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THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF THE ISTANBUL PLATFORM MEMBERS IN 1929–35**Liudmyla Vovchuk*****Abstract**

The daily activities of the members of the illegal residency of the UPR Central Committee in exile ‘Istanbul Platform’ during 1929–35 consisted of various aspects: domestic, social, and public. However, a red thread through the daily life of representatives of the Ukrainian political emigration in Istanbul was intelligence work, which still impresses researchers not only with the ambitiousness of intentions, plans, and tasks, but also with the professionalism and skill of their implementation. Especially given the fact that none of the members of the residency had previously been a professional intelligence officer and had no previous practical experience in the special services. Being under the close supervision of Soviet agents, without funding and the necessary means, without permanent and reliable channels of communication with their curators, members of the Istanbul Platform had to not only integrate into the life of the local community in Istanbul, establish their daily routine, and not cause discontent with the Turkish migration service, but also carry out intelligence, educational and propaganda activities. Every day, they resorted to new, creative methods; they used all available opportunities and skills in confronting Soviet agents.

The goal of the article is to highlight the daily activities of the members of the Istanbul Platform during this period.

The methodological basis of the research is the principles of the specific historical approach, historical-comparative and historical-typological methods, methods of comprehensiveness, systematicity, integrity, synthesis, analysis and objectivity.

The scientific novelty of the publication is the generalisation of the researched aspects of the daily activities of the members of the Istanbul Platform in 1929–35.

Conclusions. The daily activities of the members of the Istanbul Platform from the moment of its opening to the termination of its functioning were focused on a number of domestic, social and public aspects. Among them was intelligence activity, which, despite a number of obstacles, was carried out at a high level. Ensuring the functioning of the Istanbul Platform, its members shaped the continuity of historical state-building processes up to the present day.

Keywords: Ukrainian political emigration, interwar Turkey, Istanbul Platform, Volodymyr Murskyi, Mykola Zabello, Mariia Pchelinska, Ukrainian exile

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**ПОВСЯКДЕННА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ ЧЛЕНІВ «СТАМБУЛЬСЬКОЇ ПЛАТФОРМИ»
УПРОДОВЖ 1929–35 РР.**

Людмила Вовчук*

Анотація

Повсякденна діяльність членів нелегальної резидентури ДЦУНР в екзилі «Стамбульська платформа» упродовж 1929–35 рр. складалася з різноманітних аспектів: побутових, соціальних, громадських. Однак, червоною ниткою через щоденне життя представників української політичної еміграції у Стамбулі проходила розвідувальна робота, яка і сьогодні вражає дослідників не лише амбітністю намірів, планів, завдань, але й фаховістю та майстерністю їх втілення. Особливо з огляду на ту обставину, що жоден із членів резидентури до того не був фаховим розвідником і не мав попереднього практичного досвіду роботи у спецслужбах. Перебуваючи під пильним наглядом радянської агентури, без фінансування і необхідних засобів, не маючи постійних та надійних каналів зв'язку зі своїми кураторами, члени «Стамбульської платформи» мали не лише інтегруватися у життя місцевої громади Стамбулу, налагодити побут, не викликати невдоволення турецької міграційної служби, але й здійснювати розвідувальну, просвітницьку та пропагандистську діяльність. Щоденно вдаватися до нових, креативних прийомів; використовували всі наявні можливості та вміння у протистоянні з радянською агентурою.

Метою роботи є висвітлення повсякденної діяльності членів «Стамбульської платформи» упродовж вказаного періоду. **Методологічною основою** дослідження слугують принципи конкретно-історичного підходу, історико-порівняльні та історико-типологічні методи, методи всебічності, системності, цілісності, синтезу, аналізу та об'єктивності.

Наукова новизна полягає в узагальненні досліджених аспектів повсякденної діяльності членів «Стамбульської платформи» упродовж 1929–35 рр.

Висновки. Повсякденна діяльність членів «Стамбульської платформи» з моменту відкриття і до припинення функціонування була орієнтована на виконання низки побутових, соціальних, громадських аспектів. Серед яких була й розвідувальна діяльність, яка не дивлячись на низку перепон, реалізовувалася на високому рівні. Забезпечуючи функціонування «Стамбульської платформи», її члени формували тяглість історичних державотворчих процесів аж до нашого часу.

Ключові слова: українська політична еміграція, повсякденна діяльність, міжвоєнна Туреччина, Стамбульська платформа, Володимир Мурський, Микола Забелло, Марія Пчелінська, українські екзильні спецслужби

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Problem statement. Both today and decades ago, diplomatic and consular representatives were entrusted with a variety of tasks: from official meetings to participation in diplomatic receptions. The daily activities of the members of the illegal residency of the UPR Central Committee in exile the Istanbul Platform during 1929–35 also consisted of various aspects: domestic, social, civic and intelligence. Therefore, **the main aim of this article** is to clarify the main aspects of this activity in the context of constant surveillance by Soviet agents.

Last researchers' analysis of the problem. Most contemporary Ukrainian researchers focus on the activities of official Ukrainian diplomatic and consular institutions abroad in 1917–1921. At the same time, the aspect of the activities of Ukrainian exile institutions abroad remains poorly researched. Among them is the Istanbul Platform. Such national researchers as Ya. Dashkevych¹, T. Vintskovs'kyi, O. Muzychko and V. Khmarskyi², V. Okipniuk and D. Kozlov³, L. Pidhirna⁴, and L. Vovchuk⁵ partially open the veil on the establishment, functioning, and members of the Istanbul Platform, paying insufficient attention to the daily activities of the institution.

The source base of the research is represented by declassified archival documents of the Main Directorate of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine and the Central State Archive of Ukraine. Agent reports and correspondence of representatives of Ukrainian political emigration are of particular interest. In addition, it is worth highlighting the works of O. Lototskyi⁶, a contemporary of those events, and a collection

¹ Дашкевич Я.Р. Турецько-українські взаємовідносини в першій половині ХХ століття. Інформаційні стосунки: національний аспект. *Україна. Наука і культура*. 2009. Вип. 35. С. 63–72.

² Чорноморська хвиля Української революції: провідники національного руху в Одесі у 1917–1920 рр.: монографія / Вінцовський Т.С., Музичко О.Є., Хмарський В.М. [та ін.]; відп. ред. В.М. Хмарський. Одеса: ТЕС, 2010. 584 с.

³ Окіпнюк В., Козлов Д. Таємний фронт Володимира Мурського. *Історична правда*. 2020. 6 жовтня. URL: <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2020/10/6/158218/>; Окіпнюк В., Козлов Д. Володимир Мурський – представник екзильного уряду в Стамбулі. *Історична правда*. 2018. 17 вересня. URL: <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/5b868bf60ab87/>; Окіпнюк В., Козлов Д. Томос-1930, або Як «український нунцій» у Стамбулі боровся за автокефалію УПЦ. *Історична правда*. 2018. 8 жовтня. URL: <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/5bbb48e7dbf2d/>

⁴ Підгірна Л.М. «Стамбульська платформа» УНР у 20–30-ті рр. ХХ ст.: Просопографічний портрет. *Наукові праці Кам'янець-Подільського національного університету імені Івана Огієнка. Історичні науки*. 2022. Т. 36. С. 210–226; Підгірна Л. Дипломатично-розвідувальна діяльність Марії Пчелінської у Стамбулі у 1930-х рр.. *Наукові праці Кам'янець-Подільського національного університету імені Івана Огієнка. Збірник за підсумками звітної наукової конференції викладачів, докторантів і аспірантів*. 2022. Вип. 21. С. 37–38; Підгірна Л. Микола Забелло (1892–1967): персональна біографія агента ОДПУ «Надія». *Наукові праці Кам'янець-Подільського національного університету імені Івана Огієнка. Історичні науки*. 2022. Т. 40. С. 205–220.

⁵ Vovchuk L. Information activities of the Istanbul Platform in 1929–35. *Старожитності Лукомор'я*. 2024. № 4. С. 76–82. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33782/2708-4116.2024.4.282>

⁶ Лотоцький О. Сторінки минулого. Частина четверта. У Царгороді. Перевидання. Бавнд Бруц: Видання Української Православної Церкви в США, 1966. 175 с.

of documents on political emigration in 1919–1945, compiled by V. Lozytskyi, O. Bazhan, S. Vlasenko, and A. Kentii⁷.

The results and discussions. The arrival in Istanbul in the summer of 1929 of the new head of the UPR Central Committee in exile and the UPR exile special services, V. Murskyi, was of great importance for the daily life of the local Ukrainian community and actually added dynamism.

The Ukrainian community in Istanbul, representatives of the Ukrainian political emigration, were led by M. Zots-Kravchenko, an independentist by conviction, and M. Zabello, the community's secretary.

However, representatives of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul did not conduct active educational, public, and even more so, intelligence activities. This was also due to the then loyal government policy of the Republic of Turkey towards the USSR, and the fear of being 'under the gun' of new Turkish migration laws and being included in the list of 'unreliable'.

In 1928, a year before V. Mursky's arrival, M. Zots-Kravchenko himself suffered the same fate. The Turkish authorities deemed him 'unreliable' and deported him from the Turkish Republic⁸.

It is likely that M. Zots-Kravchenko's deportation was provoked by the Soviet secret services⁹ so that his place could be taken by a recruited ODPU agent, Secretary M. Zabello. He was a Ukrainian, a former officer of the tsarist army, a centurion of the UPR Army. Obviously, his wife Kateryna was also recruited¹⁰.

It is worth noting that this period of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul is not marked by much political and social activity. Nevertheless, M. Zabello actively tries to present his person as the new head of the community to the Chief Ataman of the Central Department of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile, A. Livytskyi, the heads of exile special services – V. Salskyi and V. Zmiienko; heads of Ukrainian intelligence offices in Prague, Bucharest and Paris; to establish contacts with well-known representatives of Ukrainian political emigration in Europe, the Middle East and the United States¹¹.

Representatives of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul headed by M. Zabello were more focused on their integration into the local Istanbul community, establishing their own life and trying to avoid being seen by the Turkish migration service.

From time to time, M. Zabello communicates with his fellow countrymen. Representatives of the community still try not to fall out of the context of the life of Ukrainian political emigration: they participate in raising funds to complete the

⁷ Українська політична еміграція 1919–1945: Документи і матеріали. Київ: Парламентське вид-во, 2008. 928 с.

⁸ Sectoral State Archive of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine (SSA FISU). Fund 1. List 1. File 6945, Vol. 5. P. 62.

⁹ Окіпнюк В., Козлов Д. Таємний фронт Володимира Мурського. *Історична правда*. 2020. 6 жовтня. URL: <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2020/10/6/158218/>

¹⁰ SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12628, Vol. 2, арк. 301.

¹¹ Ibidem.

S. Petliura Library in Paris and commemorate the Heroes of the Bazaar, making commemorative badges with S. Petliura's portrait¹². They gather to read and discuss Ukrainian publications that are brought to Istanbul by representatives of political emigration in Hungary, Germany, and Bulgaria.

In every way M. Zabello tried to demonstrate his usefulness to the leadership of the Ukrainian exiled special services and offered cooperation. In fact, it was M. Zotz-Kravchenko's previous unsatisfactory activities, M. Zabello's intrusive self-presentation, doubts about his reliability and the presence of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul that prompted the UPR Central Committee in exile, in cooperation with the exile special services¹³, to think about establishing the illegal residency in Istanbul, which would be headed by V. Murskyi¹⁴. He was a man whom the Ukrainian government in exile could fully trust; a man with pro-Ukrainian statehood convictions, a decent education, and diplomatic experience. He had the ability to unite conscious Ukrainians in Istanbul, to organise and establish an illegal residency, to perform various work, from public to intelligence, while coordinating the work of Ukrainian intelligence offices in the Middle East and in post-Soviet Ukraine¹⁵.

After becoming V. Murskyi's right-hand man and secretary, M. Zabello performed all the necessary tasks: he took the correspondence, which allowed him to copy all letters and documents, attended meetings of the Prometheus Club, helped Murskyi in his daily activities; he continued to maintain active correspondence with representatives of the Ukrainian political emigration. He also worked closely with the Soviet secret services. Starting in 1929, he compiled a kind of dossier on each representative of the of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul, identifying the most active ones, creating their profiles and describing in detail their daily lives, occupations, habits, preferences, inclinations, etc.

Thus, from the intelligence reports of declassified archival documents of the Sectoral State Archive of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, it becomes known that there were 50 active members of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul, representing different regions of Ukraine. V. Murskyi was able to unite these people into a fairly effective illegal institution with representative, educational, propaganda and intelligence functions.

In her article, L. Pidhirna provides a list of these representatives, indicating their marital status and occupation in Istanbul. The vast majority of them were conscious people with independent-minded beliefs, former interned soldiers of the UPR Army, representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia who were forced to emigrate or flee from post-Soviet Ukraine due to the Soviet occupation and the Red Terror.

¹² SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12617, Vol. 2, арк. 72.

¹³ Українська політична еміграція 1919-1945: Документи і матеріали. Київ: Парламентське вид-во, 2008. С. 354.

¹⁴ The Central State Archive of Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine. Fund 269. List 2. File 270. P. 62-62(б).

¹⁵ Чорноморська хвиля Української революції... С. 361-362.

The author emphasizes that the Ukrainians there managed to integrate into the Istanbul community with dignity and their daily activities were very diverse, performing information and intelligence activities at the same time. For example, Y. Smilgin, who delivered dairy products to the Soviet Embassy staff and to the residence of the Crimean Tatar pro-Soviet Kapudan Pasha, collected information about the activities of the Soviet Embassy, intentions and plans for Crimea, etc. And then he provided it to V. Murskyi¹⁶.

Such a wide range of professional activities and occupations of representatives of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul, personal connections, contacts with respected representatives of the Turkish community, membership in the most respectable Turkish families, etc. already represented interesting prospects for the formation of a reliable agent network of the illegal residency 'Istanbul Platform', which V. Murskyi took advantage.

It is interesting to note that V. Murskyi, upon arriving in Istanbul, positioned himself as a journalist and correspondent for the League of Nations. At that time, he was financially supported by the Central Committee of the UPR in exile, or rather, by the Polish special services. And although, according to M. Zabello, V. Murskyi had a 'magnificent salary'¹⁷, his intelligence, public, educational, literary and representative activities required significant financial investments, which neither V. Murskyi, nor the Central Committee of the UPR in exile, nor the Polish allies had. In one of his letters to A. Livytskyi, V. Prokopovych notes that V. Murskyi cannot carry out the necessary day-to-day representative activities due to a lack of funds to buy appropriate clothing¹⁸.

Murskyi's daily activities consisted of receiving and processing operational correspondence (letters, communications, etc.) that came to the secret Istanbul address (No. 224, Kutusu Bey Oglu, Istanbul) by regular mail, airmail¹⁹ and diplomatic pouch to the Polish diplomatic mission. Later, similar cooperation was established with the French consulate²⁰.

In addition, V. Murskyi worked on the texts of official documents of the UPR Central Committee in exile: Memorandum with the Government of Japan²¹; the text of the appeal and organisation of the reception of the representative of the UPR Central Committee in exile V. Prokopovych at the Ecumenical Patriarch Photios II regarding the receipt of the Tomos by the Orthodox Ukrainian Church²²; the Agreement with the head of the Crimean Tatar diaspora Kyrymer on the Autonomy of Crimea as part of the future Independent Ukraine²³. He wrote numerous educational materials, articles for Turkish and friendly diaspora publications, etc.

¹⁶ Підгірна Л.М. «Стамбульська платформа» УНР у 20-30-ті рр. XX ст.: Просопографічний портрет... С. 219-220.

¹⁷ SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12617, Vol. 8. P. 51-53.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 32.

¹⁹ SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12617, Vol. 1. P. 8

²⁰ Ibid. Vol. 9. P. 202.

²¹ Ibid. Vol. 8. P. 261, 316, 318.

²² Ibid. Vol. 1. P. 22.

²³ Ibid. Vol. 2. P. 248, 262-265.

V. Murskyi also worked on the manuscripts of his important pro-Ukrainian propaganda works ‘The True Face of the New Russia’, ‘Ukraine in the Struggle for Independence’, ‘Turkey and Russia’. At the same time, he was recruiting reliable people and arranging for pro-Ukrainian propaganda literature and communications to be sent by Soviet steamers to the Black Sea ports of post-Soviet Ukraine. He received this propaganda literature from the UPR Press Bureau in Warsaw.

He gave interviews about the situation in Ukraine to European and American journalists, established cooperation with representatives of foreign intelligence agencies, prepared reports and participated in meetings of the Istanbul branch of the Prometheus Club, working with representatives of friendly Diasporas: Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Crimean Tatar²⁴.

It is also worth mentioning a member of the Istanbul Platform, Ukrainian intelligence officer M. Pchelinska²⁵, who was V. Murskyi’s sister-in-law. M. Pchelinska’s daily activities consisted of a kind of ‘hunting’ for valuable contacts. Thanks to her, the Ukrainian exiled special services and the UPR Central Committee in exile were able to further cooperate with the heads of the French and Japanese intelligence services, M. Denard and Jimura²⁶.

Speaking about the daily life and leisure activities of the Istanbul Platform members, we can say that despite their professional employment and intelligence activities, they were quite ordinary. In addition to their daily routine, the members met at the Murskyis’ house for tea, celebrated birthdays and the first communion of the Murskyis’ daughters²⁷, and could get together in the evenings to play bingo²⁸. Murskyi’s wife took care of family matters and helped her husband with translations and processing of correspondence. On holidays and on Sundays, both the Murskyi family and other members of the Istanbul Platform attended St George’s Church in Phanar, had leisure time at the Alhambra cinema²⁹ and art events at the Teutonia German Community House³⁰.

In general, the members of the Istanbul Platform led a somewhat Eastern-style, measured, safe life³¹, which became quite secure after Murskyi established friendly relations with the head of the Istanbul migration service. This was facilitated by the cooling of Turkish-Soviet relations since 1930³².

It was after this that V. Murskyi was able to conduct a radio game with Ukrainian agents in post-Soviet Ukraine³³, present an autographed copy of his book ‘Ukraine and its

²⁴ Vovchuk L. Information activities of the Istanbul Platform in 1929–35... P. 79–80.

²⁵ SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12617, Vol. 9. P. 319

²⁶ Ibid. Vol. 7. P. 36, 50–52.

²⁷ Ibid. P. 36, 50–52.

²⁸ Ibid. Vol. 8. P. 51–52.

²⁹ SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12628, Vol. 9. P. 97, 98.

³⁰ Ibid. Vol. 8. P. 52–63.

³¹ SSA FISU. Fund 1. List 1. File 12617, Vol. 2. P. 270, 271.

³² Ibid. Vol. 1. P. 174–176.

³³ Ibid. Vol. 2. P. 301.

Struggle for Independence' to the President of the Republic of Turkey Ataturk (and possibly publish the book with the unofficial financial support of the Turkish authorities) and freely distribute books to well-known Turkish public and political figures (about 600 copies). He also managed to establish contact with a representative of the Turkish special services³⁴.

By 1935, members of the Istanbul Platform were actively engaged in educational, public, and intelligence activities, and made an almost successful attempt to obtain autocephaly (Tomos). However, the curtailment of funding for V. Mursky's activities and his untimely death led to the transfer of the Istanbul Platform's leadership to M. Zabello, and subsequently to its closure³⁵.

Most of the representatives of the Ukrainian community in Istanbul, members of the Istanbul Platform were buried in Istanbul, at the Orthodox Greek Cemetery (Şişli district). And V. Murskyi was buried in the Latin Catholic cemetery (Beyoglu district). Murskyi's family returned to Lviv and in 1938 moved to Germany. M. Pchelinska returned to France, where she also became a member of the early French Resistance Movement. The fate of most members of the Istanbul Platform is still unknown.

Conclusions. The daily activities of the members of the illegal residency of the UPR Central Committee in exile 'Istanbul Platform' during 1929-35 were carried out in the following areas: domestic, social, public and intelligence. The first two aspects involved the attempts of Ukrainians to survive in a foreign land, in emigration; to integrate into Turkish society, to ensure a decent life for themselves and their families. Despite the difficult social, legal and political circumstances and the opposition of Soviet intelligence agents, many representatives of the Ukrainian political emigration, given their education, experience and personal qualities, managed to do well.

Public and intelligence activities gained momentum with the arrival of V. Murskyi in Istanbul and the formation of the illegal residency of the UPR Central Committee in exile, the Istanbul Platform. The deterioration of Turkish-Soviet relations contributed to the intensification of the activities of the members of this institution. All aspects of the daily activities of Ukrainians in Istanbul were closely intertwined, constituted a symbiosis in a sense, and, as we can see, over almost 100 years, formed a separate philosophy and power of the representatives of the stateless Ukrainian nation - the global Ukrainian diaspora - in further undermining the positions of the USSR and fighting the Soviets for the restoration of Ukrainian statehood and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

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³⁴ Ibid. Vol. 2. P. 282.

³⁵ Vovchuk L. Information activities of the Istanbul Platform in 1929-35... P. 81.

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