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Yurii Lypa's Black Sea Doctrine and Intermarium According to Bohdan Osadczuk: Main Ideas and Modern Interpretations

Abstract

The paper deals with the historical and typological analysis of integration projects in the journalism of Yurii Lypa (1900–1944) – a public figure, physician, writer, ideologist of Ukrainian nationalism, and founder of the Ukrainian Chornomorskyi (Black Sea) Institute in Warsaw – and Bohdan Osadczuk (1920–2011), an émigré, publicist, researcher of the modern history of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), regular contributor to the Parisian monthly *Kultura*, and supporter of Polish–Ukrainian reconciliation. These activists help us to trace the different geopolitical accents of, respectively, nationalist and liberal Ukrainian political thought. In addition, their journalistic activities took place either in the interwar/war period (Lypa) or after the war (Osadczuk). The debate in the Ukrainian-Polish press in 1947–1948 within the camps for displaced persons in Germany can be considered a conditional distinction between different stages in the understanding of regional integration projects.

The current security threats caused by Russia's aggression have revived discussions in CEE about regional integration, projects of which have both supporters and critics. From a discursive approach to the reactualization of the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Union and Intermarium, we analyze the conceptualization of ideas relevant to the period of Lypa's and Osadczuk's life and work.

Lypa's Doctrine in the Context of Ukrainian Political Thought in the Interwar Period

The Black Sea vector gained popularity as an idea of a cooperation zone in Ukrainian intellectual nationalist circles in the first half of the 20th century. Active nation-building processes during that period made it possible to assess Ukraine's geopolitical position and its potential to become the largest power in the Black Sea region. For example, the founder of Ukrainian geopolitics, Stepan Rudnytskyi, called for the creation of a Baltic-Pontic federation consisting of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. Such a structure was supposed to demonstrate the unity of the Eastern European region and the desire of its peoples to gain independence from Russia, which was characterized by despotic power. The Ukrainian geographer included Poland in Central Europe. The idea for a Black Sea–Adriatic Federation was supported by Ukrainian politicians and theorists Stepan Tomashivskyi and Serhii Shelukhin. The latter considered it possible to unite with Slovenes, Serbs, Slovaks, Croats, and Czechs. He drew the basis for such cooperation "from racial, spiritual, and mental grounds" and rejected alliances with both Russia and Poland, which, in his opinion, were only possible in the form of a confederation if political interests came into play (Shmalenko, 2007; Tokarchuk, 2014).

Ukrainian scholars' study of Lypa's life and work makes it possible to outline a field of "Lypa studies," within which the political science (geopolitical) component is quite significant. The main research works are *Pryznchennia Ukrainy* [The Destiny of Ukraine] (Lypa, 1942), *Chornomorska doktryna* [The Black Sea Doctrine] (Lypa, 1953), and *Rozpodil Rosii* [The Division of Russia] (Lypa, 1954). Interest in Lypa's views on Russia and the prospects for developing Russian–Ukrainian relations has intensified in connection with the Russian war against Ukraine (Kucherenko, 2018).

According to Ostap Kushnir (2010), the nature and content of Lypa's journalistic work was influenced by both external and internal factors. The first include the state of scientific and political thought between the 1920s and the 1940s: the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany and the strengthening of communist totalitarianism in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The internal factors include Lypa's personal traits and contacts, upbringing, and education. The Ukrainian publicist was impressed by the above-mentioned Rudnytskyi and Shelukhin; he was acquainted with Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, Ivan Ohienko, and Dmytro Dontsov – many of whose ideas he shared. The historian, ethnographer, and art historian Vadym Shcherbakivskyi should be considered Lypa's "spiritual father," who influenced his worldview. Lypa was well acquainted with the pan-European ideological and scientific thought of the time, as evidenced by the references in his texts to the works of French, German, Italian, Polish, Russian, and British researchers. The Ukrainian writer's style, with its imperative language, testified to the author's uncompromising position and a dichotomous division of the world into "our own" and "others'."

Researcher Marek Wojnar emphasizes the reliance of Lypa's geopolitical concept on racial theories. As a representative of integral nationalism, he classified Ukrainians, along with the peoples of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, as agricultural peoples settled since the Neolithic age, thus contrasting them with hunters and nomads of Ural-Altaic (Muscovy) and Baltic origin (Poland and Belarus). This helped him to avoid the constant dilemma of Ukrainian political thought about the nature of interaction with Poland and Russia and instead form an understanding of geopolitics

in terms of the North–South axis (Wojnar, 2015). In his *Ukrainska rasa* [The Ukrainian Race], Lypa (1937) defined Ukraine's role as a southern wedge resting on the Danube and in the Caucasus, connected through rivers to the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. The direction of rivers' flows (in the vision of geopoliticians, shared by Lypa, this is the most important artery uniting the population geographically), as well as the location of the Azov and Black Seas (connected to the Mediterranean), determined the understanding that "the Ukrainian territory was more or less located by the sea, but the main trend of its life was the alternation of north and south in the formation of its culture and statehood for thousands of years" (Lypa, 1953, p. 59).

Therefore, as Yurii Kyseliov (2016) rightly notes, in Lypa's doctrine, Ukraine was located not in the south, but in the north of the interethnic community, which appeared in his imagination as a geographical cyclic space. This differed from the axial approach proposed by Rudnytskyi. According to Lypa, such a union would be more relevant because of the similar historical experience of many nations in the Black Sea region, such as the Ukrainians, Georgians, Bulgarians, Romanians, and Turks, who did not have strong enough states at that time. Rudnytskyi's axial approach, as he understood it, was losing relevance, as the Baltic states were developing as sovereign and national states, while Ukraine and other countries needed a different geopolitical unification strategy based on the logic of historical events.

For the geopolitical delineation of the Black Sea space, Lypa proposed the metaphor of a "fortress" bounded on the northeast by the western shores of the Caspian Sea – with Transcaucasia and Dagestan and the Kalmyk-Saratov desert and the Volga canals – on the north by the Don and the Dnipro along with their tributaries, and on the west and south by the Carpathians, the Balkans, and the Asia Minor massif. Three "gates" served as passageways into this space: The first was the Danube trade route in the west, the second was the Caspian gate of the steppes, nomadic hordes, and trade caravans in the east, and the third was the gateway for sailors through the Bosporus and Dardanelles in the south. The construction of the "Black Sea fortress" had its own "base" – Anatolia – and a "platform"

that, with its reliance on Transcaucasia, allowed access to Iran and the Persian Gulf. The borders of the 800–900-kilometer-long "Ukrainian arch" were marked by the Danube and the Carpathians on the one hand and the Caucasus on the other. The publicist determined the place and role of Ukraine based on cultural, historical, linguistic, ethnographic, and demographic factors (the energy of growth that stimulated expansionism) (Lypa, 1942). He saw the "conquest of the Black Sea coasts" (Lypa, 1954, p. 63) as the main direction of Ukrainian expansion over the centuries, which even the Russian imperial government could not prevent. Together with the Caucasian peoples, the Black Sea area was turning into an "inland lake for the Black Sea peoples" (Lypa, 1954, p. 70).

Researcher Volodymyr Baran (2011) summarizes the main ideas of Ukraine's geopolitical modernization in Lypa's Black Sea doctrine:

1. The Black Sea and the upper reaches of the Dnipro River are important components of Ukrainian statehood.
2. Separation from the capital of non-Black Sea states is the basis for Ukrainian control over the Black Sea.
3. The Union of the Black Sea states was to be built on common economic and political interests, as well as a sense of "new higher justice."
4. Identification of Crimea is the key to domination of the Black Sea.
5. Ukraine as a "Christian empire over the Black Sea" was to revive the "tradition of the Apostle Andrew."
6. Separating from the Mediterranean is inadmissible for Ukraine's development.

That the Black Sea vector was typical of Ukrainian thought of the period which was reflected in politics was confirmed by the borders within which politicians saw Ukrainian statehood – in Pavlo Skoropadskyi's Ukrainian State and the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR). The map submitted by the UNR delegates to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 as a plan of demands was rejected, given that the government controlled a more limited territory at that time (Maiorov, 2017).

Ukrainian–Polish Relations in the First Half of the 20th Century – From Confrontation to Attempts at Reconciliation

Despite the competition and confrontation between the Polish and Ukrainian national projects, the military and political situation in the fall of 1919 – due to the Bolshevik threat – created conditions for a short period of Ukrainian–Polish cooperation. The Polish head of state, Józef Piłsudski, focusing on the east, planned to dismember Russia "along national seams" (Miedziński, 1975, p. 7). His program initially included the incorporation of western Belarusian and western Ukrainian territories into Poland and the creation of a federalist union with Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. This union was to guarantee security in CEE. The project assigned a leading role to Ukraine due to its demographic and economic potential, and especially to its geostrategic position. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize the signs that the idea was to support Ukrainian independence under the Polish protectorate (Komar, 2017; Parukh, 2021).

Despite the considerable distrust that arose among representatives of both sides, the Warsaw Pact was signed in April 1920 between Poland and the UPR, led by the head of the Directory, Symon Petliura. Despite the controversial consequences of the international agreement, most contemporary Ukrainian historians assess it favorably (Hai-Nyzhnyk, 2021). At the same time, the signing of the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921 as a result of the Soviet–Polish war, according to Osadczuk (2000), meant the collapse of Piłsudski's federalist plans and a gradual transition to a policy based on the principles of Polish national democracy, which already included attempts to assimilate Ukraine (Kerskyi & Kovalchyk, 2009). The political idea of Intermarium in the interwar period envisioned the establishment of a federation of CEE countries that would cover the space between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas, including Belarus, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, and possibly Finland. Piłsudski believed that it would help the Central European states avoid German or Russian domination. Simultaneously, the failure of the initial project prompted the Polish leader to rethink the idea

of a federation and to formulate the concept of a union of the Baltic and Balkan states (Jurkowska, 2018).

The Second World War led to the CEE nations being occupied and subsequently losing their independence and/or sovereignty. Concurrently, there were attempts to normalize interethnic relations among émigrés. One example of such a process was the discussion in the Ukrainian and Polish press that was published in Germany in 1947–1948 in camps for displaced persons. The discussions were first initiated by *Kronika*, which was edited by Klaudiusz Grabik on the Polish side, and *Chas*, edited by Roman Ilnytskyi in Ukrainian. Later, they were joined by such Ukrainian publications as *Nedilia*, *Nashe Zhyttia*, and *Ukrainska Trybuna* and Polish publications such as *DP-Express* and *Orzeł Biały*. The discussion centered on Poland's and Ukraine's place in the concept of Intermarium. Assessing its results retrospectively, Osadczuk, under the pseudonym BEO (1952, p. 89), pointed out that it "developed inorganically, immediately taking up the solution of key and hierarchically highest problems (e.g., forms of federation), leaving many matters and important obstacles aside".

Ukrainian fears about Polish federal concepts persisted into the early 1950s, as evidenced by the continuing debate in the press. Ukrainian nationalists in *Ukrainets – Chas* defended the most radical position on Juliusz Mieroszewski's project to create an international Eastern European brigade under the European armed forces, and accused the *Kultura* thinkers of disguised Polish imperialism. The authors of *Ukrainsky Visti* expressed their warnings on the dangers of being neutral about destroying the Russian Empire and the hegemony of Polish federalists over Ukraine and Belarus. The democratic Ukrainian émigrés offered their own programs, including the creation of a bloc of nations from the Baltic Sea to the Caucasus and the formation of a union of Ukraine, Belarus, and Poland as an alternative to Polish projects (BEO, 1952). Thus, we see both a rethinking of the interwar idea of Intermarium and a continued interest in the Black Sea (or Baltic-Black Sea) among the Ukrainian thinkers.

Osadczuk: A Supporter of Intermarium
in the *Kultura* Circle

Osadczuk should also be considered a democratic publicist and activist of the Ukrainian diaspora. He was associated with the left/liberal Ukrainian Revolutionary Democratic Party, which united mostly immigrants from the Soviet republics. The party opposed Soviet imperialism, announced a platform of democratizing Ukraine, and established contact with other peoples of the USSR (Kowalczyk, 2014). Noting Osadczuk's liberal views in the Ukrainian emigrant community, the Polish researcher of Ukrainian–Polish relations Bogumiła Berdychowska (2009) calls him a "rare bird" (*rava avis*).

In the geopolitical realities of the postwar world, the new regional configuration in CEE was increasingly associated primarily with the independence of the peoples of the region, in particular those who had lost it before 1939. This determined one of the strategic directions of the Parisian monthly *Kultura*. This concept was initially combined with the idea of a federation. In an interview with Osadczuk (under the pseudonym Yurii Chornomorskyi [1950]), Jerzy Giedroyć and Józef Czapski stated during the Congress of Cultural Freedom in Berlin that "all the peoples of central and eastern Europe occupied today by the Soviet Union, must gain their independence within the framework of a European Federation" (p. 3). According to the American historian Timothy Snyder (2013), the program of the periodical can only be seen as a new form of federalism if we accept the main claim that cooperation with the eastern neighbors had to be built on friendly relations with the states and required Poland to abandon territorial ambitions and civilizational claims inherent in the old concepts of federalism of the nationalist tradition of the New Era. This idea of federalism involved the use of modern methods of alliance and approaches to cooperation with other countries.

This line of thought was evidenced by the appearance of the "Declaration on the Ukrainian Cause," signed by 14 representatives of the Russian, Polish, Czech, and Hungarian diaspora in *Kultura* in May 1977. The text dealt with the issue of liberation from Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe – including in the incorporated Soviet

republics, encompassing Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuani-
ans – as well as the need to rid Russia of its imperial ambitions. It
was emphasized that Ukrainians, as the most enslaved people of the
USSR, along with Lithuanians, fought the hardest for state existence
(Deklaracja…, 1977). The document is seen as an important part of
the broader concept of Ukraine–Lithuania–Belarus developed by
Meroshevskyi, as well as an important element in the journal's
model of Ukrainian–Polish reconciliation (Lodyn, 2017). The belief in
the fundamental influence of *Kultura*'s concepts on the formation of
the eastern policy of independent Poland is shared by a wide range
of Polish and other East European researchers (see, e.g., Frenkel,
2022; Mashkevych, 2015).

Changes in the geopolitical situation at the end of the 20th
century – associated with the collapse of the socialist system and
the USSR and the emergence of new independent states in the region –
opened up opportunities for modeling new configurations of the
regional structure. Leonid Kravchuk, Ukraine's first President,
proposed a plan to create a zone of security and stability in CEE
between Central Europe, the Baltic States, and other sovereign
states of the former Soviet Union, with the possibility of Bulgaria
and Romania joining, but excluding Russia and Austria. However,
this and other similar projects were rejected due to critical reactions
from Moscow and the West, according to researchers (Drzewicki,
2011; Chorna, 2013).

In Osadczuk's political thinking, we can trace several variations
of the configuration of the regional order involving Ukraine and
Poland (Lodyn, 2015):

1. bilateral relations between the two states in the context of
the Scandinavian orientation of the Baltic states and the Russian
orientation of Belarus,

2. Ukrainian-Polish-German cooperation as a result of the disap-
pearance of the German threat,

3. cooperation in the Black Sea basin involving Turkey and
Bulgaria, and, if possible, Georgia and Romania, as a counterweight
to Russia's aggressive policy in the region, and

4. involvement of the Baltic states, Hungary, and Romania in
Ukrainian–Polish cooperation: "Poland can and even should become

a leader of the initially informal, but with time and experience, even closer unification of the states of this region. The idea of a Black Sea-Baltic complex could become a lasting concept" (Osadczuk, 1997, pp. 142–143).

Osadczuk (1992, p. 85) urged that

> unless thinkers like Mieroszewski are found in our region between the Baltic and the Black Sea and inspire politicians to take practical action, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Baltic states may within a generation be facing a threat to today's independence again.

Seeing such ideas as an opportunity to preserve stability in the region and to create conditions to prevent political crises, the Ukrainian publicist believed that Western partners exerted political pressure on the Polish leadership to force it to abandon its own idea of creating a second NATO in the east or of supporting the Kravchuk Plan to create regional security within the Intermarium lands (Osadczuk, 1993b).

In 1993, intellectual discussions about the Intermarium project and other similar doctrines ceased. The concept of cooperation between states in the Black Sea basin was taken over by Turkey, which held a leading position in the region. The idea of creating a nuclear-free zone between Russia and France, with the participation of Germany, Poland, and Ukraine, was not discussed in detail at all (Osadczuk, 1993a).

The second President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, pursued a foreign policy oriented toward Europe and was informed by his unofficial adviser Osadczuk (Vyrpsha, 2013). It involved strengthening relations with Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic states through the implementation of Intermarium. But this plan once again failed to receive support from neighboring states (the idea was articulated only within the political party Confederation of Independent Poland). Osadczuk was concerned about NATO's eastward expansion, as he believed it could lead to Ukraine's international isolation and hinder its plans for regional partnership. He also saw the process of Poland's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures as one of the reasons for the shift in priority in its relations with Ukraine (Osadczuk, 1994, 1995a, 1995b).

Osadczuk believed that cooperation between Ukraine and Poland should have been the basis for integration projects in cee, as an imitation of the Piłsudski–Petliura alliance (Osadczuk, 1996). Polish publicist Bohdan Skaradziński opposed this idea on several grounds. He emphasized the lack of political will and weak economies (especially Ukraine's) preventing the necessary level of cooperation (Skaradziński, 1994).

Osadczuk repeatedly returned to the topic in his publications:

> The concept of creating a space between the seas or connecting the Baltic Sea basin with the Black Sea basin is no less important, and politically even more important, in terms of preparation. This is the program of the century, if not of the millennium, because if we succeed in implementing this plan, we will turn the old geopolitics, which has always been unfavorable for us, upside down (Osadczuk, 2000, p. 124).

It is worth noting that the vision of creating a regional security system based on Ukrainian–Polish cooperation, which the Ukrainian writer published in *Kultura* actively promoted, differed from the position of the magazine's editorial board. After 1991, Giedroyć abandoned the idea of a Polish federation with its eastern neighbors in favor of a partnership alliance without formalized political ties, saying in an interview before his death in 2000 that Poland would have to watch out for the eastern countries – Ukraine, Belarus, or the Baltic states – to exist as independent states (Marshal & Srokosh, 2012).

Professor Maciej Mróz (2011, p. 48) also notes, concerning Osadczuk's interest in this idea, that

> adapted to modern conditions, the old idea of Intermarium did not contain an internally consistent and intellectually innovative idea, nor was it an example of classical political thought in the sense of political definitions, but its appeal stemmed from the geopolitical and, to some extent, military-political realities of Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of a new political map so important for international security and the stabilization of the Old Continent.

What is meant by the Baltic-Black Sea Union and Intermarium today?

In analyzing holistic geopolitical concepts, as in the case of Lypa's Black Sea doctrine or Osadczuk's views on Intermarium, one should take into account the conditions of the thinkers' affiliations, which influenced their subjective optics and possibly downplayed some factors and overestimated others.

In the context of the current Russian invasion on Ukraine, we can note a surge of interest among scholars and analysts of international relations in geopolitical concepts related to the CEE region. The basis for such theorizing is often the practical implications of close military/political cooperation and support by Ukraine's regional neighbors in its fight against the aggressor. Kushnir (2020) highlights the difference between the geopolitical concepts that have developed in the Ukrainian and Polish historical traditions. In his opinion, the Ukrainian term "Intermarium" should be considered as borrowed from Western Europe and having no roots in national historiography before the early 20th century, when Ukrainian intellectuals and politicians, drawing on the traditions of Kievan Rus and the Cossacks, used the concept of the "Baltic-Black Sea Axis." Its vector, as evidenced in particular by the Lypa doctrine, was oriented southward, which meant closer partnership with the peoples of the Caucasus, Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Meanwhile, Polish historical conceptualizations, especially of Intermarium, were based on the traditions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Contemporary interpretations of the Baltic-Black Sea Union/region (see, e.g., Levyk, 2015; Martyniuk, 2015; Nadtoka, 2017; Rudnytska, 2015) usually include Poland, which was not foreseen by the Ukrainian geopoliticians of the interwar period. Given the increased use of the term "Intermarium" by contemporary Ukrainian researchers (see, e.g., Voytyuk, 2019; Zahrebelnyi, 2019; Todorov & Todorova, 2016; Shevchenko, 2016), who often outline the same regional construction of the states, we can speak of the conceptual syncretism of historical concepts of the 20th century because of their modern rethinking. Despite these peculiarities of terminological theorizing, the practical dimension of discussing

such regional cooperation, given the Russian aggression, does not require much proof of relevance.

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