

## Myron Korduba. Shchodennyk 1918–1925 [Diary, 1918–1925]

Piotr J. Wróbel

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**Myron Korduba. *Shchodennyk 1918–1925* [Diary, 1918–1925].** Compiled, edited, and with an introduction by Olia Hnatiuk and Myroslav Chekh, biographic foreword by Oleh Pavlyshyn, Vydavnytstvo Ukraïns'koho Katolyts'koho U, 2021. Ukraïna. Ievropa: 1921–1939 [Ukraine. Europe: 1921–1939]. 688 pp. Illustrations. Dictionary of archaic and foreign terms. Indexes. \$54.95, cloth.

**I**n February 1946, the Soviet authorities demanded that Myron Korduba publicly condemn his former teacher Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi. Korduba was a professor at Ivan Franko Lviv State University, a member of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, and the author of the diary under review. Hrushevs'kyi was (and is) recognized as arguably the most-distinguished Ukrainian historian. Korduba, rather than giving in to the Soviet threats, delivered instead a laudation based on his pre-war lecture delivered at his mentor Hrushevs'kyi's anniversary celebration. The Soviet authorities fired back with hostile accusations and press articles denouncing this act of defiance. Korduba spent the rest of his life expecting deportation, until his death in Lviv in April 1947. His name was systemically erased from Soviet publications, and it was almost forgotten abroad. However, a renewed interest in his scholarly research and political activism arose after Ukraine regained its independence in 1991. In lieu of a much-needed full biography, this book—with its valuable biographic foreword (9–48) and introduction (49–72), which contextualize the life of the diarist—is a very important work for scholars of Ukrainian history, especially those interested in the World War I and interwar periods.

Korduba was born in 1876 into the family of a Greek Catholic priest in a village near Ternopil, in Habsburg-controlled Eastern Galicia. It was in 1893 that he entered Lviv University and met and studied under Hrushevs'kyi. In 1895, he transferred to the University of Vienna. There, he successfully defended his doctoral thesis on the medieval Halych principality. Korduba was very active, as he participated in several Ukrainian and student organizations while also supporting himself financially as a bibliographer at the university library. In 1900, he moved to Chernivtsi, the capital of Habsburg Bukovyna, to teach at a Ukrainian gymnasium. Staying in contact with Hrushevs'kyi, he continued his academic pursuits, particularly on the history of the region and on the Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi era. He also made time for other interests, such as toponymy. His scholarly achievements secured for him membership in the prestigious Shevchenko Scientific Society (Naukove Tovarystvo imeni Shevchenka, or NTSh), in 1903. Simultaneously, he joined the Ukrainian national movement in Bukovyna. After the Russian

invasion of his home region in 1914, Korduba escaped to Prague, where he worked in the Committee for the Care of Ukrainian Refugees (Komitet Opiky nad Ukraïns'kymy Zbihtsiamy) and taught Ukrainians from the Russian army in a POW camp. In 1915, he returned to Chernivtsi and continued teaching at his gymnasium.

A few years later, in October 1918, Korduba began his diary. He describes the joy over the fall of the Habsburg Empire shared by the Ukrainian intelligentsia, who then tried to take control of the ethnically Ukrainian part of Bukovyna. Korduba represented the region in Lviv's Ukrainian National Rada (Ukraïns'ka Natsional'na Rada, or UNRada); commuted between Lviv and Chernivtsi; and travelled to Kyiv to initiate collaboration with Hetman Pavlo Skoropads'kyi, namely, to ask for his help for Ukraine in Bukovyna. However, Korduba's efforts were in vain: the Romanian army occupied the area and incorporated it into Romania. Korduba was bitterly disappointed with the Entente policies and the conformist behaviour of some of his fellow citizens in Bukovyna (167–68). His portrayals of the last weeks of the Hetmanate in Kyiv and the chaotic conditions in Eastern Galicia are also compelling for many historians.

In January 1919, Korduba returned to Chernivtsi, and soon afterward, he was arrested by the Romanians. He was released a few months later, in April, but on the condition that he would leave Bukovyna. He complied, found himself in Stanyslaviv (present-day Ivano-Frankivsk), and rejoined the UNRada. Furthermore, he became employed in the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the Western Province of the Ukrainian People's Republic (ZOUNR). He negotiated with the Romanians and the Hungarians and closely followed international events. All of this effort was fuelled by the illusion that the Entente would help Ukraine. At this point, Korduba, through his diary, poses many questions fundamental to Ukrainian history and to the national revolution of 1917–21. He notes how politicians obsessed over whether it was the Poles, the Whites, or the Bolsheviks who were the worst enemy of Ukraine. The diarist muses about who would be a lesser evil and a potential ally in a desperate situation. Which was a better strategy: to defend a truncated but independent Ukraine or to accept autonomy for a larger Ukraine within one of the neighbouring states (254, 288)? Should one boycott the Polish state or find a compromise within it (251)? Korduba was appalled by the Warsaw government, which instead of unifying its newly liberated core provinces, tried to grab ethnically non-Polish territories. He predicted that these policies would lead to future wars (244).

The diary entries describe the fall of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) in mid-1919 and the ensuing Polish persecutions and humiliations of Ukrainians. Not only politics are explored in the pages; the

everyday life and suffering of ordinary people are also detailed. Korduba mentions chaos and banditry in the countryside—where many Ukrainians believed that they would fare better under the Bolsheviks than under the Poles (261, 276, 322). Korduba records the process of rebuilding Ukrainian life in Eastern Galicia with his colleagues. They recreated the UNRada and some other seminal institutions. In co-operation with the ZUNR government-in-exile in Vienna, they built a secret “state within a state.” They tried to negotiate with Warsaw (280–82), liberate numerous detained Ukrainians, and mitigate aggressive Polish “pacification” techniques. They managed to revive the NTSh and the Ukrainian press, but they remained divided. Echoes of this appear in the diary’s pages—including notations on disagreements regarding Symon Petliura and the latter’s alliance with Poland (324, 331).

After the fall of the ZUNR, Korduba settled in Lviv, where he went back to teaching (in several educational institutions). He continued to write for the Ukrainian press and occupied a prominent position in the UNRada (332). In the summer of 1920, tensions in Eastern Galicia grew with the coming of the Red Army. On the one hand, the Poles were panicked on account of the Soviet approach; on the other hand, the Ukrainians vacillated between waiting for the Bolsheviks and succumbing to passivity and confusion. Some hoped that the new situation would bring a solution to the problem of Ukraine’s future. The UNRada stepped up its activities and participated in negotiations with the Polish authorities, including with Prime Minister Wincenty Witos (351–52). At that time, according to Korduba, members of the UNRada realized by sheer coincidence that the top secret Ukrainian Military Organization (Ukraïns’ka Viis’kova Orhanizatsiia, or UVO) had been formed (355).

A considerable part of Korduba’s diary is devoted to the Lviv (Underground) Ukrainian University, which was active between 1921 and 1925. Entries deal with its structure and internal conflicts and its relations with other sections of the “state within a state,” and they describe persecutions by Polish authorities. “Pacification” came in several waves, highlighted by historical events: On 25 September 1921, a young Ukrainian tried to assassinate Józef Piłsudski. This was followed by mass arrests, police searches, requisitions, harassment of individual people and social organizations, and military conscription (429–30, 463). The next, several-months-long violent suppression came after 15 March 1923, when the Conference of Ambassadors, formed by the Entente, recognized Polish sovereignty over Eastern Galicia. For most Ukrainians of Galicia, there was no doubt that their country had been abandoned by the League of Nations and was under brutal occupation. Only two options remained: to ask the hated Poles for some sort of concessions or to resort to terror (479, 546).

Initially, Korduba contributed new entries to his diary almost daily. From mid-1921 onward, however, he wrote increasingly less frequently and sometimes skipped several months. He was tired, and ultimately jaded, with politics. Even though he had worked very hard, he was in a desperate financial situation (404). He dreamt of life as a scholar. His diary leaves off in February 1925.

In the mid-1920s, Korduba concentrated on his activities at the NTSh and the émigré Ukrainian Institute of Sociology (Ukraïns'kyi Instytut Hromadoznavstva) in Prague. He was also invited to be a member of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Soviet Ukraine. He travelled to Kyiv but did not move there. Instead, in 1929, much to the outrage of some Ukrainians, he accepted a professorial position at the University of Warsaw, where he taught Ukrainian history until the outbreak of World War II. He was also active in the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw (Ukraïns'kyi Naukovyi Instytut u Varshavi); published pieces in numerous periodicals, both in Polish and in his mother tongue; and participated in international historical institutions and congresses. In August 1940, deprived of his livelihood, he left Warsaw and accepted a position as a teacher in a Ukrainian gymnasium in Chełm (Kholm), in the Lublin district of the German Generalgouvernement. In November 1941, after the German conquest of Eastern Galicia, he returned to Lviv and started working as a bibliographer at the Staatsbibliothek; from March 1942, he went back to teaching gymnasium students. From August 1944, after the Red Army had retaken Lviv, Korduba served as a professor of history at Ivan Franko Lviv State University and was a member of the Lviv branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR. Even during his most hectic and chaotic periods, he continued his research and published an astounding array of studies on historical geography, historiography, medieval Ukraine, the Khmelnyts'kyi era, Bukovyna, and the Chełm and Podlachia regions and their historical ties to Galicia. Among Korduba's numerous works is a subchapter titled "The Reign of John Casimir: Part 1, 1648–54" in volume 1 of the flag publication of the postwar Polish emigration, *The Cambridge History of Poland* (see Reddaway 502–17). The latter demonstrates Korduba's collaborative efforts with Polish luminaries such as Oskar Halecki and Władysław Tatarkiewicz.

Korduba's diary is a vital primary source for fostering a proper understanding of twentieth-century relations between Ukraine and Poland. It includes many previously unknown facts and details concerning the operations of the Western Ukrainian "underground state" after 1919 and the formation of the UVO and other activities that led to the establishment of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Korduba participated in many of these events, and he describes them in a stoic, measured way. A European

scholar with an ironic sense of humour, he offers abundant details, nuanced portraits, telling slices of life, and scenes portraying the realities and intellectual climate of day-to-day existence in Western Ukraine during wartime and the interwar period.

The editors of the diary under review, Ola (Olia) Hnatiuk and Mirosław Czech (Myroslav Chekh), deserve special recognition. Given that the original text is a handwritten primary source, some parts of it are hardly legible; great pains have been taken to transpose the words. The manuscript is divided between two archives, and the author published fragments of it in interwar Ukrainian periodicals. It took much time and effort to produce the book under review, but the final product is impressive. Oleh Pavlyshyn's foreword is probably the best existing biographic text on Korduba. The extensive footnotes clarify the text and together with the additional explanatory sections (613–47, 682–87) and indexes (649–81) represent a kind of encyclopedia of early twentieth-century Ukrainian history—a helpful resource for information on lesser-known national figures and institutions of that era.

At the same time, the book has certain detracting elements. The editors decided to publish the diary *in extenso*, including countless details that frequently obscure the main thread of Korduba's narrative. Carefully selecting essential parts of the journal and translating them into the English could be a valuable continuation of this project; it would allow international readers to better understand Ukraine and its present-day defensive war against Russia. Overall, Korduba's diary offers an incomparable study of this part of history and provides at least a small window into his professional and societal achievements.

Piotr J. Wróbel  
University of Toronto

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