SECTION 21.
HISTORY, ARCHEOLOGY AND CULTUROLOGY

Diana Yablonska
PhD in History,
Assistant Professor of the Department of World History,
Head of the department for monitoring the quality of training
and professional development of specialists
Kamianets-Podilskyi National Ivan Ohienko University, Ukraine

THE FIGURE OF SEMEN SIDORIAK IN HISTORY KAMIANETS-PODILSKYI INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (1920S)

One of the heads of the Kamianets-Podilskyi Institute of Public Education (hereinafter – IPE), as well as an active participant in Soviet educational construction in Podillia in the early 1920s, was the naturalist Semen Dmytrovych Sydoriak.

The teacher was born on August 2, 1870, in the village of Volivtsi, Horlytsia district, Galicia, into a poor peasant family [3, sheet 8]. At the age of thirteen, he worked for the director of the Horlytsia folk school and with his assistance received primary education. In 1894, he graduated from the state gymnasium in Nowy Sącz (now part of Poland) and for the next four years studied at Lviv University, Department of Natural History, Faculty of Philosophy. He did an internship at the Natural History Museum in Vienna and worked on comparative fish anatomy in Trieste (Italy). As a result of his discoveries, he prepared several scientific papers that were published abroad. Thanks to this, he successfully defended his dissertation and in 1898 was left as an assistant at the Department of Anatomy at Lviv University, where he worked for three years [3, sheet 8].

In 1901, he became a full member of the Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society and the Copernican Scientific Society [3, sheet 8 reverse]. The following year, the students and teachers of Lviv University were transferred to Ternopil, where they continued their work at the local Ukrainian state gymnasium. In view of the move, he worked as a professor of natural history and history. In particular, in the 1905/1906 academic year he was the head of the natural history classroom and the manager of the peasant bursa in the city, established in 1904 [8, p. 255]. He was a co-founder of the societies "Agriculture" and "Podillia" in Ternopil. The latter arose due to S.D. Sydoriak's friendly relations with I.M. Boberskyi, a theorist and practitioner of Ukrainian national physical culture. In 1913-1914 he was a delegate to the 1st and 2nd Plast congresses in Lviv [10].

During the First World War he lived in Vienna. In his autobiography, dated 1927, he explained his stay in Austria by the desire for scientific enrichment, and then he studied socio-economic disciplines to replenish his knowledge [3, sheet 8 reverse]. With the outbreak of the revolution in Eastern Galicia, he returned to his native land and took an active part in the creation of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic: in Ternopil he co-organized (with Andriy Muzychka) armed youth groups that disarmed the Austrian gendarmerie. Later he became the commissar (governor) of the city [7, p. 89].

In 1919, together with the Galician government and the army, he moved to Podillia. Here he was engaged in political education work. After the Galicians stopped participating in the armed
struggle for the Ukrainian state, he co-founded the Communist Party of Bukovyna and Galicia in December 1919 in Vinnytsia with a group of activists. He was elected deputy chairman of the First Committee of this political structure, a member of the regional committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, and was part of the delegation during negotiations with M. Muralov and V. Zatonsky on the merger of the UGA with the Red Army [3, sheet 8 reverse]. From November 1920, he held the position of lecturer of political economy at the Higher Party School at the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine in Kharkiv [3, sheet 3 reverse], and later worked in Kyiv as deputy director of a research institute [8, p. 255].

In the fall of 1921, S.D. Sydoriak was appointed rector of the Kamianets-Podilskyi Institute of Education with the obligation to teach political economy courses to students at local universities - the Institute of Education and the State Agricultural Institute, as well as at the Drahomanov Labor Faculty and pedagogical courses [3, sheet 8 reverse]. A lecturer at the IPE, Sofia Fedorivna Rusova, spoke negatively about his work in this position. In her memoirs, she stated: "In August, the rector appointed from Kharkiv, a Galician named Sydoriak, arrived and immediately turned the university into a kind of farm institution, where no one mentioned scientific issues, but only all efforts were directed to obtaining food, cultivating the land, collecting food from the garden, and utilizing the garden. At the very first meeting of the professors' council (which was almost the last), the appointed rector frightened us all with the specter of famine, which seemed to be coming to Kamianets.

In general, both the political committee and the rector despised the professors' council by all means. The professors' council convened only when Chaly or Sydoriak needed the council's sanction for their inventions. To speak out against these "bosses" meant to risk being thrown out of the professorial board, to be labeled a counterrevolutionary, an enemy of "Soviet Russia".

These university leaders (rector S.D. Sydoriak and vice-rector P.V. Chaly - Author) were completely unfamiliar with academic affairs. They took it upon themselves to give lectures on economic, biological, and social sciences. Sidoriak's lectures on comparative anatomy only made students laugh, and only 4-6 students attended... He became a laughingstock for students who posted mythical orders from him, signed by him: "Rector Se Durak" [9, p. 2-3].

Along with rectoring and teaching, S.D. Sydoriak led a Marxist-Leninist circle of members of the city's higher education institutions' party centers. Not enjoying respect among the scientific and pedagogical staff [1, sheet 9], due to unprofessionalism in the leadership of the Institute, misunderstandings with the political commissar regarding their administrative powers [5, p. 7], in the spring of 1922 S.D. Sydoriak was replaced by historian, Professor P.G. Klepatsky. Thus, he became the first rector to be elected publicly [2, sheet 11]. On May 27, 1922, he was officially admitted to the duties of the rector of the Institute [6, p. 3-7]. At the same time, S.D. Sydoriak moved to Kyiv, where from September 1923 he worked as a lecturer at the Soviet Party School, a professor at the Kyiv Institute of National Economy [3, sheet 4], and taught a course in political economy at the Architectural Institute and at pedagogical courses. Since 1926, he headed the section of political economy of the Marxist-Leninist Department at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences [3, sheet 7]. He lived in the city at 21 Engelsa Street, apartment 9, with his wife Olena, son Bohdan, and daughters Oksana and Olena [4].

On July 15, 1935, sixty-five-year-old Semen Dmytrovych was arrested by the State Security Department of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR for anti-Soviet activities. The investigation into S.D. Sydoriak's case lasted six months. Already on January 1, 1936, he was convicted under Articles 54-11 and 54-6 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR (anti-Soviet activities) and exiled to Kazakhstan for 3 years by the indictment of a special meeting of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR [4]. On November 19, 1938, he was released by the decision of the Ural Region NKVD [11]. Later he worked as a doctor and lived in the city of Uralsk in the West Kazakhstan region [11]. Here he learned about World War II, which he survived and waited for the collapse of the Third Reich. He died in 1947 and was buried in Uralsk [7, p. 89].
On the basis of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of January 16, 1989 "On Additional Measures to Restore Justice to Victims of Repression that Took Place in the 30s, 40s, and Early 50s," on July 4, 1989, S.D. Sydoriak was rehabilitated as illegally repressed during the years of Stalin's totalitarian regime by the decision of the military prosecutor's office of the Kyiv Military District [4].

Thus, the figure of the naturalist and communist Semen Sydoriak is briefly associated with the history of the Kamianets-Podilskyi INO. His controversial managerial work at this university was most likely due to his affiliation with the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and his willingness to eradicate anti-communist sentiments in a team that not so long ago supported the national revival of Ukraine. However, he was not destined to become a respected rector and authoritative teacher.

References: