. 312-320.

¹⁰⁶ Timothy Snyder. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books, 2010. P. 125, 131-149, 170.

¹⁰⁷ The OUN in 1941. *Documents*. In 2 parts. Part 1. / Compiled by O. Veselova, O. Lysenko, I. Patryliak, V. Serhiichuk. Editor-in-chief. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2006. P. 249. Online : <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/http://history.org.ua/LiberUA/Book/oun41/text.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ The OUN in 1941. *Documents*. In 2 parts. Part 1 ... P. 271-282.

Online : <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/http://history.org.ua/LiberUA/Book/oun41/text.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ The OUN in 1941. *Documents*. In 2 parts. Part 1 ... P. 284, 388.

Online : <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/http://history.org.ua/LiberUA/Book/oun41/text.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Online : <https://uamoderna.com/pdl-min/mitropolit-andrej-shepticzkij-i-golokost-novi-dokumenti-ta-novi-interpretaczii-istorichnix-kontekstiv/>

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Berlin in January 1944 and settled in Vienna. But later they were arrested for the second time and transported to a remote area in the Austrian Alps. There, in the town of Hirschegg (Kleinwalsertal), various political prisoners were held under house arrest in the Hotel "Ifen". The most famous among them was the former French ambassador to Berlin, André François-Poncet. He had a hard time with his imprisonment, entrusting his feelings to his diary, which was rescued from the guards and partially published after the war. In the conditions of isolation from the world, various prohibitions and restrictions, the only entertainment for the prisoners was walking, reading books sent by relatives from the outside, and communicating with each other. Therefore, the new arrivals were surrounded by excessive attention. In particular, on Friday, March 3, 1944. Poncet shared with his diary his impression of meeting a Ukrainian colonel and his wife who arrived that day: *"This Melnyk is graceful, noble, very polite, and well-mannered; his wife, small and black-haired, with sharp features and a keen look of lively eyes from under her glasses."* From his conversation with Melnyk, Poncet learned that he was *"a leader of the Ukrainian nationalist movement with democratic views."* In terms of his political position, he was *"an enemy of the Russian Bolsheviks, Poles and Czechs, who opposed the revival of his country."* It also turned out that Melnyk was *"hostile to the Germans, for whom Ukraine is only a tool and a breadbasket."* Melnyk believed that the reasons for his arrest were his refusal to hand over the OUN archives to the Germans and the Nazis' desire to regain control of the organization. Poncet mistook Sofia Melnyk for Konovalets's sister. This is because during the meeting it turned out that her nephew, Yurii Konovalets, studied with one of Ponce's sons at the Chateaubriand Lyceum in Rome. It seems that Ponce was pleased with this acquaintance. In his diary, he summarized: *"...they seem to be pleasant company."*¹¹¹

However, within two weeks, the former ambassador changed his mind. He was suffering from acute back pain due to an exacerbation of a chronic illness, was burdened by the tense atmosphere in the hotel due to the appearance of a snitch, and was worried about the uncertainty of his own future. The depression was deepened by his acquaintance with the works of F. Dostoevsky... Being in a difficult physical and emotional state, he complained to his diary about his self-isolation and, among other things, complained that *"the Ukrainian couple is boring."*¹¹² It can be assumed that the Ukrainian couple was not in the mood for entertainment at the time. A Sturmbannführer named Wolf, who was responsible for investigating their case, arrived at the hotel with them. According to Poncet's recollections, Wolf interrogated the couple, observed the prisoners, and intimidated the guards. This made the atmosphere in the hotel difficult and tense.¹¹³

Because of his refusal to meet the Nazis' demands, Andriy and Sofia Melnyk were transferred to the Nazi concentration camp Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen (north of Berlin) on July 27, 1944. There was

¹¹¹ André François-Poncet. Carnets d'un Captif. Dans les ateliers de l'imprimerie Firmin-Didot, le Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée. 1952. P. 117.

¹¹² André François-Poncet. Carnets d'un Captif... P. 124.

¹¹³ André François-Poncet. Carnets d'un Captif... P. 117.

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a separate room for "special" prisoners called Zellenbau, where Hitler's "personal enemies," high-ranking officials, and activists of the Ukrainian national liberation movement were held. In particular, Stepan Bandera, Yaroslav Stetsko, Yevhen Onatsky, Dmytro Andrievsky, Denys Kvitkovsky, Oleh Shtul, Oleh Kandyba (Olzhych), and others were held there. Oleh Olzhych, the right hand of Andriy Melnyk, an OUN ideologue and talented writer, died in Sachsenhausen. Others managed to survive. They did not leave detailed memories of the period of imprisonment.

During this difficult period in the life of the Melnyk/Fedak couple, a story happened that deserves special attention. One of the declassified documents of the CIA archiv reports information that at Sachsenhausen, Melnyk saved the life of the brother of the Luxembourg prince consort Felix Bourbon-Parma. The dispatch mentions the provision of any assistance to A. Melnyk and his family in the event of a *"threat to their personal safety"*.¹¹⁴ Perhaps that is why, after the release from the concentration camp, Melnyk's family found refuge in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg with the assistance of Prince Felix.

Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to find out the exact circumstances of this rescue. While working on the project, we found out that two brothers of Prince Felix survived imprisonment in concentration camps. At Sachsenhausen Melnyk may indeed have met Felix' younger brother, Prince Louis (Luigi Carlo) de Bourbon-Parma, who had been arrested by the Nazis in Italy on September 8, 1943, on charges of preparing a coup d'état with his father-in-law, the king of Italy. His wife, Princess Maria Francesca of Savoy, and their two minor sons were also detained from September 17, 1943 to February 2, 1944 in the Nazi camp of Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen.¹¹⁵ It remains unclear how Melnyk was able to help in this case. It is known that on February 2, 1944, the prince's family was moved to another camp in the Elbe Valley (Harlitz Castle, Mecklenburg), where they were held until their release. Melnyk and his wife Sofia arrived Sachsenhausen in the summer of 1944. Melnyk may have somehow learned about the imprisonment of the monarchs' family and used his connections in the highest Nazi circles to reunite Prince Louis' family and ease their plight. It is known that the family of monarchs was liberated from the Mecklenburg camp by American troops on May 2, 1945.

Princess Maria Francesca of Savoy survived her husband for a long time. Her grandchildren tried several times to convince her to write a biography, but she always rejected these proposals, repeating that she would *"never write about the terrible suffering of her stay in the Nazi concentration camps."*

¹¹⁴ Online : <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/139373375>. P.75.

¹¹⁵ Online : <https://royalwatcherblog.com/2021/12/07/princess-maria-francescas-diamond-tiara/> Warning: Unconfirmed source!

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It should be noted here that Maria's own sister Mafalda died in the Buchenwald concentration camp.¹¹⁶

Prince Felix's and Prince Louis' elder brother, Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, the Carlist pretender to the Spanish throne, was also imprisoned in a concentration camp. He was arrested in France for his participation in the French Resistance. In September 1944, he was transferred to the concentration camp of Natzweiler-Struthof, and with the approach of American troops, to Dachau. The Nazis categorized him as an "honorary prisoner" and kept him in more comfortable conditions in the so-called "honor bunkers."¹¹⁷ To understand the whole truth about those conditions, it is worth knowing that Prince Xavier weighed 36 kg at the age of 56 after the liberation of the camp by the American army on May 8, 1945. Like Maria Francesca of Savoy and many survivors, he never publicly spoke about this period. According to psychologist Viktor Frankl, who had been interned himself, this was not uncommon: *"We don't like to talk about our experiences. Those who were in the camps don't need to explain anything, and others will not understand either what we felt then or what we feel now."*¹¹⁸ Andriy and Sofia Melnyk also never mentioned the rescue of a member of the royal family. This can be explained by a conscious and concerted decision by all involved to hide this fact from the public for various reasons. On the other hand, this event could have been completely invented by Prince Felix of Luxembourg specifically for the American intelligence services as a justification for his support of the Melnyk family. If we assume that the rescue actually took place, then we can only hope that new documents will eventually appear that will confirm or refute this historical mystery. *"Res porro tractatur"* (Latin for "the case is not yet closed").

Over time, Sofia briefly described her stay in Sachsenhausen. Her memoirs provide a general picture of the life of the OUN leaders in Zellenbau. It can be concluded that the regime of their imprisonment was quite tolerable for most of them. No torture, permission to go for walks, and food, albeit of poor quality. Due to a certain leniency of the warders, the prisoners even found an opportunity to secretly exchange information. This is how S. Bandera sent a message to A. Melnyk about the death of the only OUN member, Oleh Olzhych, in the camp.¹¹⁹

Ironically, by imprisoning Melnyk's family, the Nazis saved the life of the leader of the Ukrainian nationalists. The Sectoral State Archive of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine has published a collection of documents of the GPU-NKVD-MGB-KGB of the Ukrainian SSR on the liquidation

¹¹⁶ Renato Barneschi. *Frau von Weber. Vita e morte di Mafalda di Savoia a Buchenwald*. Rusconi Libri S.p.A., Milano, 1982. P. 89-97.

¹¹⁷ E.T. Melchers E.T. und U. Melchers-Schmol. *Unvergessene Gestalten unserer Dynastie. Band II. Charlotte und Felix*. Sankt-Paulus-Druckerei, A.G., Luxemburg. 1998. P. 385.

¹¹⁸ Viktor Emil Frankl. *Man in Search of True Meaning. A Psychologist in a Concentration Camp*. Vienna, 1992. P. 22.

¹¹⁹ *Memoirs of Sofia / Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko*. - Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. P. 317-318.

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On October 17, 1944, the Nazis released the leaders of Ukrainian organizations, including members of the OUN. This became possible due to a change in their strategy of using Ukrainian nationalists to continue the war in Europe. A. Melnyk was authorized to negotiate with representatives of the Nazi government on the establishment of the Ukrainian National Committee to represent Ukrainians in Germany. Since these negotiations were unsuccessful, Melnyk instructed all leading OUN members to leave Berlin as soon as possible and seek contacts with representatives of the anti-fascist coalition. He and his wife, fleeing from Gestapo surveillance and the approaching Red Army, left Berlin on February 11, 1945, for Bad Kissingen. The place was not chosen by chance. In 1944-1946, the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile was located in Bad Kissingen. A. Melnyk planned to unite all Ukrainian political forces in exile as soon as possible, to establish a single governing body for the foreign policy representation of Ukrainians. These intentions are confirmed, in particular, by A. Melnyk's letter to S. Bandera of July 17, 1945, sent from Bad Kissingen.¹²¹ To resolve all important issues, Melnyk planned to organize a meeting of the leaders of the four most popular political associations of Ukrainians.¹²²

Sofia described further changes in their lives over time as follows: *"...the general tendency at the time was to get out of Germany as soon as possible in order to contact our emigration in America and Canada. Onatsky was the first to do so, to Rome and Andrievsky to Belgium. Through Andrievsky, my husband sent a letter (because the post office was not yet running) to Prince Felix of Luxembourg, whom he knew from his visits to the metropolitan's hunting grounds. From Bad Godesberg we went to the Luxembourg consul in Wiesbaden, and later to Cologne, where we received permission to enter Luxembourg."*¹²³ Confirmation of the latter fact can be found in one of Andriy Melnyk's letters to

¹²⁰ Branch State Archive of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine. - F. 1. - Case No. 11332. - T 2. - Art. 8. Online : <https://szru.gov.ua/history/stories/andrii-melnyk-pid-shchilnoyu-opikoyu-nkdb-urstr?>

¹²¹ Online : <https://kroun.info/bez-rubriki/lysty-andriya-melnyka-sered-novyh-nadhodzen-czentralnogo-derzhavnogo-arhivu-gromadskyh-obyednan-ta-ukrayiniky/>

¹²² Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. P. 430-431.

¹²³ Quoted by Memoirs of Sofia / Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. - Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. P. 320. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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Dmytro Andrievsky, written on July 3, 1945, in Bad Kissingen. Among other things, he stated that *"...there is not a word from Felix; I am afraid that the letter did not reach him."*¹²⁴

Indeed, the process of waiting for a permit to enter Luxembourg for the Melnyk/Fedak couple lasted more than a year. For some time, there was correspondence between officials of various organizations regarding the granting of such a permit. Then their identities were checked by the Public Security Service (**Oeffentlicher Sicherheitsdienst Großherzogliche Gendarmerie Luxemburg**) of the Grand Duchy. The information that this service managed to collect contains contradictory data about A. Melnyk, but also confirms some facts from the memories of his entourage. In particular, according to one of the documents, A. Melnyk is described as: *"A colonel of the American army, an engineer by profession, he was a Belarusian officer, and before the war he was a large landowner in Poland... Members of the Grand Ducal House visited his estate, and Prince Felix is also a good friend of his, and he invited Melnyk to visit him."* On the basis of this document, the Melnyk couple was to be granted an entry visa and a residence permit for a period of 3 months.¹²⁵

Documents in the Melnyk/Fedak family file, which is kept in the National Archives of Luxembourg, show that on June 7, 1946, Andrii and Sofia answered a questionnaire at the Grand Duchy's immigration police. According to this questionnaire, the former colonel arrived in Luxembourg as an engineer and journalist, carrying a German issued passport for stateless persons dated December 9, 1941.¹²⁶ His wife had the same passport and stated in her application form that she was born in Galicia, but for reasons known only to her, she concealed all of her father's information from the police except for his name.¹²⁷

At the request of the Prosecutor General, the Hesperange police brigadier prepared a report in early July with information on newly arrived foreigners. In addition to general information, the report stated that Melnyk spoke French but was not fluent. The police were particularly interested in the couple's means to sustain their livelihood. In response, Melnyk explained that he had some savings and planned to work as a journalist. He could also turn to his friends in Luxembourg for help if necessary. The policeman concluded that Melnyk usually traveled to Luxembourg City every morning. And that during the short period of his stay in the Duchy, *"it was not possible to find out anything about his occupations"*.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence... P. 430.

¹²⁵ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 4828, Report of the Brigadier of the Public Security Service in Luxembourg, 1945.

¹²⁶ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 260, Déclaration d'Arrivée, 1946.

¹²⁷ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 308119, Application for residence permit for foreigners, 1946.

¹²⁸ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 180, Report of the Brigadier of the Hesperange commune police to the Luxembourg Attorney General, 1946.

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It can be concluded here that the Luxembourg Security Service may have had some information about Melnyk's true activities, but the police failed to find conclusive evidence.

So, apparently, Prince Felix of Luxembourg helped the Melnyk family to 'hide' from their persecutors in the Grand Duchy. It would be interesting to find the letter that was so eagerly awaited in Bad Kissingen. It would shed more light on the relationship between the two former Austrian army officers, who met in the interwar period while hunting in Galicia and whose relationship probably went beyond a casual acquaintance.

AFTER 1945 : CONTINUING TO CARE

*"All the pale horses of the apocalypse have stormed through my life: revolution and famine, currency depreciation and terror, epidemics and emigration; I have seen great mass ideologies grow before my eyes and spread, Fascism in Italy, National Socialism in Germany, Bolshevism in Russia, and above all the ultimate pestilence that has poisoned the flower of our European culture, nationalism in general. I have been a defenseless, helpless witness of the unimaginable relapse of mankind into what was believed to be long-forgotten barbarism, with its deliberate programme of inhuman dogma."*¹²⁹

Charlotte

Charlotte spent the last period of her life in her homeland, living in her beloved Fischbach manor. Respected by her countrymen, she enjoyed her retirement surrounded by her large family as a happy mother and grandmother.

She abdicated on November 12, 1964, after 45 years of rule in favor of Jean, her eldest son. She died on July 9, 1985 and was buried in the crypt of the Luxembourg Cathedral of Notre Dame.

The French-Luxembourgish TV journalist *Stéphane Bern* dedicated one of his popular programs "Secrets d'Histoire" to the Grand Duchess Charlotte. He admits that he put particular love into this episode of the program: *"...I had an ecstatic vision of Grand Duchess Charlotte. My grandparents raised me with the burden of war. And yet, in addition to being a sovereign, she was such a symbolic figure for the people of Luxembourg who lived in that period!"*¹³⁰ The program intertwines Luxembourgers' memories of the Grand Duchess as a monarch at the head of state with her grandchildren's memories of their own grandmother. *"In preparing this program, I learned a lot*

¹²⁹ Stefan Zweig. *The World of Yesterday: Memoirs of a European*. / Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. Pushkin Press Classics, London, 2009. P. 20.

¹³⁰ Online : <https://www.virgule.lu/luxembourg/stephane-bern-tourne-secrets-d-histoire-au-luxembourg/130154.html>, (Translated with the help of DeepL).

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*through personal stories. Her grandchildren told me what a wonderful grandmother she was. I also learned that every day around 17:00 she smoked a cigarette and had a beer and played the accordion to relax. That she not only loved flowers, but also planted trees and flowers herself in the gardens of Fischbach Castle-she had a real talent for landscape design! She was a very modern woman, she did everything herself: she worked, she raised her six children, she decided everything, never going beyond her sovereign or institutional functions. And she had the simplicity that I love about Luxembourgers. She was the embodiment of simplicity. She also had a sense of empathy, like the members of the grand royal family, accepting the problems of others as her own... "*¹³¹

Bern's TV program was able to film inside the monarch's private residence in Colmar Berg, the Grand Ducal Palace and many of the houses where Charlotte had lived. Set in Luxembourg, the United States, Portugal, and France, with testimonies from several of her 27 grandchildren and the participation of the current ruling family of Luxembourg, Secrets d'Histoire draws a touching portrait of this exceptional sovereign.¹³² She still awaits a historical biography.

Sofia

It is worth tracing the Melnyk couple's journey to Luxembourg to understand that when fleeing Germany, they could not do it without the help of friends, acquaintances, and sometimes even strangers. It is also interesting from the point of view of understanding the difficulty of access to a small, completely destroyed country at that time.¹³³

Mykhailo Seleshko took the couple to the border with Germany. A former confidant of Yevhen Konovalts. Seleshko served as Melnyk's personal secretary. Due to the lack of railroad connections, they had to cross the Moselle River by boat. There, they borrowed a small cart from the owners of the nearest house to put their luggage on. Then they walked to the Wasserbillig train station, where they took a train to Luxembourg. Sofia briefly described their arrival: "...Here, after the first few days of formalities, the emigration routine began: looking for accommodation, learning languages, looking for work. My husband left, with some difficulties, either for Germany or France. I, bound by my work, had to stay in place, and thus from afar of all Ukrainian life."¹³⁴

In Luxembourg, Melnyk and his family settled at Hesperange, rue de Thionville, 216. The registration book of the Luxembourg commune of Hesperange contains a corresponding entry for July 7, 1946.

¹³¹ Online : <https://www.virgule.lu/luxembourg/stephane-bern-tourne-secrets-d-histoire-au-luxembourg/130154.html>. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹³² Online : <https://www.secretsdhistoire.tv/content/la-grande-duchesse-charlotte-de-luxembourg>

¹³³ Online : <https://onszerschloendierfer.net/>

¹³⁴ Memoirs of Sofia / Andriy Melnyk. 1890-1964. Memoirs. Documents. Correspondence / compiled by O. Kucheruk, Y. Cherchenko. - Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2011. P. 320.

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It also states that the Melnyk/Fedak couple arrived from Godesberg.¹³⁵ According to the rules in force at the time, the newcomers were allowed to work and trade. However, only Sofia was always officially employed.

Olga Kuzmowycz characterized her aunt as an extremely modest and hardworking person, kind-hearted and very organized. She also recalled that Sofia always wanted to be financially independent, so «*she worked in a bank in Luxembourg as a financier.*»¹³⁶ However, according to the questionnaires, she worked for the bank as a private civil servant. (**Privatbeamtin**).¹³⁷

Sofia did not manage to find a job quickly. When she first applied for the position of a stenographer at the Luxembourg Creditbank, she was not accepted.¹³⁸ But already in 1952, in her next questionnaire, she indicated that she was working at the Creditbank and received 3500 francs net per month. In 1954, she was already earning 5000 francs per month. In 1963, her income rose to 6400 francs, and in 1965 she received 7000 francs per month.¹³⁹ At the same time, A. Melnyk was not fully dependent on his wife. In particular, in 1957, one of the police reports stated that Melnyk's income from journalistic work for a Canadian publication was about 500 francs per month.¹⁴⁰ In 1958, he stated that he earned 1000 francs per month. In 1961, he briefly indicated "Verdienst" as the source of his income, i.e. his salary. In general, archival documents indicate that these funds were not enough for the family to live in the Grand Duchy. Sofia's husband regularly applied to the official authorities for reimbursement of the tax payment while regularly updating his residence documents. For example, in 1959, this amount was about 400 francs for two people. Melnyk justified his request by the fact that only his wife worked in the family. And he himself could not work because of his age, only occasionally working as a journalist for a Ukrainian newspaper in Winnipeg, Canada, where he earned 2000-3000 francs per year. At the same time, the family rents a three-room apartment for 1800 francs per month.¹⁴¹ Taking into account the above, as well as the fact that the applicant had no savings or debts, he was exempted from paying this tax in the future, as evidenced by archival documents.¹⁴² The questionnaire forms were usually accompanied by standardized photographs for documents.

¹³⁵ Extract from the registration book of the commune of Hesperange, no. 260/46, Certificate of family composition and change of residence, 1946.

¹³⁶ *Wives of the Leaders / Women's Society named after Olha Basarab and Olena Teliha, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists*; compiled by Nadia Buhay; under the editorship of Nadia Strinzenets. Kyiv: Ukrainian Culture Publishing House LLC, 2019. P. 11.

¹³⁷ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952. Demande pour le renouvellement de la carte d'identité, № 8646, 1959; № 2399, 1961.

¹³⁸ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 12196, Certificate from the Ministry of Labor, 1951.

¹³⁹ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952. № 308119. Fragebogen zum Antrag auf Erneuerung der Fremdekarte, № 189/52 (1952), № 311/54 (1954), № 190/79 (1963); № 190/79 (1965).

¹⁴⁰ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952. № 308119, Police Report, 1957.

¹⁴¹ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 246, Response of the Commissioner of Police to the request of the Prosecutor General, 1959.

¹⁴² ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 3825, Communication from the Prosecutor General of Luxembourg to the Minister of Justice, 1959.

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Sofia diligently updated her photos almost every time she filled out a questionnaire to renew her residence permit. Andriy, on the other hand, submitted the same photo several times. These photos allow us to trace the changes that have taken place with the couple over the decades of their life in Luxembourg. Most of them, especially Sofia's photos, are published for the first time.

Despite her own employment, according to the memoirs of her contemporaries, Sofia helped her husband in fulfilling his duties as the leader of the OUN: *"And at the same time, during her husband's life, with his heavy load of affairs and responsibilities, she constantly helped him with her voluntary secretarial work. When she returned from work, after completing her household chores, she would sit down at the typewriter and meticulously take care of organizing her husband's correspondence and other tasks, helping him not only with her own guidance as a kind and caring wife, but also with her actual cooperation."*¹⁴³ Sofia also took care of her mother, who lived with them. It is not known exactly when she arrived in the Grand Duchy. However, one of the archival documents dated 17 April 1948 indicates that Andrii Melnyk, his wife, and his mother-in-law, Maria Sichynska, were granted a one-year extension of their residence permit.¹⁴⁴ In 1952 A. Melnyk stated that his mother-in-law was supported at her own expense, but after her employment at the bank, Sofia indicated in her questionnaires that she and her husband supported her mother.¹⁴⁵ It is known that after the death of her husband, Maria Sichynska/Fedak inherited half of the property. The other half was bequeathed by her father to Sofia on the condition that she help all family members who needed support. The amount of this fortune is not known for certain, but the Melnyks declared in the first questionnaires to the immigration police that it would allow them to live in Luxembourg for several years.¹⁴⁶ Maria Fedak supported her children financially and morally until the end of her life (December 9, 1952). They reciprocated, fulfilling the will of their father, Stepan Fedak: *"I ask you, children, to love each other and help yourselves, to love and honor your mother."* Maria Fedak-Sichynska was buried in the capital of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, at the Bonnevoie cemetery.¹⁴⁷ Over time, the letters disappeared. That is why today the inscription on the grave is barely readable.

While living in Luxembourg, Andriy Melnyk continued to engage in political activities despite the official ban. Remembering the tragedy in Rotterdam that claimed the life of his friend, Yevhen Konovalts, he continued to observe strict rules of secrecy because of the threat to his life. The Soviet

¹⁴³ Wives of Leaders / Women's Society named after Olha Basarab and Olena Teliha, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists; compiled by. Nadia Buhay; under the editorship of Nadia Strinzenets. Kyiv: Ukrainian Culture Publishing House LLC. 2019. P. 11.

¹⁴⁴ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 3825, Letter from a government advisor to A. Melnyk, 1948.

¹⁴⁵ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952. № 30811, Fragebogen zum Antrag auf Erneuerung der Fremdekarte, № 190/52, 1952.

¹⁴⁶ ANLux, Police des Etrangers, Cote I-108-0454952. № 260, Déclaration d'Arrivée, 1946.

¹⁴⁷ Olha Bezhus. Women's stories of S. Fedak's family // Scientific Bulletin of the Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology named after S.Z. Grzycki National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology. Vol. 17 No. 4 (64), 2015. P. 366-376.

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secret services did not abandon the idea of eliminating the leaders of Ukrainian organizations in exile. This is confirmed by the archives of Ukrainian intelligence. One of the reports of a foreign agent dated February 14, 1947, stated: *"The removal of Andriy Melnyk has been put forward as a principled task, but there are no practical possibilities for this yet, as Melnyk is unreachable. It is impossible to predict the date and place of the meeting in advance."* Another report of 26.12.1950 shows that the OUN leadership intensified its activities after the war. Among other things, the Soviet agent noted that *"A. Melnyk permanently lives in Munich, observing the rules of strict secrecy. Knowing about the plans of the Soviet services to eliminate him, Melnyk behaves very cautiously, communicating with a limited circle of like-minded people. He trusts only his wife and a few confidants."*¹⁴⁸

Melnyk was thus successfully hiding in Luxembourg, although he was registered then under his real name. The Luxembourg police regularly received requests from the Prosecutor General to report on the current activities of Mr. Melnyk, the availability of means of living, the moral behavior of his family members, etc. Analysis of numerous police reports allows us to explain the reason for such requests. According to the Luxembourg legislation, the grounds for extending the residence permit (foreigner's card) were a stable source of income sufficient to rent housing and official registration of this housing. But in order to rent an apartment, one had to have an officially declared income. By not having a transparent income to begin with and possibly concealing some of their savings, Melnyk's family faced difficulties renting a home and, consequently, official registration and, as a result, a refusal to renew their foreigner's card. To resolve this dilemma, Melnyk tried to officially rent a 10-12 hectare farm for farming. Despite having the appropriate educational background, he was unable to conclude a lease agreement due to the lack of official registration.¹⁴⁹

Perhaps it was in this difficult situation that Melnyk again turned to Prince Felix for help. This assumption is indirectly confirmed by the correspondence between some officials of the Duchy, from which it can be learned that 3 months after arriving in Luxembourg, the residence permit for Colonel Andre Melnyk, his wife, Sofia Fedak, and mother-in-law, Maria Sichynska, was extended for another 6 months. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice sent a message about the positive decision on this issue directly to the Ducal Palace as a response to a previous request.¹⁵⁰

Meanwhile, the Luxembourg police continued to regularly monitor Melnyk's family, reporting to government officials. One of these reports informed stakeholders that the Melnyk family had no contact with their neighbors, but that the neighbors had nothing bad to say about the family. Melnyk

¹⁴⁸ GDA SZRU (Branch State Archive of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine), f. 1, file № 11332, vol. 5, pp. 23-25. Online : <https://szru.gov.ua/history/stories/andrii-melnyk-pid-shchilnoyu-opikoyu-nkdb-ursr?>

¹⁴⁹ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 79, Report of the Police Brigadier to the Prosecutor General, 1946.

¹⁵⁰ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, № 3825, Letter from the Minister of Justice to Mr. Corbert Prussen, Lieutenant-Adjutant of the Grand Duke's Palace, 1946.

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> and his wife commute from Hesperange-Howald to Luxembourg every day, and his mother-in-law hardly ever leaves the house. When asked a standard question about his livelihood, Mr. Melnyk replied that he works as a correspondent for the Canadian newspaper New Pathway, which is published in English in Winnipeg, and even showed his credentials. He shared with the police officer his plans to emigrate to Canada in 1-2 years, when a position becomes available for him there. Mr. Melnyk also said that he had abandoned his plan to rent a farm due to various significant difficulties and serious doubts about the profitability of such an idea. Among other things, the police officer found out that Melnyk's family had no debts. Overall, the former colonel made a positive impression on the officer. He had no doubt about Melnyk's sincerity, which was reflected in the report: *"His previous activities are unknown, but here he is considered to be decent."*¹⁵¹

Excessive police scrutiny, the need to comply with the rules of secrecy, or other reasons prompted the Melnyk family to change addresses, even in Luxembourg. It is known that in December 1957 they moved to 2, Boulevard de Verdun in the posher neighborhood of Belair.¹⁵² In various publications, one can find information that Melnyk lived for some time in the territory of the Grand Duchy in Clervaux. However, it has not been possible to confirm this information. There is no record of such a resident's registration in the commune of Clervaux. The veracity of this information is also questionable from the point of view of the convenience of living in Clervaux for Melnyk's family, especially for his wife Sofia. The bank where she worked was located in the capital. Clervaux commune is located in the north of the country. Despite a direct train line, covering this distance twice a day is exhausting even today. Perhaps, for the purpose of conspiracy, A. Melnyk met in Clervaux with some members of the OUN, who later disseminated this information.

After the war, A. Melnyk focused his activities on consolidating the Ukrainian emigration in order to preserve and develop Ukrainian culture and prepare a new stage of the struggle for Ukrainian independence. During this period, the OUN, led by Melnyk, took various initiatives to draw the world's attention to the situation of Ukrainians in the USSR. In May 1957, while in the United States and Canada, Melnyk initiated the convening of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians. The territory of Ukraine occupied by the totalitarian communist regime was not left out of the attention of Ukrainian political emigrants. *"We are fighting for the final destruction of the occupier with its imperialism, for its removal from Ukraine forever. That is why our underground is fighting for the soul of the Ukrainian person first and foremost..."*¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, No. 105, Report of the Senior Brigade Police Officer of the Municipality of Hesperange to the General Department of the Police for Foreigners in Luxembourg, 1948.

¹⁵² Extract from the registration book of the commune of Hesperange, № 19079, Certificate of family composition and change of residence.

¹⁵³ Interview with Colonel Andriy Melnyk, Leader of the Ukrainian Nationalist Movement. Paris, 1950. P. 4.

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It is known that A. Melnyk received the European Combat Cross Certificate from the European Confederation of Veterans. This confederation recognized *"the merits of veterans of Europe and their allies who, without betraying soldierly honor and striving to spare future generations the suffering and horrors of war, are committed to the common struggle to build a united Europe and to defend civilization and freedom."* Applicants must have a veteran's certificate (in France) or, in the absence of such a certificate, a certificate of military service, a certificate of recognition of their nation or recognition of services to the European army.¹⁵⁴

In the last years of his life, A. Melnyk was seriously ill with cancer and was treated in Germany. When the disease worsened, Sofia quit her job and rented an apartment near the clinic to be near her husband. Olha Konovalts arrived from Rome. Both women carefully cared for and supported Andriy for several months. He died on November 1, 1964, in a Cologne clinic after undergoing surgery. His death came as a heavy blow to Sofia. Her photographs in the years that followed captured it especially clearly. The Soviet totalitarian regime operating in Ukraine at that time did everything possible to destroy the memories of Melnyk's origins: in 1950, in his native village of Yakubova Volia, Drohobych district, Lviv region, almost 30 families from among Melnyk's close and distant relatives were deported to Siberia, to Tomsk region and Khabarovsk territory, without trial or investigation, with all their property confiscated.¹⁵⁵

A year after Melnyk's death, on October 31, 1965, Ukrainians who gathered to pay their respects at his grave caused quite a stir. The local police were informed in advance, everything went off without incident, and the event was widely covered in the regional press.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the General Prosecutor's Office was concerned about the "demonstration" at the Bonnevoie cemetery, where about 350 people gathered, and again began to investigate the identity of the deceased. At the request of the Prosecutor General, a detailed report was prepared. It shows that the Luxembourg security authorities did not have reliable information about Melnyk's true activities. They managed to find out that the demonstration at his grave was organized by the Association of Ukrainians in Luxembourg, founded in April 1933, and that Melnyk himself was president of the International Organization of Ukrainian Political Refugees since 1938. They also stated that at his funeral Ukrainian delegations from all over the world came to Luxembourg and – interestingly – that a wreath from the grand-ducal family had been delivered.¹⁵⁷ Despite her heavy loss, Sofia found the strength to continue her active life. In her

¹⁵⁴ Conseil de La Croix du Combattant de L'Europe, "European combatant cross certificate," *IBCC Digital Archive*, accessed March 4, 2025. <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/17818>

¹⁵⁵ Online : uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volya_Yakubova

¹⁵⁶ Trauerfeier für Colonel Andry Melnyk. In: *Luxemburger Wort*, 118. Jg., № 308/309 (06.11.1965), p. 11. [Digitized by the National Library of Luxembourg]. Online : <https://persist.lu/ark:70795/6qbz2pw4n/pages/11/articles/DIVL1097>

¹⁵⁷ ANLux, Police des Étrangers, Cote I-108-0454952, Report of the Commissioner of the Security Service to the Prosecutor General, № 2272, 1965.

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retirement, she kept in touch with relatives who had settled around the world, performed community service in cooperation with other OUN members, and wrote her memoirs. In 1967, Sofia and her sister Olha Konovalets, at the invitation of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States, attended the First World Congress of Free Ukrainians in New York, where they were honored guests as *"worthy widows."*¹⁵⁸ They were also taken care of by Yakiv Makovetskyi, an OUN member close to Melnyk. In addition to the circle of friends from the OUN, the "widows of the Leaders" were taken care of by the Ukrainian Golden Cross, a public organization founded in the United States in 1931 as a women's department of the Organization for the State Revival of Ukraine. Both women received regular financial assistance from the organization's special fund.¹⁵⁹

In 1975, Sofia was naturalized, i.e. became a citizen of Luxembourg. She is registered in the national registry under her maiden name Fedak.¹⁶⁰

In her oral recollections, Olga Kuzmowycz recalled that Sofia took care of her sister, Olha, who lived in Rome until the end of her life and worked in the library of Archbishop Josyf Slipyj of the Greek Catholic Church. Olha's son, Yurii Konovalets, died of cancer at the age of 35. Olha outlived him by 20 years. According to her niece's recollections, her aunt Olha was interested in music, art, literature, and all manifestations of Ukrainian cultural life. She loved traveling and sent letters full of impressions to her family. Being deeply religious, every year she spent Christmas in meditation in the city of Assisi, praying for all her relatives there.¹⁶¹ *"Her credo was patience, pazienza. She never smiled, but no one saw her tears..."*¹⁶²

In the center of the photo is the house at: 36, rue Guillaume Schneider (in the district of Limpertsberg), where Sofia lived after her husband's death. She moved there in December 1973 from another address: 42, Av. Berchem, in the Howald suburb of the capital. However, it has not yet been possible to find out when the couple settled there. The registration book of the Luxembourg City Hall contains some inaccuracies and has gaps in the records of their moves. Indirectly confirming their residence at this address is the fact that Maria Sichynska and later Andriy Melnyk were buried at the cemetery of Bonnevoie – close to Howald. Official sources say that Sofia lived at 36, rue Guillaume Schneider until December 12, 1989. From December 13, 1989 until her death on July 29, 1990 she was

¹⁵⁸ Olga Kuzmowycz. *This and That. Collected Short Stories and Essays*. New York. 2000. P. 29.

¹⁵⁹ *Wives of the Leaders / Women's Society named after Olha Basarab and Olena Teliha, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists*; compiled by Nadiia Buhay; ed. Nadiia Strinzenets. Kyiv: Ukrainian Culture Publishing House LLC, 2019. P. 12.

¹⁶⁰ Memorial A no. 46 de 1975.

¹⁶¹ *Wives of the leaders / Women's Society named after Olha Basarab and Olena Teliha, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists*; compiled by Nadiya Buhay. Under the editorship of Nadiya Strinzenets. Kyiv: Ukrainian Culture Publishing House LLC, 2019. P. 10-11.

¹⁶² Olha Bezduk, "Olha and Yevhen Konovalets: Interdependence of Feminine and Masculine", *Scientific Bulletin of LNUHRS named after S.Z. Hzhyskyi*. Vol. 17 №. 1 (61), Part 4, 2015. P. 267.

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. "Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations", URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> registered at 2, rue Englebert Neveu, where she lived.¹⁶³ The last address of her registration is the Hospice de Hamm, one of the geriatric institutions in Luxembourg under the care of the Red Cross. According to the register, she spent only six months there, but Sofia was seriously ill for the last 8 years of her life, *"the disease deprived her of the ability to move and act freely."*¹⁶⁴ It is possible that she was living in the Hospice much longer. In 1987 Olga Kuzmowycz wrote an essay reflecting on loneliness in old age and may have referred to Sofia : *"...who knows today how the wife of a well-known political leader feels in a retirement home? Who tries to ease the fate of a lonely old woman who once helped others so much?"*¹⁶⁵ Another of her essays describes a scene in a geriatric home after the Christmas holidays. The nurses, who speak only German, are discussing a romantic story involving a resident of room 216, who has just received a visitor. The girls whisper among themselves, saying that this woman is a foreigner, from Ukraine. She understands German but does not speak it. She was brought from the hospital several years ago in a semi-conscious state. All this time, she has been lying still and only whispering quietly. She has no family here. She is rarely visited by anyone. Only one elegant gray-haired man comes every week, brings flowers and stays for half an hour at the patient's bedside, holding her hand...¹⁶⁶ It is known that Olga Kuzmowycz described scenes from real life and her reflections on them in her short essays and feuilletons. Thus, the story mentioned above may be directly related to her aunt Sofia.

It is known from unconfirmed sources, that Sofia was buried next to her husband. For some unknown reason, her name is missing from the monument. Perhaps this was her wish. But it is also possible to explain this fact by the absence of Sofia's close relatives who could have perpetuated her memory. Information about the burial place of anyone is not available to outsiders. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg protects the personal data of its citizens even after their death. In any case, Sofia Fedak/Melnyk has earned the right to keep her name in the collective memory of Ukrainians.

¹⁶³ Ville de Luxembourg, Centre des technologies de l' information de l' Etat, Registre National des Personnes Physique, 1922.

¹⁶⁴ Wives of the leaders / Women's Society named after Olha Basarab and Olena Teliha, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists; compiled by Nadiya Buhay; ed. Nadiya Strinzenets. Kyiv: Ukrainian Culture Publishing House LLC, 2019. P. 12.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted by Olga Kuzmowycz. This and That. A Collection of Stories and Essays. New York. 2000. P. 25. (Translated with the help of DeepL).

¹⁶⁶ Olga Kuzmowycz. This and That. A Collection of Stories and Essays. New York. 2000. P. 58-59.

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EPILOQUE

"This is our land, marked by language,

June grass, winter path,

A warm carol like a flower!

We know who we are and we know where we come from!"¹⁶⁷

Despite all the difficulties, the project's protagonists, like their peoples, withstood all the trials of the twentieth century. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has developed into a powerful state with significant economic capital and political influence. Luxembourg became a founding member of the Benelux Union, European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations (UN), and the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), which confirms its key role in international relations. While not denying their complex history, Luxembourgers tend to defend their own identity. This may be exemplified by the language policy: the laws used to be bilingual (German-French) but are now solely in French, German remains an official administrative language too but the "national language" is Luxembourgish.¹⁶⁸ In addition, many residents of the Grand Duchy are fluent in English, which is particularly popular in the capital. And in the south of the country, where the Portuguese community is well represented, Portuguese has gained additional popularity. Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) is also sometimes used on official flyers and many other languages can be heard when walking the streets. At the same time, Luxembourgish dominates in pre-school and primary education as "language of inclusion", which is much studied and debated. In order to obtain citizenship, it is necessary to pass an exam in the Luxembourgish language. This is the uniqueness of Luxembourg, which defines itself as "open and cosmopolitan".¹⁶⁹

Since 1991 Ukraine began to develop as an independent state. The process of development was complicated by overcoming the consequences of the totalitarian past. Along with economic problems, Ukrainians began to rethink the pages of their history distorted by the totalitarian regime. This traumatic experience was accompanied by access to new information and freedom of speech, but also by hybrid attacks by neighboring Russia, whose new political regime did not accept the collapse of the USSR. In 1914, the Russian empire had moved to openly annex Ukrainian territories. Today, the Ukrainian people are facing yet another test as they continue to defend their independence, identity, and the right to determine their own future. The issue of protecting the state (Ukrainian) language, which has undergone long and extensive Russification, is particularly acute in Ukraine. This time, however, Ukraine is supported by democracies throughout the world based on Ukraine's right to self-

¹⁶⁷ Serhiy Zhadan, Ukrainian writer. 'Bird'

¹⁶⁸ Online : <https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/1984/02/24/n1/jo>

¹⁶⁹ Online : <https://luxembourg.public.lu/en/society-and-culture/population/demographics.html>

How to cite: Zhanna Serdiuk. “Between friendship and politics: little-known aspects of the history of Ukrainian-Luxembourgish relations”, URL : <https://mhid.netlify.app/> defense under the UN Charter.¹⁷⁰ The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is – within the EU - at the forefront of this coalition.¹⁷¹

Luxembourg's motto is "Mir wëlle bleiwe wat mir sinn" (We wish to remain as we are). It is this right to remain oneself that the Ukrainian people are defending today.

Partenaires

Oeuvre Nationale

Uni.lu

Film Collective NoCut (Cristina Haneş)

Luxembourg Ukrainian Researcher Network (LURN)

LUkraine Asbl - Ukrainian Community in Luxembourg

Ukrainian Student Club Luxembourg

¹⁷⁰ Online : <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9477/>

¹⁷¹ Online : <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ugoda-pro-spivrobotnictvo-u-sferi-bezpeki-ta-dovgostrokovu-p-92057>