

DOI 10.70286/EOSS-01.12.2025.008

POLITICAL FUNCTIONS OF INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONTACTS OF THE UKRAINIAN SSR IN THE 1970S

Semenov Hennadii

Postgraduate student

Department of History

Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University, Ukraine

Inter-parliamentary cooperation of the Soviet republics represented a distinct and still insufficiently examined layer of official international activity in the late Soviet period. In the 1970s, the Ukrainian SSR developed an intensive network of contacts with foreign parliaments, delegations and international parliamentary organizations. While existing research has focused mainly on the USSR's centralized foreign policy, the republican level has often been treated as a passive extension of the union centre. Such an approach underestimates the political functions of these contacts and their role in shaping a controlled international visibility of the Ukrainian SSR during *détente*. [4]

The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the political functions and mechanisms of inter-parliamentary contacts of the Ukrainian SSR in the 1970s and to assess the extent of its symbolic agency within the all-Union foreign policy framework. Particular attention is paid to how these practices contributed to the gradual formation of international visibility that preceded the emergence of Ukraine's independent diplomatic identity.

The source base includes archival materials from the Central State Archive of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine and the Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine: official correspondence between the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR and foreign parliamentary bodies, delegation reports, protocol records and draft speeches. These documents were analysed through the identification of key functional categories and their comparison with directives issued by Soviet central institutions, as well as with contemporary coverage in *Radyanska Ukraina* [1].

The findings indicate that inter-parliamentary contacts primarily fulfilled a representational function, enabling the controlled positioning of the Ukrainian SSR as an active yet subordinated participant in international affairs. Delegation reports systematically emphasized socio-economic achievements, peace initiatives and loyalty to Soviet foreign policy lines associated with *détente* [2]. A second key function was ideological communication: meetings were carefully scripted, followed pre-approved talking points and reproduced all-Union narratives on disarmament, socialist development and international solidarity in different regional contexts. Participation in multilateral parliamentary forums also contributed to the legitimization of the official concept of republican sovereignty within the USSR, which was important for the symbolic architecture of Soviet nationality policy [5].

At the same time, the research reveals limited but notable instances of symbolic initiative in cultural and educational exchanges and in informal elements of international communication. These areas allowed Ukrainian representatives to highlight specific cultural and historical features of the republic, to maintain direct contacts with foreign partners and to accumulate experience of international interaction. Such practices did not challenge the political hierarchy of the Soviet system, yet they gradually strengthened the external visibility of Kyiv as a separate actor. In this sense, inter-parliamentary contacts of the 1970s can be interpreted as an early stage in the transformation of the Ukrainian SSR from a purely representational unit of Soviet diplomacy into a bearer of its own, albeit constrained, international profile [3].

Thus, inter-parliamentary cooperation of the Ukrainian SSR during détente functioned as a controlled instrument of external representation and ideological transmission of all-Union positions, while simultaneously creating preconditions for the emergence of symbolic subjectivity. This combination of strict political control and growing international visibility helps to explain how, after 1991, Ukraine was able relatively quickly to institutionalize an independent foreign policy and to rely on already existing, though previously limited, traditions of international parliamentary activity.

References

1. Description No. 18 of permanent-storage files for 1972–1975. 1975. ІЦДАБО. 1. Fonds 1. Inventory 18. Volume 2. Files 389, 394, 435, 462, 469, 471, 490, 496, 497. URL: <https://tsdavo.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1-18-t2.pdf>.
2. Mishchenko M. International Diplomatic Activity of the Ukrainian SSR in the Second Half of the 20th Century: A Historical and Legal Analysis. Scientific Notes of V.I. Vernadsky TNU. Series: Historical Sciences. 2020. Vol. 31, No. 70. Pp. 27–30. URL: https://www.hist.vernadskyjournals.in.ua/journals/2020/1_2020/7.pdf
3. Mishchenko M. Formation and Activity of the Diplomatic Service of Ukraine in the 1950s–1970s. Hileya: Scientific Bulletin. 2019. Issue 149, No. 10. Pp. 127–130.
4. Vasylenko V.A. Legal Aspects of the Participation of the Ukrainian SSR in International Relations. Kyiv: Politydyav Ukrainy, 1984. 207 p.
5. Zadorozhnyi O.V. The Genesis of Ukraine's International Legal Personality: A Monograph. Kyiv: K.I.C., 2014. 688 p.