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R. Ya. Pyrih. Relations between Ukraine and Central states: uncommon occupation in 1918. Kyiv, Institute of History of Ukraine of NAS of Ukraine, 2018. 357 p.

The monograph analyses relations between Ukraine and Central states, namely Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1918 that are deemed to be a multidimensional phenomenon of political, military, economic and legal nature, caused by the intricate final stage of the First World War. Signing of the Brest Peace Treaty accelerated the nationhood of the young UPR, gave it the status of a subject of international law and the possibility to be protected against the Bolshevik expansion. At the same time, while concluding the peace treaty, experienced German and Austrian diplomats set pragmatic goals – to replenish food supplies exhausted by long-lasting war with the help of the “breadbasket of Europe” while the Reich leadership considered Ukraine to be the bridgehead for the implementation of their strategic plans in the East.

For the first time in Ukrainian historiography, the author investigates functioning of German occupation zone, which covered Kyiv, Chernihiv, Poltava and Kharkiv provinces and Crimea. The military-administrative structure, dislocation of corps units, role of local commandant’s office, and military-field justice are represented. The author shows the refinement in the number of German troops in Ukraine and tendency to their reduction along with the completion of hostilities in early May 1918.

The historical image of German occupation zone is described in-detail through personifying activities of the main implementers of the “eastern” policy in Ukraine: Field Marshal H. Eichhorn, Commander of Kyiv Army Group; General W. Groener, Chief of Staff; Major H. Hasse, Chief of the National Reconnaissance Office; Ambassador A. Mumm, Head of the diplomatic mission; Counsellor G. Berchem; Consul General E. Thiel and other military officers and diplomats. They represented different government centres, often being hostages of the uncertainty and variability of their policies towards Ukraine; however, they always defended the pragmatic interests of Germany in a consolidated and rigorous manner.

In the end, the author states that this scientific problem leaves a range of topical and simultaneously under-investigated aspects. The First World War has caused the German-Austrian occupation of Ukraine; however, it has not been sufficiently “inscribed” in the historical context yet. The issue is illustrated with unique photographic documents of that time. The book is designed for scientists, teachers, students, all those interested in the history of Ukraine and its relations with other states.