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**CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ'S
REFLECTIONS ON THE
POLITICAL 'DISEASES' OF
THE 20TH CENTURY IN THE
CONTEXT OF HARMONIZING
BILATERAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN POLAND AND
UKRAINE. PRELIMINARY
REMARKS**

Abstract

In the proposed article, the author presents the political 'diseases' of the twentieth century and the prospects for overcoming them, based on a political analysis of the creative heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian poet and mastermind, Nobel laureate Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004). Such 'diseases' include: human violence against human beings, blurring the line between good and evil, the enslavement of the human mind, the erosion of national identity, as well as extreme nationalism and pseudo-patriotism. A deeper insight into these problems allowed us to conclude that the work of Czesław Miłosz will remain a valuable source of knowledge for the people of the so-called 'other' Europe. The article supports Miłosz's claim that living in Central and Eastern Europe gives its inhabitants a chance to create a special type of culture that the rest of Europe

may follow one day. The author also notes that the political thinker has a profound sense of the rhythm of life in this part of Europe.

Miłosz's ideological and theoretical aspirations are related to overcoming the 'inferiority' of peoples through the formation of a "Native Realm" as a set of small homelands. Miłosz's scientific and civic argument touches upon the need to jointly develop a European policy of reconciliation, based on the European principle of deepening the dialogue between citizens of different countries with different historical background, in order to reach common views on the past, the present, and the future. His legacy for both present and future generations is a relentless search for a harmonious model of life in the common home that our planet is for us, overcoming not only old diseases, but also those that arise in modern conditions, such as terrorism, dependence on information, religious bigotry, drug addiction, mental disorders, etc. The article demonstrates that Miłosz, having no illusions about the possibility of an ideal political system, believes that it is possible to limit the scale of injustice in the world, and to form an ideal society. His ideal is a man who, in the face of chaos, seeks his place in the spiritual world, endowed with the ability to take a moral stand and go against the flow in the name of truth.

Keywords

political violence, good and evil, the captive mind, national identity, nationalism, pseudo patriotism.

The world has entered the XXI century. We once dreamed that by this time we would find ourselves in a better, kinder, brighter reality, with no more wars, social upheavals, or conflicts. However, the political problems of the last century – the most brutal in the history of human civilization – continue to haunt us. In view of this, it is worth referring to the creative heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian poet and thinker, Nobel laureate Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004), who is rightly considered a chronicler of the twentieth century.

Lithuanians and Poles, especially in Vilnius and Kraków, have a long-established admiration and a deep respect for their great countryman and citizen. Only now Ukraine is truly discovering this poet and thinker of world-wide recognition. Miłosz has been translated into Ukrainian since 1980, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize. The first edition was B. Struminsky's translation of "The Captive Mind" issued by the emigration publishing house "Modernity" (Сучасність). With the independence of Ukraine, it was published thanks to the efforts of M. Ryabchuk in the magazines "Universe" (Всесвіт) and "Modernity" (Сучасність). Book editions appeared at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2000, with the funding of the Ministry of Culture and Arts of the Republic of Poland, a bilingual book "Selected Poetry" (translated by S. Shevchenka) was published. Subsequent publications included: "Roadside dog" ("Придорожний песик", translated by J. Senchishin); "Native Realm" ("Родина Європа", translated by Y. Izdryk); "Selected Works" ("Вибрані твори", translated by N. Bilotserkivets, D. Pavlychka, N. Sidyachenko); "Alphabet" ("Абетка", translated by N. Snyadanko); "Heaven born just now: Poetry" ("Небо народжених щойно: Поезії", translated by S. Zlyuchy); "The Grand Duchy of Literature. Selected Essays" ("Велике князівство літератури. Вибрані есеї", translated by O. Kovalenko, I. Kovalchuk, A. Pavlyshyna); "Prompted by Miłosz" (translated by Y. Andrukhovich, A. Bondar, S. Zhadan, O. Irvanets, M. Kiyanovskaya, O. Kotsarev, B. Matiyash, D. Matiyash, K. Moskalets, T. Prokhaska, O. Slivinsky, Y. Stakhivska); "Land of Ulro" ("Земля Ульро", translated by N. Sidyachenko); "The Issa Valley" ("Долина Ісси", translated by N. Sidyachenko). Along with this, a large number of Ukrainian-language publications devoted to various aspects of Miłosz's life and work appeared.

Czesław Miłosz did not write much about Ukraine, as he had no personal experience related to this country which he knew rather from the stories of his friends Jerzy Giedroyc and Stanisław

Vincenz. But the problems that Miłosz addresses in his work will concern Ukrainians for a long time, along with Poles and Lithuanians, because he was “a sensitive membrane of his time and managed to formulate the cornerstones that still confuse the intellectuals of the planet today, and will be the subject of their thoughts tomorrow, or in 50 years”.¹ These concerns include, first of all, the complex problems of Ukraine’s integration with Europe, its bilateral relations with Poland, and the search for an asymmetric strategy in countering Russian aggression.

Andrzej Franaszek, the author of Miłosz’s most complete biography, notes:

The Life of Czesław Miłosz is a chronicle of the last century, which he experienced first-hand, from the battlefields of World War I seen through the eyes of a few-year-old boy, through the Russian Revolution, the regain of Poland’s independence, the social and national problems of Interwar Poland, the time of the Apocalypse and hell on the streets of occupied Warsaw, the Holocaust and the struggle against two totalitarianisms, the experience of being an emigrant in a world separated by the ‘Iron Curtain’ of America in the 1960s and 1970s, to the fall of the Soviet empire and the beginning of the 21st century.²

Against this background, Miłosz managed to deeply comprehend the main ‘diseases’ of the twentieth century, and warn humanity about their persistence in the future, which is the subject matter of this article. The objectives of our study include key political

1. Я. Поліщук, *Розум поневолений і визволений. Чеслав Мілош: Літописець ХХ століття: Світоглядні питання польських та українських інтелектуалів у дзеркалі творчості Мілоша*. Український тиждень. September 23–29, 2011, 21.

2. A. Franaszek, *Miłosz: Biografia* [Miłosz: Biography] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2012), 9.

issues that affect both past and present, such as violence of human beings against human beings, blurring the line between good and evil, enslavement of the human mind, erosion of national identity, extreme nationalism and pseudo-patriotism.

Human-to-human violence

The political lexicon of the twentieth century has been supplemented by a number of new words and concepts. Here are just some of them: world war, communism, fascism, totalitarianism, Machiavellianism, concentration camp, Holocaust, famine, deportation, information warfare, hybrid warfare. It's not just words. These are signs of unprecedented human-to-human violence. In his famous poem *Campo di Fiori*, written in occupied Warsaw, Czesław Miłosz not only condemns the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazis, but also shows what kind of challenge the Holocaust poses to the Christian and human conscience. In his conversation with Polish intellectuals on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Miłosz said a horrifying thing: “The Germans wanted the victims not to be considered humans. I remember when the ghetto was closed in Warsaw, there were inscriptions on the walls: ‘Jews, lice, typhus’, these words went in a row”³ The horrors of the ghetto seen in the German-occupied capital, the irretrievable human losses – those remained in his memory forever. Besides, the years of German occupation ultimately determined the humanistic nature of Miłosz’s work, giving him a deep understanding of the extraordinary vulnerability, uniqueness and value of each human life.

3. “Человечество, что остается. «Campo di Fiori» 50 лет спустя. Неопубликованная беседа Яна Блонского, Чеслава Милоша, Ежи Туровича и Марека Эдельмана в связи с 50-й годовщиной восстания в варшавском гетто” [Humanity that remains. “Campo di Fiori” 50 years later. Unpublished conversation between Jan Błoński, Czesław Miłosz, Jerzy Turowicz and Marek Edelman on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising], [in:] *Мой Милош*, Н. Горбаневская (Москва: Новое издательство, 2012), 311.

Miłosz draws also attention to the cynicism and meanness of the violence that took place, driven by ideological justification based on such intellectuals as Friedrich Nietzsche or André Gide, with their appeal to the will, intuition, and the subconscious, as well as the release of eagerness and power from moral reservations. Condemning their work, Miłosz reveals the mechanism of harmful intellectual influence:

The delicate hands of intellectuals are stained with blood from the moment they bring out a word that bears death, even if it appeared to them as a word of life. Their books are not read, perhaps by the broad masses. But they will be read by a journalist writing articles for the daily press. These articles will be read by a tribune of the people, a teacher, a person in the street. And now the coin of ideas, of thoughts starts rolling, its more elegant letters are rubbed out along its way until flat, simplified, it reaches the crowd in the form of a single slogan, a cheap slogan. Then a time comes when the demagogue raises it from the bridge. What are the speeches of dictators who are applauded by millions? They are made of slogans selected in popular brochures, transparent enough to be understandable to everyone; they need to be preceded by the work of scientists and artists, only then an apologist takes them – thanks to this, they are quite tenacious and complex enough so that a small person, deafened by their noise, could not see their falsehood.⁴

Here, as a true humanist, Miłosz expresses his position with unequivocal firmness: “nothing: not even a single high-level slogan,

4. Ч. Милош, *Легенды современности: Оккупационные эссе. Письма-эссе Ежи Анджеевского и Чеслава Милоша* [Modern Legends: Occupation Essays. Essay letters by Jerzy Andrzejewski and Czesław Miłosz] (Санкт-Петербург: Изд. Ивана Лимбаха, 2016), 117.

not a single truth, not a single distant goal can justify the torment of an individual”. Starting from this maxim, Miłosz condemns communism as an inhuman regime guilty of terrible crimes, including “both physical tortures, to which it subjected millions of defenceless human beings, and spiritual torture, such as fear and abandonment – out of fear – of common moral instincts and religious practices”.⁵

Miłosz was one of the first to suggest that Russian communism should be considered a criminal system in the same way as Nazism, and that August 23 should be an annual day of remembrance of the conspiracy between two dictators that led not only to the outbreak of a terrible war, but also to the establishment of a colonial principle, pursuant to which “nations are no different from cattle that are bought, sold and that are completely dependent on the will of each subsequent owner”.⁶ For Miłosz, violations of human rights that are not publicly recognized or condemned are a slow-acting poison that generates hatred between the nations instead of friendship. At a time when Russia still has not admitted the Soviet Union’s participation in unleashing World War II, this approach remains relevant.

Miłosz links the danger of perpetuating violence to the support from collective consciousness and public opinion. He notes that the crimes of the twentieth century are to be blamed not only on the authorities and dictators, but also on an ordinary German, who did not question the guardian’s role of the Fuhrer in the 1930s; on a Pole who justified the dictatorship and went to Germany for an internship before the war; on an Ukrainian who enlisted for the service of one dictator in order to defeat the other; or, say, a Russian who, with his tacit or active consent, helped to send dissidents to psychiatric hospitals. The poet appeals to the human conscience, as he notes in his essay *The experience of war* (1942):

5. Ч. Милош, “Достоевский и западное религиозное воображение” [Dostoevsky and the Western religious imagination], [in:] *Мой Милош*, Н. Горбаневская (Москва: Новое издательство, 2012), 210–211.

6. Ч. Милош, *Велике князівство літератури. Вибрані есеї* [Grand Duchy of Literature. Selected essays] (Київ: Дух і Літера, 2011), 19–20.

Everything depends on how a person's conscience overcomes doubt. If doubt settles in it, if the conscience considers the struggle for 'living space' to be a natural state, then realistic politicians will appear on stage, for whom the only basis of international relations would be the balance of power and the chess game of states, which, as we know, no longer leads to "small wars" between the two states, but inevitably ends with fireworks for the entire globe.⁷

The thinker is convinced that wars and human-to-human violence would disappear only if we overcome such remnants of the past as the military upbringing of young people since childhood, blind faith in an ideology or a leader, and intellectual justification for violence in the name of an idea.

Blurring the line between good and evil

Analysing the past, Miłosz warns of the danger of the mass consciousness being guided by ideologically-grounded false political promises. Using an example of the Polish society, he demonstrates how the distinction between good and evil is lost. After the brutal German occupation, the Poles came to terms with their subordination to Moscow, seeing it as a much lesser evil, and hoping for some change. However, it turned out that a more perfect totalitarian government, which makes use of the concepts of good and public good, is able to break all previous social ties and change the worldview of the whole nation.

From Miłosz's point of view, the evil that came to Poland and to the neighbouring countries of the so-called 'other Europe' is deeply rooted. It is derived from messianic ideas, which, in particular, were born in Russia. The worst thing is that these ideas were supported by intellectuals. This applies in particular to Fyodor Dosto-

7. Ч. Милош, "Опыт войны" [War experience], [in:] *Мой Милош*, Н. Горбаневская, (Москва: Новое издательство, 2012), 171–172.

evsky with his contradictory love for his neighbour, combined with his faith in the “God-bearing nation” who will bring Europe “their Christ on the blades of bayonets”⁸

Accordingly, in Miłosz’s opinion, Russia, despite the undoubted influence of its culture and despite historical transformations of political regimes, remains an aggressive geographical and geopolitical space. By pointing out this disease of the twentieth century, Miłosz manifests his critical attitude to the West, whose representatives handed over half of Europe to Russia in Yalta, being “guided not only by the desire to appease the bear, but also by the desire to get rid of territories inhabited by peoples, claims, complaints and mutual hatred which no one is worthy to understand”⁹

Pursuant to Miłosz, the loss of the principles of the humanistic Western European worldview is largely due to the recognition of the ‘secondary’ nature of the Eastern European peoples and the artificially formed border between the two Europes. After all, the situation today is almost mirrored in the West’s attitude towards Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

In this context, the following question is extremely important. What does European policy mean, is it holistic and consistent in terms of values? This question just came to the minds of Ukrainians after 2014, when Ukraine fell into a kind of grip – between Russia’s expansion, with its television propaganda of violence, and Western policy of indulgence towards the aggressor. In the conditions of a hybrid warfare, it turned out that European policy, with its excessive political correctness and general relaxation, caused some Western leaders to flirt with Putin. Such a policy should be considered not only anti-Ukrainian, but also anti-Russian, as it contributes to the final elimination of the remnants of democracy in today’s Russia. Here one must agree with the Lithuanian intellectual Leonidas Donskis, who noted:

8. Ч. Милош, *Земля Ульро* [The Land of Ulro] (Київ: Юніверс, 2015), 117.

9. Cz. Miłosz, *Prywatne obowiązki* [Private Obligations] (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1985), 115.

The triumph of Stalinism and Hitlerism in pre-war, military Europe was a tragic consequence of the collapse of Western liberal democracy, and the rise of Putinism is directly related to the shaking of European political values in the world economy, politics and international relations.¹⁰

Observing the current situation at a time of information wars, when black becomes white, when a crime becomes a feat, and a lie becomes the truth, we can confidently say that Miłosz's diagnosis of history, of which he was a partial witness, extends to our present and, presumably, to our future. Of course, Miłosz is far from considering it possible to completely overcome evil in the foreseeable future. He claims that the idea of building a paradise on Earth is ephemeral. However, we must clearly define the boundaries between good and evil in order to accept this world as it is. Not in the name of its preservation, but in the name of hope for the formation of a harmonious system. Only that way will humanity be able to overcome the cruel automatism of history, and continue to live with the awareness of the mortality of cultures, the inevitability of suffering.

Enslavement of the human mind

Miłosz sees the emergence of the phenomenon of enslaved mind as a result of the qualified victory over totalitarianism. Enslavement of the human mind is understood as the fall of a significant part of people into the trap of a deceptive sense of liberation from personal responsibility for the country, society, everyday life; the desire for security at all costs after several years of fascist captivity; the commitment of the intelligentsia to seductive idealisms associated with a 'bright future', the possibility of taking over the entire globe. Miłosz described these and other reasons in detail in his book *The*

10. Т. Венцлова, Л. Донскіс, *Передчуття і пророцтва Східної Європи* [Premonitions and prophecies of Eastern Europe], Пер. з литовської Георгій Єфремов, Олег Коцарев (Київ: Дух і Літера, 2016), 25.

Captive Mind (1953), which, according to Irena Grudzinska-Gross, was “not an analysis of communism as such, but rather an attempt to find out the reasons for its attractiveness to some eastern European writers and intellectuals”.¹¹

The main sign of an enslaved mind is the collaboration of intellectuals. Using examples from Polish post-war life, Miłosz provides an in-depth analysis of the psychological mechanisms of this phenomenon, trying to show how talented and seemingly quite decent people cooperate with absolutely immoral authorities, deceiving themselves in the most challenging ways and justifying their actions to themselves and others. However, according to Miłosz, for a thinking person, such an adaptation means their end as a free person. A fear of thinking is instilled in their soul at their own wish and such person falls into the peculiar ‘ticks’ of dialectical materialism in its Stalinist form, which “creates social and political conditions in which a person loses the ability to write and think differently than required, and at the same time is forced to agree with this requirement”.¹² There is not a single convincing argument, no wisdom of life’s observations, no torments of writers and artists’ creativity that could stop the onslaught of an organized state machine.

Miłosz addressed the problem of terrorism, which has taken over the world today, back in the 1950s in *Native Realm*, where, arguing with representatives of the West, he claimed that “terror is not monumental at all”, allegedly it is “abject, with a furtive glance”. Its nature and consequences are much deeper: “it destroys human society, and changes the relationships between millions of individuals into channels of blackmail”.¹³ These words, in particular, are con-

11. И. Грудзинская-Гросс, *Милош и Бродский: магнитное поле* [Miłosz and Brodsky: magnetic field], Пер. с польского М. Алексеевой (Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2013), 48.

12. Ч. Мілош, “Поневолений розум” [The Captive Mind], *Бібліотека Прологу і Сучасности*, в. 145, Сучасність, 1985, 30.

13. Cz. Miłosz, *Rodzinna Europa* [Native Realm] (Warszawa: Biblioteka Polityki, 2009), 244.

firmed by the current wave of spiritual terrorism directed against religious, linguistic, cultural, or civilizational enemies.

Returning to this problem several decades later, the thinker draws attention to the ability of terrorism to change, to acquire unpredictable forms:

Awareness of the importance of man in society did not prevent murders in the twentieth century from being committed under the banner of destroying class enemies or representatives of the 'lower' race. It is not known what new motivations will appear to kill people, but the reasons can be the most cunning and unpredictable. The wave of terrorism that has risen is in many cases directed against religious enemies. Violent and bloody clashes occur between non-believers. All this takes on new forms and a great mass character.¹⁴

Already in our times, Miłosz, in a conversation with a Ukrainian writer and scientist Mykola Ryabchuk, expressed doubts about the significance of the book *The Captive Mind* in modern times. This doubt is certainly true in relation to Poland, where in the 1980s and 1990s there was an irreversible process of transformation from a pro-Moscow to a pro-Western orientation, both in human consciousness and in practice. However, for Ukraine, this book still has lasting significance today, given that a significant part of the population after 2014 still openly or covertly supports pro-Moscow political forces.

Erosion of national identity

Ukrainian writer Oksana Zabuzhko very accurately called the last century “the century of the great fornication of history with geography”. This name refers to large-scale mass escapes of representatives of different nations, deportations of entire peoples, urban-

14. В. Масгеров, *Миłosз заглядывает в XXI век* [Miłosz looks into the 21st century], *Новая Польша*, no. 4 (2011), accessed September 10, 2019, www.novayapolsha.pl/pdf/2011/04.pdf.

ization and other socio-political processes and upheavals that have caused and still cause the erosion of national identity. In this context, Miłosz's position on the decisive role of the native language as a factor of human self-preservation is important for the Ukrainian present situation in a complex and unpredictable world. Emphasizing the importance of this problem, Miłosz justifies his position with the following arguments:

- emigration does not necessarily mean a break with the native land, tradition, language; preservation of the native language in a foreign language environment allows one to cleanse oneself of superficiality and strengthen the spiritual connection with one's homeland, thus recognizing the power of language over man and the world, its infinite possibilities, shades, and meanings;

- the native language is the most perfect tool for securing national identity, a means of preserving one's inner self; the desire to encapsulate the world in the native language is a powerful mechanism for the formation of the individual and civilization;

- changing the language entails not only the expansion of the world's borders, but also partial, yet irreversible transformation of the individual; accordingly, Miłosz notes that “by changing the language, we become someone else” and we betray “the expectations of people who speak that language”;¹⁵

- considering that we inherited the language of the enslaved society with its introduced habits, our task is to cleanse it from the superficial, calling things by their names, freeing the past from fabrications and legends; language is considered healthy if it is a desperate fighter who tries to capture and reproduce the existing reality.

According to Miłosz, the mismatch between language and reality exists objectively. At the same time, the twentieth century was the proof of the vulnerability of European culture, in which, under the pressure of totalitarian rule, “clear criteria of good and evil, truth

15. Ч. Мілош, *Абетка* [Alphabet], (Харків: Треант, 2010), 21.

and falsehood disappeared”. Under these conditions, “language has become the property of the people who own power, since they have monopolized the media and can now arbitrarily change the meaning of words”.¹⁶ At the same time, Miłosz argues for the need to overcome a distorted cultural identity, which leads many people to perceive their own national culture as ‘provincial’. Analysing the Polish identity, Miłosz goes beyond the stereotype of so-called ‘Polishness’. He defines this concept through the following series: the Polish language and Polish literature, deep Catholic religiosity, understanding of the history of Poland as a struggle for independence, Polish messianism. Olena Brazhovska, a researcher of Miłosz’s oeuvre, remarks: “Miłosz is one of the poets-thinkers who wrote almost exclusively in their native language, but crossed the borders of national literature. He had a sense of being part of Polish literature, but said that he was brought up by the whole world’s culture”.¹⁷

Throughout his work and life, Miłosz manifests his belief that identity must be multifaceted, that one can be both a Polish writer and a patriot of Lithuanian land, a resident of a small county in a forgotten corner of Europe and at the same time a full citizen of the world.

Extreme nationalism and pseudo-patriotism

In his reflections, Miłosz uncompromisingly turns his attention to ambiguous, painful problems concerning illusions of great power, which are equally dangerous both in the Russian and the Polish context. In the late 1990s, the poet published an extremely valu-

16. Ч. Мілош, *Вибрані твори: Поезія; Статті* [Selected Works: Poetry; Articles] (Київ: Юніверс, 2008), 303.

17. Е. Бразговская, “*Это я или культура, в которой я вырос?*” Чеслав Милош об аутентичности поэта в культуре. *Сегменты идентичности в творчестве зарубежных славянских писателей* [“Is it me or the culture I grew up in?” Czesław Miłosz on the poet’s authenticity in culture. Segments of Identity in the Works of Foreign Slavic Writers], Бодрова А. Г., Бразговская Е. Е., Князькова В. С., Котова М. Ю. И др.; отв. Редактор М. Ю. Котова (Санкт-Петербург: Изд-во С.-Петерб. ун-та, 2014), 84.

able book *Wyprawa w Dwudziestolecie [An Excursion through the Twenties and Thirties]*, in which he honestly and uncompromisingly depicted the problems of people in the interwar period, capable of gaining freedom and unable to properly manage it.¹⁸

Miłosz believes that nostalgic maintenance of historical memory in conditions that have undergone radical changes is dangerous and can lead to collective psychosis. This was the case in the interwar Polish twentieth century, when exclusivity in access to the 'national rite' only for persons who met certain criteria led to the division of the country's inhabitants into citizens of the first and second categories. This problem is pointed by Miłosz not only in recognition of the difficult national history, but also as one that has, to some extent, preserved to the present day. Manifestations of extreme nationalism and pseudo-patriotism can be traced in such historical and modern phenomena as mutual Polish-German, Polish-Russian, or Polish-Ukrainian hatred; in religious fanaticism, which causes enmity between Catholicism and Orthodoxy; in various manifestations of contempt in inter-ethnic relations, in the illusions of great power with territorial claims, etc. Having presented his negative view of these phenomena on historical examples, Czesław Miłosz came to the conclusion that any nationalism, whether Polish, Ukrainian or Russian, is dead, even if it is expected to become more and more triumphant. And whatever the future form of coexistence, it should not preclude friendly competition of peoples.

Conclusions

The work of Czesław Miłosz will remain a valuable source of knowledge for the inhabitants of the so-called 'Other Europe' for a long time to come. In his opinion, being in Central and Eastern Europe gives its inhabitants a chance to create a special type of culture, which, perhaps, one day will be taken as a model by the rest of

18. Cz. Miłosz, *Wyprawa w Dwudziestolecie [An Excursion through the Twenties and Thirties]* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2016), 612.

Europe. The poet has a deep sense of the rhythm of life in this part of Europe. His ideological and theoretical aspirations are related to overcoming the ‘secondary importance’ of peoples through the formation of a “Native Realm” as a set of small homelands. The reflections of this great Polish poet and political thinker are extremely important in the context of establishing friendly bilateral relations between Poland and Ukraine. The legal framework adopted over three decades prevails over historically determined problems that remain unresolved in relations between the two countries. Despite the existing problems, largely resulting from the ‘diseases’ of the twentieth century, and despite the need to address current issues such as cross-border cooperation, historical heritage, or labor migration, there is every reason to recognise the upward trajectory in relations between Poland and Ukraine. Evidence of this is the establishment of scientific cooperation, mutual translations of books by Polish and Ukrainian authors, restoration of justice in the perception of historical memory, promoting the development of national minorities – Ukrainian in Poland and Polish in Ukraine, assistance from the Polish government and Polish society provided to Ukrainian soldiers. Friendly relations between the two countries are dictated by the mutual interest of the two countries in ensuring stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the future of both countries in the equal European community that Czesław Miłosz dreamed of throughout his whole life.

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