

# JOURNAL OF UKRAINIAN STUDIES

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Summer 1999

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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# Introduction

We have here a most interesting discussion, in which four quite diverse authors show us new, and different, ways to understand the revolutionary events that transpired in Ukraine in the years 1917–20.

The discussion's foundation text, to which the other authors are responding, has been penned by Vladyslav Verstiuk of the Institute of the History of Ukraine at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv. This is a man who has spent a long time in the archives and a long time on his sofa reading almost everything that has been published on the Ukrainian Revolution. He made scholarly "headlines" in 1991 with his richly researched monograph on Nestor Makhno, and since then he has published the documents of the Central Rada and numerous other works. No one knows the Ukrainian Revolution like he does. Vladyslav is also a well-known radio personality in Ukraine, where his series on Ukrainian history is broadcast nationally. He belongs, as I do, to the middle generation of Ukrainian historians.

Vladyslav was a John Kolasky Fellow at the University of Alberta in the winter of 1998. Divorced temporarily from his beloved archives and freed from his usual set of obligations, he had time to sit back and think, to reflect on the major issues of the revolution and on the work that historians still needed to do. The result of his meditations was a paper first delivered in March 1998 in the seminar series of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and shortly thereafter at the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in New York City. It is this paper, slightly revised, that appears here as "Conceptual Issues in Studying the History of the Ukrainian Revolution." It was a fine piece: a distinguished authority taking stock of the major historiographical and methodological issues and charting out the directions for future research. It was the kind of piece that cried out for serious discussion.

Roman Senkus and I put our heads together and invited responses to Vladyslav's "Conceptual Issues." We knew that we had recruited an interesting crew of discussants, but I don't think either of us quite expected texts of the calibre we ended up with. Sometimes you get lucky.

We invited one other middle-generation scholar to take part in the discussion—Marko Bojcun. Like Roman and I, Marko had come out of the Ukrainian-Canadian anti-Soviet left and had been involved with the journals *Meta* and *Diialoh*. He completed his doctoral dissertation on the working class in the Ukrainian Revolution at York University in 1985, but later left Canada for Great Britain. He now heads up the Ukraine Centre at the University of North London. The text he wrote for our discussion turned out to be a highly original Marxist interpretation of the that revolution, powerfully written and argued.

We also approached two representatives of the younger generation of historians, still writing their doctoral dissertations: Mark Baker and Serhy Yekelchuk. Mark received his M.A. in history at the University of Alberta (his article on Lewis Namier in the last issue of *JUS* had its origin in that thesis). Now he is one of Roman Szporluk's doctoral students at Harvard. Mark has spent most of the last few years in Ukraine, rooting in the archives there for his massive microhistorical study of Kharkiv in the years 1914–21. He kept his mind open while searching and found things no one has ever looked for before. His contribution to the Verstiuk discussion throws some of these findings directly into the face of almost all previous interpretations of the revolution.

Readers of *JUS* probably remember Serhy's article on the Ukrainophiles and Shevchenko's Tomb in Kaniv that appeared in the 1995 double issue. As one of the few texts on Ukrainian history to incorporate postmodernist insights, it's not easily forgotten. We have received another view-refreshing piece from Serhy for this discussion. He is now finishing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Alberta, and he already has a candidate of historical sciences degree from the Institute of the History of Ukraine in Kyiv. In between living in Kyiv and Edmonton, Serhy spent a year in Australia at the invitation of Prof. Marko Pavlyshyn, so he comes by his interest in the "linguistic turn" honestly.

\* \* \*

Before I saw all the texts, I had expected that the main axis of dialogue would be Ukraine/the West, i.e., that Roman and I had primarily hosted a meeting of minds from Ukraine and the Anglophone world (I was aware that Serhy would introduce a measure of ambiguous hybridity). I was way off base. The main division here turned out to be between generations of historians.

On the one hand are Vladyslav and Marko of my generation of historians—one espousing Hroch, the other Marx. I know these perspectives intimately, since most of the social history of Galicia I've written has been informed by both of these (by no means incompatible) thinkers. Vladyslav and Marko think in structures and, most notably, orderly phases (Vladyslav's engagement with Hroch's three stages of national development, Marko's discovery of four phases of the revolution repeated in three cycles). Absent from their texts, on the other hand, are the references to cultural studies and the revisionist social history of

the Russian Revolution that figure so prominently in the contributions of their juniors, Mark and Serhy.

This divergence runs deeper than a difference in reading lists: the two generations disagree on the critical issue of the relationship between order and chaos in history. Both Vladyslav and Marko impose order on the chaos of history, while Mark and Serhy challenge order with chaos. Marko offers us what must be the most highly ordered explanation of the Ukrainian Revolution to be found in the literature. He also situates the revolution firmly in a global perspective. Vladyslav places the revolution into an over-arching narrative framework in which “history” unapologetically goes about solving certain “tasks” for the nation. Mark and Serhy, by contrast, are interested in intricacies and in facts that break patterns, erase lines, and upset apple carts. Mark does not simply eschew a global perspective: he takes the perspective of a single gubernia. And Serhy goes even further: in the second half of his essay he concentrates on a single, completely peripheral figure in the revolution, one, moreover, whose identities shifted constantly. Both contributions radically de-centre the history of the revolution.

Large political verities find a more comfortable home in the contributions of the middle-generation historians than in those of the younger generation. Symptomatic is how the current independence of Ukraine is reflected in the essays. For Vladyslav the circumstance that Ukraine achieved national statehood in the 1990s means that the outcome of the Revolution of 1917–20 can no longer be considered a failure, but needs to be re-evaluated as a necessary step on a particular historic path. For Mark, on the other hand, the achievement of statehood signifies that Ukrainian history can finally free itself from its obsession with the nation. Reflected in these intelligently written essays are the great debates in the humanities and social sciences today as they are applied to a linchpin issue of modern Ukrainian history. Have a pleasant read!

John-Paul Himka



# Russian Nationalism and Ukraine

The Nationality Policy of the  
Volunteer Army  
During the Civil War

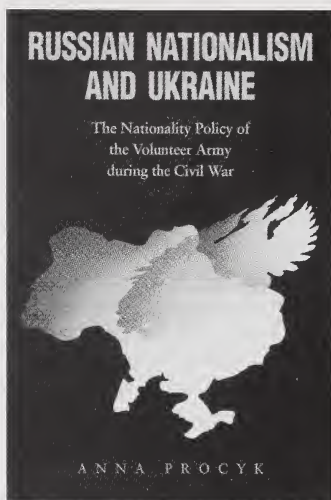
Anna M. Procyk

In the historiography of the Russian revolution and the civil war, the origins of the White movement and its ideology appear to be a reaction to the Bolshevik seizure of power. But the movement's slogan, "Russia One and Indivisible," reveals a different ideological agenda. The principal task of this monograph is to unravel the meaning behind this well-known yet never seriously investigated objective by focusing on the nationality program of the White cause. The study examines the rights and privileges that were envisaged for the nationalities within the framework of an "indivisible" Russia and attempts to explain why a movement the White leaders founded on the periphery of the empire, where the support of the nationalities was crucial, adhered so tenaciously to the idea of an undivided Russia.

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# Conceptual Issues in Studying the History of the Ukrainian Revolution

*Vladyslav Verstiuk*

For many decades the historiography of the Ukrainian Revolution has been dominated by two conflicting approaches. One—the Soviet approach—did not concede that the revolutionary events of 1917–21 in Ukraine had any independent significance, and it grossly falsified them while viewing them as a variant of the so-called Great October Socialist Revolution. The other approach—which I call the national approach—treated the Ukrainian Revolution as an independent historical phenomenon, but focussed its efforts on determining who was responsible for the defeat of the struggle for Ukraine's freedom. As early as the mid-1920s Viacheslav Lypynsky characterized the development of the national historiographic approach to the revolution with considerable accuracy:

The Hetmanites blame the ruin on the various Ukrainian social democrats, the authors of the fraternization [*bratannia*] with Kerensky, the authors of the [Central Rada's] Third Universal, [and] the leaders of the uprising [against the Hetman government led by the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic]. The democrats think that [all of the] evil stemmed from the Hetmanites who dispersed the Central Rada. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks think that the [independence] cause was lost because the democrats betrayed the people, while the democrats think it was because of the Bolsheviks' demoralization of the people. The central Ukrainians [*naddnipriantsi*] heap all of the blame on the Galicians for switching [their support] to Denikin, while the Galicians heap it all on the central Ukrainians for switching [their support] to the Poles.<sup>1</sup>

Both the national and the Soviet historiographies of the Ukrainian Revolution generated a sizable literature on the subject. It is very tempting to try to make

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1. Viacheslav Lypynsky, *Lysty do brativ-khliborobiv: Pro ideiu i orhanizatsiiu ukrainskoho monarkhizmu*, ed. Iaroslav Pelensky (Kyiv and Philadelphia: Instytut shkidnoievropeiskyykh doslidzhen Natsionalnoi akademii nauk Ukrainy and the W. K. Lypynsky East European Research Institute, 1995), 16.

one's way through that slippery, complicated historiographical labyrinth, but that would require a separate discussion or study. The groundwork for the latter was laid in 1994 by John-Paul Himka, who quite successfully delineated the main historiographical issues.<sup>2</sup> One can agree fully with his comments and conclusions. Still, it is worth emphasizing that there was a great deal of ideology in both historiographies, but very little understanding of the Ukrainian Revolution's actual course of events.

However important various ideologies (nationalist, populist, statist, or socialist) might seem to have been in the Ukrainian Revolution, I am firmly convinced that we need to abandon ideology-based historiographical conceptions. Ultimately, as previous experience has shown, such conceptions do not so much facilitate a deeper understanding of the past as lead (whether researchers want it or not) to scholastic assertions that the ideology selected as the thread of Ariadne is much better than those that have been rejected. In studying the Ukrainian Revolution, ideology-based historiography needs to be replaced by intellectual historiography. The experience accumulated around the world in exploring the history of the English, French, American, and other revolutions opens the door to broad perspectives and possibilities for students of the Ukrainian struggle for independence.

Today the first task that researchers face is to study, in their totality, the great and small social structures that led to the outbreak of the revolution and determined its nature and the direction in which it developed. It is necessary to elucidate which socio-political forces played leading roles in the revolution and why, and which forces were secondary. Why were some effective only at a certain stage of the revolution and then lost their significance? Moreover, it is necessary to identify and explain the mechanisms by which these forces acted upon and against each other. I believe that such an approach will lead us to a more rational and more pragmatic understanding of the history of the revolution and that thus we will be able to comprehend its actual historical functions.

Historians should direct their efforts toward clearly defining the revolution's place and role in modern Ukrainian history as the link connecting the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They should also elucidate the revolution's genuine accomplishments and consequences instead of those concocted under the influence of ideology. One of the principal tasks of such studies, it would seem, should be conceptualizing the distinctiveness of this extraordinary historical phenomenon connected with, in the first place, the general state of the Ukrainian nation, and with the close and complex interweaving of national and social factors, with the problem of the unification of all ethnic Ukrainian lands, with

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2. In his article "The National and the Social in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–20: The Historiographical Agenda," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 95–110.

the level of the masses' national consciousness and social mobilization, with the quantitative and qualitative predicament of the Ukrainian elite, with the significant changes in the social structure of Ukrainian society, with the antagonistic relations between the village and the city, and with inter-ethnic relations. Illumination of these paramount problems will help us to find new approaches and solutions to modelling the history of the revolution. It will also help us to gain an objective understanding of the consequences of the revolutionary struggle, of why the national forces lost, and at what price victory came to the Bolsheviks.

One of the cornerstones of such a new, modern conception of the Ukrainian Revolution has to be an emphasis on that revolution's uniqueness and self-sufficiency. But it would be a mistake to erect a Chinese wall between it and the Russian Revolution. While studying their preconditions, it is worth beginning from the premise that in social terms the Ukrainian and Russian Revolutions had much in common. They were both rooted in the contradictions that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries between the necessity to modernize the Russian Empire and the existence of feudal vestiges, first and foremost imperial rule. The Russian autocracy did not admit the possibility of the free development of society; it placed all sorts of obstacles on society's road to self-organization, to legal political activity. The structure of society looked much better in Russia proper than it did in Ukraine, but even so it was far from normal. The Russian elite and middle class were narrow social strata. The middle class did not play a noticeably independent role. That is the factor where one should seek the main reason why a force such as the Bolsheviks was victorious.

The nature of Russian rule—its despotism, centralism, and chauvinism—exacerbated the national question in the Russian Empire. The modernization of the empire—the creation of a European, democratic, constitutional Russia—was impossible without fundamentally resolving the national question, in our case the Ukrainian question. But neither Russia's rulers nor Russian society showed any desire to do so. This circumstance transformed the Ukrainian national movement into a national-liberation movement, into a constituent part of the revolutionary struggle.

The ethno-national component was what fundamentally distinguished the Ukrainian and Russian Revolutions. But a great number of analogous social issues, which both of these revolutions aimed to resolve, closely linked both of them and, at the same time, made the realization of national goals difficult. Identical social problems were the ground on which national-communism germinated in Ukraine and Bolshevism was able to take root.

The Russian Revolution also allows us to compare the Ukrainian national-liberation movement with analogous movements of other oppressed peoples in the Russian Empire. This, in turn, facilitates a more objective discussion of the Ukrainian Revolution's strengths and weaknesses. What must be just as

necessary when studying the revolution is the historical context of Central Europe at that time. A number of historians have justly observed that the Ukrainian Revolution was not a regional variant of the Russian Revolution because it took place not only within the Russian Empire but also in the Western Ukrainian territories that were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is, of course, a very important observation. It requires its own conceptualization, and here it is important to show how much the revolutionary processes in Western Ukraine and in the Ukrainian lands farther east were similar, what united them, and what distinguished them. Thus, the contemporary paradigm of the Ukrainian Revolution has to be a structure that is quite complex and thematically many-sided. Let us turn to its general characteristics.

When we look back at the modern history of Ukraine, that is, at the last two centuries, we see that one of its principal themes is Ukraine's progression toward its own statehood. From the activity of the Ukrainian awakeners to the declaration of independence in 1991, the theme of the national-liberation movement, of nation-state building, can be traced in one way or another throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

I will stress two particularities of this historical process. First, it significantly extended over time in comparison to analogous processes in such central European countries as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria; but by its tempo and nature it was similar to developments in Belarus, Moldova, Lithuania, Estonia, and other countries that also rose from the ruins of the Russian Empire but were subsequently swallowed up by the Soviet Union.

The second particularity is the central and quite special place that the revolutionary events of 1917–21 occupy in modern history. The Ukrainian Revolution brings together the “long” nineteenth and “short” twentieth centuries. At the same time it can be viewed as the former's culmination and the latter's beginning. Interwoven in it were processes that did not find their completion in the history of the nineteenth century (national and social mobilization) and those that came to distinguish the twentieth century (nationalism, totalitarianism). One may say that the Ukrainian Revolution was the consequence, the product, of nineteenth-century Ukrainian history; its results were closely connected to that history, were caused by it. On the other hand, the revolution determined the development of twentieth-century Ukrainian history to a significant degree. These peculiarities must be considered as fully as possible when the contemporary paradigm of the revolution is created.

In the late 1960s, the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch introduced into scholarly discourse the notion of the development of “small” (meaning “stateless” or “non-historical”) peoples into modern nations and their creation of national

states.<sup>3</sup> His schema consists of three stages, in each of which specific but extremely necessary tasks for further development are completed. During the first stage, the idea of a nation is formulated by a small circle of national awakeners. During the second stage, through intensive cultural-educational activity a nation simultaneously becomes nationally conscious and consolidates itself organizationally with the help of various civic, educational, and cultural structures—associations, schools, and circles. During the third stage, a nation enters onto the road of political mobilization.

Hroch's schema has been applied to the study of Ukrainian history. According to it the Ukrainian Revolution is the culmination of the third, political stage—the apex on which the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) was proclaimed. Hroch's schema gave Iaroslav Hrytsak grounds to assert that in the context of the history of East-Central Europe Ukraine developed completely normally in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup> This view of the Ukrainian historical experience as an element in the common denominator shared by the entire greater European region has a great, positive significance; it frees Ukrainian history of any remaining feelings of inferiority and positions it alongside the other national histories. Nonetheless, many questions remain unanswered.

If Ukraine's statehood during the revolutionary period had not been so fleeting and had survived, it would, of course, have been possible to say that Ukrainian history had also confirmed Hroch's schema. But the Ukrainian Revolution was a defeat in terms of building an independent state. The important question of the causes of this defeat has therefore been raised. Did they originate in the political leaders' tactical errors, about which the national historiography has written and debated so much; or were there deeper, more fundamental factors that inhibited the consolidation of national statehood and delayed its final formation for several decades?

In 1980, using Hroch's schema as a basis for looking at modern Ukrainian history, Roman Szporluk expressed the view that the principal sources of the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution were the great gaps in the organization and mobilization of the Ukrainian nation that occurred during the second phase described by Hroch. Szporluk is correct when he states that this organization and mobilization were forcibly checked by the tsarist autocracy, which blocked the normal development of Ukrainian education, scholarship, culture, and, last but

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3. Miroslav Hroch, *Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas: Ein vergleichende Analyse zur gesellschaftlichen Schichtung der patriotischen Gruppen*. Acta Universitatis Carolinae Philosophica et Historica Monographia, 24 (Prague, 1968).

4. See Iaroslav Hrytsak, *Narys istorii Ukrainy: Formuvannia modernoi ukrainskoi natsii XIX–XX stolittia* (Kyiv: Heneza, 1996).



not least, society at large.<sup>5</sup> Similar thoughts had been expressed earlier. As far back as 1934 the Ukrainian sociologist Olgerd Bochkovsky wrote: "The Ukrainian nation's genesis [*natsioheneza*] has generally been delayed. Its development was curbed through political repressions by [those] states that came to rule on the Ukrainian lands."<sup>6</sup> This opinion was also expressed later by Isaak Mazepa and Ivan Kedryn.<sup>7</sup> The Russian autocracy's Ukrainophobic policies, the deleterious effects of the Valuev circular of 1863 and, in particular, the Ems Ukase of 1876, have been described in the historical literature.<sup>8</sup> Bearing all of this in mind, it is natural to consider whether one can expect that the national mobilization of peoples occurred according to one schema if they were in various political predicaments. The answer is in the question. In a recent article Iaroslav Hrytsak wrote about "certain doubts" regarding the appropriateness of applying Hroch's schema as an "instrument for evaluating the strength or weakness of national movements."<sup>9</sup> One can agree with him in the sense that the consequences of national mobilization depend not only on the potential possibilities of a national movement, but also on the political and juridical context in which it develops. In Ukraine's case, we should emphasize not the Ukrainian movement's underdevelopment, but the absence of conditions necessary for that movement's normal evolution. The views expressed do not place in doubt the methodological importance of Hroch's schema, which is completely adequate if one is studying the history of the "small" peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. More than anything, they provide a key to understanding why the development of the Ukrainian and, let us say, the Belarusian national movements was held up and why they consequently had a somewhat different, more complex, and longer mobilizational paradigm. In general too many issues in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ukrainian history still need to be discussed and debated. This article will not deal with them.

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5. See Roman Szporluk's review of Taras Hunczak, ed., *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977), in *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 14 (nos. 37–8 [1978–80]): 260.

6. Olgerd Bochkovsky, *Vstup do natsiolohii: Kurs lektsii* (Regensburg: Ukrainskyi tekhnichno-hospodarskyi instytut, 1947), 156.

7. See Isaak Mazepa, *Pidstavy nashoho vidrozhennia*, vol. 2 ([Neu Ulm]: Prometei, 1949), 9; and Ivan Kedryn, "Beresteiskyi myr," in his *U mezhakh zatsikavlennia* (New York: Naukove tovarystvo im. Shevchenka, 1986), 45.

8. See, for example, Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 282–4.

9. Iaroslav Hrytsak, "Ukrainska revoliutsiia, 1914–1923: Novi interpretatsii," *Ukraina moderna* (Lviv) 2–3 (1997–8): 261.

Let us return to issues connected with the revolution and ponder the question of whether it is appropriate to view the revolution as the apex of the national-liberation struggle and simultaneously its unsuccessful culmination, a national calamity. Are there objective grounds to maintain that the Ukrainian Revolution should have culminated in the creation of a sovereign national state and that it could not do so only because of the political differences within the political leadership and because of the mistakes that that leadership made? Would it not be more germane to say that its result was determined by much more profound factors, particularly the nation's weak mobilization? Let us consider the circumstance that the revolution facilitated the appearance of politically diverse Ukrainian regimes—democratic, conservative, and left-democratic. None of them was able to reach fruition even though it acted in a manner that was contrary to its antecedent. This indicates that the issue was not one of particular, erroneous decisions, of which there were, of course, enough, but the general state of the Ukrainian national-liberation movement.

In my opinion, there is a need to change our contextual perspective on the revolution. It is worth rejecting the conception of a revolution lost, of a national calamity, and we should not continue looking for those who might have been responsible for this “calamity.” Instead we should examine the revolution as an important but transitional stage in Ukraine's nation-building that began long before the revolution, continued after it was over, and has not ended even today.

We should acknowledge that the principal tasks of the Ukrainian Revolution were, first, to tear down the wall that the Russian autocracy and ruling elite had erected to obstruct the development of the Ukrainian nation, and, second, to create conditions that would facilitate the modernization of Ukrainian society. It would be wrong to think that the Russian Revolution performed this task by demolishing the autocracy. The Ukrainians had to defend their rights by engaging in a struggle with the Russian revolutionary democrats, who thought solely in terms of “one, indivisible Russia.” This struggle was a distinctive feature of the Ukrainian Revolution. During its course a particularly strong increase in national consciousness and national mobilization occurred, at times in an organized manner, at other times spontaneously. One could say, combining the titles of two of the most widely read accounts of that revolution, by Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Isaak Mazepa respectively, that the Ukrainian nation was reborn in the fire and tempest of the revolution. This was its most significant achievement. But the revolution could not finish the process of nation-building, because the latter requires an extended length of time and the resolution of many specific tasks. It did, however, create favourable conditions for nation-building.

That the Ukrainians managed, albeit for a brief time, to create their own state during the revolution and the unfinished World War without the support of external forces manifests not the Ukrainian movement's weakness, but its strength, its colossal potential. This is confirmed when one compares its nation-

and state-building achievements with those of the other stateless peoples of the former Russian Empire.

Another distinctive trait of the Ukrainian Revolution was how closely the national and social movements were fused in it. This has been explained by the fact that the Ukrainians had been an oppressed people and an incomplete nation that had lost its indigenous elite in the eighteenth century and therefore had a decreased social status. The non-resolution of the agrarian question, peasant land poverty, and the presence of a great number of Russian and Polish landed gentry in Ukraine closely linked the national and social movements.

Let us turn our attention here to two circumstances. First, the Ukrainian peasantry, which was generally illiterate and had a low level of national consciousness, perceived the national idea not as independent and self-sufficient, but as one of the possible ways of solving the agrarian question. Because of its cultural and political predicament, the peasantry, which was extraordinarily radically predisposed toward the distribution of gentry-owned land, did not think in nation-state categories.

Second, the young, modern Ukrainian elite—the intelligentsia—had very close ties with the countryside and the peasantry. The overwhelming majority of the Ukrainian intelligentsia of the early twentieth century were the children of peasants or of village schoolteachers or village priests. The Ukrainian national consciousness that they acquired had as its underpinning the Ukrainian peasantry, and the resolution of the latter's social problems constituted an important part of that intelligentsia's political worldview. The absolute majority of the Ukrainian intelligentsia was imbued with populist or socialist ideology. For them the national state was sooner a means than an end in itself. Socialist and federal cum autonomist ideas dominated in Ukrainian socio-political thought of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time when statist, independentist thinking was still in its initial stage. On the eve of the revolution the national idea was still relatively poorly elaborated and had not been fully developed or gained widespread currency. Meanwhile the Ukrainian political parties' catchwords regarding the need for social change were thoroughly radical.

As a result, the scenario for the national revolution was defined to a significant degree by social concerns. Only during the course of the revolution did the Ukrainian elite come to understand that it was necessary to modernize the national idea; consequently it rejected the slogans of autonomy and of federation with Russia, replacing them with the slogan of a sovereign Ukrainian state. In my opinion, however, the national idea's ultimate goal was never attained during the revolution. But the revolution did provide rich material for elaborating this idea. There is no need to prove how much the importance of the national question in Ukrainian socio-political thought increased after the revolution in comparison to the pre-revolutionary period.



The non-crystallization of the national idea is certainly one more indication of the Ukrainian nation's immaturity at the moment when the revolution began. But this was not a trait unique to the Ukrainians, and in this sense they in no way differed from other "peasant" peoples.

The fact that the social determined the national had both positive and negative consequences, as well as a distinctive dialectic that defined how the Ukrainian Revolution unfolded. At first, after the autocracy was overthrown and the democratic conditions for the development of a national movement were created, but the state's authorities still controlled the situation on the local level, the social component was muted and simply reinforced the Ukrainian national movement. National concerns dominated in the Ukrainian Revolution, but as the decline in the moral authority of the governments of both Russia and Ukraine became increasingly more noticeable, political attitudes radicalized and the importance of the national in the revolution ceded place to the social.

During the rule of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, who tried to build a Ukrainian state built on conservative notions and restored private ownership of land and pre-revolutionary legislation, the social mood of the peasantry came into conflict with the national idea. The peasantry refused to support a Ukrainian state that took away its land and grain. Consequently the Ukrainian idea substantially lost credibility in the eyes of the peasantry, who in the autumn of 1918 mounted a mass insurrection against the Hetman's regime and destroyed it. But the Directory that came to power on the wave of the popular struggle against that regime and proclaimed the restoration of the UNR could not, in my opinion, fully rehabilitate the national idea. There was a chance that the latter could have grown stronger with the proclamation of the unification of all Ukrainian lands. But the union of the UNR and the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) officially announced and celebrated on 22 January 1919 essentially remained a formal act that lost its viability by the end of that year.

Neither organizationally nor in terms of ideas were the Directory and governments of the UNR able to exert full control over the social Ukrainian movement. The latter mostly expanded spontaneously in the form of insurgency, which I shall discuss below. In short, the Directory's authority extended in 1919 to an insignificant part of Ukraine's territory, and it was constantly threatened by military defeat. From late 1919 on the head of the Directory, Symon Petliura, increasingly considered the need for seeking military aid against the Bolsheviks from a foreign power—namely, Poland. As we know, this aid did not significantly change the situation, and in late 1920 the UNR government was forced into exile once and for all.

At the same time, throughout the years 1919–21, social contradictions remained the reason why the Ukrainian peasantry remained an inveterate foe of the "War Communist" Bolshevik regime. A temporary solution and compromise occurred only after the Bolsheviks introduced their New Economic Policy.

The closest possible merger of the Ukrainian Revolution's national and social aspects should now become the conceptual foundation for studying the history of that revolution. As John-Paul Himka has written, "the general direction is clear: in the first place toward a social history of the national revolution and eventually toward the understanding of the social and national revolution in Ukraine as a totality."<sup>10</sup>

Here we should turn our attention to yet another problem: the role of Ukraine's cities in the revolution. But first a few statistics. In the late nineteenth century 39 million people lived in Russian-ruled Ukraine. The absolute majority—31 million—were ethnic Ukrainians. In the cities, however, ethnic Ukrainians constituted no more than a third of the population, while in the large industrial centres—Kyiv, Katerynoslav (now Dnipropetrovsk), Odesa, and Kharkiv—they were even fewer: only seventeen percent. Even more striking were the statistics about the people employed in the leading sectors of society. Thus, forty-seven percent of the tsarist state's civil servants in Ukraine were Russians, while thirty-one percent were Ukrainians. Jews constituted forty-eight percent of the people engaged in commerce, while Ukrainians constituted only thirteen percent.<sup>11</sup> Decades of Russification policies and the de facto prohibition of the free development of Ukrainian culture had turned Ukraine's cities into enclaves where the Russian language, Russian culture, and Russian civic and political organizations dominated. Even in Poltava, the town where Ukrainian traditions were best preserved, on the eve of the revolution the clandestine Ukrainian Hromada had only thirty members; yet, in 1917 over fifty persons were needed if Ukrainians were to take control of that town.<sup>12</sup> During the elections to the municipal councils (*dumy*) held in the summer of 1917, no Ukrainians were elected in any of the more than one hundred cities and towns in Russian-ruled Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> The Russian revolutionary democrats were generally ill-disposed to the Ukrainian movement. That was even more so the case when it came to the conservative and liberal Russian circles:

The urban social base of the Ukrainian movement was extremely limited. Among the intelligentsia it was supported primarily by post-secondary and high-school students. A good indication of this were the events at Kruty, where a small military detachment comprised of students from Kyiv was sent to defend

10. Himka, "The National and the Social in the Ukrainian Revolution," 109.

11. Bohdan Kravchenko, *Sotsialni zmyny i natsionalna svidomist v Ukraini XX stolittia* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1997), 69.

12. Borys Martos, *Vyzvolnyi zdvyh Ukrainy* (New York: Naukove tovarystvo im. Shevchenka, 1989), 161.

13. V. M. Boiko, *Ukrainski politychni partii i bloky u vyborchii munitsypalnoi kampanii 1917 roku: Avtoreferat dysertatsii na zdobuttia naukovooho stupenia kandydata istorichnykh nauk* (Kyiv, 1997), 2.

the capital of the UNR from the advancing Bolsheviks. Other willing defenders could not be found in Kyiv, despite the fact that there were many military units in that city. Pavlo Khrystiuk has testified that after the Central Rada proclaimed its Fourth Universal, "the division of the workers and intelligentsia of Kyiv into two camps occurred not so much according to class and social traits as it did according to national affiliation: on one side an anti-Ukrainian Russo-Jewish camp was being created, [while] on the other the forces of Ukrainian revolutionary democracy were becoming increasingly isolated and were dwindling."<sup>14</sup>

During all the years of the revolution, Ukrainian rule was unable to entrench itself in any of Ukraine's large industrial centres, and the UNR Army was forced to withdraw from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Poltava, Zhytomyr, Katerynoslav, and Odesa more than once. As it turned out, Ukraine's cities were hostile or, at best, neutral toward the Ukrainian movement. This forced the latter to link itself even more closely with the village.

There has been a certain tendency among historians to depict the Ukrainian Revolution as a destructive, elemental phenomenon, a spontaneous peasant uprising, and the national elite as a paltry and isolated group of nationalist intellectuals.<sup>15</sup> This perspective is being propounded today by certain political journalists and historians who would like to bring the rebel *otaman* to the fore of Ukrainian history as the exponent of the national Ukrainian character. Since I have written a monograph about Nestor Makhno,<sup>16</sup> it is not my place to deny that such *otamany* played a prominent role. I do think, however, that addressing the issue in this way is wrong. Its error is connected first and foremost with the fact that neither the spontaneous nor the organized beginnings of the Ukrainian Revolution have been elucidated. The revolution provided many examples of organized activity. I will mention only a few. The Ukrainian Central Rada was created in Kyiv practically at the same time as the Council of United Civic Organizations and the Council of Workers' Deputies in that city. The Central Rada united Ukraine's intelligentsia, peasants, workers, and soldiers on a representational basis. It initiated the all-Ukrainian soldiers', peasants', and workers' congresses and many other national, gubernial, and county conventions. It also created its own executive body—the General Secretariat, which became the national government after the independence of the UNR was proclaimed. The year 1917 was a year of full-blooded activity by the Ukrainian political parties

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14. Pavlo Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materiialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii, 1917–1920 rr.*, vol. 2 (New York: Vydavnytstvo Chartoryiskykh, 1969), 127.

15. See, for example, Arthur E. Adams, "The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie," in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak with the assistance of John T. von der Heide (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute), 247–70.

16. *Makhnovshchyna: Selianskyi povstanskyi rukh na Ukraini, 1918–1921* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1991).

during which elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly were successfully held.

Many other similar examples could be provided. I will not do so, but will admit that this large-scale organizational activity had several flaws. The most essential flaws were connected with the Ukrainian elite's organic defects, primarily with its small size. The state of that elite during the revolution has remained almost entirely unstudied. Up until now historians have not created works examining the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the Ukrainian elite, the formation of its national consciousness, its socio-political views, or its practical experience in running a state. All of this will have to be done in the near future.

One could speak of the relative smallness of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. In stating this fact, Isaak Mazepa wrote that "after the revolution erupted, we did not have the opportunity to organize a strong leadership neither during the period of the Central Rada, although in fact then a single national front existed among us, nor during P. Skoropadsky's rule ([when] Russian conservative forces governed) or the period of the Directory."<sup>17</sup>

The Ukrainian elite was not only numerically small. It was fragmented into various political parties that could not agree on questions of social and national policy. As the revolution unfolded, these parties split into even smaller inter-party groups and groupings. This, in turn, made directing of the revolutionary masses impossible, strengthened the spontaneous revolutionary processes, and, in the end, resulted in the Bolsheviks, whose influence on the Ukrainian masses when the revolution began was insignificant, taking the political initiative in Ukraine.

The problem of the leaders of the Ukrainian Revolution is part of the general problem of the Ukrainian elite. Formally they included Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Skoropadsky, Vynnychenko, and Petliura. Outside the formal features of leadership, the figure of Skoropadsky, the hetman of the Ukrainian State, was not appropriate for the role of head of the Ukrainian nation. He did not take part in the Ukrainian movement before the revolution or during it, and a confluence of conditions put him in the position of leading Ukraine. Not only Ukrainian revolutionary democracy, but also the liberal-democratic national forces, took a negative position toward the Hetman's rule. Even among the conservative forces he did not carry enough political weight and did not play a prominent independent role. Indeed, according to Duke Georgii Leikhtenberg, who knew Skoropadsky, "the hetman did not find support either in socialist (mostly Ukrainian) circles, who saw him as an aristocrat and a large landowner, or in

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17. Mazepa, *Pidstavy nashoho vidrodzhennia*, 144.

conservative (mostly Russian) circles, who saw that under the Germans' pressure he often resorted to measures [that were] in a socialist spirit."<sup>18</sup>

The attitude toward Skoropadsky is one more confirmation of the view that conservative ideas did not have much of a social base in Ukraine. The Hetman's regime had a chance of surviving only under the condition that it received long-term support from external political forces and their military. In this regard, it is reminiscent of the history of the nineteenth-century rebirth of the Bulgarian state.

Volodymyr Vynnychenko's activities have not received uniform appraisals. He was very attracted to the idea of being the national leader, and at particular moments he performed that role with great enthusiasm. As a politician, however, Vynnychenko did not have a clearly defined program of action; he was governed by the masses' fluctuating sentiments but was unable to anticipate them. From 1917 to 1920 he evolved from a social democrat into a national-communist. Vynnychenko lacked the preparation one needs to be able to govern a state. Instead of exhibiting a strong political will, he reacted as an intellectual would, and he left the highest executive post in the land quite soon after taking office.

The person most able to perform the role of leader of the Ukrainian state was Mykhailo Hrushevsky. Through his scholarly works on Ukrainian history and his active participation in civic affairs, he gained indisputable authority among the Ukrainian intelligentsia long before the revolution, and among the masses at large in 1917. As long as the revolution unfolded peacefully and democratically, Hrushevsky felt quite confident at the helm of the national-liberation movement. But after the revolution radicalized and it became necessary to shift away from democratic principles, to apply authoritarian forms of rule, and to make hard and unpopular decisions, Hrushevsky turned out to be incapable of doing so. He relinquished power without a struggle, all the while remaining loyal to his democratic principles.

At the moment when the explosive force of spontaneous Ukrainian revolutionary activity was the mightiest, Symon Petliura rose to head the nation and the state. During the revolution a conspicuous evolution in his views had occurred. But in contrast to Vynnychenko, a fellow member in the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party (USDRP), Petliura evolved from being a doctrinaire social democrat not toward national-communism, but toward the ideals of national statehood. Putting the interests of the national state above his party's interests, he resigned from the USDRP. As the commander-in-chief of the UNR Army and subsequently the head of the UNR Directory, Petliura came to

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18. Gertsog Georgii Nikolaevich Leikhtenberg, *Vospominaniia ob "Ukraine", 1917-1918* (Berlin: Detinets, 1921), 30. It is not clear what the author means when he speaks of "measures in a socialist spirit." But somewhat earlier he remarks quite rightly that the Russian conservatives could not accept the idea of an independent Ukraine or the Hetman as its head of state.



personify the Ukrainian national camp in the revolution, and after his assassination in Paris in 1926 his name took on the power of a national symbol.

The question of Petliura's charisma is an interesting one. In my opinion, he had charismatic qualities, and numerous eyewitness accounts indicate that he demonstrated them quite often. But his charisma turned out to be too soft and insufficient for the attainment of the desired goal. As we know, since the time of the Cossack-peasant uprising begun by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648, Ukraine had not lacked charismatic leaders, and the Revolution of 1917–21 was no exception. Possibly the greatest charismatic during the years of struggle for independence was Nestor Makhno, but he had insufficient national consciousness. We should not see this state of affairs as accidental. During the few years that the revolution lasted, the overwhelmingly peasant Ukrainian nation could not create a politically and nationally developed elite from which a national leader with the necessary stature could emerge. Instead the peasantry produced greater and lesser *batky-otamany* in large numbers.

The peasant insurgent movement was the most distinctive feature of the Ukrainian Revolution. It is likely that no other national-liberation movement had something similar. The insurgency reminds us once again of the peasant nature of the Ukrainian nation, of the importance of the agrarian question, of the insignificant role of urban constituents in the revolution, and returns us to the issue of elemental force. The question of defining and evaluating the latter arises. Should we understand it simply as a negative outburst of social energy? In my opinion this force is not entirely or necessarily a destructive phenomenon. First of all, it is an indication of the masses' high degree of mobility while having a low degree of organization. Let us recall what Iurii Tiutiunnyk wrote about in his *Revoliutsiina stykhiia* (Lviv: Knyhozbiirnia "Visnyka," 1937): the Ukrainianization process within the rank-and-file in the Russian army and the creation of Free Cossack units, that is, the primary forms of self-organization. There were enough Ukrainian peasants to create an insurgent detachment to defend their village, rural district, and, at best, county from political intruders, but not enough to create a national army to defend the interests of Ukraine as a whole. All of the UNR's governments' efforts to consolidate the insurgent movement under one leadership, to unite it around common goals, proved unsuccessful.

Now for some conclusions.

The history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be viewed as the time when the Ukrainian nation underwent the process of formation. This process occurred more slowly and in a more complicated way in Ukraine than it did among the other "small" peoples of East-Central Europe because the Ukrainians were part of two states, Russia and then the USSR, that disregarded the rule of law and implemented chauvinistic and assimilationist policies that obstructed the free development of the non-Russian nations.

We can assume that Ukrainian nation-building therefore occurred according to a somewhat different schema of mobilization than the one that Hroch proposed. In this different schema the Ukrainian Revolution occupies an important place. But the creation of a sovereign Ukrainian state during the years 1917–21 lay beyond the objective possibilities of the nation and its leaders.

The fatal failing of Ukrainian state-building was concealed not so much in the political leadership's mistakes during critical conjunctures as it was in the organic structural flaws of Ukrainian nation-building. These flaws were revealed in the nation's deformed social structure, cultural and educational backwardness, weak presence in the cities, and inadequate national consciousness and mobilization.

At this point it is worth raising an extremely important problem that has not yet been discussed. The building of new states requires conducive political factors, both domestic and external. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic countries were able to create their own states after the First World War because they had the support of foreign powers. Ukraine did not have such support. The powers that shaped the postwar political map of Europe did not want to see Ukraine on that map.

Even though Ukrainian statehood was unable to assert itself during the revolution, this is no reason to maintain that the revolution suffered total defeat or, even more, that it was a catastrophe. Social calamities inevitably result in a society's decline. But we can speak of significant positive shifts that occurred in the state of the Ukrainian nation during the years of the revolution, of the powerful mobilizing impact of the revolution on the nation's forces. The revolution facilitated the growth of the nation's consolidation, self-awareness, and elite. It also completely destroyed the shameful status that the Ukrainians had under tsarism. Mykhailo Hrushevsky put it very aptly: "The Ukrainian question no longer exists. [There] exists a free, great Ukrainian people, which is building [fulfilling] its will in the new conditions of freedom."<sup>19</sup>

During the years of the struggle for independence, Ukrainian education, scholarship, and culture became real viable national structures; to them was added the creation of a national church. The activities of the political parties, civic organizations, and mass media energized the Ukrainians and facilitated the growth of national awareness. During the revolution the process of the nation's cultural renewal began. The nation actively made up for what it could not do under the tsarist autocracy. There was an evident boom in Ukrainian book publishing; Ukrainian literature was enriched by dozens of new authors; and the revolution became a subject of literary reflection. These fundamental, extraordi-

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19. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, "Velyka khvyliia," repr. in his *Khto taki ukrainsi i choho vony khochut* (Kyiv: Znannia, 1991), 96.

narily powerful modernizing processes forced the Bolsheviks to make significant concessions to the Ukrainians. The first of these was the creation of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (USRR) and the federalization of the Bolshevik state. Of course, the USRR was not a full-fledged state, but, in comparison to the stateless status of Ukraine before the revolution, this was a certain step forward. The second concession was the implementation of the policy of Ukrainianization: in order not to appear as an occupying power, the Bolsheviks were forced to Ukrainianize (indigenize) the Party-state apparatus, and by the late 1920s the number of ethnic Ukrainians in the state's administrative structures was triple what it was in tsarist times.

The eradication of the Russian and Polish gentry estate in Ukraine may be considered another positive consequence of the revolution. As a result, the Ukrainians were liberated from the social oppression of foreigners.

Ukraine lost a great deal when large numbers of its national intelligentsia emigrated to escape Bolshevik rule. But these individuals were thus able to survive and to create an émigré political community whose existence became a significant factor in the subsequent stage of the struggle for national liberation. This community's conceptualization of the revolution's consequences and its experience became the cornerstone of Ukrainian nationalist and statist ideology.



# Approaches to the Study of the Ukrainian Revolution

*Marko Bojcun*

Vladyslav Verstiuk has raised several important issues facing the study of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–21, including its place in European history, the relationship between its national and social dimensions, and the basis for judging it to have succeeded or failed in securing its aims. I welcome the opportunity to address these issues, which lie at the heart of my own study of the period.<sup>1</sup> My contribution here explores a number of conceptual approaches that, I believe, are useful for analyzing the revolution at its epicentre—in the nine Ukrainian gubernias of the Russian Empire.

## **The Revolution's Place in European and Continental History**

Verstiuk speaks about the need to locate the Ukrainian Revolution in a broader geographic and temporal context. Taking up Miroslav Hroch's scheme of national formation, considering its relevance to Ukrainian contemporary history, and noting also the limitations of the scheme, he has tried to show how Ukraine's evolution has been part of a European process. I entirely agree with this approach, yet I feel that the context of Ukraine's national formation is even broader than that, encompassing Asia as well as Europe.

The Ukrainian Revolution marks a temporal-geographic point along the path of a broad historical change that has swept the continent of Europe and Asia in the past two hundred years. It is difficult to give a name to this complex change, but it nevertheless lays quite a discernible path over time and space. Its progress across the continent is marked by the disintegration of traditional societies, by revolutionary upheavals, and by the appearance of new, modernizing states. Sweeping out of western Europe at the close of the eighteenth century after the

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1. "The Working Class and the National Question in Ukraine: 1880–1920," Ph.D. diss., York University (Toronto), 1985.

English and French revolutions, it passes into Central Europe with the 1848–49 revolutions and arrives in the Russian Empire in 1917. It then moves eastward into China in the 1930s and 1940s, turns into Indochina and the Indian subcontinent after the Second World War, and weaves back westward under the belly of the Soviet Union through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Kurdistan in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The disintegration of the Soviet bloc in the 1980s amplifies its path on its way back into Europe. It arrives finally in Yugoslavia and Albania. On the temporal-geographic map this process of change can be likened to a massive fault line opening up one society after another as it snakes across the north of the continent, turns in a clockwise arc, and then returns through southern Asia to the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and the Balkans at the close of the century.

This broad process of historical change over two centuries is driven forward by the rise of capitalism in western and central Europe, its penetration eastward into the rest of the continent (and the world) as a new kind of imperialism, and the response to imperialist penetration. As it develops between the late eighteenth and late twentieth centuries, the process exhibits common features everywhere: the breakdown of traditional, caste- and status-based societies and of their absolutist or autocratic states; migrations from agriculture to industry, leading to new concentrations of urbanized, socially mobile, skilled, and literate populations; the construction of modern state institutions with powerful instruments of material redistribution, communication, and coercion; and the appearance of new nations within multinational states seeking their own state self-organization.

Every country that succumbed to this change at its “appointed time” exhibited the above features to varying degrees. But that is about the extent of their common or shared experience. For this historical change also led to quite different results for different countries in terms of their economy, state organization, and national complexion. At the most general level, the biggest differences are between the countries west of Ukraine that underwent the change largely before 1917 or immediately afterwards, and Ukraine and the countries to its east that changed from 1917 onwards. Up to the end of 1991 these differences were encapsulated in Western social-science literature as the “Western” and the “Communist” roads of modernization.<sup>2</sup> The Western road led to capitalist economies, liberal democracies, and nation-states based on strong civil societies. The Communist road led to nationalized and planned economies and multinational single-party states with little, if any, autonomy for its constituent nationalities and no independent civic associations.

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2. See David E. Apter, *Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968); and Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

However, the way in which the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991—into fifteen independent states based on the titular republics of the USSR—and the ongoing disintegration of the Russian Federation thereafter demonstrated that the economic and social changes achieved on the Communist road of modernization had created socially complete national formations out of the “non-historic nations” of this region. Such national formations are able to rule and administer themselves quite independently, having in the grasp of their new “leading” social classes the critical levers of state, economy, and society. Thus the broad process of historical change that carries this inadequate name of “modernization” revisited the territory of the Soviet Union on its way back into Europe. And by way of clearing up unfinished business it broke again the (now modernized) multinational, non-democratic state mould.

When we consider the broader context of the Ukrainian Revolution it is clear that the national question that constituted one of its determining features had international causes: international not only in the sense that Ukraine was conquered by Russia and Austria-Hungary, which dominated it militarily and politically, but also in the sense that Ukraine’s oppression as a nation was shaped by the eastward spread of capitalism into those states. Indeed, one cannot fully understand why at the turn of the twentieth century Ukraine’s economy was dependent and its social structure deformed—crucial parts of the explanation, it seems to me, for the relatively slow pace of its national maturation—unless we examine the quite contradictory impact of capitalist development in Ukraine upon its “modernization”.

The traditional societies based on caste and status disintegrated first in the northwestern extremity of the continent—in Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The consolidation of capitalism there by the mid-nineteenth century coincided with the development of the secular, democratizing bourgeois state and the modern nation. Italy and Germany were unified as nation-states, capitalist economies, and democratizing polities in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Farther to the east the empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia denied their subject peoples democratic rights and national self-determination, even though the penetration of market relations into their societies was steadily undermining their caste systems of privilege and political power. Austria-Hungary tried to absorb and co-opt the pressures for change with the 1867 Compromise with the Hungarians and limited local self-government for the other nations within its borders. Russia, on the other hand, reacted to the loosening of traditional social ties by becoming an even more savage autocratic state as it approached the end of the nineteenth century. The defeat of the Revolution of 1905 and the rapid withdrawal of even its limited democratic gains by 1907 simply suppressed, and eventually made more powerful still, the head of steam that was building up in Russian imperial society.

If capitalism played at first a progressive role in these changes in western and central Europe (by undermining feudalism, unifying territories that became national in character, and gathering the social forces that would then organize in pursuit of democratic rights), from the 1870s onwards its role in eastern Europe, the Balkans, and other parts of the world to which it spread was far more ambiguous. For inasmuch as European capitalism—in the form of rival national capitalist economies of the Great Powers—set out to capture markets well beyond its heartland, to export its capital there, and finally to secure control of those territories to protect its interests, it became imperialism. Capitalist penetration of the East could not replicate the capitalist experience of the West simply because penetration was designed to serve the interests of the Western metropolitan economies. Therefore imperialist capitalism could not lead to the all-rounded development of the penetrated economies and societies. Neither the representatives of the metropolitan countries nor the rulers of the penetrated (now client) states had any interest to see them come under popular, democratic control or to be split up, if they were multinational, into their constituent national parts.

Ukraine resided within a Russian state at the end of the nineteenth century that was both penetrated, and thus imperialized by the Western powers, and imperialist in its own right, on its own territory. The Russian Empire was in fact the weakest of the Great Powers, and this weakness gave it its dual identity. It consciously entered into a partnership in the late nineteenth century with French, Belgian, German, British, and American companies and banks to invest jointly in the rapid development of industry and communications on its own territory. The Western investors took their share of the proceeds in repatriated profits, and the Russian state took its share through taxes and the proceeds from its monopoly to trade abroad in grain.

From the peculiar way in which capitalism developed there up to the First World War, the Ukrainian gubernias of the Russian Empire acquired a powerful heavy industry based on coal, steel, and machine building, and a commercial agricultural sector based on grain and sugar exports. Together these sectors made it one of the six main regions of rapid capitalist development in the empire. Yet Ukraine's manufacturing sector remained poorly developed, especially in the case of those industries that produced finished consumer durables and food products. The distorted nature of economic growth was directly attributable to the repatriation of profits by the foreign investing companies and banks and by the fiscal policies of the Russian state, which spent most of the taxes it collected in Ukraine in other parts of the empire.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the industrial and agricultural

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3. See Mykola Porsh, *Ukraina v derzhavnomu biudzheti* (Katerynoslav: Kameniar, 1918); and Karlo Kobersky, *Ukraina v svitovomu hospodarstvi* (Prague: Ukrainska striletska hromada, 1933).

sectors of the Ukrainian economy were not linked to each other in mutually reinforcing cycles of investment and consumption because Ukraine did not have a state of its own and therefore had no national policies to promote such sectoral reinforcement. Rather, the earnings of capitalist agriculture and industry were realized largely on foreign markets and retained abroad or in the Russian treasury.

The social consequences of capitalist development under the leadership of foreign investors and the Russian state were similarly contradictory. Rather than pursue a land reform after the abolition of serfdom that could foster the growth of a class of middle-sized farmers, the Russian autocracy had imposed a settlement in 1861 that created a mass of indebted, increasingly landless peasants on the one hand, and a clutch of large capitalist farming enterprises on the other. Ukraine's food-processing industries and the heavy industries of its southeast could not absorb the great labour surpluses of the countryside. They did not develop fast enough because rural poverty suppressed domestic demand, and because, as noted above, a considerable portion of the annual surplus product was removed from the domestic economic cycle.

I would like to draw attention in this discussion to the issue of the European imperialism's relationship to the Ukrainian national question—that is, its co-responsibility with the Russian state for exploiting Ukraine's economy and contributing to the social deformation and cultural and linguistic exclusion of its ethnic majority. My reasons are, first of all, the belief that the formation of the modern nation and its aspiration to statehood is the consequence of intricately related and yet antagonistic international and domestic (in-state) change. The international side of the Ukrainian question at the time of the Revolution of 1917 involved far more than the states that directly ruled over it. Both Stalinist and Ukrainian nationalist historiography of the revolution were fixated, each in their own way, on the relationship between Russia and Ukraine. In doing so they effectively buried from sight the late tsarist and early Soviet historians who had addressed the issue of capitalist development, imperialism, and the Ukrainian national question.<sup>4</sup> My second reason is fear, perhaps unwarranted, that the new post-independence discourse on Ukrainian history may overlook European capitalism's rather contradictory contribution to the self-determination of nations on the periphery of its metropolitan heartland. I do not find in Verstiuk's otherwise wide-ranging discussion of the causes and consequences of the Ukrainian Revolution any attention to this issue.

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4. That is, Matvii Iavorsky, Lev Iurkevych, Pavlo Khrystiuk, Isaak Mazepa, Nikolai Popov, Mykola Porsh, Mykhailo Slabchenko, and many others who published in the journals of the 1920s.



To sum up, Ukraine's history up to and including the Revolution of 1917 may be defined as part of European history by way of the following propositions:

1. After almost two centuries of isolation from the rest of Europe by force of its integration into the Russian state, Ukraine "rejoined" modernizing Europe with the abolition of feudalism and the eastward spread of capitalism, which literally broke into the Russian Empire as trade, commerce, and investment and made possible the greater movement of people and ideas across its borders. The opening to the West allowed the infiltration of the European revolutionary ideas of democracy, national liberation, anarcho-socialism, and social democracy. These ideas first took form as intellectual movements and only became mass movements once social conditions ripened sufficiently to provide them a base.

2. The Ukrainian Revolution could hardly have replayed the course or achieved the outcomes of 1789 or 1848 or 1871 (the unification of Germany), even though it shared their participants' democratic and national values, because the nature of capitalist development since then had so radically changed the given social forces, domestically and internationally. To be specific, the Ukrainian Revolution could not give birth to an independent national and capitalist state for three main reasons: (1) Ukraine's nascent capitalist class had been all but destroyed by the mid-nineteenth century in competition with the northern Russian bourgeoisie, which was itself relegated to a subordinate rank by the foreign capitalists who directed the industrialization of Ukraine during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;<sup>5</sup> (2) the Ukrainian intelligentsia, which, in the absence of a Ukrainian bourgeoisie, took up the banners of national liberation and democracy, was overwhelmingly socialist in its orientation; and (3) the leaders of the powerful capitalist states in Europe did not have any interest in an independent Ukraine—indeed, they saw it as a threat to their vital economic and strategic interests, which could be better served by a strong Russian-led multinational capitalist state in the region.

3. The Ukrainian Revolution, along with the Russian, was the last bourgeois-democratic revolution in Europe and the first in a series of socialist or Communist-led revolutions and wars of national liberation that erupted across Asia and continued in various forms in concert with the decolonization of the post-World War Two period throughout the region stretching from Southeast Asia to the Middle East. Starting with the Ukrainian Revolution in 1917, the motives of revolutions on the continent of Europe and Asia changed from liberal

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5. See Mykhailo Volobuiev, "Do problemy ukrainskoi ekonomiky," in *Dokumenty ukrainskoho komunizmu*, ed. Ivan Maistrenko (New York: Proloh, 1962), 154; Mykhailo Slabchenko, *Materiialy do ekonomichno-sotsialnoi istorii Ukrainy XIX stolittia* (Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1925), 10; and O. I. Luhova, "Pro stanovyshe Ukrainy v period kapitalizmu," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1967, no. 3: 16–18.

democracy and national liberation to social democracy-turning-into-communism and national liberation.

4. The post-1917 revolutions that managed to establish independent (from foreign domination) states were successful because their socialist and Communist leaders embraced the peasantry and united it with their urban bases of middle- and working-class support. The Chinese Revolution provides the dramatic testimony for the centrality of this strategy henceforth followed by Communist movements. The Ukrainian Revolution failed to secure national independence in great measure because an alliance of urban social forces with the peasantry was not successfully created.

5. The revolutions of 1917 and thereafter led by socialist or Communist parties in multinational societies (the Russian Empire, China, Indochina) always failed to resolve their domestic national questions and led eventually to the re-domination of one nation over the others. The Communist leaders of the dominant nations understood national liberation as essentially liberation of the existing state's territory and peoples from foreign—that is, external—domination, and not necessarily as the self-determination of all the nations within the state.

## **The National and Social Dimensions of the Revolution**

Vladyslav Verstiuk rightly places a great deal of emphasis upon the important relationship between the national and social dimensions of the Ukrainian Revolution. Where did this relationship originate, and how it was manifested in the economy and social structure within the confines of the Russian state and in international relations?

Not having a state of its own, Ukraine could not impose or even advance its national interests as it became locked into the international division of labour at the end of the nineteenth century. It could not develop an all-round capitalist economy or social structure as long as it was subordinated to the interests of the metropolitan centres to its east and west. Western investors and the Russian state imposed upon the developing capitalist economy in the nine Ukrainian gubernias a particular role in the international division of labour as an exporter of raw materials, semi-processed goods, and heavy machinery and an importer of capital-intensive consumer and producer goods.

Quite apart from its partnership with Western capital, the Russian state applied taxes, imposed tariffs, and took investment decisions (on railway building, for example) that discriminated against the development of industry and communications in Ukraine and promoted the interests of the northern-based Russian bourgeoisie. It was only the superiority in capital resources of the Western investors that forced the Russian state to acquiesce to their priorities,

made southeastern Ukraine one of the six centres of rapid industrialization in the empire and arguably the most dynamic of them.<sup>6</sup>

The tsarist policy of Russification had denied the Ukrainian language a place in education, the media, the economy, government, and the military. Insofar as language is indispensable in a variety of ways to employment in every level of the economy, Ukrainians were unable to move upward through the social structure as rapidly as Russian speakers, unless, of course, they assimilated and adopted the Russian language and culture. The Jewish population was subjected to discriminatory laws that actually reinforced their caste status by denying them education, certain occupations, the right to own property, and mobility. Connected to these impediments, the denial of basic democratic rights—suffered by all subjects of the empire—prevented Ukrainians and other non-Russian peoples from openly expressing their collective national demands.

The level of literacy among Ukrainians at the end of the nineteenth century was the lowest for any nation of the Russian Empire west of the Urals. Having enjoyed nearly universal literacy in the time of the Hetmanate, the decline to a literacy rate of around 13 percent (3.5 percent for women, 22 percent for men)<sup>7</sup> could only be explained as a consequence of incorporation into a state that was determined to remain autocratic and imperial into the twentieth century.

The consequences of such Russian state policies and of Ukraine's place in the international division of labour could be seen in the peculiar development of its social structure in the decades before 1917. First there was the emigration of Ukrainian peasants to Siberia and Russian-ruled Central Asia in search of new land. Despite its fairly rapid growth, industrialization in southeastern Ukraine could not alleviate the growing underemployment and overpopulation in the Ukrainian countryside, particularly in the northwestern gubernias. There was also a wave of Jewish emigration that swelled at the turn of the century under the pressure of pogroms.

Second, the Ukrainian population had to compete for wage labour with resident or in-migrating Russians, Poles, and members of other nationalities who had more of the requisite skills for modern industry. Thus the social stratification evolving in the first period of Ukraine's industrialization, whether one looks at the society as a whole or at the new wage-earning class in particular, took on a pattern of ethno-linguistic layering. Overall, the peasantry remained Ukrainian in its overwhelming majority. The lowest paid, least skilled, and least secure wage-earning occupations were occupied mainly by Ukrainians: seasonal agricultural workers, day labourers, journeymen, servants, stable hands, miners,

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6. See Vsevolod Holubnychy, *Try leksii pro ekonomiku Ukrainy* (Munich: Ukraina i diiaspora, 1969), 3–6.

7. See Mykola Porsh, *Pro avtonomiiu* (Kyiv: Prosvita, 1907), 71–3.



and railroad builders. The better paid, higher skilled, and more secure occupations were held mainly by people of other nationalities, particularly by Poles, Belarusians, and Germans in the agricultural industries and by Russians in the extractive and heavy industries. The Jewish proletariat was concentrated in the small industries and trades; two thirds of them lived in the Right-Bank gubernias. Ukrainians began moving into the middle layers of the industrial working class by the time of the First World War, but this came at the cost of assimilating into the urban—Russian—culture. The levels of urbanization achieved by the different nationalities before the Great War testify to this pattern: the larger the urban centre, the smaller the proportion of Ukrainians who lived there.

Beyond the wage-earning class, the middle classes and the elite in Ukraine were absolutely dominated by people of other nationalities—the long standing residents of cities and towns that were bastions of Russian and, on the Right Bank, Polish culture. And there was little evidence to show that Ukrainians could increase their proportion of the middle and upper classes *as Ukrainians* unless political conditions radically changed.

The empirical evidence suggests that under the conditions of autocracy, the social mobilization stimulated by capitalist development in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russian-ruled Ukraine proved to be a highly uneven one. People with different ethno-linguistic attributes (language, work habits, geographic location) had unequal chances of moving up through the social structure into the new classes. Thus the society on the eve of the Revolution of 1917 still exhibited some traits of the caste-based system of the past, where ethnicity and occupation had coincided so that the Ukrainians were mainly peasants, the Jews were petty traders and artisans in the small towns and villages, and the Poles and Russians dominated the social heights. As in the recent past, individuals identified themselves by their religion, occupation, and attachment to a small region rather than by membership in a nation. Unless social mobilization was accompanied by political freedom and equality in some measure, national identity could not easily mature. Only recently was there an intrusion into the social structure of a new, proletarian class drawn from the peasantry, the artisans, and from abroad that reproduced within its very own ranks a hierarchy of skill, remuneration, and security of occupation that corresponded to an ethno-linguistic or proto-national hierarchy. The logical conclusion from this observation was that one's social status was in some measure determined by one's ethno-linguistic attributes.

Verstiuk has identified the fact that the Russian autocracy denied Ukrainians the democratic and national rights they needed to organize *as Ukrainians* as one of the principal causes of the relatively slow process of Ukrainian national mobilization before 1917. Without detracting the significance of this cause, it is nevertheless important to recognize that the social restructuring of Ukrainian ethnicity and of Ukrainian society as a whole according to the labour needs of

capitalist development had quite an autonomous effect of retarding the process of Ukrainian national formation. The ethnic majority could not generate a native-speaking intelligentsia of sufficient size to lead it because of the political restrictions on Ukrainian identity and of the social inducements to assimilation into a Russian one. One can overstate the autonomy of the social process from the political, for indeed they are both parts of the same historical experience. Yet we should not lose sight of it.

How can one express in a theoretical way the symbiosis of the national and social dimensions of the Ukrainian question before 1917 that manifested itself on so many practical levels: in the predicament of the individual, of separate social classes, of Ukrainian society, of its economy, and of the international political economy of Europe? I propose a version of the concept of the division of labour as a way to unite these seemingly disparate experiences. Karl Marx observed in capitalist development the progressive separation and specialization of male and female, agricultural and industrial, and menial and intellectual labour. These separations in social labour were not peculiar to capitalism, but the product of a much longer evolution in human society. However, the capitalist mode of production incorporated the city-country, menial-intellectual, and gender divisions of earlier modes and accentuated them in an even sharper way. For Marx the division of labour was the infrastructure of class society. Private property was merely a juridical expression and defence of the division of labour peculiar to capitalism.<sup>8</sup> The European social democratic movement that inherited Marx's ideas had a tendency to reduce his concept of class to its juridical expression, as the relationship between the owners of labour and the owners of the means of production. This notion served as a general indicator, or the "last word," on class under capitalism. But it was not of much use for understanding social struggles other than economic ones, or the inner contradictions of the modern working class divided against itself by occupational privileges based on location, education, and gender.

How does this relate to the national question? The division of labour did not stop evolving with the advent of capitalism. From the end of the nineteenth century, capitalism as an economic system acquired an international division of labour characterized by its imperial metropolises' imposition of specific economic tasks upon the peripheral societies that they drew into the world market. Regions of the world took different paths of social and economic evolution, depending on the time they were linked to the world market, the resources most readily exploitable in them, and the relative strength of the state powers already in control of their territories.

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8. See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Germany Ideology*, pts. 1 and 3, ed., with an intro., by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 8–16, 21–7, 43–4.

For different historical reasons, the boundaries of the states of traditional, peripheral societies—such as the Russian Empire—seldom conformed to territories settled by compact ethno-linguistic groups. As a rule they encompassed several of them. Such groups were drawn into the process of industrialization and urbanization at varying rates, depending upon the readily exploitable resources in their vicinity, the influence of their leaders in the central government, each group's knowledge of the language of modern industry, education, and government, their prior acquisition of industrial skills and work habits, and their willingness to assimilate into a new culture. Because the resources for industrialization were necessarily limited, they were applied in only selected parts of the country. Invariably industrialization benefited the ethno-linguistic group or groups that controlled the power of the state. Even if industries were not located on their home territory, they were nevertheless in control of the mechanisms for centralizing and redistributing a major portion of the surplus product from economic activity taking place over the entire territory of the state. Thus the division of labour that emerged on a global scale between the industrialized and industrializing regions was reproduced once again within the confines of the latter. Within those territorial confines the division of labour was reproduced yet again in the hierarchical structure of the new class of wage earners. There it incorporated as its fourth main vector the potential attributes of a national identity—language, culture, attachment to territory—that affected an ethno-linguistic group's capacity for social mobility through the modernizing class structure. Thus it was the crystallization of a division of labour between established and incipient nations, which put a brake on the relative social mobility of the incipient nations and redistributed the surplus product of the whole state inequitably between them, that politicized the potential attributes of national identity.

One may therefore argue that labour in Ukraine on the eve of the Revolution of 1917 was divided not only along gender, menial-intellectual, and city-country lines, but also along national, or proto-national, lines. It follows from this that the Ukrainian national movement should have had the liberation of labour as one of its chief aims and that the labour and social democratic movements should have had a clear interest in national liberation.

## **Toward a Historiography of the Revolution**

In several parts of his article Verstiuk speaks of the need to analyze distinct social groups, to identify those that played primary and secondary roles in the events, and to disclose the underlying logic of the revolutionary process. This is an immense task—in fact it can only be an ongoing and collective enterprise. The events of 1917–21 appear so turbulent and chaotic as to defy any logic to their unfolding. This was a period of dislocation and destruction of the social order, the economy, and the state. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern the key

actors, their objectives, and a logic to the unfolding struggle. From an examination of such constituent elements of the revolution one can understand better its outcome—the Pyrrhic victory of the Russian Bolsheviks and the qualified defeat of the Ukrainian Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries.

The essential international context of the revolution was the war between the Great Powers to conquer and redivide among themselves the territories of the emerging new nations of Europe. The war exhausted the Russian autocracy first, leading to its collapse and the incursion of the Central Powers to seize Ukraine, followed by the intervention of Russia's Entente allies to restore her old regime. The World War posed for Ukraine's inhabitants a fundamental question: who could create a state power on Russia's ruins sufficiently strong to extricate Ukraine from the war and assure its self-determination as a nation? The contenders in the revolution had many motives for their repeated attempts to create a new state power. They were pursuing the domestic needs for a democratic order, land reform, national and linguistic equality, and economic recovery. But in terms of the international context, the creation of an independent Ukrainian state was an imperative born of the imperialist war. Moreover, this imperative to nation-statehood was consistent with the broader historical process sweeping out of Europe into the East—a process whose economic, social, cultural, and political consequences were increasingly at odds with the autocratic, multinational form of state organization exhibited by the last European empires.

It is not surprising that an end to the war and the formation of a Ukrainian national army were first posed by Ukrainian soldiers in the armies of Russia and Austria-Hungary as they confronted each other over Galicia. The soldiers' committees at the front and in the urban garrisons, representing 1.6 million conscripts in the Russian imperial army at their height of self-organization, were the most important base of support for the Ukrainian Central Rada in 1917. Their second congress (in June) persuaded the Rada to declare autonomy (the First Universal) and to negotiate its terms with the Russian Provisional Government; and their third congress (in November) organized and conducted the Rada's seizure of power.

There were four key socially defined domestic actors involved in the Ukrainian Revolution: the intelligentsia, the industrial working class, the peasantry, and "the peasant-soldier in the city." Historians have felt comfortable demarcating empirically and analyzing the first three groups, even though many will concede a great deal is still unknown about the parts they played in the revolution. I am of the view, however, that "the peasant soldier in the city" was arguably the crucial actor in 1917. "The soldier was a *persona grata*. He made

the Revolution. Everywhere he was accorded first place".<sup>9</sup> He expressed the most radical and consistent programme of the revolution's international and domestic objectives for Ukraine: an end to the war, the socialization of land, workers' control of industry, council democracy, and national independence. He wielded organized military might. The soldier, whose elected representatives sat in all the councils of workers' and soldiers' deputies, constituted a living link between the urban proletariat and the landed peasantry. In the prevailing situation of a "revolutionary democracy" divided between its Russian urban base and its Ukrainian rural base, the soldiers' movement was the Archimedian point around which an independent socialist government representing all the members of the revolutionary camp in Ukraine might have united and subsequently repelled the incursions of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia.

The revolution unfolded in a cycle of four key stages.<sup>10</sup> Year one of the revolution (not a calendar year) spanned the period from the collapse of Tsarism in March 1917 to the Austro-German occupation and the fall of the Central Rada in May 1918. It passed through the following stages: the mobilization and self-organization of the lower classes (March to August 1917) in elected committees, councils, congresses, unions, and military formations; the contestation and seizure of state power (September and October), involving a three-way power struggle in which the forces of the Central Rada overcame those of the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks; the attempt to reconcile the interests of the mass movements in the new state power (November and December), which failed and led to the formation of two Ukrainian People's Republics, one based in Kyiv, the other in Kharkiv; and the descent into civil war and foreign intervention (January to May 1918), which led to the installation of Hetman Skoropadsky's client state in the service of the Austro-German occupation.

This cycle of four stages was to repeat itself between April May and May 1919. It began with a drawn-out period of clandestine self-organization of opposition parties, legal resistance by urban workers, and rural guerrilla warfare, passing over in November 1918, when Germany sued for peace and began withdrawing from Ukraine, to the gathering of armed peasant forces and Petliura's triumphant entry into Kyiv on 1 January 1919. There followed a brief and ultimately disastrous attempt to reconcile the interests of the radicalized peasant brigades and the urban-based Bolshevik forces with those of the revived Ukrainian People's Republic. The Congress of the Toiling People in February 1919, mirroring the outcome of the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets in

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9. Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny pro nedavnie mynule, 1914–1920* (Munich: Ukrainske vydavnytstvo, 1969), 156.

10. I followed this methodological scheme in chapters 3–6 of my diss. (see n. 1), which explored the years 1917–20 in former Russian-ruled Ukraine.



December 1917, also failed to unite and represent the interests of the organized movements seeking a place in the new state power. Civil war was accompanied immediately by a second invasion by Bolshevik Russia, which took control of much of Ukraine by April 1919.

The pattern was to be repeated once again between April 1919 and March 1920, when the third Red Army invasion finally secured Russia's hold over Ukraine.

## **The Outcome of the Revolution**

I find this repeating cycle a compelling model for understanding the logic of the destruction and attempted reconstruction of state power in Ukraine by the large domestic social movements, each time involving distinct phases of mobilization, contestation, reconciliation, and foreign invasion in the wake of the failure of reconciliation. It is, however, a cycle configuring the actions of large organized social groups, which is not in itself adequate for explaining the role that was played by their political leaders in the outcome. On this question of leadership, it is perhaps useful to recall that the debates about the revolution have traditionally offered two kinds of explanation for the outcome. The "objective conditions" explanation suggested that Ukraine failed to secure independence because the weight of the nationally conscious component of the urbanized working class and intelligentsia was insufficient to lead the whole society in what was ultimately a struggle decided in the towns and cities. The "subjective factor" explanation of the nationalist generation of the 1920s and 1930s suggested that the Ukrainian Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, and Socialist Federalists made key mistakes: they clung for too long to the ideal of a federal multinational state instead of declaring independence and suing for peace with the Central Powers on their own and well ahead of the Russians; they allowed the Ukrainian units on the front to disband and did not try to regroup them in defence of the new state; or they were simply "too socialist" and "internationalist," disregarding the "national" tasks of the revolution.

It is worth noting that neither kind of explanation has considered the role of the peasantry. This is the least understood class in the revolution, even though it twice placed the Ukrainian People's Republic into power and twice made a serious contribution (in concert with the Red Army) to driving it from power.

Both objective conditions and the quality of leadership offered to the mass movements played their parts in the outcome. But it seems that the long separation of the debate on the outcome between the nationalist school, which deplored it, and the Stalinist school, which applauded it, has prevented a more comprehensive and credible view of the events. If Ukraine could only flower in union with Russia, as the Stalinist argument went, or if Ukraine's failure to become independent was principally due to hostile domestic and foreign Russian forces, as the nationalists put it, or indeed if the revolution came too soon, before



the nationally conscious component of the industrial working class had grown sufficiently powerful—such reasoning denies even the remotest possibility that an independent state based on the domestic forces available at the time could have been established. I cannot agree with the inherent argument of inadequacy common to all three theses.

I wonder if the kind of “objectivist” judgement that Verstiuk makes in his conclusions—that, in the final analysis, the fatal defects of the national movement were the deformed social structure, cultural and educational backwardness, the Ukrainians’ weak presence in the cities, and the low level of national consciousness—might not dissuade historians from considering once again the actions of key individuals and parties at crucial moments in the revolutionary process? For I do think that about half of the explanation for the outcome of the revolution lies there.

All the mass movements from below were united in their pursuit of solutions to three fundamental problems: the war, the economic crisis (land reform, the restoration of industrial production), and the problem of democratic representation. They were, however, divided seriously on the national question along the same lines as the social democratic parties in Ukraine had been divided since their inception. The national question was the key to unity within the working class and to unity between it and the peasantry and intelligentsia. Therefore only a state project for national independence that offered solutions to these other questions had any chance of succeeding. Indeed, the Central Rada had a big chance in 1917, but it lost it when its leaders shied away from dealing with the problems. It did not move boldly to sue independently for peace. It compromised its initially radical position on land reform in favour of the middle peasants. It wished to replace the Provisional Government as controller of strategic nationalized industries, and it did not welcome the movement for workers’ self-management and control. On all these problems the Ukrainian Social Democrats took Menshevik positions, and like the Mensheviks they were outflanked by the Bolsheviks.

Most important of all, the Central Rada failed to create a government based on the democratic representation of the masses. Of course, there is a long-standing argument about the form of democratic representation that was legitimate and acceptable in Ukraine in 1917: the parliamentary form based on the outcome of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly elections, or the council/soviet form, based on the directly elected representatives of workers’, soldiers’, and peasants’ committees. Moreover, it was not just a question of the form of democratic representation, but the fact that the “Russian Democracy” had the upper hand in the workers’ and soldiers’ councils in the urban areas and the “Ukrainian Democracy” had the upper hand on the basis of the results of the Constituent Assembly elections.

However, an opportunity to resolve the impasse did appear, and it could have altered the entire course of the revolution. In the period right after the Rada seized power in October 1917, a groundswell of popular support emerged for the Rada's re-election as an expanded legislature and executive representing not only the "Ukrainian Democracy", the peasantry, and the parties of the other nationalities (Russians, Jews, Poles) as had been negotiated in July with the Provisional Government, but also representing the urban workers' councils. It was only when the Rada was recognized as an autonomous government in July that the urban councils began turning their gaze from Petrograd to Kyiv as a seat of power. The groundswell of support for the Rada's re-election was particularly strong in the towns across the northern-tier gubernias, but it was dominant also in the cities of Kyiv, Kremenchuk, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Kherson, Katerynoslav, Odesa, and Mykolaiv.<sup>11</sup> The councils of workers' and soldiers' deputies in all these cities had majorities in favour of the Rada's expansion through re-election. This development split the ranks of both the Ukrainian Social Democrats and the Bolsheviks, indicating significant movement on both sides to reconcile their positions on the form and content of state power. Both sides then went on to make what were the biggest strategic mistakes of the revolution. The Social Democrats denied the urban councils adequate representation at the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Councils, and the Bolsheviks (and the left Ukrainian Social Democrats) walked out, went to Kharkiv to convene the rival All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, and established a rival Ukrainian People's Republic backed by an invading Russian Red Army. By the time that the Red

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11. The historical evidence of this groundswell is substantial. See *Robitnycha hazeta*, 3 November (p. 4), 4 November (p. 3), 5 November (p. 3), 7 November (p. 1), 25 November (pp. 3–4), and 15 December (p. 2) 1917; Evgeniia Bosh, *Natsionalnoe pravitelstvo* (n.p.: August 1918), 19, 20; V. Skorovstansky [Vasyl Shakhrai], *Revoliutsiia na Ukrainie* (Saratov: Borba, 1919), 74; Mykola Skrypnyk, "Nacherk istorii proletarskoi revoliutsii na Ukraini," *Chervonyi shliakh*, 1923, no. 2: 79; S. Sh., "Iz istorii Sovlasti na Ukraine," *Litopys revoliutsii*, 1924, no. 4: 167; Heorhii Lapchynsky, "Zarodzhennia Radianskoi vlady ta pershi ii kroky v odnomu z mist ukrainskykh," *Chervonyi shliakh*, 1925, no. 1–2: 122, 141–4; idem, "Z pershykh dnev Vseukrainskoi Radianskoi vlady," *Litopys revoliutsii*, 1927, no. 5–6: 55–6; E. Kviring, "Nekotorye popravki k vospominaniam ob Ekaterinoslavskom Oktiabre," *Litopys revoliutsii*, 1928, no. 2: 137; Volodymyr Sukhyno-Khomenko, "Z pryvodu osoblyvosti proletarskoi revoliutsii na Ukraini," *Litopys revoliutsii*, 1928, no. 4: 105, 109, 111; M. A. Rubach, "Treba diisno vypravty," *Litopys revoliutsii*, 1930, no. 3–4: 264; Iu. Hamretsky, "Do pytannia pro taktiku bilshovykiv shchodo Tsentralnoi Rady v lystopadi 1917 r.," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1965, no. 3: 69–71; Panas Fedenko, "Isaak Mazepa v zhytti i v politytsii," *Nashe slovo*, no. 3 (1973): 16; and Iu. M. Hamretsky, Zh. P. Tymchenko, and O. I. Shchus, *Rady Ukrainy v 1917 r.: lypen–hruden 1917 r.* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1974), 103, 161–2, 186, 200, 206, 224, 242, 244, 247, 250–5.

Army approached Kyiv in January 1918, many of the Ukrainian military units that brought the Rada initially to power were disillusioned with its subsequent performance and had defected to the invading side. That was why only students went out from Kyiv to nearby Kruty to defend the Rada against Muravev's advance. It was not so much a lack of national consciousness among Kyiv's civilians and soldiers that made the Rada so defenseless, as Verstiuk suggests, but a deep disillusionment with the Rada precisely among those who had put their greatest hopes in it.<sup>12</sup>

The leaders of the mass movements that appeared in Ukraine in 1917 failed to unite their forces and create a state capable of resisting the threat of foreign intervention and conquest. They lost their best chance of creating an enduring new state. In the following years of the revolution there were progressively less trust between these movements and steadily multiplying external challenges to Ukraine's self-determination.

Yet, looking back we now see that the war and the revolution had turned the historic tide. I can only concur with the positive assessment Verstiuk makes of the outcome of the revolution in terms of the maturation of Ukrainian national identity. The fact that the Ukrainians failed to secure an independent state in those years has deeply coloured the assessment of the nationalist generation that followed the socialist one and saw state-building as the only serious measure of progress. The outcome of the revolution was indeed a military victory for the Russian Red Army over all domestic forces, leading to the creation in December 1922 of a Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic as a formally federated member of a considerably centralized Soviet Union. The Ukrainian SSR represented less than the Ukrainian socialists wanted to win. Yet it was more than the Russian socialists had been initially prepared to concede, and thus it was a historical compromise forced upon the contenders for power by the experience of the revolution itself. Above all, the compromise grew out of the new mass consciousness created by the revolution within Ukrainian society—a consciousness that the ruling Bolsheviks could no longer ignore.

Mykyta Shapoval, a Socialist Revolutionary participant in these events, wrote in 1927: "The Great Revolution is a historical fact of exceptional importance for the Ukrainian people. Above all, the people discovered their identity in it ... [and] every peasant and worker knows now that he or she is a Ukrainian.... The national identity of the urban workers has grown enormously. In 1917 they came forward as Russians, but today more than half identify themselves as Ukrainians.

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12. As the Rada convened for the last time in Kyiv to finalize the Fourth Universal (the declaration of independence), shrapnel fire from across the Dnieper River rained down on their roof. "And these guns were not brought from Russia. They were our own, belonging to Ukrainian military units," wrote Volodymyr Vynnychenko in *Vidrodzhennia natsii*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Dzvin, 1920), 254.

This is an important conquest of the revolution and of our difficult struggle.<sup>13</sup> This, indeed, was the most important achievement of the revolution. It made possible the renaissance of the 1920s, which in turn ensured that Ukraine's inhabitants would participate in the economic and social modernization of the twentieth century as Ukrainians despite the almost complete denial of their political freedom.

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13. Mykyta Shapoval, *Velyka revoliutsiia i ukrainska vyzvolna prohrama* (Prague: Vilna spilka and Ukrainskyi robitnychi instytut, 1927), 251.

## **Beyond the National: Peasants, Power, and Revolution in Ukraine**

*Mark Baker*

Vladyslav Verstiuk's article makes a significant contribution to historians' attempts to grapple with the many contested issues usually thrown up whenever someone writes about the revolutionary period in Ukraine. Verstiuk stresses the deleterious effects that ideologies have had on the historiography of the Ukrainian Revolution, suggesting, at least initially, that the only way out of this historiographical labyrinth is to discard all ideologies as much as possible. In place of a historiography of ideologies, he suggests we move to "an intellectual historiography."

What Verstiuk means by "intellectual historiography" is not made clear, but his subsequent discussion suggests that he has in mind a sort of structuralist approach to history. The task he lays before historians is "to study the whole sum total of great and small social structures that caused the outbreak of the revolution, [that] defined the direction of its development and character. It is necessary to elucidate which socio-political forces played leading roles in the revolution and why, and which ones were secondary." Although Verstiuk's approach is non-ideological, it is, like any ideology, quite abstract; his historical actors seem to be structures and forces more than people, though in the end he calls for the study of Ukrainian national elites. But I would like to leave those problems aside and focus on another that I think is more crucial to historians' attempts to rethink the Ukrainian Revolution.

Verstiuk suggests that we reject ideologies as a driving force in researching and writing histories of the revolution. This is quite a natural reaction to the extremely politicized and polarized historiographies that we have inherited from the Cold War and especially from the intentional ideologization of history in the Soviet Union since the time of the revolution. I wonder, however, whether Verstiuk has really given up on ideology. Justifiably, he rejects communism and



Soviet historiography's version of events. But though he criticizes the national approach to the history of the revolution, I believe that he remains firmly within what John-Paul Himka has called "the Ukrainian national paradigm."<sup>1</sup> Verstiuk criticizes the national historiography because it has directed all its energy into an attempt to determine who was responsible for "the defeat of the struggle for independence [*vyzvolnykh zmahan*]." In other words, he bemoans not the national approach to history as such, but rather the sometimes petty historical controversies that have raged within it and its obsession with assigning blame for the revolution's "failure." But is not the national historiography also ideologized? Or, at least, does not the ideology of nationalism underlie this historiography? Though Verstiuk calls for an end to ideology, he employs the basic assumptions of nationalism throughout his paper.<sup>2</sup>

The clearest expression of Verstiuk's continued adherence to the national paradigm is his attempt to explain why an independent Ukrainian state did not emerge from the Ukrainian revolution. Though he correctly points out how important it is to move beyond the search for blame and suggests that "failure" is not a useful way to interpret the revolution's outcome, he still ends up attempting to explain why Ukraine did not achieve statehood. He states that the formation of the modern Ukrainian nation was slower and more complex than that of other "small" peoples of central Europe because most Ukrainians lived in "unjust states"—the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union—"that carried out chauvinistic and assimilationist policies, that blocked free national development."<sup>3</sup> Thus the "fatal failure of Ukrainian state-creation" was due not so much

1. John-Paul Himka, "The National and the Social in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920: The Historiographical Agenda," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 96–9; see also this article for a comparative analysis of Soviet and Ukrainian national interpretations of the revolution.

2. Because the study of nationalism has so often suffered from unclarity of definitions, those who have studied it have spent considerable time defining the term. In my view, the most rigorous and useful definition was suggested and masterfully worked out by Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983). There Gellner then defined nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (p. 1). In his recent, posthumously published work, Gellner further developed his definition: "Nationalism is a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond. Whatever principles of authority may exist between people depend for their legitimacy on the fact that the members of the group concerned are of the same culture (or, in nationalist idiom, of the same 'nation')" (Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997], 3–4).

3. Verstiuk's use of terms such as "free national development" suggests that he adheres to the idea that nationality is a basic human characteristic, inherent and unchangeable, that all "nations" left to their own devices would "develop." But, as Gell-



to political mistakes as it was to "organic structural defects in Ukrainian nation-creation," such as the nation's "deformed social structure," "its cultural and educational backwardness, weak presence in the cities, insufficient national consciousness, and lethargy," as well as its lack of international support.<sup>4</sup> Having listed all these "defects," Verstiuk then concludes that it is necessary to think of the revolution not as a complete failure, but also to note its achievements.

While this is a useful critique of the national historiography on the Ukrainian revolution, I do not think it takes us away from ideology. Verstiuk questions Ukrainian historians' tendency to assert blame and to view the revolution as a

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ner, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and others have pointed out, there is no such a thing as "free national development"; nations are imagined, created, and built. Historically some groups of people, who may share a common language, social position, and/or religion, but have no clear sense of themselves as a cultural group, have always had to assimilate into other groups. Not all groups of people sharing some characteristics of a "nation," however they define that term, could or can today become nations, let alone create their own nation-state. There is nothing inherent or inevitable about "nation" as a social category. Verstiuk is certainly not alone in holding to the illusion of the nation-state. Even an otherwise very promising recent book by Iaroslav Hrytsak claims that the many new states that have emerged in this century are, "for the most part national states in which ethnic borders more or less corresponded with political [ones]. After the great geopolitical changes of the twentieth century, the last of which was the disintegration of the socialist system, this principle has taken the upper hand almost in all corners of the planet" (Iaroslav Hrytsak, *Narys istorii Ukrainy: Formuvannia modernoi ukrainskoi natsii XIX–XX stolittia* (Kyiv: Heneza, 1996), 102). In fact, pure nation-states are a marginal phenomenon in the present world: only 26.7 percent of all states claim to be composed mainly of one ethnic group. My calculations are based on Lori P. Wiesenfeld, ed., *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1999* (Mahwah, N.J.: Primedia, 1998), 760–861. Of course, the idea that the nation-state *should* be the model of state development is now broadly accepted, perhaps even in every corner of the planet.

4. All of these "defects" suggest how closely Verstiuk adheres to a very particular and ahistorical idea of how nations are "created" and "develop" and eventually turn into nation-states. It is significant that he cites Miroslav Hroch for his model of "national development." (See Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, trans. Ben Fowkes [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985].) Though Hroch's model does have some explanatory power for the nations he chooses to include in his study, the assumption that all "non-historical nations" should have followed a similar course is not and cannot be proven. Hroch's model also does not take into consideration the very important role played by constituting "others" in the formation of any national identity. As Roman Szporluk has recently pointed out, Ukrainian nationalists created and defined themselves as Ukrainians by stressing the ways in which they believed they were different from Russians and Poles. See Roman Szporluk, "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State," *Daedalus* 126, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 85–119.

failure, but for him the revolution is still a very Ukrainian national revolution. His subjects, other than occasional remarks on the “backwardness” and “unconsciousness” of peasants, are still the Ukrainian national elites.<sup>5</sup> And he is still attempting to track and explain Ukraine’s long and twisted (but supposedly inevitable) path to statehood.<sup>6</sup> This is teleological history, admittedly of a sort far more sophisticated than the Soviet variant. Verstiuk does not question the validity of the national paradigm itself; he does not suggest that the history of Ukraine should be about anything but the making of a nation and its pursuit of statehood. And in this he is certainly not alone.<sup>7</sup>

As Verstiuk’s references make clear, he is very much indebted to the Ukrainian national historiography created mostly by Ukrainian émigrés and historians in the West during the Soviet period. Certainly, these historians have never agreed on all aspects of the revolution, but they have shared what Himka calls “a common narrative framework.” This shared sense of “the events” results from the very basic rule underlying the national approach to history: whatever promotes the national cause is thereby historically relevant. Seeking to portray in particular those events and people that carried the Ukrainian national cause forward toward statehood, these historians neglect all other phenomena. The

5. Strangely, while Verstiuk admits that one of most essential “defects” of the Ukrainian people during the revolution was the small size of its elite and the latter’s factional infighting, he calls for further study of that elite, focussing on it both in his paper and elsewhere. His most recent publication, while it moves beyond the discussion of the highest-level elites, remains solidly within the national paradigm; see Vladyslav Verstiuk and Tetiana Ostashko, eds., *Diiachi Ukrainskoi Tsentralnoi Rady: Biohrafichnyi dovidnyk* (Kyiv: Natsionalna akademiia nauk Ukrainy, 1998).

6. Verstiuk asserts that the main theme of the modern history of Ukraine is “the progress of Ukraine to its own statehood. From the activities of Ukrainian [national] awakeners to the proclamation of the independence of the Ukrainian state in 1991, the theme of the national-liberation movement, [of] national state-building[,] can in one way or another be traced throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.” This statement reflects one of the main problems with the whole post-1991 approach: in the face of achieved Ukrainian independence, historians are now looking back and only looking for the roots of that final result. They are ignoring all the other possible contingencies. For a thorough discussion of some of those contingencies, see John-Paul Himka, “The Construction of Nationality in Galician Rus’: Icarian Flights in Almost All Directions,” in *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation*, ed. Michael D. Kennedy and Ronald G. Suny (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming in 1999).

7. In a sense, Verstiuk is doing exactly what some Ukrainian historians in the West wanted him to do. See, for example, the recommendations suggested in Orest Subtelny, “The Current State of Ukrainian Historiography,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 18, nos. 1–2 (Summer–Winter 1993), 33–54. Admittedly, Subtelny calls for “the highest scholarly standards” in new approaches to Ukrainian history, but the thrust of his argument is to create a strong national history for Ukraine (p. 54).

result is a history of a nationally conscious elite and its activities in *making* the Ukrainian Revolution; great attention is paid to declarations and political bodies claiming legitimacy over the Ukrainian people, an amorphous mass that is often invoked but rarely defined.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, a considerable amount of very professional history has been written within the national paradigm, and the historical controversies over the national roles of the successive Ukrainian governments have led to some lively debate.<sup>9</sup> But, like the interpretative framework that spawned them, all these controversies have been confined to a very narrow set of events, institutions, and people—to an institutional, top-down political interpretation that leaves almost everything else out. The Ukrainian Central Rada's universals, decrees, and debates have been examined in great detail, and since Ukraine's independence these "sacred texts" have been lavishly republished in Ukraine.<sup>10</sup> Yet to the present time there are only a few serious studies of the peasantry, its attitudes towards the various governments that pretended to power in Ukraine, or its participation in the revolution in general.<sup>11</sup> Some Ukrainian national historians

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8. See Himka, "The National and the Social," 96–9. Verstiuk cites the writings of Pavlo Khrystiuk, V'iacheslav Lypynsky, Isaak Mazepa, Borys Martos, and Volodymyr Vynnychenko. Other standard works are Dmytro Doroshenko, *Istoriia Ukrainy, 1917–1923 rr.*, 2 vols. (New York: Bulava, 1954); Taras Hunczak, ed., with the assistance of John T. von der Heide, *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Oleh S. Pidhainy, *The Formation of the Ukrainian Republic* (Toronto: New Review Books, 1966); and John S. Reshetar, Jr., *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952).

9. See, for example, the well-crafted essays in Hunczak, *The Ukraine, 1917–1921*; and Roman Szporluk's insightful and provocative review of this book in *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 14 (nos. 37–8 [1978–80]): 267–71.

10. See, for example, Vladyslav Verstiuk et al, comps., *Ukrainska Tsentralna Rada: Dokumenty i materialy u dvokh tomakh* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1996–7). I am not arguing that these texts should not have been republished and made known to the Ukrainian public. They are an important part of the history of Ukraine. But, what I see emerging in Ukraine is the unbalanced privileging of these texts, and especially those who composed them, over everything else as part of a new "founder's myth." Now, instead of Lenin and Stalin, we are presented with Petliura, Vynnychenko, and, above all, Hrushevsky (admittedly, in a much more sophisticated and honest way). Since independence, Ukrainian historians have roundly embraced the national paradigm. For example, during the years 1991–98 *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* published fifty-nine articles on the Ukrainian Revolution and another twenty-seven on Hrushevsky; of all these, only seven touch on peasants or workers in any substantial way. The rest focus explicitly on the leading national figures and their institutions, above all the Central Rada.

11. These few include Andrea Gratsiozi [Graziosi], *Bolsheviki i krestiane na Ukraine, 1918–1919 roky: Ocherk o bolshevizmakh, natsional-sotsializmakh i krestianskikh*

have argued that the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) lost its first military encounter with the Bolsheviks (December 1917–January 1918) because the peasantry switched sides.<sup>12</sup> But they have not examined why the peasantry did so.

The central issue here is really the purpose of history in contemporary, post-Cold War Western society in general and in Ukraine in particular. Most historians of Ukraine, both in the West and in present-day independent Ukraine, seem to assume that Ukraine's history should be national and should be about "the making of the nation." The importance of events, people, and ideas is determined by their role, positive or negative, in the national project. I want to suggest that while this political use of history may have been necessary at a time when Soviet historians downplayed and even denied the national aspects of Ukraine's past, it has also obscured our understanding, especially of the revolutionary period. If we wish to move beyond this myopic focus, then we must begin by questioning the purpose of history itself and whether it should any longer serve the nation. Ukraine is now an independent country with internationally recognized borders. Is it not time to move beyond the nation?

One of the ways to break out of the Ukrainian national paradigm is to focus on that which was popular. In my dissertation research on the revolutionary period in Kharkiv gubernia, I attempted to do this by casting my net very widely, striving not to uncover expressions of Ukrainian national consciousness or unconsciousness in particular, but rather those aspirations and actions that appeared to me to be most important to most inhabitants of the gubernia at the

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*dvizheniakh* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1997); Vsevolod Holubnychy, "The 1917 Agrarian Revolution in Ukraine," in *Soviet Regional Economics: Selected Works of Vsevolod Holubnychy*, ed. Iwan S. Koropecykj (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1982), 3–65; Steven L. Guthier, "The Popular Base of Ukrainian Nationalism in 1917," *Slavic Review* 38, no. 1 (March 1979): 30–47; idem, "The Roots of Popular Ukrainian Nationalism: A Demographic, Social, and Political Study of the Ukrainian Nationality to 1917" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990); and Harold R. Weinstein, "Land Hunger and Nationalism in the Ukraine, 1905–1917," *Journal of Economic History* 2 (1942): 24–35. Graham Tan recently successfully defended a very promising and innovative dissertation on the central role played by peasant community organizations during the revolution: "Village Social Organisation and Peasant Action: Right-Bank Ukraine during the Revolution, 1917–1923" (Ph.D. diss., School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1999).

12. For example, paraphrasing Vynnychenko, Yaroslav Bilinsky states that "the war in December [1917] and January [1918] was a struggle for influence over the popular masses, since neither the Rada nor Antonov had a strong, disciplined army" ("The Communist Take-Over of the Ukraine," in Hunczak, *The Ukraine, 1917–1921*, 112); cf. Volodymyr Vynnychenko, *Vidrodzhennia natsii*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Dzvin, 1920), 151, as cited in Himka, "The National and the Social," 98.



time. It was crucial to focus on that which was most representative, because I believe it is at present impossible to write "the whole story" even of only one Ukrainian gubernia. While I am all too aware of Nietzsche's warning to historians about the "uses and disadvantages of history" and that I may be making more of my subject than it warrants, I think that it is too early to write a comprehensive social history of the revolution. Once I began to move outside ideology, away from such "guiding principles" as nationalism and communism, in the selection of what I considered significant in my research, it simply became obvious that there was far too much going on to make of it all one story.<sup>13</sup> Hence what follows is an attempt to sketch in brief outline *some* of what I consider to be the most representative expressions of popular mood and action amongst the peasants of revolutionary Kharkiv gubernia.

I decided to focus on the peasants for a couple of reasons. First of all, besides what has been provided in the highly ideologized and partial studies of a few Soviet historians, very little is known about what happened during the revolution in the countryside of Kharkiv gubernia and in rural Ukraine in general.<sup>14</sup> Although a few Western historians have researched the peasantry in the all-

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13. For example, from March to December 1917 at least forty-two newspapers were published in Kharkiv gubernia, thirteen of them in the smaller county centres and twenty-nine in Kharkiv itself. The tendencies of these various publications spanned the political spectrum, from the conservative *Iuzhnaia Rus'* and popular liberal daily *Iuzhnyi kraj* to the organ of the Kharkiv Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, *Izvestiia Iuga*, and the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries' organ, *Zemlia i volia*, which also served as the organ of the Gubernial Council of Peasants' Deputies. Four Ukrainian-language newspapers were published in 1917 in Kharkiv: two were successive organs of the small local committee of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party (USDRP); a third, *Ridne slovo*, quite unsuccessfully attempted to bridge all political tendencies within the Kharkiv pro-Ukrainian community; and the fourth, *Nova hromada*, which appeared after Central Rada's proclamation of its Third Universal, was edited jointly by local members of the USDRP, the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (UPSR), and the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Federalists. The great diversity of political tendencies represented by these organs suggests just how complex was the political and social landscape of 1917 Kharkiv gubernia and, moreover, how little a narrow national approach to the sources could reveal. And, of course, because the majority of the population of the gubernia could not read or write, even these forty-two newspapers, written mostly by literate and urban members of the intelligentsia, could not be said to represent the views of all the gubernia's inhabitants. (The largest collection of newspapers published in Kharkiv gubernia during the revolution is held not in Kharkiv, but in Kyiv at the Scientific Research Library of the Central State Archives of Ukraine.)

14. The most important and useful Soviet works are Petro F. Reshodko, *Selianskyi rukh u Kharkivskii hubernii (berezen 1917–sichen 1918 r.)* (Kharkiv: Vydavnytstvo Kharkivskoho universytetu, 1972); V. Kachinsky, "Krestianskoe dvizhenie," in *1917 god v Kharkove: Sbornik statei i vospominanii*, ed. V. Morgunov and Z. Machulskaia

Russian context, the urban environment has been by far the preferred field of study for most—a sign both of Soviet historiography's unavoidable influence on foreign scholars' work and of the ideological biases of social historians in the West.<sup>15</sup> Second, by selecting the peasantry, I hope to avoid the charge that I am stacking the cards in my favour and to be able to make some claims that my findings are representative of the more general Ukrainian context, because most peasants in Kharkiv gubernia were Ukrainian-speakers, most Ukrainian-speakers were peasants, and most Ukrainian socialists and nationalists considered the peasantry their main potential base of support.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to the urban environment, what is most noticeable in the countryside in the early stages of the revolution is the absence of organized activity. While the Kharkiv Council (*sovet* in Russian, *rada* in Ukrainian) of Workers' Deputies was formed the day after news of the tsar's abdication reached Kharkiv and published the first issue of its newspaper on 4 March 1917,<sup>17</sup> the first indications that some peasants of the gubernia had begun taking advantage of their newly received freedoms reached Kharkiv almost two months later. On 27 April a landowner, Matenkov, complained to the gubernial commissioner about "outrages" committed on his estate by peasants from nearby

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(Kharkiv: "Proletarii," 1927), 180–269; A. P. Korotenko, "Revoliutsionnaia rabota bolshevikov Kharkovshchiny v period pervoi mirovoi imperialisticheskoi voiny," in *Sbornik nauchnykh rabot kafedr obshchestvennykh nauk vuzov g. Kharkova*, issue 1 (Kharkiv, 1956), 79–103; and M. I. Ksenzenko, *Zavershennia revoliutsiinykh zemelnykh peretvoren na Kharkivshchyni (hruden 1919–berezen 1921 rr.)* (Kharkiv: Vydavnytstvo Kharkivskoho universytetu, 1968).

15. For example, the bibliography of Edward Acton's quite thorough discussion of the Western historiography on the Russian Revolution, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (London: E. Arnold, 1990), names only seventeen studies (of a total of 282) dealing with the peasantry. Yet, on the eve of the Great War four out of five subjects of the tsar were registered as peasants. The urban working class, properly defined, numbered about four million; if construction and transportation workers, domestic servants, artisans, agricultural labourers, and peasants working in industry are also included, the number increases to 18 million in a total population of about 160 million. See Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution (1917–1921)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1.

16. I use the term "Ukrainian-speakers" instead of "Ukrainians" because I do not think these Ukrainian-speaking peasants thought of themselves *primarily* as members of the "Ukrainian nation," which was still a new and vague idea to most of them. As I hope to show here, the Ukrainian-speaking peasants of Kharkiv gubernia thought mainly in much more local terms.

17. *Izvestiia Kharkovskogo soveta rabochikh deputatov*, no. 1 (4 March 1917). This newspaper was renamed *Izvestiia Iuga* in July 1917. All dates in this article are according to the Julian calendar, which in the twentieth century is thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the West.



Mykolaivka, Izium county.<sup>18</sup> On 2 May 1917 another landowner, M. V. Kondratsky, reported that local peasants had plundered all his land in Starobilsk county.<sup>19</sup> And in early May the Valky county commissioner informed the gubernial commissioner about “excesses” and “arbitrary retributions” carried out by local peasants against those suspected of theft in several villages of the county.<sup>20</sup>

But the first clear sign that peasants were beginning to organize on a large scale, or perhaps that someone was organizing them, did not occur until 3 May with the calling of the First Congress of Peasant Deputies of Kharkiv gubernia.<sup>21</sup> The evidence concerning this congress is unfortunately incomplete, but it is possible to piece together its main debates, which included (1) national autonomy, (2) the land question, and (3) the grain monopoly. The national question, discussed on the first day of the congress, appears to have been an important and contested issue, but more for the local party-affiliated intelligentsia in attendance than for the peasant deputies themselves. The organ of the USDRP, *Robitnycha hazeta*, called the peasants’ deputies “Russified old peasants [*diadky*]” and complained that they “listened distrustfully to the literary Ukrainian of agitators and only jargon could smash the block of ice covering the heart of the *slobozhanets* [inhabitant of Slobidska Ukraine]. Both in the corridors and at the sessions [of the congress] Ukrainian and Russian languages resounded pell-mell [*vsumish*]. The presidium carried out the assembly in the Russian language.”<sup>22</sup> I do not mean to suggest that the USDRP members’ sensitivity to the language problem was unjustified. The liberal Russian daily *Iuzhnyi krai* labeled their slogan “Long live a Democratic, Autonomous Ukraine” a sign of

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18. Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia Ukrainy (hereafter TsDAVO), f. 1327, op. 1, spr. 52, fol. 56. Unfortunately this is all the information I have found on this incident.

19. *Ibid.*, fol. 71.

20. *Ibid.*, fol. 85.

21. On an all-Russian scale this was relatively late. The Kharkiv gubernial congress began one day before the All-Russian Congress of Peasants’ Deputies convened in Petrograd, and therefore it is unlikely that Kharkiv gubernia was properly represented at the early sessions of the all-Russian congress. On the Ukrainian scale, the first Kyiv Gubernial Peasants’ Congress took place at the end of April; it elected deputies to the all-Russian congress and sent them to Petrograd with an order similar to that produced by the Kharkiv gubernial congress a week and a half later. See Graham J. Gill, “The All-Russian Soviet of Peasants’ Deputies,” in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution*, ed. Harold Shukman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 17; and Pavlo Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materiialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii, 1917–1920 rr.*, vol. 1 (New York: Vydavnytstvo Chartoryiskyykh, 1969), 46.

22. *Robitnycha hazeta*, 11 May 1917.

“the ardent nationalism of the Ukrainian SDs.”<sup>23</sup> But neither they nor any one else presented evidence that the peasant deputies themselves were sensitive to the language issue. Moreover, the comment about the need to use jargon to get through to the *slobozhanets* and the fact that the peasant deputies allowed the presidium to carry out the congress in Russian suggest the opposite.

Nevertheless, the congress took a fairly strong stand on Ukraine’s national autonomy, resolving that the best form of government in the former Russian Empire would be a democratic, federated republic and that “for the complete development of the Ukrainian people national-territorial autonomy is necessary for Ukraine while ensuring national minorities’ rights.” The congress also demanded “that the [Russian] Provisional Government immediately and openly recognize the Ukrainian people’s right to national-territorial autonomy” and considered it necessary that all education be in Ukrainian (while ensuring national minorities’ rights) and free and obligatory for all children.<sup>24</sup> While these resolutions suggest that the Kharkiv gubernial congress was following resolutions recently pronounced in Kyiv, two important differences should be noted: (1) the Kharkiv congress’s resolutions made no reference at all to the Ukrainian Central Rada, and (2) the assemblies and congresses meeting in Kyiv in spring 1917 paid far less attention to the land question.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, as I hope will become clear, the most important issue for most peasants of Kharkiv gubernia in 1917 was not the national question, but the land question. Party representatives who spoke at this first congress seem to have sensed this,

23. *Iuzhnyi krai*, 9 May 1917.

24. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 1a. This document is a broadside announcing the congress’s resolutions, printed in parallel columns (Ukrainian on the left, Russian on the right). At the top there is a brief chart explaining how to read Ukrainian, which obviously suggests that the authors assumed that many readers only read Russian.

25. Khrystiuk, *Ukrainska revoliutsiia*, 1: 36–41. The lack of attention to the land question may be in part a source problem, because Ukrainian historians have looked for and stressed the national aspects of the congresses’ activities, and because much of the original source materials have not been published. But, according to Khrystiuk, the UPSR’s constituent congress in April resolved that under the current economic conditions in Ukraine it would be difficult to realize the desired land reform, and insisted on the eventual transfer of state, royal-family, and private lands in Ukraine to a Land Fund that would redistribute them among the peasants (for their use) through local public organizations. The issue of compensating landowners was “hushed up” with the vague suggestion that “the expenditures [incurred] in the implementation of the land reform would have to be covered at the state’s expense” (ibid., 1: 37.) The program of the All-Ukrainian National Congress (6–8 April) did not even mention the land question. See I. V. Khmil, *Na shliakhu vidrozhennia ukrainskoi derzhavnosti (Ukrainskyi natsionalnyi konhres-z’ezd 6–8 kvitnia 1917 r.)* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 1994), 6–7.

their anxieties heightened by recent news that peasants in some gubernias were arbitrarily seizing land and property. Although this was not yet a serious problem in Kharkiv gubernia, the educated elites speaking at the congress repeatedly reminded the peasant deputies that “the land question cannot be solved by violent seizures,” calling peasants to wait patiently for the Constituent Assembly to convene.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, I have only found one account of how peasant deputies at this congress expressed themselves on the land question. It is worth quoting in full.

Private property on land must be abolished. Monastery, allotment [*nadilna*], state, and gentry-owned land must all be transferred to the people and must be justly distributed amongst those who work the land with their own labour. The land must be transferred to the people without compensation. The land is God’s, [and] the people reaped and protected it for thousands of years. With the institution of serfdom hundreds of thousands of desiatins of land and hundreds of thousands of people were crushed by the tsars and their favourites—the gentry. Under serfdom peasants watered their native land with sweat, and then, during the [world] war, with blood. And this was a price higher than money. Not one peasant was found who spoke out for private ownership of the land or for compensation. They unanimously declared: “All land to the people! We will obtain land and freedom!”<sup>27</sup>

Although, by this account, the peasant deputies themselves were united and certain on the land question, the congress’s debate was protracted. The controversial issue seems to have been whether the peasant deputies would agree to wait for the Constituent Assembly to solve the land question; leaders obtained a consensus only after a lengthy debate lasting into the early hours of the morning of 5 May.<sup>28</sup> This was also reflected in the congress’s resolutions, which very clearly stipulated “the foundations for the resolution of the land question”:

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26. *Robitnycha hazeta*, 16 May 1917. I have found very little evidence, other than Kondratyevsky’s telegram (mentioned above), that peasants of Kharkiv gubernia were engaged in such seizures in the spring of 1917. The first serious cases were not reported until the summer, which was relatively late: already in March and April the Russian Provisional Government had resorted to dispatching military detachments to stop seizures in some northern gubernias (see V. I. Kostrikin, *Zemelnye komitety v 1917 godu* [Moscow: Nauka, 1975], 100). But Kharkiv educated society had received several warnings from Petrograd already in March about the growing “peasant movement.” See, for example, *Izvestiia Kharkovskago soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov*, 15 March 1917.

27. *Robitnycha hazeta*, 16 May 1917, 2. I should stress the certainty of the last sentence, with the verb in its perfective form: “Zdobudemo zemliu i voliu!”

28. *Ibid.*

1. Private land ownership by individuals is to be abolished forever. All gentry-owned, state, monastery, church and all other lands will become community property [*hromadske dobro*].
2. Only those who will work the land with their own hands, with their family or in a society without hired hands, can make use of it.
3. All lands, both of private owners and other types, must be transferred into the hands of the entire people without any compensation.
4. Local, regional, and central organs of self-government will manage the all-people's land fund.
5. Underground resources, forests, rivers, lakes, and other riches are to be made the property of the entire people. The central legislative organ will issue rules on how they will be used.
6. The All-Russian Constituent Assembly will establish the basic principles of the land laws. The detailed elaboration of the land laws, in the light of the conditions of local life, will belong to separate autonomous units, [which] in Ukraine is the Ukrainian Diet [*Seim*].<sup>29</sup>

Not only was the Constituent Assembly's role in resolving the land question relegated to one sentence in these "foundations," but the congress further resolved to ban the purchase, sale, and mortgage of all land, to give local self-governing institutions the right to administer all lands left uncultivated, and to abolish all laws that permitted "the consolidation of land as property."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the congress called on "the organized peasantry to take into its hands the establishment of rules for renting land, hiring of agricultural labourers, and control over the carrying out of agriculture and equally the felling of forests."<sup>31</sup> As these additions suggest, at this first congress there seems to have been considerable resistance, very likely from the peasant deputies, to leaving the land question alone until the Constituent Assembly convened. This would be borne out by the events of the summer and fall of 1917 in Kharkiv gubernia.

The final important issue debated at the congress was food supply. According to Aronov (pseud. of A. Legin), the main political writer for *Izvestiia Kharkovskago soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov*, the question of introducing

29. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 1a.

30. This last proposed decree probably reveals the attitude of many peasant deputies and their constituents toward the Stolypin reforms, which had made some progress in Kharkiv gubernia before the cessation of land-survey work in April 1915. For a reasonably cogent study of the reforms' progress in the gubernia, which, unfortunately, equates their relative success with peasants' desire to become independent yeoman farmers, see Vladyslav S. Maistrenko, "Stolypinska ahrarna reforma na Kharkivshchyni ta ii rezultaty (1906–1915 rr.)," *Visnyk Kharkivskoho derzhavnoho universytetu*, no. 396 (1997) (Istoriia, issue 29), 88–98.

31. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 1a.

a grain monopoly<sup>32</sup> in order to solve the ever-worsening food-supply problem provoked lively debate at this congress. Some peasant deputies were so hostile to the introduction of a state monopoly on grain that they demanded that it not be introduced under any circumstance. One of them declared that "a partial requisition of grain would be better than a monopoly." Others spoke out for the introduction of a grain monopoly, but only if monopolies on other products were introduced as well. Others went still further, citing the excessive increase in the cost of living and demanding the establishment of control over factories, especially those producing manufactured, textile, and leather goods.<sup>33</sup>

In the end, the congress resolved to consider the law on the grain monopoly the "single correct means by which the country and army will be saved from hunger, ruin, and grain speculation." The congress called for the immediate organization of local food-supply committees composed of democratically elected people whom peasants would trust and who would be capable of carrying out all food-supply measures. It was necessary to remove all middlemen and speculators and to purchase grain and distribute all necessities through local community organizations. The congress demanded the immediate introduction of a state monopoly on all consumer items and agricultural implements and machines. Finally the congress, which had renamed itself the Gubernial Council of Peasants' Deputies, resolved that, in concert with the Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, it must "exert all forces and measures in the hands of the united toiling people to solve the food-supply question, assist in the correct organization of this matter, and introduce real control over the entire trade, industrial, and transportation apparatus as quickly as possible."<sup>34</sup>

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32. On 25 March 1917 the Russian Provisional Government replaced its tsarist predecessor's wartime grain-levy system, from which many peasants and landlords had profited, with a state monopoly on grain surpluses. According to the decree "On the transfer of grain to the state's command and local food-supply organs," all grain besides that which producers needed for food, sowing, and feeding livestock and poultry was to be transferred to the control of the state. This surplus grain had to be sold to local food-supply agencies at fixed prices, which were quickly overtaken by inflation. The government promised to supply the countryside with affordable consumer items. See V. A. Vakhromeev, "Sovety i prodovol'stvennyi vopros v 1917 g.(mart-oktiabr)," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, no. 116 (1988): 8.

33. *Izvestiia Kharkovskago soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov*, 6 May 1917, 2. Aronov thought that these speeches were "extraordinarily characteristic" of the peasantry's attitude towards the monopoly, and went on to argue that there was already a de facto, but unplanned, grain monopoly brought on by the necessities of fighting the war. Therefore he called for a state-imposed monopoly and even agreed with those peasant deputies who called for state control not only of distribution, but production as well.

34. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 1a.



It is difficult to determine to what degree the congress's resolutions reflected the views of the peasant deputies, let alone their constituents. Some of the resolutions seem to reveal more the opinions and hopes of party representatives than those of the deputies. Though a majority of deputies eventually assented to the proposals of these educated men, one should not assume that their agreement meant that they had the peasants' support, especially not long-term support. After the congress ended, the peasant deputies had to return to their villages with no conclusive decision on the land question, just copies of the congress's resolutions, and attempt to convince their co-villagers not only to wait patiently for the Constituent Assembly to convene, but also to give up their surplus grain to food-supply committee agents whenever they came around. Decrees and resolutions were a sort of mania in 1917, and many historians of the revolution have assumed that they reflected the opinions of those people whom the institutions producing these resolutions claimed to represent. While I would not argue that these resolutions say nothing about non-urban, uneducated peasants' desires, I want to suggest that we need to look more closely at their concrete actions and less at the resolutions of congresses, assemblies, and councils if we want to obtain a clearer understanding of peasant attitudes and aspirations.

Of course, most peasants spent most of their time in 1917 as they had in previous years—cultivating the soil and tending their livestock to provide themselves with food, clothing, and shelter. Outside the fulfillment of their households' basic needs, however, the peasants of Kharkiv gubernia, as across the crumbling empire, above all took actions to obtain more arable land, pastures, and woodlots. Outside the *hospodarstvo*, this was their primary concern.<sup>35</sup> One Soviet historian calculated that there were 164 unauthorized seizures by peasants of landlords' arable lands in Kharkiv gubernia from March to October 1917.<sup>36</sup>

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35. For a good general overview, see John Channon, "The Peasantry in the Revolutions of 1917," in *Revolution in Russia: Reassessments of 1917*, ed. Edith Rogovin Frankel, Jonathan Frankel, and Baruch Knei-Paz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 105–30. For a somewhat outdated but still useful discussion of the Ukrainian context, see Holubnychy, "The 1917 Agrarian Revolution in Ukraine."

36. Reshodko, *Seliaskyi rukh u Kharkivskii hubernii*, 99. For examples of such conflicts, see TsDAVO, f. 1326, op. 1, spr. 25, 53, and 90, which contain many complaints received by the gubernial land committee. In his *Peasant Russia, Civil War* (p. 47), Figs has noted that Soviet historians' estimates of the peasant disturbances vary widely because each historian had a different definition of the term "disturbance" (*vystuplenie*, *vystup*). For example, Isaak I. Mints (*Istoriia Velikogo Oktiabria*, vol. 2 [Moscow: Nauka, 1973], 1125) found 4,246 peasant disturbances during the period March–October 1917. Aleksandr D. Maliavsky (*Krestianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1917 g.* [Moscow: Nauka, 1981], 378) gives a figure of 16,298 for almost the same gubernias and time period. For Kharkiv gubernia, Mints lists 102 peasant *vystupleniia* (pp. 1122–3), whereas Maliavsky found 563 (p. 376). Mints's figures put Kharkiv gubernia in



In addition, the land committees reported that they had transferred to the peasants of the gubernia almost 100,000 desiatins of gentry-owned lands over the same period.<sup>37</sup> But one would receive a very incomplete picture by focussing solely on peasants confiscating gentry-owned lands. Though Soviet and Western historians have concentrated mainly on these seizures, assuming that this agrarian revolution was a class struggle between peasants and landlords, there were, in fact, at least as many conflicts among the peasants themselves as there were between them and the landlords. In other words, at least in Kharkiv gubernia, the peasant revolution of 1917–18 was not so much a revolution of the peasants as a “class” with any conscious sense of a collective identity as it was many tiny local revolts by individual peasant communities, usually involving the seizure (violent or not) of non-peasant land. More importantly, these local revolutions quickly turned into squabbles between peasant communities over the splitting of the disappointingly meagre spoils.<sup>38</sup>

I have found many cases of conflict amongst peasants over rights to newly acquired land, but I will limit illustrations to a few. On 3 September the Ternova Volost Land Committee (Kupiansk county) informed the gubernial committee that on 15 July it had taken over the land and meadows of Count Sheremetev’s

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seventeenth place in the number of disturbances among all eighty-four gubernias and oblasts of the former empire, while Maliavsky’s put the gubernia in eleventh place. Probably the most that can be said is that the peasants of Kharkiv gubernia were among the most active participants in the 1917 agrarian revolution.

37. TsDAVO, f. 1326, op. 1, spr. 11, fol. 100. There is probably some overlap between these two figures because lower-level land committees usually sanctioned peasants’ “unauthorized seizures,” while higher-level land committees often merely acknowledged peasants’ *faits accomplis*.

38. Holubnychy calculated that, even if all 42 million des. of arable land in Ukraine were distributed equally among all 4,011,000 peasant households, the average Ukrainian peasant household would have gained only 1.49 des. and would have remained “merely a subsistence farm” (“The 1917 Agrarian Revolution in Ukraine,” 4–5). According to *Vserossiiskaia selskokhoziaistvennaia perepis 1917 g. v Kharkovskoi gubernii: Itogi po uezdam, gubernii i gorodam. Predvaritelnyi poschet* (Kharkiv: Tipografiia A. A. Libin, 1920), 12–13, in 1917 Kharkiv gubernia had 450,644 peasant households, of which 22 percent (99,048) had no arable land; 4.9 percent had up to one des.; 18.6 percent had one to three des.; 16.9 percent had three to five des.; 22.8 percent had five to ten des.; and 14.8 percent had more than ten des. If all 2,685,506 des. of arable land in the gubernia had been distributed equally among these 450,644 peasant households, each one would have held only about six des. Thus 62.4 percent of the gubernia’s peasant households stood to gain from the completely equal redistribution of all arable land, but this would have been a small gain indeed. At their contemporary productivity level, the peasants would have simply continued (though more equally) to eke out an existence. More intensive farming techniques were obviously needed to solve “the agrarian question” conclusively.

estate. The committee somewhat defensively asserted that, “by right of the law of the Provisional Government,” this property must be used first of all to satisfy the inhabitants of Ternova volost, because that was where the estate was located. If any land was left over after that, it could be given to inhabitants of other volosts. Following this “interpretation” of the current law, Ternova’s peasants had started to cultivate this land for winter sowing. But peasants from Iampil in neighbouring Izium county had recently begun seizing and renting out parts of this same land without any authorization. Therefore the Ternova Volost Land Committee asked the gubernial land committee to intervene on its peasants’ behalf.<sup>39</sup>

On 16 September the Kharkiv Gubernial Land Board (the gubernial land committee’s executive) informed the Ternova Volost Land Committee that no instruction from the Russian Provisional Government about renting land only to peasants of the same volost existed, and that “therefore the citation of this non-existent decree is without foundation.” The board asserted that such questions “had to be solved in accordance with the real needs for land” and therefore ordered the Ternova Volost Land Committee “to enter without fail into an agreement with the Iampil committee.”<sup>40</sup> That the peasants of Ternova volost did not comply with the gubernial board’s order is evident from subsequent events.

On 30 September a commission from the Zakitne Volost Land Committee arrived at Sheremetev’s estate to investigate the damages that the peasants of Ternova volost had caused to the Iampil community’s hay harvest. Although the commission claimed that it had sent an invitation to Ternova ten days earlier, no representatives from the accused community appeared at the investigation. Apparently the gubernial committee had given the Iampil peasants permission to harvest hay on twenty desiatins of the estate, and then hay from a second mowing on forty desiatins. Peasants from Iampil had baled all this hay, but when they attempted to cart it home, peasants from Ternova volost forcibly seized all of it without presenting any authorization. The commission calculated that the latter had caused about 7,200 rubles’ worth of damage to the Iampil community and asked the gubernial committee to help call them to account.<sup>41</sup> Probably feeling powerless to help these peasants, the gubernial board merely suggested that the Iampil community initiate legal action through the courts to retrieve its losses.<sup>42</sup>

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39. TsDAVO, f. 1326, op. 1, spr. 90, fol. 30.

40. *Ibid.*, fol. 31.

41. *Ibid.*, fol. 124.

42. *Ibid.*, fol. 125. How ineffectual the land committees and their executive boards felt they were at this time was reflected in the resolutions of the third session (13–15 October

Sometimes conflicts amongst peasant communities arose even when the land in question had been legally rented to peasants. On 12 September the Committee of the Fourth Reserve Artillery Division, then quartered near Chuhuiv, Zmiiv county, resolved to divide up its fields amongst four nearby villages whose inhabitants had recently petitioned to rent this land: 520 desiatins to Maslivka; 340 desiatins to Malynivka; 400 desiatins to Korobochkyne; and 65 desiatins to Tahanka. The committee warned the peasants not to plough the land allotted to other communities, but three of the four villages proved unwilling to heed the committee.<sup>43</sup> On 10 November the Maslivka Village Public Committee reported to the Kharkiv Military-Revolutionary Staff that the Malynivka community had spontaneously ploughed up 470 rather than its allotted 340 desiatins, cutting into the land granted to Korobochkyne. In turn the peasants of Korobochkyne had seized some of the land given to the Maslivka community; and the inhabitants of Tahanka, being unsatisfied with a mere 65 desiatins, had also ploughed up some of Maslivka's land. Thus the peasants of Maslivka were left with a little more than 100 desiatins, despite the fact that their representatives had paid the military commissioner the full rent for 520 desiatins.<sup>44</sup> The Maslivka committee claimed that the peasants of the other three communities already had sufficient land, while those of Maslivka, being formerly serfs on gentry-owned land, had no land besides that which they had purchased through the Peasant Land Bank, and half of that land had been swamped. Extremely offended by the other peasants' seizures, Maslivka's peasants warned that "undesirable phenomena" could arise amongst these villagers, "perhaps even murders." They asked the Military-Revolutionary Staff to dispatch representatives immediately to demarcate the division's lands rented out to all four communities and thus avert the possibility of violence.<sup>45</sup> Once again revealing its impotence, the Kharkiv

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1917) of the Kharkiv Gubernial Land Committee. The latter stressed that under the current law the land committees were "doomed to complete impotence in establishing any order in land relations, and because of the impossibility to respond to any of the basic needs of the population, naturally they cannot receive any sort of decisive support from the population, without which the activities of the committees are not only useless but even harmful, because the population is forced into independent actions that will inevitably lead to anarchy in the country" (cited in Kachinsky, "Krestianskoe dvizhenie," 219). For further examples, see Reshodko, *Selianskyi rukh u Kharkivskii hubernii*, 103; and TsDAVO, f. 1326, op. 1, spr. 11, fol. 67.

43. TsDAVO, f. 1326, op. 1, spr. 25, fol. 171.

44. Ibid., fol. 174. This is the receipt that Maslivka's representatives received on 10 August certifying that they had paid the military commissioner 2,600 rubles' rent for 520 des. of state land.

45. Ibid., fol. 171. The Maslivka committee also noted that some of its peasants had already ploughed and sown the land that Tahanka's peasants had seized. As a result they were left not only without land, but without any winter seed as well.

Gubernial Land Board merely resolved on 24 November to ask the Zmiiv County Land Board to send representatives to Maslivka to resolve the matter; if the latter determined that a surveyor was required, the Kharkiv Gubernial Land Board promised to dispatch one.<sup>46</sup>

Such conflicts between peasant communities were numerous, and they increased in 1918.<sup>47</sup> But the examples provided here suffice to suggest that the great agrarian revolution of 1917–18 in Ukraine was not a class revolution in Marx's sense of that term or in the sense often assumed by more recent scholars. For the most part, peasants acted as members of a community; they acted in a manner reflecting their localized understanding of the world. This worldview can also be seen in the ways peasants related to broader issues, especially food supply.

Immediately after the tsarist regime's collapse, which to a great extent resulted from that regime's failure to supply the cities with food, the Russian Provisional Government took serious steps to overcome the food-supply problem, but proved incapable of enforcing its decrees.<sup>48</sup> Already in March the government had introduced a state monopoly on all grain surpluses, charging local food-supply organs to purchase the grain at set prices, which were soon overtaken by rampant inflation in the summer of 1917. As noted above, the first Kharkiv Gubernial Congress of Peasants' Deputies had roundly endorsed the grain monopoly and called for a monopoly on manufactured goods as well. But, not surprisingly, the peasants of Kharkiv gubernia, as across the former empire, proved increasingly reluctant to give up their grain to local food-supply agents at such low prices and in the absence of manufactured goods for purchase.<sup>49</sup> Soviet historians argued that the food-supply problem could only have been overcome by the transfer of "all power to the soviets," thereby justifying the Bolsheviks' coup. Yet, the overthrow of the Provisional Government did little to

46. *Ibid.*, fol. 177.

47. For more examples of inter-village conflict, see *ibid.*, fols. 19–26, 52, 61–6, 71, 80, 90, and 183–4.

48. See Vakhromeev, "Sovety i prodovolstvennyi vopros v 1917 g.," 5–42. On the old regime's failure to solve the food-supply problem, see Kimitaka Matsuzato, "The Role of Zemstva in the Creation and Collapse of Tsarism's War Effort during World War One," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 46 (1998), fasc. 3: 321–37; and *idem*, "Inter-Regional Conflicts and the Collapse of Tsarism: The Real Reason for the Food Crisis in Russia after the Autumn of 1916," in *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. Mary Schaeffer Conroy (Niwtot: University of Colorado Press, 1998), 243–300.

49. In the former empire as a whole, grain deliveries to the army and the civilian population decreased steadily from fifty percent of grain orders in July 1917 to nineteen percent in October. See Vakhromeev, "Sovety i prodovolstvennyi vopros v 1917 g.," 32–3.

alleviate the food-supply problem, and in Ukraine, where the Central Rada claimed authority, the food-supply situation also continued to worsen as winter came on.

On 2 December, D. Skrypnychenko, Kharkiv gubernia's commissioner for food-supply matters subordinated to the UNR's General Secretariat, published a panicky "Appeal to the Peasant Citizens of Kharkiv Gubernia" in which he asserted that the food-supply situation in the army was becoming "deadly" and that "a real famine is beginning in the army." Almost daily the gubernial food-supply committee received alarming telegrams from the front with appeals "to save the army" by sending more grain. But the gubernial committee not only could not increase grain deliveries to the front; it had, in fact, ceased sending grain altogether "because the population of Kharkiv gubernia has almost stopped supplying grain to the food-supply committees." Skrypnychenko warned that soon it would be too late: starving soldiers would abandon their trenches in droves, and anarchy would break out: "we free citizens will be made into slaves again and lose all hope of receiving land and freedom." He cautioned the Ukrainian people not to be "deaf and mute" in this threatening moment, but to help their sons and brothers dying from hunger at the front. "Only those who desire the destruction of the people's freedom, of the young Ukrainian republic and all of Russia, would at this time hide their grain or sell it not to the food-supply committees, but to various interlopers and speculators. Let there not be among us one who would keep any surplus grain to oneself. Everyone as one immediately give your grain to the food-supply committees. Save your army, Ukraine, and all of Russia from anarchy and ruin."<sup>50</sup> That peasants had not yet given up their grain, and would continue not to, is perhaps not only a sign of their economic self-interest, but also of their lack of identification with broader ideas such as "Ukraine," let alone "all of Russia."

On the second day of the Fifth Congress of the Kharkiv Gubernial Council of Peasants' Deputies, 7 December, Rubinsky, the council's representative in the Gubernial Food-Supply Committee, gave a detailed report on the present situation.<sup>51</sup> Lamenting that the peasants were not fulfilling their civic duty,

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50. *Nova hromada*, 2 December 1917, 1.

51. After the Central Rada issued its Third Universal, the General Secretariat of the UNR declared its authority over food-supply issues throughout the UNR and formed a special council under the general secretary for food-supply matters. The Kharkiv Gubernial Food-Supply Committee recognized the authority of the Central Rada and the General Secretariat at the time. But somewhat earlier, in response to the Bolsheviks' ultimatum to the Central Rada, the General Secretariat had ordered the closure of the UNR's borders to Russia's northern and western fronts and to the Russian gubernias at the rear, thus cutting off Kharkiv gubernia's traditional trade routes to the north. In response, the food-supply committee insisted that food supply should not be a political



Rubinsky noted that the countryside had received far more in goods from the city than it had given in grain. Kharkiv gubernia was supposed to provide 28 million poods of surplus grain, but only 3.5 million poods had been received, and this had come mainly from landlords. "The peasants are not giving up their grain," stated Rubinsky, claiming that the grain was now in the hands of "village kulaks, who often meet representatives of the food-supply committee with stakes in hand. Poor villages are giving up their grain more willingly."<sup>52</sup> Interlopers from the starving gubernias to the north were also greatly obstructing grain collection, because they could pay as much as fifteen rubles per pood. Rubinsky called on the peasant deputies to insist that their constituents back home not sell their grain to these interlopers, amongst whom there were not only those from starving regions, "but also speculators who will then resell the grain at four times the price."<sup>53</sup> At the same time he noted that the supply of necessities to the population was in "a sad state," mostly because the transportation system was in ruins, and, more recently, representatives from the starving northern gubernias had announced that their populations refused to fulfill their civic obligation and would not send finished goods to Kharkiv gubernia unless they first received grain from the latter.<sup>54</sup>

At the evening session of the congress, a Comrade Ugriumov took up the food-supply question again, noting that Poltava gubernia had completed its civic obligation "brilliantly" while Kharkiv gubernia had barely fulfilled its at all. He stressed that both the army and the northern gubernias had to be fed, and threatened that "famine could give birth to civil war with all its horrors." Armed

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issue and refused to submit to the General Secretariat's demand not to transport grain to the starving Russian gubernias to the north. The Kharkiv Council of Peasants' Deputies supported this position even though its fifth congress had been informed that Bolshevik troops were approaching from the north. The council resolved both not to submit to the Central Rada's order to close the borders and to condemn the interference of the Soviet Council of People's Commissars in the UNR's internal affairs. Such ambiguous positions were typical for Kharkiv during the revolution. See TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fols. 217 and 215 verso.

52. Ibid., fol. 216 verso. Rubinsky was no doubt speaking here from a very class-conscious point of view. He provided no evidence that "kulaks" in particular were hiding grain, and I have not found any in my research. It is perhaps telling that he refers to "poor villages" and not "poor peasants" within villages. On the all-Russian scale, Orlando Figes recently stated that, "contrary to the old Soviet myth, there were very few conflicts within the village between richer and poorer peasants. But there were a great many conflicts between neighbouring communes, sometimes ending in little village wars, over control of the estates" (*A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1996], 364).

53. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fols. 216–17.

54. Ibid., fol. 216.

interlopers from starving gubernias in search of grain had already appeared in Voronezh gubernia due north of Kharkiv gubernia. Noting that during the seizures of gentry estates peasants had stolen seed grain and ground it into flour, Ugriumov also stressed the necessity to preserve seed for the spring planting and called on peasants to feed the army and the starving gubernias.<sup>55</sup> In the end the congress passed the following resolution proposed by Rubinsky: "In order to save the country from complete ruin, the army from famine, and the economic structure of Ukraine from devastation, immediately to take all measures to gather surplus grain from the population of Kharkiv gubernia, to which end all councils of peasants' deputies are to be ordered to render energetic assistance to all food-supply organizations' measures and the work of requisition commissions and in all ways explain to the population the necessity to complete grain deliveries."<sup>56</sup>

That the council and its deputies were quite unsuccessful in carrying out their resolution once they returned to their villages is clear from the minutes of the Sixth Congress of the Kharkiv Council of Peasants' Deputies, which took place six weeks later, from 21 to 23 January 1918. Speaking again there on the food-supply question, Rubinsky stated that when starving people from other gubernias appealed to the food-supply committee, he would become "ashamed of his native gubernia." The gubernia had always provided at least 21 million poods of surplus grain, but in this past year it had only given up four million.<sup>57</sup> Despondently Rubinsky declared, "nothing helps, not the democratic character [*demokratichnost*] of organizations leading the food-supply work, not the requests of the starving, not the armed forces. The village consciously holds on to the grain, motivated by the absence of kerosene, manufactured goods, and nails." As a person closely involved in the matter, Rubinsky claimed that he could provide exact information that the city could not spare to give any more to the countryside. The city had been "refused everything" in order to send to the village all possible manufactured goods, whose value to date totalled 15 million

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55. Ibid., fol. 219.

56. Ibid., fol. 215.

57. Rubinsky later stated that he had received "exact data" through the statistical department of the gubernial zemstvo "from the peasants themselves" that the harvest had been above average in three or four counties, average in five or six, and had failed in only two counties. His statistics showed that the surplus grain from the 1917 harvest could not be less than 15 million poods, but by late January 1918 the food-supply agencies had received only 4 million poods, most of which came from landlords. See *ibid.*, fols. 263-4. Compared to 1913, the sown area in 1916 had decreased by 8.5 percent from 1,499,100 des. to 1,371,300 des. This was not a substantial decrease—certainly not enough to account for the food-supply committee's failure to receive grain. See Andrei M. Anfimov, "Krestianskoe khoziaistvo Rossii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1957, no. 3 (July-August): 68.

rubles. Of course, this was not enough to satisfy the village, he said, but it was a great sacrifice for the city and certainly worth more than four million poods of grain. And of those four million poods, he was ashamed to say, only an insignificant part had come from the village, most of it from landlords' estates. Calling upon the councils to take grain requisition into their hands, Rubinsky stressed that the only way to get grain from the peasants was to provide more manufactured goods, "because the masses will come only to those who give, and not to those who take." He noted that there had already been cases when *meshochniki* from starving regions who had come to the gubernia in search of food had engaged in armed battles with peasants. Rubinsky then enumerated the many obstacles to transporting goods to the grain-producing gubernias and grain to the starving ones. Seeing no real escape from the crisis, he concluded: "I cannot offer any real measures, but nonetheless I propose that (1) a goods exchange be organized; (2) freedom of trade be implemented; and (3) the volost councils of peasants' deputies take measures to requisition surplus grain and send it to the starving gubernias."<sup>58</sup>

As the two protocols suggest, most peasants in Kharkiv gubernia proved quite unwilling to make substantial sacrifices for the larger idea of community, regardless of which government—the General Secretariat in Kyiv or the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) in Petrograd—claimed political authority over them. In fact, my research suggests that most peasants were hardly aware of the change of authority in December 1917, which is not surprising if one considers the subtle distinctions between these two governments' land policies. To the peasants' way of thinking, both the Sovnarkom's Decree on Land and the Central Rada's Third Universal had abolished private land ownership and placed the land under the authority of local land committees, which the peasants themselves controlled. To them the other aspects of either government's land policies seemed mere details.

One other important aspect of the peasants' localist attitudes in 1917 merits discussion: their attitude towards the primary institution that had claimed to

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58. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 262 verso and 263. Interestingly Rubinsky, who very likely was a Left Russian Socialist Revolutionary, did *not* recommend forced confiscation, the method preferred by successive Soviet regimes and the Central Powers' occupational authorities. Only after policies very similar to Rubinsky's first two suggestions were finally implemented by the Soviet regime in the late summer of 1921, after three years of civil war and great food scarcity in Kharkiv, did the peasants of the gubernia again begin giving up their grain to the city in sufficient quantities. See the reports to the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine in TsDAVO, f. 2, op. 2, spr. 297, fols. 1 and 4; and Derzhavnyi arkhiv Kharkivskoi oblasti, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 464, fol. 251. In Ukraine those policies, later associated with the New Economic Policy, were not implemented until the autumn of 1921.

represent them ever since that first conference in early May 1917—the Kharkiv Gubernial Council of Peasants' Deputies. Although historians have often invoked the resolutions of local councils as indicators of the popular mood, the attitudes of "the people" towards these institutions have almost never been examined.<sup>59</sup> This is understandable. The leaders of local councils claimed to represent and speak in the name of "the people," whether this meant workers, soldiers, peasants, working women, "the toiling people," or some other smaller social group. Yet it is questionable, at least in the case of the Kharkiv Gubernial Council of Peasants' Deputies, that the views expressed by these institutions' leaders and the resolutions they passed and sent on to Kyiv and Petrograd reflected the desires of their claimed constituents.

Certainly this is a matter of degree. Probably the gubernial council's resolutions sometimes reflected peasants' views, especially early in 1917. But there is considerable evidence to suggest that the peasants proved increasingly unwilling to support the council's efforts to speak and act on their behalf. The council usually passed on conflicts over peasant land seizures to the gubernial land committee and, more importantly, supported the committee's decisions.<sup>60</sup> Thus the gubernial land committee's inability to carry out its commands at the local level or to resolve disputes between landlords and peasants or among peasant communities also reveals to some extent the limits of the gubernial council's authority. If peasants supported the gubernial council, why did so many not heed its appeals (and those of the gubernial land committee) to stop seizing land and felling forests and instead patiently await the Constituent Assembly's resolution of the land question?<sup>61</sup>

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59. For a recent example, see Michael Melancon's, "The Syntax of Soviet Power: The Resolutions of Local Soviets and Other Institutions, March–October 1917," *The Russian Review* 52 (1993): 486–505. While Melancon presents a cogent and sophisticated analysis of some of the resolutions that the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet (later, the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Soviets) received from local soviets, he does not question the degree to which these resolutions and the institutions that generated them expressed the will of "the masses" whom they claimed to represent. But he does seem to be aware of this problem in his sources when he concludes that "the masses (*or at least those who entered organizations*) hearkened to the call to overthrow the [provisional] government and embark forthwith on the great soviet socialist experiment" (p. 504; emphasis added).

60. For example, on 30 July the gubernial council resolved "to applaud the Gubernial Land Committee's activities" (TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 110).

61. For example, on 15 September 1917, in support of the land committee's efforts, the gubernial council sent a telegram to the peasants of Matviivka, Bohodukhiv county, denouncing their illegal ploughing of the beet fields of sugar magnate I. P. Kharytonenko as "intolerable" and demanding that they stop immediately. See TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 150 verso. Matviivka's peasants not only ignored the council's telegram:

Further evidence can be found by tracking how the gubernial council was funded—an issue historians have rarely studied.<sup>62</sup> While examining the minutes of the gubernial and county councils, I was struck by how much time their executive committees spent on financial matters, ranging from how much committee members should be paid to how to fund the Constituent Assembly election campaign. At its very first meeting on 7 May, the gubernial council's Executive Committee (EC) discussed how it should be funded and resolved (1) to entrust its Economic Commission to ask the All-Russian Council of Peasants' Deputies from where they were to acquire means and in what form, (2) to work out a budget for the council, and (3) to send Rubinsky to the gubernial zemstvo with a request to assign monetary means to the council.<sup>63</sup> On 16 May the EC examined the Economic Commission's draft budget, but resolved that it was too general and the sums proposed were too modest.<sup>64</sup> The next day the EC approved a revised draft budget amounting to 50,000 rubles per month, but it entrusted its presidium to revise this figure "in relation to developing activities."<sup>65</sup> The EC requested funding from the Gubernial Land Board, the Union of Co-operatives, the Union Bank, and the Public Committee, and asked the military commissioner to send any available and capable soldiers from the Kharkiv garrison to work as clerks, office workers, and agitators.<sup>66</sup> On 11 June the EC, which now included a chairman, deputy chairman, secretary, and twenty-six members, resolved "to deem obligatory for the Council of Peasants' Deputies the principle of self-taxation [*samooblozhenie*] to cover the costs of maintaining the council."<sup>67</sup>

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Kharytonenko's estate manager soon reported that the peasants of other local villages had also joined in the ploughing of the estate's fields. See TsDAVO, f. 1326, op. 1, spr. 90, fol. 60.

62. The one extensive Western study of the councils only mentions how much the Petrograd Soviet received from March through June 1917, but does not discuss from where this money came. See Oskar Anweiler, *The Soviets: The Russian Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers Councils, 1905–1921*, trans. Ruth Hein (New York: Random House, 1974), 108.

63. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 3.

64. *Ibid.*, fol. 11.

65. Only in the months of May and July did the EC stay under this budget estimate. In fact, later in 1917 the EC revised this estimate to 141,600 rubles per month, although it only found sufficient funds to spend on average 68,000 rubles for each of the months of May to November 1917. Most of these funds came from loans from the Union Bank and the gubernial zemstvo. See *ibid.*, spr. 4, fols. 36–8.

66. *Ibid.*, spr. 1, fol. 13 verso. The latter request suggests that the EC lacked not only money, but also literate, skilled employees—an increasingly common problem in the early Soviet period.

67. *Ibid.*, fol. 33.



In July the EC embarked on a campaign to collect this self-tax from the peasants of the gubernia. It sent out to all volost councils of peasants' deputies an appeal informing them about its decision to ask the peasants to fund "their councils" at a rate of ten kopecks per desiatin per month; households holding less than two desiatins were to pay twenty kopecks per month.<sup>68</sup> The EC asked volost councils to call assemblies in each village to discuss the self-tax and to take all measures to obtain this money, "since neither the volost, county, nor gubernial councils of peasants' deputies can exist without consistent support from their electors, without the support of the toiling peasantry who elected the councils of peasants' deputies for the defence of their rights and interests." Half of the money collected was to remain at the disposal of the volost councils "exclusively for the needs of the volost and county councils of peasants' deputies." The rest was to be transferred to the gubernial council and used for its needs.<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately for the members of the EC and the gubernial council, the peasants proved reluctant to volunteer funds to support "their councils," in particular those above the county level. In mid-August the EC discussed a protocol it had received from the Zmiiv County Council of Peasants' Deputies in which that council resolved to place all funds generated through self-taxation into the county council's treasury without passing on the obligatory fifty percent to the gubernial council. At the same meeting a resolution adopted by the Randava Volost Public Committee and Council of Peasants' Deputies in Bohodukhiv county was read out: the committee and council refused to carry out self-taxation, stating that local organizations were funded by the peasants' communities ("*iz mirskikh summ*"). In both cases, the EC resolved to order these local organizations to comply with the self-taxation order and to send on the much-needed funds to the gubernial council.<sup>70</sup> On 20 August the EC discussed its continuing search for money and decided to send one of its members to the Union Bank, another to the Agricultural Society and gubernial zemstvo, and a third to the Union of Co-operatives of South Russia to petition for funds.<sup>71</sup> On

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68. After they had seized the land, the peasants of Kharkiv gubernia held 2,559,754 des. of arable land. If peasants had paid this self-tax at the rate of 0.1 rubles per des., they would have generated 255,975 rubles per month, half of which (127,987 rubles) was supposed to be transferred to the gubernial council; the latter amount would have more than covered the council's estimated expenses. See Narodnyi komissariat zemledelia, *Pidsumky ahrarnoi revoliutsii na Ukraini* (Kharkiv, 1923), 6.

69. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 4, fol. 33; and spr. 1, fol. 111.

70. *Ibid.*, spr. 1, fol. 130. The Randava volost case in particular suggests that peasants equated local councils with other prerevolutionary peasant organizations.

71. *Ibid.*, fol. 132.

8 September the EC resolved to ask all county councils to petition their respective county zemstvos to provide funds for the gubernial council's needs.<sup>72</sup>

On 24 September at the Fourth Congress of the Gubernial Council of Peasants' Deputies, one of the three central issues discussed was self-taxation. One EC member, Trebelev, reported that "not everywhere are the peasantry sympathetic to self-taxation," while the gubernial council, lacking sufficient means, could not carry out even such important matters as preparations for the elections to the county zemstvos and the Constituent Assembly. Passionately calling on peasants "to support their own peasant organizations," Trebelev provoked a series of speeches by peasant deputies, who tried to explain why the self-taxation was going so poorly. The most common reason given was that "the peasantry are insufficiently enlightened about the goals of the money gathered, thinking, for example, that this money will go only for the salaries of members of the Executive Committee." In other cases deputies claimed that peasants refused to give money voluntarily to the councils because of "agitation by the village bourgeoisie." In a few cases as well, the peasants either did not know to where to send the collected money and had given all of it to the local public committees, or had not received the proper accounting books from county councils to gather the money. The congress resolved to appeal to the peasantry once again to support the voluntary self-taxation while explaining to the population the necessity and goals of the taxation.<sup>73</sup>

Not surprisingly, the gubernial council's appeal did not have its intended effect. Neither resolutions and appeals from Kharkiv nor the peasant deputies' efforts back home could convince peasants to pay this modest sum to support "their council." At a meeting of the EC on 2 December it was revealed that the gubernial council's financial situation was critical; there were "no means and, apparently, nowhere to obtain them." Public organizations and credit-granting institutions refused to give the council funds "because they are all composed of defensists."<sup>74</sup> The EC resolved simply to ask the city дума for a loan.<sup>75</sup> On 8 December the EC again discussed the council's lack of means and passed several resolutions aimed at raising funds: (1) to order the Lebedyn, Kharkiv, Valky, and Starobilsk public committees to give 3,000 rubles each for the Ukrainian Constituent Assembly elections; (2) to ask the Central Rada to give

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72. *Ibid.*, fol. 142 verso.

73. *Ibid.*, fol. 158.

74. The "defensist" label was applied to those who supported continuing the Russian war effort against the Central Powers instead of the separate peace that the Sovnarkom was negotiating at the time at Brest-Litovsk. Here it may have referred more generally to those who opposed the Bolshevik takeover and attempted to remain loyal to the Provisional Government, which had espoused a "defensist" position.

75. TsDAVO, f. 1400, op. 1, spr. 1, fol. 207.

30,000 rubles for these elections; (3) to demand that all county councils of peasants' deputies send half of the self-taxation funds immediately to the gubernial council; (4) to appeal to all zemstvos and co-operatives for funds; and (5) to appeal along with the Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to the Sovnarkom in Petrograd for money.<sup>76</sup> These measures also proved ineffectual. The gubernial council did not overcome its financial difficulties before invading German troops forced the EC members to flee from the gubernia in late April 1918.<sup>77</sup>

This evidence is not conclusive. It is not easy to determine why it was so difficult for the gubernial council to extract this tax from its supposed constituents. As the peasant deputies suggested, peasants may have been confused about the reasons for the self-tax and unsure of where to send it, though in the context of that fourth congress of the council the "reasons" offered by the deputies ring somewhat apologetic. After all, the deputies supposedly represented their volosts and were partly responsible before the gubernial council for the failure of the tax collection. It is also possible that peasants simply did not have the funds to pay the tax; this is, however, somewhat refuted by Rubinsky's statement (mentioned above) that by January 1918 the gubernia's peasants had purchased about 15 million rubles in manufactured goods and that this amount had not satisfied them.<sup>78</sup> It also seems that peasants were paying the tax in some counties, but that county and volost councils were not passing on the required fifty percent to

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76. Ibid., fol. 225. That the EC resolved to appeal to both the Sovnarkom and the Central Rada for money is not surprising if one considers the ambiguous political situation in Kharkiv in December 1917. Basically the EC recognized the overthrow of the Provisional Government as a revolution of the entire "toiling people," but called for an all-socialist government spanning the political spectrum, from Socialist Federalists to Bolsheviks, to replace the Bolshevik-dominated Sovnarkom, and recognized the Central Rada and its executive organ, the General Secretariat, as the supreme authority in Ukraine. At its fifth congress (6–7 December), the gubernial council of peasant deputies attempted to walk this same thin line. Though the congress heard reports that pro-Bolshevik troops were arriving in Kharkiv at that very moment, it still strove to reach a compromise, expressing both its support for Ukrainian autonomy and reluctance to cut ties with Russia. See the congress's minutes in *ibid.*, fols. 210–19.

77. Ibid., fols. 289 and 308.

78. Ibid., fol. 262 verso. A further indication that peasants possessed the means to pay the tax is found in their ability to pay money to rent land. According to the 1913 peasant-household census, in Kharkiv gubernia 87.3 percent of rented land had been paid for with money, and 36.7 percent of peasant households rented land. See Kharkovskaia gubernskaia zemskaia uprava, *Selskoe khoziaistvo, fabrichnaia promyshlennost' i zaniatie naseleniia Kharkovskoi gubernii* (Kharkiv, 1917), 8–9. Moreover, because local land committees significantly lowered the rent on the lands they confiscated and because of the decrease in manufactured goods available for purchase by the peasants, by 1917 the peasants likely had more money on hand than previously.

Kharkiv. (This is perhaps a further indication of peasants' localist tendencies.) Moreover, it is doubtful that the amount imposed on any one peasant household was burdensome. Even after their seizures of 1917, most households would have ended up with no more than about six desiatins each, making their tax "burden" a mere sixty kopecks per month.<sup>79</sup> Thus it is reasonable to suggest that many peasants did not pay this tax, or at least did not send it to Kharkiv, because they were not willing to support the gubernial council, even to this modest extent. Such evidence of peasants' lack of support for "their council" prompts the questions: to what extent did the resolutions and decrees of such higher level councils, gubernial and above, reflect the peasant masses' attitudes and desires; to what extent did those resolutions come to express attitudes held by those "elected" (under quite unknowable circumstances) to represent peasants; and, more importantly, to what extent did such resolutions reflect the aspirations of these higher-level councils' executive committees, largely composed of urban, socialist intelligentsia?

In conclusion, I would like first of all to stress that I am not arguing that the revolution that raged across Ukraine during the years 1917–21 was not in part national. I am merely pointing out that it was not *only* national and that Ukrainian historians' singular focus on the national aspects of the revolution has greatly obscured our understanding, leaving many people, events, and institutions out of the history of the Ukrainian revolution. Because peasants have been the most neglected and yet were the largest social group, I have focussed on them, attempting to outline the most representative expressions of their attitudes and actions. For most peasants of Kharkiv gubernia, as across the crumbling empire, the land question was primary. Outside of their essential, daily activities of cultivating the soil and feeding their animals in order to provide for their families, peasants acted above all to obtain more land, sometimes legally, sometimes not. This scramble for the land was not merely, or even primarily, a "class struggle" between peasants and landlords. Peasants fought amongst themselves as much as with landlords for the land, revealing the very local worldview that they brought to the revolution. Their localism was expressed not only in numerous inter-village conflicts, but also by their unwillingness to sacrifice for larger ideas of community. They proved reluctant to sell their grains at low government-set prices to food-supply committees, despite numerous appeals to them from Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Petrograd to save the army, Ukraine, and all of Russia from starvation. Moreover, even the gubernial council of peasants' deputies, which claimed to represent and speak on the peasants' behalf, could not enforce its decrees amongst them and proved unable even to extract

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79. According to *Vserossiiskaia selskokhoziaistvennaia perepis 1917 g. v Kharkovskoi gubernii*, 12–13, there were 450,644 peasant households in Kharkiv gubernia in 1917.

enough money from them to fund itself. And this, perhaps, suggests how poorly the gubernial council represented the views of its constituents, questions the reliability of documents generated by such higher-level councils for understanding peasants' revolutionary aspirations, and, more broadly, indicates the ephemeral and fluid nature of power in revolutionary Ukraine, at least in the rural localities.

I have been deliberately tentative in this conclusion, as I have been throughout this paper, mainly because so little social research not motivated by one ideology or another has been done on peasants in Ukraine. There is very little with which to compare. To some historians who have studied the Ukrainian Revolution, these peasants' stories may seem strange and perhaps even irrelevant. But I hope that I have shown in some small way that their experiences are worthy of historians' consideration and investigation, and that, at least, I have prompted some useful questions. I shall close with one more question: although these peasants did not take an active and important part in the national struggle, is not their history also an important part of the history of the revolution in Ukraine?



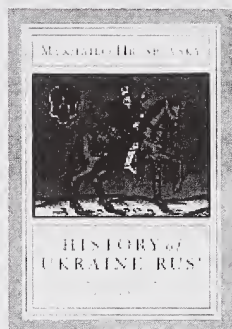
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## **The Revolution at Eighty: Reconstructing Past Identities after the “Linguistic Turn”**

*Serhy Yekelchuk*

In 1978, when François Furet coined “The French Revolution is over,” the rallying cry of French revisionists, Soviet historians were toiling diligently at developing the official grand narrative of the “Great October Socialist Revolution.” Far removed from the ideological dictates of Soviet Party functionaries, Western students of the Revolution of 1917 felt free to engage in revisionist undertakings. But the revisionism that developed in Soviet studies in the West during the 1960s and 1970s and effectively became the “new orthodoxy” by the late 1980s did not correspond to its counterpart in French historiography. The French revisionists negated the once-dominant Marxist social history in favour of neo-liberal political and cultural interpretations of the French Revolution. In contrast, the Western historians of the Revolution of 1917 proceeded to displace the traditional liberal “political history” of that revolution with an innovative social-history approach.<sup>1</sup> In 1994 Ronald Grigor Suny finally addressed the contradictory ways in which contemporary historiographies of the two great European revolutions were developing. He suggested that the historians of the Russian Revolution emulate their French colleagues in examining the discursive

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1. On the recent developments in the historiography of the French Revolution, see Gwynne Lewis, *The French Revolution: Rethinking the Debate* (New York: Routledge, 1993); T. C. W. Blanning, ed., *The Rise and Fall of the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Gary Kates, ed., *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 1998). On the historiography of the Russian Revolution, see Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (London: Edward Arnold, 1990); and Ronald Grigor Suny, “Toward a Social History of the October Revolution,” *American Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (February 1983): 31–52.

construction of the revolutionary world, albeit without denying the reality of social relations expressed through and shaped by the discourse.<sup>2</sup>

Although I fully support Suny's call for a new social history recognizing the role of language, representations, and cultural codes, I believe that there is also a need to consider another challenge to the Western social history of the revolution—the challenge that Vladyslav Verstiuk's article in this issue exemplifies so well. The fall of Soviet-style socialism prompted historians in the former USSR to reverse their vision of the revolution. In his discussion of Western historiography of the Revolution of 1917, Suny noted in passing that “[t]he interpretation of the October seizure of power as either a coup d'état without popular support or the result of a fortuitous series of accidents in the midst of the ‘galloping chaos’ of the revolution (the view of Robert V. Daniels)” had taken root in latter-day Soviet and post-Soviet public discourse.<sup>3</sup> A year before Suny, Diane P. Koenker complained that scholars of Russia and the general public were disenchanted with the revolution and its values and seemed to embrace the interpretations by the senior conservative critic of the revolution, Richard Pipes.<sup>4</sup>

However, the post-Soviet reception of the revolution is much more complicated than the transition from the obligatory “class approach” and glorification to pragmatic “political explanation” and denunciation. The post-Soviet Russian historians' idea of the revolution differs markedly from the views of their non-Russian colleagues. In current Russian public discourse, the revolution is understood as an illegitimate conspiratorial blow to Russian statehood and great-power status, as an event diverting Russia from its way to modernity.<sup>5</sup> The Ukrainian historians, in contrast, celebrate the revolution as their people's drive to overthrow Russian colonial domination, re-establish their statehood, and thus “return” to the road to modernity. (Of course, the evil Bolsheviks ultimately blocked Ukrainian nation-building.) The different ways in which Russian and non-Russian historiographies of the revolution are evolving in the post-Soviet ideological space reveal a larger shift in the post-communist *Philosophie der Geschichte*. Whether consciously or not, the post-Soviet historians are struggling to replace the Soviet *class-based* notion of modernity with some sort of presumably “normal” and “Western” *nation-based* vision. Ver-

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2. Ronald Grigor Suny, “Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics,” *Russian Review* 53 (April 1994): 165–82.

3. Suny, “Revision and Retreat,” 168–9. The book by Robert V. Daniels that he is referring to is *Red October: The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917* (New York: Scribner, 1967).

4. Diane P. Koenker, review of *The Russian Revolution* by Richard Pipes, *Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 2 (June 1993): 432–5, here 434.

5. See R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Yeltsin Era* (London: Macmillan, 1997), esp. 37–80.

stiuk's think-piece, however, demonstrates that the best Ukrainian students of the revolution feel uneasy about a simple change from the grand narrative of Class to that of Nation. Having just rejected the reductivist Soviet model of the revolution, they approach the nationalist model with justifiable skepticism. Although Suny and Verstiuk arrive at the historiographic crossroads from opposite directions, they are ultimately facing the same dilemma: how to go beyond the traditional master-narratives in the depiction of an infinitely complex revolutionary era.

## **Toward a New Cultural History of the Revolution**

Verstiuk begins his article by suggesting that the students of the Ukrainian Revolution liberate themselves from the dictate of ideologies. He refers to what John-Paul Himka has identified as the traditional domination of the two principal paradigms in the historiography of the revolutionary events of 1917–20 in Ukraine. The first, the “Ukrainian national” paradigm, holds that the events constituted a specifically Ukrainian revolution aimed at establishing a Ukrainian nation-state; the second, the “Soviet,” considers those events part and parcel of the overall Russian Revolution and Civil War. Himka has noted that “[t]he intersection of the social and national revolutions in Ukraine provides abundant material for the study of modern social mobilization along national and class lines, but this opportunity has been largely neglected.”<sup>6</sup> Verstiuk's think-piece is the closest post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography has come to taking up this conceptual challenge. He calls for a structuralist history of the Ukrainian Revolution that would account for a complex interplay of social and national factors. He does not follow the old nationalist writers in unproblematically separating the “Ukrainian” revolution from the “Russian” one; instead, he emulates Roman Szporluk in putting the revolutionary events in Ukraine in their proper East European context.<sup>7</sup> Mark Baker demonstrates in his contribution that Verstiuk's discussion of Ukrainian nation-building, the national elites, the social base of the nation-building project, and the ideological visions of various leaders positions him strategically within the “national” paradigm.<sup>8</sup> Baker's own

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6. John-Paul Himka, “The National and the Social in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–20,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 95–110, here 95–6. Verstiuk is aware of this article.

7. See Roman Szporluk's review of *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak with the assistance of John T. von der Heide (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977), in *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 14 (1978–80): 267–71; and idem, “Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State,” *Daedalus* 126, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 85–119. Verstiuk cites the first of these works.

8. See Baker's article in this issue.

research shows how subtle social-history case studies can question the salient notions of both Soviet and nationalist visions of the revolution. However, both the existing corpus of works on the revolutionary events in Ukraine and the present discussion almost completely ignore *new cultural history*—the paramount industry in current historiography of the French Revolution and the increasingly influential field in recent works on the Russian Revolution.<sup>9</sup>

Some Western historians of the Russian Revolution have already issued a call to recognize the ways in which symbolically articulated social practices, cultural codes, and discourses “constitute the economic, social and political spaces in which people in the past acted.”<sup>10</sup> Others have rebuffed this call.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the growing debate within French historiography has revealed the conceptual pitfalls of the “linguistic turn.” I will return to that below, but first I would like to argue that new cultural history has enormous potential in the study of the revolution in Ukraine. It attends to the problems that both the historians of Class and Nation are facing in reconstructing their social groups as historical agents and recovering their past experiences. Cultural historians have always been attentive to language and representation, to the way cultural products were “read,” consumed, and used, and to their connection with social practices. In the Ukrainian case, the “linguistic approach to political culture”<sup>12</sup> can open new vistas for both social and political historians.

Long overdue is an investigation of the “vocabularies” that gave such a peculiar shape to the revolution in Ukraine. The “statistical” history of the Ukrainian language during the revolution has been told by many scholars. Both the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Hetmanite monarchy proclaimed the previously suppressed Ukrainian the official language of the country and promoted the Ukrainization of the educational system. The number of Ukrainian

9. On recent trends in cultural history, see Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); and Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

10. Steve Smith, “Writing the History of the Russian Revolution after the Fall of Communism,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 4 (1994): 563–78, here 568. For a very sophisticated and interesting early product of this “linguistic turn” in the study of the Russian Revolution, see Donald J. Raleigh, “Languages of Power: How the Saratov Bolsheviks Imagined Their Enemies,” *Slavic Review* 57, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 320–49.

11. Edward Acton, “The Revolution and Its Historians: The *Critical Companion* in Context,” in Edward Acton, Vladimir Iu. Cherniaev, and William G. Rosenberg, eds., *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914–1921* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 3–17, here 13–16.

12. This definition has been coined by one of its principal exponents, Keith Michael Baker, in his *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.



periodicals exploded to 106 in 1917 and 212 in 1918, and that of books to 747 titles in 1917 and 1,084 in 1918. Independent statehood instantly propelled certain types of Ukrainian books into bestsellers. In 1918 the circulation of elementary textbooks in Ukrainian reached 950,000 copies. Ukrainian “national” discourse on history and politics also acquired an official and “prestigious” status, evidenced by unprecedented sales of Mykhailo Hrushevsky’s booklet *What Type of Autonomy Do We Want?* (80,000 copies in four months) and his *Illustrated History of Ukraine* (19,000 copies in one month).<sup>13</sup> Not all buyers and readers shared Hrushevsky’s views, to be sure. Yet Vladimir Vernadsky’s diary reveals that even this opponent of Ukrainian separatism found it necessary to study Hrushevsky’s multi-volume *History of Ukraine-Rus’*.<sup>14</sup> The publication of self-instruction manuals of Ukrainian and Russian-Ukrainian dictionaries almost overnight became a profitable business. Fifty-nine manuals appeared in the years 1917–19, while only eleven were published during the entire preceding century. Three Ukrainian-Russian dictionaries and no fewer than fifteen Russian-Ukrainian ones were published in the years 1917–19, along with eight dictionaries of Ukrainian legal and administrative terminology, four each in medicine, physics and chemistry, and technology, three in natural history and geography, and one each in military science and mathematics.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, the revolutionary invention of new words and meanings has remained understudied. In his book on the twentieth-century history of the Ukrainian language, George Y. Shevelov was able to offer “only a few observations and tentative generalizations, based on limited data.” He noted the “historical romanticism” of the Ukrainian nationalist governments that resuscitated the antiquated terminology of the seventeenth-century Cossack state, especially the names of state offices and decrees, monetary units, and officer ranks: *rada*, *hetman*, *holovnyi otaman*, *heneralnyi pysar*, *karbovanets*, *hryvnia*, *shah*, *serdiuky*, *roiovy*, *chotovy*, *bunchuzhnyi*, *sotnyk*, and so on. Hetman Skoropadsky reintroduced some more “modern” but manifestly Russian imperial terms, such as *rada ministriv*, *huberniia*, and *derzhavnyi senat*. The restored Ukrainian People’s Republic of 1918–19, in contrast, introduced into Ukrainian

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13. George Y. Shevelov, *The Ukrainian Language in the First Half of the Twentieth Century (1900–1941): Its State and Status* (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1989), 74–8.

14. V. I. Vernadsky, *Dnevniki 1917 – 1921: Oktiabr 1917 – ianvar 1920* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1994), 81, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 105, 107. Vernadsky read vol. 6 of Hrushevsky’s history in June 1918. A personal opponent of Hrushevsky, he noted the historian’s awkward scholarly Ukrainian language and his general “lack of originality.” In May 1918 Vernadsky wrote in his diary: “I think the Ukrainian language is heard [on the streets of Kyiv] a bit more often than before” (p. 81).

15. Shevelov, *The Ukrainian Language*, 78–9.

political discourse notions associated with the French Revolution, democracy, and labour: *dyrektoriia*, *trudovi kongres*, and *Rada narodnikh ministriv*.<sup>16</sup>

Interestingly, Shevelov concentrates exclusively on state- and nation-building terms and completely ignores the powerful and innovative *socialist* vocabulary of the Ukrainian Revolution. The works of Soviet Ukrainian linguists provide a partial remedy. They register, for instance, the new meaning of the previously little-used word *tovarysh* (comrade), which became the accepted form of address among socialists. The Ukrainian word for “Soviet,” the adjective *radianskyi*, came to be one of the most important neologisms in Soviet Ukrainian. Some old words, such as *komisar* (commissioner, commissar) and *pan* (gentleman, landlord), acquired new connotations, while others were combined to create new Soviet abbreviations with completely new referents, such as *revkom* (revolutionary committee) and *partoseredok* (Communist Party cell).<sup>17</sup> However, many more questions about the revolutionary language remain to be asked and answered. How did the vocabulary of the old order break down? Undoubtedly “socialism,” “democracy,” and “autonomy” became the preferred idioms of Ukrainian politics in 1917, but what did different social and national groups understand by them? How did the connotative meaning of these terms change, say, by late 1918?

The question of the political and cultural construction of the new Ukrainian identity during the revolution has also not been seriously addressed. During the last decade, Ukrainian scholars have produced dozens of books and hundreds of articles about Ukraine’s greatest historian and first president, Mykhailo Hrushevsky. Nevertheless, no one seems to be puzzled by the fact that in 1917, with the Ukrainian Revolution on the rise, Hrushevsky took time to write the popular booklet *Who Are the Ukrainians and What Do They Want?*<sup>18</sup> Writing such a brochure in Russian or German would have been legitimate. But the head of the Ukrainian parliament wrote this text in *Ukrainian*. This fact alone could seriously undermine the notion that current Ukrainian historiography is increasingly adopting—the idea of a primordial Ukrainian nation “naturally” advancing toward statehood. Was it not Hrushevsky himself who stated as early as 1908: “The idea of nationality, which appears to us so elementary and clear in its contemporary form, is an invention of late modern times. In earlier times

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16. *Ibid.*, 81–2.

17. See P. P. Pliushch, *Istoriia ukrainskoi literaturnoi movy* (Kyiv: Vyshcha shkola, 1971), 398–408; and V. M. Rusanivsky, ed., *Istoriia ukrainskoi movy: Leksyka i frazeolohiia* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1983), 557–91.

18. Reprinted in A. P. Demydenko, ed., *Velykyi ukrainets: Materialy z zhyttia ta diialnosti M. S. Hrushevskoho* (Kyiv: Veselka, 1992), 61–75.

the notions of political, class, religious, geographical, and cultural loyalty substituted for it.”<sup>19</sup>

Rich in invented traditions, rituals, and festivals, the revolutionary events in Ukraine could provide material for many studies of revolutionary political culture, this “set of discourses or symbolic practices by which [political claims] are made.”<sup>20</sup> The literature on festivals in the French Revolution is already vast.<sup>21</sup> Recent insightful studies by Richard Stites and James Von Geldern have manifested the turn to studying cultural practices during the Russian Revolution.<sup>22</sup> Puzzlingly, the contemporary historians of the revolution in Ukraine continue ignoring the events that most memorialists had found impressive and worth describing, such as the Ukrainian rallies in Petrograd and Kyiv in March 1917 or the string of colourful gatherings and ceremonies on St. Sophia Square in Kyiv during the years 1917–20.

The Ukrainian rally in Petrograd on 12 (25) March 1917 is particularly well-documented and cries out for analysis by a cultural historian. It began as a memorial service for the greatest Ukrainian poet and nationalist icon, Taras Shevchenko (1814–61), at the Kazan Cathedral. After singing Shevchenko’s “Testament,” then used as an unofficial Ukrainian anthem, the gathering before the cathedral evolved into a public march through the central streets of the capital. The Ukrainian units of the Russian army paraded at the head of the column, led by the former tsar’s personal escort of Kuban Cossacks in “old Cossack dress.” Although the Cossacks wore the same uniforms at the tsar’s service, this time they paraded under the traditional Cossack standards and Ukrainian blue-and-yellow flags, so that the observers perceived the dress as “Ukrainian.” The Ukrainian manifestation made an enormous impression on Petrograd’s public and generated a discussion of the “Ukrainian question” in Russia’s leading newspapers.<sup>23</sup> Generally, Cossack pageants and Cossack

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19. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Kulturno-natsionalnyi rukh na Ukraini* [1908], repr. in his *Dukhovna Ukraina: Zbirka tvoriv* (Kyiv: Lybid, 1994), 143.

20. This definition comes from Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, 4.

21. Especially interesting are Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989).

22. Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); idem, “Festival and Revolution: The Role of Public Spectacle in Russia, 1917–1918,” in John W. Strong, ed., *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism* (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, 1990), 9–28; and James Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

23. See Pavlo Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materiialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii*

symbolism played an extraordinarily important role in the political rituals of the Ukrainian Revolution.

However, future practitioners of the new cultural history of the revolution in Ukraine should be aware of conceptual pitfalls awaiting them beyond the "linguistic turn." Much of the recent work on the French revolutionary political culture has been based on the assumption that language is constitutive of social reality. Deeply engaged in intellectual struggle against Marxism as some leading French revisionists have been, they have replaced the Marxist socio-economic explanation of the revolution with an emphasis on its political causes and the extent to which the revolutionary discourse was conditioned by contemporary cultural codes. Their critics immediately reminded them that language is inevitably embedded in social relations of power and domination. The actors deploy the language in certain "social sites," and the discourse of change acquires meaning only in relation to existing social and political realities, such as class or exploitation.<sup>24</sup> Other skeptics have argued that even the most subtle materialist critique of the linguistic turn basically attempts to anchor historical analysis in some stable and presumably non-linguistic social domain, while the major weakness of the linguistic approach to political culture lies in its "failure to integrate systems of beliefs into the analysis of language use."<sup>25</sup> To take a Ukrainian example, one can examine the way *Robitnycha hazeta* construed the image of "Ukrainian workers" in 1917 by comparing it with statistical data about the "real" workers and their "real" demands. But the proper referent for the newspaper's political language would be the ideology of Ukrainian social democracy. Such an approach neither denies the objective existence of the working class nor presents it as existing somewhere in the realm of socio-

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1917–1920 rr., vol. 1 (Vienna, 1921; New York: Vydavnytstvo Chartoryiskyykh, 1969), 26–8; and Oleksander Lototsky, *Storinky mynuloho*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1934; Sound Bound Brook: Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA, 1966), 330–9.

24. The orthodox Marxist response to new cultural history is represented by Bryan Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). Other critics do not share Palmer's contempt for discourse analysis, but still insist that class ultimately remains the principal site of political transformation. See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History and Postmodernism IV," *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 194–208; and Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, "Starting Over: The Present, the Post-modern and the Moment of Social History," *Social History* 20, no. 2 (October 1995): 355–64. For a critique specific to the role of cultural idioms in the French Revolution, see Theda Scopol, "Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Reconstruction of State Power: A Rejoinder to Sewell," in Blanning, *The Rise and Fall of the French Revolution*, 314–24.

25. Jay M. Smith, "No More Language Games: Words, Beliefs, and the Political Culture of Early Modern France," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1997): 1413–40, here 1415–17.

economic “objectivity” outside of a semantic field. Instead it brings to the surface the evolving values of political agents who expressed and shaped the new reality in terms of revolutionary discourse.<sup>26</sup>

## Enter Martin Guerre

I submit that a close reading of well-known sources can reveal the neglected dimensions of the Ukrainian Revolution—its cultural codes, rituals, vocabularies, and discursive strategies. Fascinating stories are out there waiting for a researcher to uncover and analyze. For instance, memoirs represent a much-read but poorly analyzed source on the revolutionary era. In the Ukrainian case, scholars both in Ukraine and in the West refer extensively to the autobiographical writings of several leading personalities—Hrushevsky, Vynnychenko, Skoropadsky—but usually only to establish a fact noted there or to extract the writer’s conceptual views on Ukrainian nation-building. Meanwhile most of the memoirs of the revolutionary era also represent a rich catalogue of “cultural codes” that the writers’ contemporaries used to shape and express their social ideas and their own identities. The rise of “micro-history” has given social historians license to examine individual stories as cultural narratives opening unique windows into past societies.<sup>27</sup> The celebrated story of Martin Guerre, which provided a plot for the acclaimed French film *Le Retour de Martin Guerre* (1982) and a topic for provocative discussion on the pages of the *American Historical Review*, exemplifies the new way of studying past identities. Natalie Zemon Davies has shown that the fake Martin, Arnaud du Tilh, successfully impersonated the

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26. Compare Suny’s explanation of how worker’s values related to their material conditions: “The material conditions of these workers could ‘objectively’ have been calculated in hours or wages or even in calories, but their self-representation as loyal subjects or as militant proletarians cannot be deduced from their ‘material’ conditions: it must be referred to the larger, competitive discourse universes in which these workers found themselves” (“Revision and Retreat,” 181). See also two recent insightful studies of the Bolshevik and Kadet political discourse: Raleigh, “The Languages of Power”; and William G. Rosenberg, “Representing Workers and the Liberal Narrative of Modernity,” *Slavic Review* 55, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 245–69.

27. On the advantages of micro-history, see Carlo Ginzburg, “Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm,” in his *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 96–125; and Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” in Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 93–113. The most celebrated case studies include Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); and Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).



missing man because he played a role that was plausible to the sixteenth-century villagers of Artigat.<sup>28</sup>

Similar captivating stories of impersonation and the changing of one's identity can be found in Ukrainian memoir literature on the revolution. Ivan Maistrenko's well-known *History of My Generation* is particularly striking in this respect.<sup>29</sup> A non-Bolshevik Ukrainian communist, Maistrenko was only seventeen in 1917 and, unlike Hrushevsky, Vynnychenko, and Skoropadsky, did not take part in momentous political events in Kyiv. The revolution he remembered was primarily a story of confusing and violent changes in the small towns and villages of Poltava gubernia. While standing by his political beliefs, Maistrenko often changed his party and military affiliations and even his own name; moreover, as an intelligence agent of his group of Ukrainian communists, he crossed the front lines of the Civil War many times. Consequently his memoirs demonstrate unusual sensitivity to what the present-day scholar would call "cultural construction" or even the "carnavalesque" aspect of the revolutionary identities.

Consider Maistrenko's description of the "invention" of a new public phenomenon, the mass political manifestation, out of the elements of religious traditions and modern nationalist and revolutionary symbols. In the small Ukrainian town of Opishnie in the spring of 1917, a group of radical Ukrainian activists from the neighbouring village of Mali Budyshcha ordered the local icon-dauber to copy Nikolai Repin's famous portrait of the greatest Ukrainian poet and "father of the nation," Taras Shevchenko. The organizers set off this "icon" with traditional Ukrainian embroidered cloth and, imitating a church procession, flocked to Opishnie with the portrait at the head of the peasant column. Instead of gonfalons the participants carried blue-and-yellow (Ukrainian) and red (revolutionary) standards. All this happened on either Sunday or the second day of Easter, which was also the day of the district peasant gathering. After securing an audience of some three thousand people at the central square, the Ukrainian activists opened the meeting that marked the beginning of the Ukrainian revival in Opishnie. Eighteen-year-old Maistrenko took part in the manifestation as a member of the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries and a local organizer of the Peasant Union. Two years later, on 1 May 1919, he marshalled a procession with a meeting in another small district town of Poltava gubernia, Kustolove. Then twenty, Maistrenko was affiliated with the Borotbists, a group of Ukrainian Left Socialist Revolutionaries

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28. See Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; Robert Finlay, "The Refashioning of Martin Guerre," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (June 1988): 553–71; and Natalie Zemon Davis, "On the Lame," *ibid.*: 572–603.

29. Ivan Maistrenko, *Istoriia moho pokolinnia: Spohady uchasnyka revoliutsiinykh podii v Ukraini* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985).

that allied itself with the Bolsheviks in an effort to strengthen the soviets' power in Ukraine: "We received from the centre portraits of the leaders of the revolution—Lenin and Trotsky—and our people carried them like [they did] the icons during church processions; [only] now [the portraits were] set off not with embroidered *rushnyky* but with red cloth."<sup>30</sup>

In the late summer of 1919 Maistrenko found himself serving as the political commissar of a partisan regiment. The Borotbists of Kobeliaky county formed this unit to assist the Red Army in defending Ukraine against the overwhelming offensive of Anton Denikin's White Army. Just as the front lines were in flux, so too were the political affiliations. The party group of Maistrenko's regiment decided to break with the Borotbists, and they tentatively adopted the name Ukrainian Party of Communists. This decision, however, did not presume either an ideological or an organizational evolution towards the retreating Bolsheviks. In fact Maistrenko and his comrades-in-arms planned to join the armed forces of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), which had been created by the moderate Ukrainian socialist parties. During the autumn and winter of 1919 Maistrenko crossed the front lines several times in attempts to establish ties with the Ukrainian socialist underground in White-occupied areas. He describes his first encounter with a White patrol:

When [the two riders] reached me, one of them asked for matches to light [his] cigarette. I gave him [some]. Then, after he had already ridden past me, he turned and shouted: "You didn't serve with the 'comrades' [in the Red Army], did you?" I replied proudly, "No, I'm a teacher!" Meaning that how could a teacher [possibly] serve with the "comrades." That [answer] was enough for the riders, and they rode off.<sup>31</sup>

Maistrenko got into trouble again while a White patrol searched his room in a Kyiv hotel. Fortunately he had made a point of drawing the soldiers' attention to the large, gold religious medallion (a gift from his uncle who was a monk) that he had on a chain around his neck, and consequently the patrol departed and left Maistrenko in peace: no communist would have kept such a thing close to his heart. Although he had no contact names or addresses, Maistrenko soon managed to link up with the Ukrainian socialist underground. His only "password" was his literary Ukrainian: "In those times, when one intellectual addressed [another] intellectual in Ukrainian, this was the best proof that he was one of us [*svii*] and not a Denikinite or a Bolshevik, for neither the first [the Denikinites] nor the second [the Bolsheviks] had their own Ukrainianized agents." But speaking proper Ukrainian did not help Maistrenko as he made his way back to the UNR army. He was detained by a Galician unit, and its

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30. Ibid., 20, 54.

31. Ibid., 69.

commanding officer had him arrested as a suspected White spy: in the officer's native Western Ukraine under Austro-Hungarian rule, speaking literary Ukrainian did not prove one had certain political sympathies.<sup>32</sup>

On his next trip behind the Denikin lines, Maistrenko relied on a different "cultural code" to ensure his safety. While making his way on foot, he often stayed overnight with Jewish families. The latter looked frightened and were uncommunicative until Maistrenko "quietly sang to myself the 'Internationale' (only people close to the [socialist] cause could sing it) and [thus] more or less friendly relations with the young generation [of Jews] were established." Soon Maistrenko reached Poltava gubernia, where many people knew him as a Ukrainian communist revolutionary. He bought a pince-nez and learned to press his lips together, but old acquaintances recognized and greeted him from the moment he stepped off the railway car. On his way back to the regiment, Maistrenko travelled together with Nina Konotopska, a rich Poltava merchant's teenage daughter who had become fascinated by Ukrainian nationalism and had decided to join the UNR army. "Nina's proposal [to travel together] suited me because travelling with a girl looked less suspicious under the Denikin regime than if I were travelling on my own." Although they posed as a young couple, the two travellers did not share each other's political views; in fact, Maistrenko's regiment was fighting against the UNR even as the couple journeyed through the White Army's rear lines.<sup>33</sup>

Upon learning that his regiment had deserted the Ukrainian front, Maistrenko returned to his native Opishnie (then under the Whites) in late November 1919. He had stopped in a neighbouring village to buy bread and milk when suddenly the news came that an armed group was approaching. Here is how he handled the difficult dilemma of not revealing his identity to the local peasants:

Everyone inside the hut jumped to their feet, grabbed what they could of their clothing, and rushed outside. I figured that they [the approaching armed men] were partisans, [and] perhaps even [from] my own [regiment], but I had to express solidarity with the others, who were regarding me even with the suspicion that I might belong to those [partisans] who were approaching. Together with the others I ran into the steppe, where there were no woods or gardens—[just] green winter wheat and black ploughed fields. I kept on running, choosing the route in the direction of Opishnie. When I [finally] found myself alone in the steppe, I began thinking: should I seek an encounter with those partisans or should I continue on my way to Opishnie. After all, they were not necessarily "my" partisans. Besides, on the horizon I could not see mounted or infantry soldiers, only a bare, twilight autumn sky. So I continued on in the direction of Opishnie.<sup>34</sup>

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32. Ibid., 86, 87–8, 90–1. The quotation is on p. 87.

33. Ibid., 96–7.

34. Ibid., 101.

While living in Poltava gubernia under the Whites, Maistrenko found himself in the midst of a confusing carnival of identities. His older brother Petro, a former teacher and officer in the tsarist army, repeatedly tried to persuade him that “only the strong authority of General Denikin can establish the necessary [law and] order,” but Petro himself would soon be conscripted into the Red Army and put in command of a Red armoured train. In Poltava Maistrenko met a beautiful UNR intelligence agent, Lesia Komendant. There the underground Ukrainian communist organizer and the Ukrainian nationalist spymistress attended “Ukrainian salons,” where Komendant exquisitely recited Oleksandr Oles’s then popular poem “Aistry” (Asters). Meanwhile the Red Army was fast approaching. Maistrenko and his comrades awaited the Bolsheviks as allies, but charming Lesia had to escape to UNR-controlled territory. For that purpose Maistrenko helped her to obtain a fake Soviet identity card.<sup>35</sup>

During the very last days of the White regime in Poltava, Maistrenko experienced the most thrilling of his Civil War adventures. It resembles the story of the sixteenth-century French peasant Martin Guerre. Maistrenko had been living in Poltava with an old fake passport identifying him as a teacher called Fedir Rudych. He also had another, more reliable fake ID bearing the name of his childhood friend Mykola Vasyliiev, but it lacked a picture. Maistrenko was looking for a photographer on Poltava’s central avenue to take his photo when he was suddenly apprehended by another native of his village, the White officer Fastivets. Although Maistrenko was wearing a pince-nez with dark lenses and pressing his lips together as strongly as he could to disguise himself, Fastivets recognized him as a former member of the local revolutionary committee. While being transported to the military barracks, Maistrenko managed to eat the passport identifying him as Rudych. As it happens, the arresting officer could not remember Maistrenko’s name, but he knew the real Vasyliiev well and was irritated by Maistrenko’s insistence that he was Vasyliiev. Maistrenko was placed in prison to await imminent execution.

Suddenly the door to Maistrenko’s cell opened, and another White officer entered. Incredibly enough, the visitor was yet another fellow-villager and a former teacher from Opishnie, Mykola Fedirka, who was engaged to the real Vasyliiev’s sister. As if this were not enough, Fedirka had met the real Vasyliiev only the day before. Nonetheless Maistrenko clung to his initial statement that he was Vasyliiev from Opishnie, gave Vasyliiev’s exact address, and described his family. Dumbfounded, the officer left. As it happens, he also did not remember Maistrenko’s name. Then guards escorted Maistrenko to a room full of White officers. When a captain asked him his name, he said he was Vasyliiev from Opishnie. After two other officers testified that he was not Vasyliiev, however,

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35. *Ibid.*, 101–2 (Petro), 106–7 (Lesia).



Maistrenko confessed that he was Ivan Maistrenko from Opishnie but insisted that he was not a revolutionary. The captain then asked him to recount his autobiography.

For some reason I felt that whether I would continue living or not would depend on what I would say. So I spoke as eloquently as I never had [before] in my life.

The main thrust of my speech was to show that the many [members] of my family were [university] students and high-school pupils and that my older brother also [had been] an officer. On the other hand, I tried to put things in such a way so as not to contradict what Fedirka could say about me. After I finished my speech, the captain, as if confirming that Fedirka had said the same thing, asked: "And now tell us frankly what your convictions are." I answered, "I am a Ukrainian." That answer would not have pleased the faithful Denikinite supporters of [one,] indivisible [Russia]. However, in Poltava a Ukrainian newspaper was being published, [and] there were Ukrainian schools, albeit only private [ones] there. So I intentionally did not specify [what] my being a Ukrainian [meant]. I could have been a Hetmanite (and although Denikin did not allow former Hetmanites to serve in the civil service, he did not persecute them). I could have been a supporter of the UNR (who were Denikin's opponents). Finally, I could even have been a Ukrainian communist, whom Denikin, of course, used to have shot. I did not want to be specific, and that was good. After [uttering] my words "I am a Ukrainian," some of the officers cheered with delight. Aha, I thought, the Ukrainians here are not afraid to reveal themselves.<sup>36</sup>

Luckily for Maistrenko, most of the officers in that White unit appeared to be apolitical members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia whom Denikin had conscripted by force. They let Maistrenko go free, and some even shook his hand, saying "Well, you Ukrainian!" The arresting officer, Fastivets, also shook Maistrenko's hand, but warned: "Mr. Maistrenko! If you are a Ukrainian, I shake your hand. But if you are a Bolshevik, then beware—I will get you sooner or later!" Maistrenko's other fellow-villager, Fedirka, confessed to him that he had been a Red partisan commander in 1918 and asked Maistrenko to link him up with the partisans. (Later he deserted the Whites but was captured by Red partisans and executed as a White officer.) After his release, Maistrenko met the real Mykola Vasyliiev and borrowed his theological seminary-student overcoat as additional protection from arrest. Wearing this coat and accompanied by two pretty girls, he walked through Poltava to a hiding place. Three days later a Red partisan regiment entered Poltava. Incredibly, its commanding officer was yet another fellow-villager.

As a member of the Ukrainian Communist Party (of Borotbists), Maistrenko participated in the consolidation of Soviet power structures in Poltava gubernia. In March 1920 his party merged with the ruling Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) of Ukraine (CP[b]U), but soon after Maistrenko left the Bolsheviks to join the rival Ukrainian Communist Party (UCP), the successor of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Independentists). On this occasion he also

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36. Ibid., 107–13; the longer quotation is on 111–12.



dropped his Borotbist pseudonym, Ivan Daleky, and started using the name Ivan Zernytsky. Meanwhile the local Red Army commissar had been looking for Ivan Daleky, who had not reported along with his age group when it had been called up for military service. After discovering that Maistrenko was Daleky, Maistrenko was apprehended and quickly found himself a private in a Red Army regiment. The Central Committee of the UCP immediately sent off a letter on special letterhead requesting his release. "The [regimental] commander did not understand the difference between the Central Committee of the UCP and that of the CP(b)U, and perhaps he even thought they were identical because he knew [of] only one Communist party, and he gave me a furlough at once." In the tiny UCP Maistrenko immediately became a candidate member of its Central Committee and head of that party's Kharkiv gubernial committee.<sup>37</sup>

The story of the Ukrainian revolutionary version of Martin Guerre reminds the reader of one of the primary postulates of new cultural history: that culture is not just reflective but also *performative*. Rituals, narratives, naming games, and other cultural practices do not passively reflect a culture, but shape it.<sup>38</sup>

Maistrenko learned this truth the hard way. The agonizing ambiguity of his identity choices led him to a nervous breakdown at the age of twenty-one. As a local Soviet official in the summer of 1920, he experienced the horror of peasant violent resistance to grain requisitioning. Sixty years later he still remembered his fear of travelling in a countryside engulfed by the peasant rebellions. In the winter of 1920–21, Maistrenko survived typhoid but developed paranoid delusions:

I continued to believe that the insurgents had taken me prisoner and were brutally torturing me. At that time the insurgents were stopping the trains going to Kharkiv (especially between the stations Iama and Lyman), escorting [all] communists out of the cars, and executing them. The rumour was that when the insurgents captured Red Army soldiers carrying out grain requisitioning, they cut the soldiers' bellies open while they were still alive and filled them with grain. Although I was then opposed to the Bolshevik government in Ukraine, psychologically I felt on their side at the front; I also had a UCP member's party card, and the insurgents certainly did not understand which Communist party was Bolshevik and which one was Ukrainian, just as most Bolsheviks did not.<sup>39</sup>

Insomnia and anxiety haunted Maistrenko for years after the Civil War. In the meantime the bloody carnival of revolutionary identities evolved into a cohesive Bolshevik party-state. In 1925 the Comintern decreed that the UCP must disband;

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37. Ibid., 146–7.

38. See Sarah Maza, "Stories in History: Cultural Narratives in Recent Works in European History," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 5 (December 1996): 1493–1515, here 1501.

39. Maistrenko, *Istoriia moho pokolinnia*, 142–3 (summer of 1920), 170–1 (winter of 1920).

after that decision Maistrenko joined the ruling CP(b)U for the third time in his life. His ambiguous revolutionary past would haunt him in more than one sense, and it resulted in his arrest as a member of a "Ukrainian nationalist Trotskyist" terrorist group in 1936. (Fortunately his nebulous case did not hold together, and Maistrenko was imprisoned "merely" for counter-revolutionary agitation. He died in Munich in 1985, just after reading the proofs of his memoirs.)

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John-Paul Himka ended his 1994 article by calling on Ukrainian historians to emulate the "ready-made, successful model: the social history of the Russian Revolution that has flourished in the West, mainly in the Anglophone West, for well over a decade." At the same time he cautioned against ignoring the national factor, the investigation of which could require social historians of Ukraine to advance new questions and new methods.<sup>40</sup> Vladyslav Verstiuk proceeds from the opposite direction, using social history only to explain the specifics of Ukrainian national-building. Both approaches, however, reflect a promising decentralization of grand narratives in studying the Ukrainian Revolution. Geoff Eley has remarked that "social history in its amorphous but aggrandizing form of the 1970s ceased to exist: it lost its coherence as an intellectual project."<sup>41</sup> The same, I would add, has happened to the study of nationalism or nation-building. Suny's "Revision and Retreat" demonstrated that historians of the Russian Revolution are taking up the challenge of new cultural history. In Ukrainian history, likewise, no longer can the revolutionary identities be taken as given, stable, and "objective." It is now up to historians to listen to the many and varied voices of the revolution.

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40. Himka, "The National and the Social," 109–10.

41. Geoff Eley, "Is All the World a Text? From Social History to the History of Society Two Decades Later," in Terence J. McDonald, ed., *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 193–226, here 225. Eley goes on to say that "[t]he 'new cultural history' or cultural studies is currently taking its place."

## Review Article

### Stalin's War against the Peasants: Questions and Meanings

Andrea Graziosi

Lynne Viola. *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. xii, 312 pp. \$73.95 cloth.

Valerii Vasyliiev (Vasilev) and Lynne Viola, eds. *Kolektyvizatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini (lystopad 1929–berezhen 1930 r.r. / Kollektivizatsiia i krestianskoe soprotivlenie na Ukraine (noiabr 1929–mart 1930 g.g.))*. Vinnytsia: Logos, 1997. 536 pp. U.S. \$40.00 cloth. Distributed by the Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Pittsburgh.

These important books deal with the beginning of the final stage in the confrontation between the Soviet state and its multinational peasant and nomadic population that culminated in the terrible famine of 1932–33. They thereby contribute to focussing the attention of specialists—and, one hopes, of the historical profession in general—on a human tragedy of immense proportions, the understanding of which is central to any proper reconstruction of the history of twentieth-century Europe. Although the two books constitute a unitary whole, I shall deal with each of them separately, starting with Lynne Viola's monograph. This will put into a proper light one of Viola's best qualities—her ability to see what her sources tell her and to grow from that.

This quality is already clearly attested by the difference between *Peasant Rebels under Stalin* and Viola's first monograph, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization* (Oxford

University Press, 1987). The latter's standpoint on these events was, in my opinion, highly debatable. This makes the change in Viola's perspective even more welcome. Now she sees the subject clearly, and her perceptions seem correct both scientifically and morally. These may seem strange words, but I am convinced that it is impossible to deal with and understand tragedies such as the Soviet collectivization and the famine of 1932–33 without a firm grasp of their human dimension. Good history cannot but be the history of human beings, and Viola has been able to write a good history of the collectivization's beginnings precisely because she was not blind to the suffering it involved and put this suffering at the centre of the stage, where it properly belongs.

This has prompted me to engage in a discussion with Viola's latest book rather than writing a traditional review of it. This discussion will raise themes and problems that are far from being resolved. It is made even more interesting by the open nature of Viola's book, which, especially in the light of *Kolektyviziatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini*, can be considered yet another stage in her constant effort—as far as this is humanly possible—to get closer to the truth.

First, however, a few words on the way the book is organized. Rather than arranging her material chronologically, Viola chose to deal with it in terms of groups of problems, thus following the sociological approach already implied in her subtitle (*Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance*). The core of the book consists of five chapters (2–6), which examine the gamut of resistance to the collectivization from rumours to women's crucial role, passing through Luddism, evasion, and self-help (chapter 3), peasant terror (chapter 4), and open rebellion (chapter 5). The final chapter (7), "On the Sly", is devoted to everyday forms of resistance in the collective farms once the collectivization had been imposed.

As the author repeatedly asserts, it is a "peasant war" we are dealing with. I believe this assertion is correct, but what peasant war does she mean? And what is the general meaning of this war, once we have agreed that it took place? It is my impression that it is impossible to answer these questions if one remains within the framework of the years 1929–30, or even 1929–33. To give just one example, it is perhaps possible to maintain that from the Soviet state's standpoint in January 1930 it looked as if this war had been unleashed against a "peasant reality that blocked the revolution, perhaps doomed the revolution from the start" (p. viii). But if we expand our perspective to the 1918–33 period in its entirety, are we not faced with *two* revolutions, one statist and one popular (essentially but not only agrarian in nature), that started colliding as early as 1918? If this is true, as I believe it is, the question becomes: which revolution was blocking or destroying what?

The necessity to enlarge the period under consideration is further attested by the difficulty of understanding certain features of 1929–30 without taking into account what happened in previous years. For example, how can we explain the

relatively limited scale of the 1929–30 revolts and the much more threatening shadow they cast on the minds of Soviet leaders (Viola convincingly uses the term “paranoid” in discussing them) without referring, on one hand, to the scale and the violence of the repression with which the great peasant revolts of 1918–21 were met and, on the other, to the “great fear” of 1920–21, which forced the Party to introduce the NEP?

Extraordinary documents such as those on the Antonovshchina (*Krestianskoe vosstanie v Tambovskoi gubernii 1919–1921 g.g.: “Antonovshchina”. Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. V. P. Danilov et al. [Tambov: Intertsentr and Arkhivnyi otdel administratsii Tambovskoi oblasti, 1994]) show that peasants had learned what the consequences of rebellion were the hard way. This at least partly explains why real revolts against the collectivization were of rather limited dimensions despite stubborn peasant opposition to it, especially compared to what had happened ten years earlier in the same villages and areas, as the OGPU took great care to underline. Even the Soviet leaders were amazed by this change in behaviour. In a letter to Stalin, for instance, Mendel Khataevich rightly stated that the big surprise was the patience with which the villages suffered up to March the abuses heaped upon them.

Once cast against this background, Viola's hypothesis that open rebellion is but “a rare and daring flash of peasant anger” (p. 179) in a behaviour generally characterized by subterfuge does not seem convincing. It is because during the NEP the Soviet state strengthened its position vis-à-vis the peasantry by silencing active peasants, imprisoning or deporting the cadres of the peasant regiments of 1920, and seizing their arms and eliminating their leaders that it is possible to speak of “the localism of revolt, the absence of organized structures of resistance,... the isolation of peasant rebels,” and “the archaisms of peasant politics” (p. 238) by 1930. These were historical “products” rather than the perennial features of peasant behaviour.

This is not to deny the importance of passive resistance, which in the long run may well be the principal recourse of a defeated people or group. But in 1928 and 1929 the peasants were far from being “defeated.” Actually they could claim to be the winners and beneficiaries of the revolution *alongside the new state*. Their defeat came later, and was preceded by extraordinarily massive passive resistance (the “agrarian strike” of 1931–32) that was an altogether different phenomenon than the “small” passive resistance that characterized life in the collective farms in the post-defeat years. The tragic defeat of this “agrarian strike” raises a number of questions about the effectiveness of such “weapons” against an enemy willing and ready to use even famine to break its opponent. On the other hand, the much smaller passive resistance cum adaptation of the post-1933 years ultimately undermined the regime and was not a small factor in its eventual demise. In “On the Sly” Viola approaches this phenomenon from what I consider to be the right perspective. In particular, her critique of Sheila



Fitzpatrick (on p. 232 and again on p. 288, n. 211) seems convincing. Unfortunately, however, she treats the issue in a rather cursory way.

Viola's treatment of women's extraordinary role in the resistance to the collectivization is excellent. Given her important past contributions on that subject, this could be expected. But in *Peasant Rebels under Stalin* she has new things to say and says them in a very balanced way, underlining the "tactic" of sending women to the front line in the confrontation against a pitiless regime ("we let the women do the talking") and the quite understandable rage and determination of those women in opposing the brutal attack on their families' way of life.

The direct relationship between open revolts and factors such as certain areas' grain-producing capacity or national and political traditions of opposition to the tsarist state is raised by Viola, though not systematically treated by her. She also makes very interesting, though sparse, comments about the connection among the collectivization, procurement quotas, and the first appearances of pockets of famine already in 1930 (pp. 173, 175). Once more, the parallels with what happened in 1920–22 is striking (see *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK-OGPU-NKVD, 1918–1939: Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1, 1918–1922, ed. A. Berelovich and V. Danilov [Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998]) and confirms the need for a combined treatment of these two periods.

Although Viola does not pretend to be able to answer it, she rightly raises another fundamental question in her book: the identity of the hard-hearted men employed by the state in the fierce attack upon the countryside. But she does not seem to appreciate the consistency of the initial support of at least part of the village to the pogroms initiated by these *likvidatory* (p. 172). How then did this "embattled and unpopular minority of local officials and peasant activists" (p. 114) come to be? What process of selection over time guaranteed the state the availability of such a relatively large group of cruel people? And how did this process work from 1917 to 1929 and especially in the years 1918–22? Viola does, however, correctly assess the importance of 1929 and 1930 in the selection process by pointing to the role that the collectivization (and the famine) played in the creation of personnel later used in the great purges of 1937–38 (p. 234).

The identity of the peasants' enemies is strictly related to another question that Viola, perhaps still under the influence of views she expressed in her previous book, seems to answer in a contradictory way. Was the conflict a war between the Soviet *state* and the peasantry, as she writes on p. 90, or was it a confrontation between the cities (or the "working class") and the countryside, as she states elsewhere? In other words, can we really assume that in 1930 the state represented the interests of the urban population and of its working strata in particular (p. 295)? Also, in the light of comments about the Red terror against the workers and about their hunger (p. 120) that accompanied the collectivization, and of the documents on workers' hostility to the Stalinist assault upon the

village reproduced in *Kolektyvizatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini* (not to mention much more other evidence at our disposal today), it seems that Viola's confusion could and should be easily solved. It is possible, however, that at least in some non-Russian republics and regions things were different. There the urban population—generally different from the peasant population of the surrounding countryside in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture—may have accorded certain initial support for the taming of villages perceived as hostile and alien. But this hypothesis needs further investigation.

Another interesting question that Viola raises is that of peasant ideology, or rather ideologies. Did collectivism and solidarity really play such a central role, and were peasants really so tradition-oriented? Were their reactions so “apocalyptic”? The contradictory way in which Viola deals with these issues seems to reflect more the weaknesses of the interpretive schemes she tries to apply to Soviet realities than the fragmentation of the latter. In fact, Viola is rather conscious of the problem and repeatedly underlines the rationality of the peasants' behaviour, calling, for example, their self-help “logical, political, and humane” (p. 236). One may add that the collectivization and the famine of 1932–33 (not to mention de-nomadization in Central Asia) were indeed apocalyptic events, and therefore the presence of some apocalyptic answers to them should not be surprising. What is surprising is the consistency and rationality of the peasants' responses. Deported “kulaks” agitating in the special settlements advanced requests that were strikingly similar to those of the great revolts of 1919–21 (yet another confirmation of the usefulness of considering a period in which peasants had felt free to say what they wanted and framed their demands in their own terms). Furthermore, it is perhaps possible to maintain that, rather than defending “traditions,” peasants defended the right to follow their own path of development.

If this rationality was there, can we call peasant agitation “riots” (pp. 154–55, 195)? And should we continue calling such sophisticated phenomena as the women-led protests “*bab'i bunty*” or, for that matter, Muslim fighters “*basmachi*,” that is, bandits? Viola knows that these terms are misleading and says so. But this is not enough. We should all go further and quit “speaking Bolshevik,” that is, adopting both the categories of a regime that waged a war to transform the countryside and that regime's vocabulary, whose terms were used as weapons.

Viola rightly emphasizes the importance in the peasant world of the village church and of religion, rather than that of the church as an institution. But her casting of this peasant war into a more general framework of state-led modernization versus traditional societies (p. 29) is questionable. This is not to deny the modernizing features and aspirations of the Stalinist drive. But it seems to me that we are dealing here with a very peculiar and contradictory modernization—whose diversity and novelty its leaders loved to stress and boast about—colliding with a

countryside that, at least from 1861 on, had started moving decisively toward a modernization of its own.

*Peasant Rebels under Stalin* is therefore an important work. In the view of this reviewer, however, it is not the definitive book on the subject. Some of its problems seem to originate from three specific sources: (1) Viola's own past interpretations; (2) her decision to study 1929 and 1930 in isolation, without taking into consideration what had happened since 1917 (this is not to say that she should have devoted half of the book to the civil war, but it is regrettable that she did not keep the civil war in mind when discussing 1929 and 1930); and (3) her rather mechanical attempt to "apply" certain theoretical tools (Scott's interpretation of peasant resistance and "subaltern studies") to Soviet realities, which, though not uninteresting, often fail her, and not just because of the heavy vocabulary and frequent repetitions they involve. Both the Russian and the Ukrainian peasants, for instance, came from decades of self-propelled development and modernization and had been the protagonists of armed rebellions of epic proportions and quite striking organization. At least from these points of view (and many more could be listed), they were thus very different from the creatures inhabiting the works Viola refers to. The decision to proceed analytically, by categories of peasant behaviour, is also damaging to the reconstruction of the dynamics of the collectivization and of peasant opposition to it. Yet these very dynamics are essential for understanding the typology of peasant resistance and its evolution.

Still other problems derive from the relative paucity of the sources upon which the book is built. Other reviewers have remarked on the preponderance of a single report, parts of which had been already published by Viktor Danilov and Alexis Berelowitch in "Les documents de la VCK-OGPU-NKVD sur la campagne soviétique," *Cahiers du monde russe*, 1994, no. 3. The fact that this publication is quoted only in passing is yet another symptom of what appears to be Viola's problematic relations with previous scholarship. Was resistance to the collectivization really a "lost chapter" of Soviet history (pp. viii and 180)? Authors such as Merle Fainsod, memoirs, collections of documents prepared by victims who had been able to flee to the West, and even Stalin himself in conversation with Churchill have made repeated references to it. This is not to diminish the importance of Viola's book, which has the merit of systematically dealing with the phenomenon for the first time. Rather it is to underline that nothing was lost but in the captive mind of *part* of Western historiography, a part that it would be wrong to confuse with the whole.

Many other similar observations could be made. (Why, for instance, does Viola not quote "The Kolkhoz and the Russian Muzhik" by Moshe Lewin [republished in his book *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (London and New York: Methuen and Pantheon Books, 1985): 178–88] in "On the Sly"?) Even more puzzling is Viola's reconstruction of the

historiography on the collectivization that appears in her introduction to *Kolektyvizatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini*. There an innocent reader could be led to believe that Robert Conquest wrote *before* Isaac Deutscher. And is Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford University Press, 1986) really a "cold war" book, as Viola states? Even though one may not agree with some of Conquest's conclusions, his book had the undeniable, great merit of raising—before a profession that was absorbed in often meaningless research—the single most important event in interwar Soviet history. One may thus say that Viola's book too is indebted to it. Chronologically speaking, Fainsod's *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Harvard University Press, 1958) is indeed "cold war" history. Yet for long years it was perhaps the best and truest book available about Soviet rule. Shouldn't we learn to judge our predecessors for what they gave us rather than for their politics?

The way that Viola deals with the national question in *Peasant Rebels under Stalin* is also problematic. This is all the more striking in the light of the importance—repeatedly stressed by the documents—of the nationality factor in the resistance to the collectivization. At times Viola uses the term "region" in referring to Ukraine, having uncritically borrowed it from the OGPU documents (significantly, this term is rarely found in official Soviet language). And the reader may get the impression from Viola's book that the commune, a typically Russian agrarian institution, was the patrimony of the peasantry throughout the USSR, including in Ukraine and in Siberia (where communes were also rare). Viola's attribution of Mogilev-Podolskii *okrug*—i.e., Mohyliv-Podilskyi *okruha* in southwestern Ukraine—to Belarus (p. 160) also seem to confirm that she did not devote proper attention to nationality issues.

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*Kolektyvizatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini*, the collection of documents that Viola co-edited with Valerii Vasyliiev, bears witness to her already recalled capacity to see what her sources are saying and to progressively refine her historical sensibility. The relation between nationality and peasant agitation is clearly established and well explored here (in spite of minor slips such as the use of the term "Russian" when referring to what appear to be *Soviet* events, as if the two terms were interchangeable, as on p. 21). Above all, the scholarly community is introduced to a large number of new sources of great value.

From this point of view, this collection is a significant contribution to the great movement devoted to publishing documentary sources that started in the late 1980s and has accompanied the renaissance of post-Soviet historiography in both Russia and Ukraine. (In Ukraine, for instance, Iurii Shapoval and Volodymyr Prystaiko have compiled and co-edited some superb volumes of documents.) A tentative and incomplete but valuable bibliography of these collections compiled by Peter Blitstein (forthcoming in *Cahiers du monde russe*,



1999, nos. 1–2) lists more than 250 titles published in the last decade (in the provinces many other collections were published). Of course, some of these volumes are not of great quality, but their total number and collective scholarly significance are impressive. Viola has been in the forefront of such endeavours. She has also co-edited *Riazanskaia derevnia v 1929–1930 g.g.: Khronika golovokruzheniia. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998) and has played a leading role in *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni: Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN), vol. 1 of which (covering May 1927–November 1929) was published earlier this year.

Viola's choice of collaborators is to be welcomed. Valerii Vasyliiev, for example, is one of the most promising young Ukrainian historians. In 1992 he was the first to draw our attention to the new documentation on the Ukrainian countryside's resistance to the collectivization, and his introduction to *Kolektyvizatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini* reconfirms his talents. The inner dynamics of the events are well reconstructed here, even though here too a clearer awareness that the conflict was but a continuation, in new forms but often with the same protagonists, of something that had been started in 1918–19 would have been beneficial to an understanding of the events under consideration. In fact, many of the published documents confirm this linkage, often quoting protagonists, such as Oleksander Shlikhter and Stanislav Kosior, who had been deeply involved in the repression of the great revolts of 1919 (Shlikhter then moved on to Tambov, where he directed the forced procurements that helped detonate the Antonovshchina). As their friend Volodymyr Zatonsky then wrote, at the beginning of the 1930s the Ukrainian Bolshevik leadership believed that the collectivization represented the realization of its 1919 dreams.

The collection is well organized, and the reader can move through its more than 150 documents also thanks to a detailed index of place names (an index of personal names is unfortunately missing). Besides helpful lists of abbreviations in both Russian and Ukrainian, the collection contains a select bibliography of Ukrainian and Western works on the subject. There is both a Ukrainian and a Russian version of the general introduction to the volume, but the short introductions to the four sections and the titles of the single documents appear only in Russian. Most of the Party documents are in Ukrainian (although Ukrainian Bolshevik leaders resorted to Russian when speaking with Moscow), while those of the Ukrainian GPU are often in Russian, thereby confirming the secretive “imperial” core of the Soviet federal state. Ukraine was constitutionally a federated republic—a fact of not secondary importance—but for what Terry Martin has called the hard-line bureaucracies of the regime it remained a “region” in their documents.

As further confirmation of the statist nature of the Soviet regime and of its archival legacy, most of the documents are official Party-state papers of various kinds. Therefore we are confronted with the events as seen through the eyes of



the powers-that-be. Nonetheless Vasyliiev and Viola did their best to provide us also with testimonies "from below" and are to be complimented for it.

The first section (pp. 95–253) is devoted to the view from above, that is, to the position of the Ukrainian Bolshevik leadership and to its evolution. The documents in the second section (pp. 254–400) illustrate the activities and reactions of provincial and other local leaders. Together the two sections account for approximately three quarters of the volume's documents. They offer the reader numerous, important confirmations and not a few novelties. The extremely rich and detailed data about the implementation of the collectivization and dekulakization and on the nature of the operations they involved clearly prove that these were centrally organized and directed actions. Deadlines and *kontrolnye tsifry* (control figures) were carefully set, and even unavoidable "excesses" were in fact anticipated. The mechanics are thus strikingly similar to those recently unearthed by Oleg Khlevniuk in his studies on the dynamics of the Great Purge of 1937–38.

The participation of at least part of the villages in the initial pogroms and the latter's unavoidably chaotic and wasteful nature cannot be denied. But this participation had to be organized and fomented by representatives of the Soviet state. We thus return to the already mentioned problem of the perpetrators of such evil actions to discover that there were different layers of them, from the instigators at the centre to their agents *in loco*, the helpers these agents found in the villages, and the kind of people they were both able to mobilize, sometimes in the name of ideology, but more often with the promise of free pillage.

The documents also confirm the Ukrainian Bolshevik leaders' initial enthusiasm and support for the Stalinist offensive against the peasantry. Such a position undermined the relatively serious attempt at state- and nation-building that these leaders themselves tried to carry out in the years of "national-communism." In the end it resulted in their own physical elimination. Vasyliiev underlines the role of ideology and of the commitment to Marxism in this fateful decision. He is probably right. Nonetheless, this factor may have been strengthened by the mirage of substituting—via industrialization—a firm urban support for Ukrainian statehood instead of the unstable peasant one that was hostile to the national-communist project as well.

Given the content of these documents, it will be very difficult for anyone to deny that a "peasant war"—a term that Viola repeatedly uses in her introduction—was waged in Soviet Ukraine in the years 1929–30. But, as these documents confirm, this was a peculiar war initiated by a vicious aggressor, to which the victims reacted as they could. Vasyliiev writes that "*v tsilomu selianski vystupy zalyshylysia stykhiinymy i roz'iednanyymy*" (p. 92). I have already tried to explain why that was so.

The third section (pp. 401–58) aims at reconstructing the way that workers, soldiers, and peasants saw and judged the collectivization. The excerpts (quoted

in police reports) from the leaflets of protest then courageously produced are particularly interesting and moving. Also of great interest are the passages that explore workers' reactions to the collectivization and, more generally, to the Stalinist offensive. Their support for the regime seems to have been very weak, to say the least, even in areas where the solidarity of Soviet workers (very often of recent rural origins) and peasants was undermined by ethnic and religious differences. Given the paucity of the documents reflecting popular moods and the statist origin of many of them, and considering the decision of the editors to include already published documents, one wonders whether this section could not have been enriched with testimonies such as those gathered in *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book*, ed. S. O. Pidhainy, trans. Alexander Oreletsky and Olga Prychodko, 2 vols. (Toronto: Ukrainian Association of Victims of Russian Communist Terror, 1953, 1955); this work should also have been included in the bibliography.

The fourth and last section (pp. 459–94) is perhaps the most original one. There the editors have tried to provide the anatomy of a “revolt” in a single village. Again, most of the documents in this section are state-produced. They include the transcripts of interrogations of both local inhabitants and Party activists. The details they reveal are extremely interesting. We learn, for instance, that even in a small village scores of peasant hostages were taken by the authorities so as to prevent the repetition or the spread of revolt (in 1920 and 1921 groups of hundreds of hostages were also publicly shot at short intervals to teach the populace an appropriate lesson). The reconstruction of the “career” of the local *likvidatory* is also fascinating. In this case too, a direct link emerges with the civil war, the first stage during which such people were selected. What also emerges is how little a role socialism, Marxism, or ideological commitment played in their formation. Instead, it was their allegiance and utility to the new state that mattered.

Many documents point to the strong link between the Ukrainian peasants' unrest and national aspirations. Already in December 1920, the Cheka had been forced to admit that “the Ukrainian kulak desires to be the master in the countryside and does not want to be dependent on the city and the workers.... He nourishes the dream of an independent Ukrainian People's Republic ... and wants his own, Ukrainian, home-baked rule [*vlast*]” (*Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK-OGPU-NKVD*, 1: 365–66). The liquidation of this rural base of support, which, in spite of the Ukrainian nationalists' understandable complaints about its instability, had for decades nourished the Ukrainian national movement, is central to understanding the problems that Ukrainian national efforts were to meet in subsequent years.

## Book Reviews

Andrea Gratsiozi [Graziosi]. *Bolsheviki i krestiane na Ukraine: 1918–1919 gody. Ocherk o bolshevizmakh, natsional-sotsializmakh i krestianskikh dvizheniiakh*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1997. 200 pp.

Andrea Graziosi has written a lucid and compelling history of Bolshevik-peasant relations during the 1918–19 civil war in Ukraine. From the start, he makes clear his work's limitations, claiming that it contains several "distortions" (*perekosy*), especially an "inordinate concentration on the Kyiv Bolsheviks and one of their leaders—Georgii Leonidovich Piatakov." This study grew out of Graziosi's larger, still ongoing project—a political biography of Piatakov, which he started ten years before the collapse of the Soviet Union and, largely as a result of the latter event and the opening of formerly classified archives, "in some sense [had] to begin all over again" (p. 10). Although he makes judicious use of some newly available documents from two central Russian archives (the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Modern History [RTsKhIDNI] and the State Archive of the Russian Federation [GARF]), most of the sources for this study are published primary sources, memoirs, and documents, which have been available in some Western libraries for many years. This study is thus a critical close reading of these published (and some archival) sources, older Western and Soviet accounts, and recent research in Russian and Ukrainian archives by Ukrainian, Russian, and Western historians, all of which he has brought together in an original, sweeping interpretation of the revolutionary period in Ukraine.

Amongst the many fascinating ideas overfilling this concisely written book, perhaps the most interesting and provocative is what Graziosi calls "the misunderstanding" between the "Ukrainian" Bolsheviks and the peasants. Quite ironically, the crushing defeat of pro-Bolshevik troops by the joint forces of the Central Powers and the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) in early 1918 saved the Ukrainian peasants from the Bolsheviks' anti-peasant policies that would provoke large-scale peasant uprisings in 1918 across rural Russia. Instead, in Ukraine the peasants were subjected to often brutal excesses by German and Austro-Hungarian occupying troops as the latter attempted to wrest food (and whatever else they could find) from the Ukrainian village. As a result, when these "foreign" troops began disintegrating in November 1918, the Ukrainian peasants rose up en masse against the regime that those troops had been propping up since May 1918—the "Ukrainian State" headed by Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky.

Graziosi argues that this massive "national-liberation movement" was the predecessor of many similar movements of this century, which have also been provoked by the presence of perceived "foreign occupiers" and have been national in form but social in content. These peasants expressed a quite explicit program, demanding the expulsion of the occupying forces, the seizure and redistribution of all land, the cessation of requisitions, and the development of free trade, "but only on the local level, in so far as the peasants were hostile towards 'speculators' from other regions, and especially of other nationalities." Recalling the trenches that numerous peasants dug out around their villages, Graziosi stresses their demand for strong local autonomy, which they continued to

associate with "Soviet [i.e., conciliar] power" (pp. 67–8). At the end of 1918, as in Russia in the previous year, "but to an even greater degree, in many Ukrainian villages oppressed by Skoropadsky and incited to uprising by the Communist Party and located in complete ignorance of the severe conflicts between Moscow and the Russian countryside, this *SRshchina* [as Graziosi calls the peasants' program described above] began to be called 'Bolshevism'" (p. 68). And it was the peasants' misunderstandings about "Bolshevism" and "Soviet power" that gave to Piatakov and the "Ukrainian" Bolsheviks an "easy victory" over Petliura and the UNR Directory's forces in January and February 1919.

On the other hand, these same Bolsheviks, cut off from Ukraine for most of 1918 and trapped in a narrow Marxist vision of the revolution's progress, never understood the real reasons why the peasants supported them. On the contrary, once in power they immediately began implementing policies that cut that support out from under them. Both Lenin and the leaders of the Party in Ukraine viewed Ukraine as their conquest and the salvation for Russia's starving proletariat. The first order given by the new "Ukrainian" Soviet government on 2 February 1919 declared that its first task was to supply Russia with food and fuel (p. 108). Yet, despite the best efforts of the new regime's food-supply detachments, soon given *carte blanche* to seize all they could from the peasants and to punish those hiding reserves "with all the severity of the laws of [this] revolutionary time," and the numerous *meshochniki* pouring into "conquered" Ukraine from the north, the peasants proved even more resistant to giving up their grain than they had in 1918. The "outsiders" managed to obtain only 7–8 million poods and to send only a small portion of that to Moscow. The foreign occupiers of the previous year had been able to extract considerably more from Ukraine, yet had considered their own effort a failure (p. 110). It was, however, the Bolshevik government's land policy that the peasants found most repugnant. "Dizzy with the successes" they read into their rise to power, the Hungarian Revolution, and the proclamation of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, the "Ukrainian" Bolsheviks attempted to bring communism to the Ukrainian countryside by forcing peasants into *kommuny* and preserving large landlord estates as Soviet farms, thereby denying the peasants their long-dreamed-of spoils of the revolution. Of the fifteen million desiatins of land formerly belonging to non-peasants, the government granted only one-third "for temporary equal distribution" amongst the peasants (pp. 130–1).

Hence, two months of Soviet rule proved sufficient to clear up the peasants' misunderstanding of what the Bolsheviks meant by "Soviet power." Already in March 1919, in some villages and in the ranks of the Red Army, peasants began resisting the government's efforts; by May they rose up in open revolt against the regime. This great insurrection obtained a broad and variegated character, including in its ranks not only peasants (though they were the overwhelming majority), but also Russian workers, German colonists, Poles, and, in southern Ukraine, many Jews, who had joined up with the anarchist forces of Nestor Makhno (p. 136). The insurrection's ideology was similar to that of the previous year, though it now also included a vehement anti-communist (especially anti-commune) and anti-state character. The Soviet government responded with ruthless repression, hostage-taking, torture, and terror, escalating the uprising into a brutal, internecine civil war that was only interrupted by the Volunteer Army's arrival. The resulting "barbarization" of life stripped the peasants' national and social strivings of much of their positive content and, in part, led to the brutal Jewish pogroms of 1919–20.



Graziosi admits, however, that both White and Red soldiers also participated in the pogroms in large numbers.

Graziosi has written a concise and thought-provoking survey of two critical years of the Ukrainian Revolution from an unusual point of view. Moreover, he has taken great pains to link his study to some of the crucial issues facing historians of twentieth-century Eastern European and even world history. Unlike far too many Western historians, Graziosi has endeavoured to treat Ukraine as an important European country that is as worthy of historians' attention as is, for example, Italy. His use of "na Ukraine" may seem somewhat "Russocentric" to those who watch over current trends in Russian language use in post-Soviet Ukraine; but this can perhaps be excused because he makes such an effort to treat Ukraine as a separate national entity and to make Ukraine and its complex history better understood in a larger context. To some extent this is a Russian context: Graziosi's book was published in Russian in Moscow, where it will likely receive quite a different evaluation.

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Dieter Pohl. *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien, 1941–1944: Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997. 455 pp.

This is a massive study of the murder of over 400,000 Jews in Distrikt Galizien during World War II, and certainly one of the best books to have appeared to date on any aspect of the Holocaust in Ukraine. It is based on research in all the relevant German, Polish, and (most importantly) Ukrainian archives. The bibliography lists over three hundred printed works, including many multivolume source collections.

Dieter Pohl, who earlier had written a book on the Final Solution in the Lublin district of the Generalgouvernement, chose to focus on Eastern Galicia because it represented a transitional zone between the occupied territories of the Soviet Union and the rest of the Generalgouvernement. The Holocaust followed different courses in these two broad areas, and Eastern Galicia exhibited features of both. The purpose of Pohl's research is to throw light on the major questions currently occupying Holocaust research. Hence there is much attention to the role of forced labour camps, the attitudes of perpetrators, and the timing and institutional origin of certain decisions.

Pohl was not, in this book, very interested in the victims' views, so he made relatively little use of survivors' memoirs and left untouched, for example, the vast collections of memoirs and oral testimony preserved at Yad Vashem. He was, however, interested in the collaborator and bystander, so there is much fresh material in the book about Ukrainian-Jewish relations during the Nazi occupation. Pohl presents a much more complicated picture of Ukrainian behaviour during the Holocaust than anything that presently exists in Ukrainian, Jewish, or any other historiography. His position is that the attitudes of the autochthonous, non-Jewish population were relatively unimportant in determining the general course and final outcome of the mass murder in Galicia: essentially the German occupation authorities made the decisions and executed them.



Whether resisting or aiding the Germans in the murder, the actions of what Pohl calls "the Christian population" were of secondary importance in influencing events (p. 316). This is not, of course, the same thing as to say that their behaviour made no difference or that they were morally indifferent.

Pohl singles out the churches, both Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic, for their resistance to mass murder. The churches were the only legal institutions in Galicia in 1942 and 1943 that maintained a certain degree of independence from the German regime, and it was they who did the most to prevent the slaughter of the Jews (pp. 320–22). Pohl singles out the metropolitan of Halych, Andrei Sheptytsky, for his rescue work and protests (pp. 66, 321) and also mentions the Greek Catholic pastor of Kaminka Strumylova who interceded (in vain) on behalf of Jews about to be murdered in July 1943 (p. 352).

Pohl characterizes the Bandera faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists as anti-Semitic for much of the war, particularly in the spring and summer of 1941 and again, as the Soviets closed in, in 1944; in 1942 and 1943 the OUN distanced itself from the Germans' murder of the Jews (pp. 40, 48–49, 375, 382). (This was a time when, in general, Ukrainian opinion cooled towards the Germans and their Final Solution; see pp. 316–17.) Pohl does not directly link the OUN to any concrete war crimes. His treatment of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in relation to the Holocaust (pp. 374–75) is nuanced and complex.

Perforce Pohl devotes much attention to the Ukrainian auxiliary police (see esp. pp. 92–93, 277–78, 311–12) because they played such an important part in the execution of the Final Solution by guarding labour camps (pp. 170, 339), rounding up Jews for deportation (pp. 186–87) and immediate execution (p. 190), helping in the final clearing of the Lviv ghetto (p. 258), digging mass graves (p. 296), combing the woods for fugitive Jews (p. 372), and themselves shooting Jews (pp. 148, 217–19, 260, 360). Most of Pohl's information on the Ukrainian police stems from the documentation generated by the force itself, preserved in the Lviv Oblast State Archive. (Pohl also discusses the collaborative role played by the Jewish police.)

As background to his narrative, Pohl sketches out the contours of the German administration in Galicia in the years 1941–44 (pp. 74–96). This in itself is a solid contribution to the study of the region during the Second World War, since nothing like it exists. Appended to the book is a biographical glossary of personages who served in that administration. The atmosphere of corruption that pervaded it is convincingly sketched as well (pp. 300–304).

In concluding his work, Pohl suggests that Galicia could serve as an excellent case study for the comparison of Soviet and Nazi rule (pp. 409–10). Pohl himself does not attempt this, even though he does make the occasional foray back to the years 1939–41 (to discuss in particular the issue of Jewish collaboration with the NKVD and Bolshevik Party at that time [pp. 31–32, 38–39]). Further exploration of this period would probably have strengthened Pohl's study. For example, he lists a number of factors that might explain why Jewish resistance to the Holocaust was so weak in Galicia (p. 369); had he worked more in the 1939–41 period, he might have added to that list the fact that the economic resources of Galician Jews were severely curtailed by the nationalization of real estate and enterprises by the Soviets.

This is an ambitious and pioneering work. It is not a synthesis based on a corpus of pre-existing monographs; instead, it attempts a comprehensive portrayal of the Holocaust in Galicia largely on the basis of primary sources. It opens the field for further, in-depth monographic research of specific problems and incidents.

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Susan Heuman. *Kistiakovsky: The Struggle for National and Constitutional Rights in the Last Years of Tsarism*. Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1998. xiv, 218 pp. U.S. \$18.00 paper, U.S. \$32.95 cloth. Distributed by Harvard University Press.

Compared with many of his contemporaries—Petr Struve, Pavel Miliukov, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Nikolai Berdiaev, and others in that remarkable generation from the twilight of imperial Russia—Bogdan (Bohdan) Kistiakovsky has suffered undue neglect in the historical literature. Such scholarly oversight is surprising in view of his intellectual breadth. A seminal legal philosopher, he contributed to two of the most important collections in the history of late imperial Russian thought—*Problemy idealizma* (1902) and the better-known *Vekhi* of 1909. One can gauge the respect he enjoyed abroad from Max Weber's reliance on him to help interpret the "bourgeois" revolution and "*Scheinkonstitutionalismus*" in the Russian Empire after 1905.

In addition to these achievements, Kistiakovsky also spoke out for Ukrainian distinctness to an imperial(ist) intelligentsia little inclined to take such claims seriously. Born in Kyiv in 1868, he grew up in a milieu that contemporaries would have termed Ukrainophile. His father, a law professor, had written on the Hetmanate's legal history; his uncle was the distinguished historian Volodymyr Antonovych; and Mykhailo Drahomanov was a friend of the family. Kistiakovsky himself took part in the Ukrainian underground; this led to a series of arrests and imprisonment in the late 1880s and early 1890s. In 1906 Kistiakovsky published an edition of Drahomanov's works; several years later he engaged his erstwhile friend Struve in a bitter polemic over the Ukrainian language and culture; during the Great War he published numerous appeals in support of Ukrainian autonomy; and, finally, he taught law (1918–19) at the Ukrainian State University in Kyiv in the short-lived Ukrainian republic and then in Ekaterinodar, dying in late 1920 shortly before that Ukrainian state itself.

As Susan Heuman demonstrates in this succinct and highly accomplished biography, neglect of Kistiakovsky stems from the fact that his views placed him at the margins of the debates he engaged in, and that he espoused the cause of individual rights and liberties in an age when many were willing to sacrifice these to larger ends. Thus, an ardent proponent of the rule of law state, he argued that only a socialist economy could guarantee equal access to liberty for all in the state—disputing liberal claims that law itself could guarantee equality and socialist contempt while repudiating "bourgeois" notions of legality. On the Ukrainian question, Kistiakovsky differed from nationalists in his advocacy of an autonomous Ukraine within a confederal republic to replace the Russian Empire. Finally, unlike most *intelligenty* of his era, he argued consistently that

the people should be encouraged to develop their own freedom from "below" rather than having it won for or imposed on them by the intelligentsia.

The complexity of Kistiakovsky's career confronts his biographer with manifold difficulties, both organizational and substantive. Heuman rises well to both challenges. She organizes the biography thematically. Her first chapter traces Kistiakovsky's life history and introduces the themes that are developed in subsequent chapters. These explore the various aspects and underpinnings of a legal theory that sought to synthesize sociological methodology, an aspiration to social justice, and the "return to Kant" that dominated legal thought during his time. The concluding two chapters examine Kistiakovsky's arguments for an autonomous Ukraine.

Heuman unfailingly grounds Kistiakovsky's thought and actions in the context of his time. Readers learn of the debates among Ukrainian patriots, as well as of the more abstruse turns of interpretation in turn-of-the-century legal theory, over which Heuman displays a sure grasp. When necessary, Heuman describes the turbulent political events of the early twentieth century as they affected Kistiakovsky's thought and actions. In each instance, she demonstrates clearly the choices facing Kistiakovsky and his reasons for choosing as he did. As such, Heuman's study serves as both a biography and a compact guide to liberal thought in imperial Russia, a topic that, as she herself notes, has acquired growing topicality since the collapse of the USSR.

Of course, any book raises quibbles. Heuman's is no exception. At times, her obvious admiration for Kistiakovsky leads her to oversimplify his opponents' views, especially in the case of Struve, whose nationalism has yet to find a clear exponent. Likewise, her treatment of Kistiakovsky's Ukrainophilism lacks reference to contemporary debates in tsarist-ruled Ukraine and Austrian-ruled Galicia. Heuman's decision to organize her study thematically comes at the cost of a clear periodization of Kistiakovsky's evolving thought. None of these flaws derogates significantly from the overall strength and insight of the larger discussion.

According to the preface, Heuman let this biography lie fallow before she was persuaded to submit it for publication. As this study attests, Kistiakovsky was too interesting to merit such a fate. Scholars concerned with European legal thought, the intellectual history of late imperial Russia, and the sources of Ukrainian thought owe a debt to Heuman for this overdue work on such an important figure. As Heuman herself remarks, Kistiakovsky's theories and aspirations have acquired new relevance with the emergence of the post-Soviet order and an independent Ukraine.

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Andrew Wilson. *Ukrainian nationalism in the 1990s: A minority faith*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xviii, 300 pp. U.S. \$19.95 paper, U.S. \$59.95 cloth.

After reading Andrew Wilson's book, this reviewer was left with mixed impressions and, indeed, mixed feelings. The author has obviously invested a great deal of time and effort in studying Ukrainian history—early, modern, and contemporary—and conducting

research in the latter area, including archival work and interviewing. This can easily be seen from the copious footnotes and rich bibliography, which account for about one-third of the book's contents. For anyone who wants or needs to know what has been published about modern Ukrainian history and politics during the past twenty-five years or so, particularly in English and Ukrainian, Wilson's references are a must. Indeed, these references may well be the most valuable part of the book. Many of the publications that the author cites are in Ukrainian, which suggests that he also went to the trouble of learning the language—a relatively new and welcome departure for specialists in non-Russian Soviet and post-Soviet studies.

The results, as it were, of the author's study of Ukrainian history are presented in the first two chapters—"Ukraine: historical roots of diversity" and "Ukrainian nationalism in the modern era"—which essentially offer the reader an overview of Ukrainian political history from Kyivan Rus' to the dissidents of the 1960s and 1970s in about sixty pages. Here we find the Trypillians, Cimmerians, Scythians, Varangians, the Polianian principality, Metropolitan Maximos and his successor Petro, Kazimierz III, the Cossacks, Khmelnytsky, Mazepa, Charles XII of Sweden, Kostomarov, Shevchenko, Drahomanov, Franko, Mikhnovsky, Hrushevsky, Vynnychenko, Petliura, Skoropadsky, Dontsov, Lypynsky, UNDO, KPZU, OUN, Bandera, Melnyk, Lukianenko, Dziuba, Valentyn Moroz, Chornovil, Khmara, and so on. Wilson does not make any claim to a novel approach or new interpretation of some one thousand years of Ukrainian history or, for that matter, of Ukrainian nationalism, which figures in the title of the book. One wonders, therefore, why he thought it necessary to subject readers to all of this. Specialists in the field have been there and done that; and for the uninitiated a short introduction and suggestions for further reading of perfectly adequate histories of Ukraine published in recent years would have sufficed. If there is a message here, it is that the territory of present-day Ukraine was divided among some of its neighbours for long periods of time, that nation building was a difficult process, and that it developed in different regions under different political and socio-economic circumstances and at different times.

This is all well and good. A much more serious criticism concerns what is lacking in Wilson's historical survey—namely, a discussion, however cursory, of the specific nature of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship. Without such a discussion, it seems to me, any attempt at examining Ukrainian nationalism in the 1990s, 1980s, 1970s, 1960s, or whenever, is rather odd, all the more so considering that the blurb at the very front of the book begins with the statement that "The complex interrelationship between Russia and Ukraine is arguably the most important single factor in determining the future politics of the Eurasian region." Russia as a problem for Ukraine and Ukraine as a problem for Russia emerge later, in those relatively few pages of Chapters 6 and 7 that actually address the subject named in the title of the book. But even here the focus is on the former—let us call it Ukraine's Russian problem as shorthand for the various ways in which Russia has had an impact on Ukraine's domestic and international policies and behaviour—with little or no indication that Russia has a Ukrainian problem. The result is that the Ukrainian-Russian relationship emerges as something in the nature of a one-way street, where Ukrainian "nationalists" appear to be the only personae in the relationship, reacting to some sort of strange phobias about things Russian that they have inherited from their unfortunate history.



This already becomes evident earlier, in Chapter 4, entitled "National communism," in the initial discussion of what the author characterizes as Kravchuk's embrace of the "nationalist agenda" by mid-1992. Wilson writes that at this juncture the Ukrainian president was constantly referring to Russian chauvinists, Moscow's territorial pretensions and crude interference in Ukraine's internal affairs, and the like, but the impression that the reader is left with is that such statements were being made in a vacuum. I am confident that Wilson is not entirely unaware of what was happening in Moscow at the time: Yeltsin declared that the entire Black Sea Fleet was, is, and will be Russia's; the Russian parliament began the process of reclaiming Crimea; the Russian vice-president, Aleksandr Rutskoi, asserted that Crimea and other regions of Ukraine belonged to Russia, that no one should confuse the borders of the Russian Federation with the real Russia, and that he had no intention of living in a banana republic (the Russian Federation); leading Russian democrats on Yeltsin's team, such as Anatolii Sobchak (the mayor of St. Petersburg), Gavriil Popov (the mayor of Moscow), and Sergei Stankevich (a presidential adviser), were all insisting that Crimea and various parts of eastern and southern Ukraine should revert to Russia and that an independent Ukraine would surely result in genocide for Ukraine's Russian minority, World War III, or perhaps even a nuclear holocaust; Sergei Baburin, one of the leading figures in the red-brown coalition of Russian "patriots," was quoted as telling Kyiv's ambassador to Moscow that if Ukraine did not reunite with Russia there would be war; and various other Russian politicians in and out of government were telling anyone who would listen that Ukrainian independence was nonsense and that soon everything would return to its "normal" and "natural" state of affairs.

The "nationalist" Kravchuk was also wary of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Wilson seems to find this wariness puzzling. It would have been useful to consider this aspect of Ukrainian-Russian relations against the background of the mood in Russia at the time. With few exceptions, Russian public opinion viewed the collapse of the Soviet Union as a Russian tragedy—more specifically, a tragedy for the Russian state. In April 1992, at the Sixth Congress of Russian People's Deputies, Yeltsin found himself explaining to Russian lawmakers that it was not Russia that destroyed the Soviet Union, but rather that the non-Russian republics had forced the course of events. From the standpoint of Russia's democrats, the CIS was a regrettable compromise, and the hope was that it could be transformed into some sort of revamped Union but "under new (Russian) management." The Russian "patriots," on the other hand, viewed the creation of the CIS as an act of treason on Yeltsin's part. (In May 1999, it will be recalled, the destruction of the Soviet Union was one of the charges brought against Yeltsin in the unsuccessful attempt by the Russian Duma to impeach the president.) In short, the absence of the "Russian question" in Wilson's book renders Ukrainian "nationalists" and Ukrainian "nationalism" as, at best, some sort of curious and not entirely comprehensible phenomenon personified largely by individuals in Kyiv and Lviv (Kravchuk, Plushch, Chornovil, Mykhailo Horyn, Lukianenko, Khmara, et al) who do not seem to be fully aware of the fact that there are a large number of ethnic Russians in Ukraine and that there are also many ethnic Ukrainians who prefer to converse in Russian.

Chapters 3 and 4 are also essentially introductory-type surveys of perestroika and post-perestroika political developments in Ukraine that have been well analyzed by others, including by the author himself in other publications. Chapter 3 has a nice "political-



sciency" title—"Channels of nationalist discourse: political parties, civil society and religion." It is a straightforward narrative description of the development of Rukh and other Ukrainian political parties, public organizations, trade unions, and religious groups during the perestroika period. Chapter 4, as has already been mentioned, addresses the issue of national communism, where readers are reminded of Shumsky, Skrypnyk, Volobuiev, and Shelest, and where Kravchuk's anti-Russian tirades are mentioned. Chapter 5, entitled "A minority faith: the limits to nationalist support," is about the various elections and referendums that were held in the Soviet Union and Ukraine in the years 1989–91. It shows, among other things, that if given the opportunity to express their views more or less freely, people often do not agree on much of anything or, conversely, they agree on things that are mutually exclusive. The best example of the latter is the wisdom of a Kyiv cabdriver in the spring of 1994, which goes something like this: "I would like everything to be like it was before. I want independence and I want the Soviet Union, but without the Communists. In any case, I'll vote for Khmara; he's a real man [*nastoiashchii muzhik*]."

Readers get what the title of the book promises in Chapters 6 and 7, where the "nationalist agenda" in domestic politics and foreign affairs is discussed. One of the major problems here (and elsewhere) is the word "nationalist," which Wilson never defines but makes use of frequently and applies indiscriminately to virtually everyone involved in Ukrainian politics since at least the mid-19th century. This is all the more perplexing given that at one point he quotes Kravchuk as emphasizing the importance of making "a clear distinction between national and nationalist" (p. 110). One must assume, therefore, that Wilson understands perfectly well that the term "nationalist" often means different things to different people. References to Anthony Smith and Miroslav Hroch notwithstanding, it would have been helpful if he had shared with his readers what it is (more or less) that he understands by such terms as ethno-nationalism, civic nationalism, national movement, and just plain nationalism, particularly since these and related concepts are at the heart of his argument. And that argument is stated forthrightly at the very beginning: the various cleavages in Ukrainian society severely limit the appeal of "modern Ukrainian ethno-nationalism" and create the preconditions for a sharp polarization of its citizens (p. 1). I am in full agreement. What I find myself having difficulty with is the strongly implied corollary argument to this thesis—namely, that "modern Ukrainian ethno-nationalism" in fact forms the agenda of Ukraine's leaders as well as of those "nationalist" political groups that are in opposition. This corollary argument is formulated in terms of the "nationalizing state"—that is, a state that, in this case, imposes "things Ukrainian" on all of its citizens. Wilson, as far as can be determined, is not prepared to say that Ukraine is a "nationalizing state." What he is suggesting is that the precepts of a "nationalizing state" inform the agendas of Ukraine's political class and that is how the situation is perceived by those citizens of Ukraine who, for one reason or another, prefer to speak Russian rather than Ukrainian.

There are some passages in the book that are a bit odd and perhaps indicate lapses in logic. On p. 62 Wilson states that the Helsinki Union "reflected the ambiguous nature of the supposed civic revolution of the 1960s [?] by attacking the Soviet concept of the artificial intermixing of the population and deriding the concept of the 'Soviet man'." Is the reader to understand that the Helsinki Union should have supported these policies? On p. 67 we read that the student hunger strike and the mass demonstrations in Kyiv in the

fall of 1990, the largest in the capital's history, were a "relative failure." Yet, it was precisely these events that brought down Prime Minister Vitalii Masol and his cabinet and resulted in a parliamentary resolution that, in effect, postponed Ukraine's participation in the negotiations over the new Union treaty until some indeterminate time when Ukraine had "stabilized." In a footnote on p. 214 the author explains that he has avoided using the term "Russification" "because it implies a prior loyalty to Ukrainian language and culture, which may not necessarily have existed." I do not quite follow the logic here. Why must there be an implication of prior loyalty to the Ukrainian or any other language and culture before one can use the term "Russification," particularly as no such caveats are applied for the use of "Polonization" or "Ukrainianization"? The explanation only makes sense if Wilson takes it as a given—which seems to be the case—that Ukrainians cannot be Russified because they are an ethnographic mass with no prior loyalty to their language or culture.

There are relatively few factual errors in the book, although Bohdan Kotyk, the popular mayor of Lviv during perestroika, will probably turn in his grave to learn that he was the head of the Communist Party organization in that city (p. 64). On the other hand, there are more than the acceptable number of misspelled names: Hrat instead of Hvat, Lysiakh instead of Lysiak, Znysh instead of Knysh, Prskop instead of Prokop, Skypyl's'kyi instead of Skypal's'kyi, Petro instead of Pedro Ramet, Anna-halia Horbach, and more.

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Andreas Wittkowsky. *Fünf Jahre ohne Plan: Die Ukraine, 1991–96. Nationalstaatsbildung, Wirtschaft und Eliten*. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 1998. 218 pp. 38.80 DM.

Andreas Wittkowsky, a young political scientist and economist from Berlin, presents a well-researched and original account of post-Soviet, independent Ukraine's first five years, during which it developed mainly "without a plan." It is based on the many different sources he collected during his two-year stay in Ukraine (1994–95) and a series of valuable interviews he conducted there with members of the new Ukrainian national elite.

This book recounts (as much as it is possible to do so) the economic story of the new Ukrainian state from 1991 to 1996. In the process it discusses the country's key political issues and its cultural elites. Wittkowsky identifies three unrelated interest or strategic groups that compromised and thus furthered the "national project" during the years 1989–91—the national cultural elite, the miners and workers' organizations in the Donbas, and part of the former political elite in Kyiv. Their "national consensus as a historical compromise" was not based on the idea of the nation or of ethnic unity, but on diverse interests and perspectives, especially in the economic realm. Nonetheless, certain influential individuals and subsidized groups blocked or simply simulated economic reforms up to 1994; they included Ukrneftekhim, Interenergo, the former minister for

agriculture Oleksandr Tkachenko, and the former prime minister Iukhym Zviahilsky (pp. 101–5).

Wittkowsky's account does not end with economic disaster or regional tensions, however. Unlike Andrew Wilson's *Ukrainian nationalism in the 1990s: A minority faith* (Cambridge, 1997), which goes up to 1994 and greatly emphasizes such tensions, Wittkowsky identifies a "new national project" in the first two years of Leonid Kuchma's presidency that integrated various regional elites (and not only the Dnipropetrovsk elite) on the national level. Subsidy-seeking strategies and simulation of economic reforms did not end after 1994. Nevertheless a new kind of "political capitalism" was established (p. 155); unfortunately it affected mainly the military-industrial complex and the spacecraft industry, which began "flourishing." The political results of this new configuration of elites were the adoption of a new constitution on 28 June 1996 (pp. 140–3) and the defusing of the Crimean issue.

What is clearly missing in Wittkowsky's book, and this is my main criticism of it, is a chapter on foreign policy. He does inform us about Ukrainian-Russian relations in his discussion of the Crimean problem, but he does not examine Ukraine's foreign policy, which is a matter of great importance to any new nation-state. Ukraine's treaties with Poland, Russia, and Romania, for example, stabilized the state and created some prospects for Ukraine's difficult advancement toward integration into Europe's political and economic structures.

One could argue that Wittkowsky pays too much attention to the elites. Indeed, the masses play almost no role in his book, and the story of the Ukrainian "people" in the 1990s still has to be written. It must be stated, however, that Wittkowsky's study is not based on any anti-national, globalized sentiment, although he does begin with a critical assessment of nationalist concepts that see linear or objective regularities in the evolution of national consciousness. Wittkowsky believes that nations and nation-states—including Ukraine—are key elements in world politics today and that they will remain so in the near future.

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George Luckyj. *The Anguish of Mykola Hohol, a.k.a. Nikolai Gogol*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998. x, 117 pp. \$18.95 paper.

The question of Gogol's Ukrainianness has enjoyed a certain vogue in Ukrainian cultural and intellectual circles since the demise of the Soviet Union and of its official myths about Russian-Ukrainian fraternity. Happily this vogue has coincided with increased interest in marginal and postcolonial literatures on the part of cultural theorists. To date, neither scholars in Ukraine nor their Western counterparts have provided a sufficiently comprehensive account of how Gogol's writing might be shaped by the author's ethnicity, cultural background, and attitude towards Imperial Russia. George Luckyj's *Anguish of Mykola Hohol* comes, therefore, as a welcome introduction to the Ukrainian Gogol. Updating and, in part, building on his earlier monograph *Between*

*Gogol' and Ševčenko: Polarity in the Literary Ukraine, 1798–1847* (1971), Luckyj provides much useful background material in this new biography for an English-speaking audience long accustomed to regarding Gogol as (in Belinsky's famous formulation) a "Russian national poet."

Luckyj's focus on Ukrainian elements in Gogol's life is avowedly revisionist: its stated aim is to "redress an obvious imbalance in the past" (p. 25). In attempting to do so, the author provides an extensive survey of post-Soviet Ukrainian scholarly and popular literature on Gogol's place in a Ukrainian cultural context, as well as a selection of revealing comments by earlier observers and Gogol's contemporaries. Recasting the traditional two-Gogols approach of previous biographies (comic writer versus Christian homilist), Luckyj considers the writer's self-confessed state of ethnic *dvoedushie* as a major source of inner conflict. Early on in the book he advances the provocative thesis that Gogol's inability to reconcile his twin Ukrainian and Russian souls may have precipitated the crisis at the end of his life. At the same time Luckyj concedes the main problems in demarcating Ukrainian identity in the nineteenth-century Russian Empire and adeptly considers how they may have affected Gogol's split national loyalties. In relation to this, a brief discussion about *obshcherusskost* and its role in rendering the Eastern Slavs' ethnic boundaries indistinct is very much to the point. An incisive reading of "Rome," in which the prince's reception of Italy and France are treated as emblematic of Gogol's own attitudes to Ukraine and Russia, complements many of the other points made by the author.

Unfortunately, in seeking to uncover a Ukrainian Gogol, Luckyj's biography tends, in places, towards overstatement, which repels rather than enlists the reader's sympathy for the author's cause. The extremely marginal observations that Gogol was probably aware of the fact that Glinka composed most of *Ruslan and Liudmila* in Ukraine (p. 83), wore *sharovary* (p. 94), and, close to death, grew a "Cossack mustache" (p. 101) is a clear case in point. Similarly tenuous is some of the evidence that Luckyj cites in support of Gogol's own view of himself, such as that provided in note 5 (p. 3): conversing with the Polish "Ukrainian-school" poet Bogdan Zaleski in Ukrainian, Gogol was bound to refer to himself as "Hohol," while Leontev's "Ces bons Hohols" (which, contrary to the purpose of the note, has no bearing on how Gogol might have perceived himself) is not "cryptic" in the least—in context, it is a French-speaking Turk's felicitous pun on *khokhol*. A venal sin of omission can also be detected in Luckyj's failure to note that Gogol's letter in "fairly good Ukrainian" to Zaleski (p. 74) is absolutely unique in the correspondence that has come down to us: apart from transcribing some verse, epigraphs, phrases, and lexical items, Gogol wrote nothing in Ukrainian. Similarly worthy of reminder is the fact that Gogol's "Polish episode" (pp. 74–76) had a vitriolic anti-Polish denouement in the extensively reworked 1842 edition of *Taras Bulba*.

More caution would be desirable in those places where Luckyj traces Gogol's satirization of Russia and its institutions to the author's actual and his characters' possible Ukrainian identity. An unconvincing hypothesis is posited along such lines in relation to "a Little Russian Khlestakov ... who whipped the provincial Russian town" (pp. 71–72). (Khlestakov, it might be recalled, is on his way to his family estate in Saratov gubernia). It hardly need be noted that nineteenth-century Russian letters have a long tradition of even ethnic Russians experiencing a love-hate relationship with their motherland and making such a relationship a subject of their writing. Further afield, worth mentioning



also is the fact that Luckyj's characterization of Aleksandra Smirnova as "the shining light of the St. Petersburg intellectuals" is generous to the point of being misleading (p. 77), as is that of Gogol's censor, Aleksandr Nikitenko, as "another old Ukrainian acquaintance" (p. 81). Derivatives of *khokhol* ("*khakhlatskaia*," "*khakhly*") are consistently misspelled.

Perhaps the most disappointing point in the study occurs when the author identifies but fails to expand on a fecund critical framework for considering Gogol's Ukrainian-ness—that of postcolonialism. Luckyj's observation that little has been done "to scrutinize those writers who came from the colonies and served the imperial centre" (p. 8) is an important one that continues to apply to many non-Russians writing in Russian. His indistinct references to Edward Said usefully point to colonial discourse analysis as an avenue for exploring Gogol's complicity with Russian literature, but then he directly dismisses such analysis out of hand (pp. 15–16, 24). It could, of course, be argued that Gogol's unfavourable reception among independence-minded Ukrainians stems, in large measure, from the writer's pivotal historical role in stigmatizing Ukraine as a backward province. Additionally, Luckyj's incautious allusion to postcolonial theory fails to take into account recent critiques of Said, which provide for a fuller range of ambivalences in relations between colonizer and colonized. The implications of such critiques are, in fact, highly appropriate for "Hohol" scholarship in that they accommodate many of the ambiguities in Gogol's Ukrainian view of Russia to which Luckyj draws attention. One fruitful line of inquiry would be to consider how the writer's collusion with Russian cultural imperialism is deconstructed by his debasement of Russian literary canons with the ethnically and linguistically marginal. Far from being deterred by "the *patois* value of Ukrainian" (p. 45), Gogol was well aware of its merits in destabilizing the Russian ethnocentrism of imperial Russian culture.

As the author rightly points out, the subject of Gogol's Ukrainianness has been long subject to denial, distortion, and neglect. Any effort to reappraise Gogol's standing in the Russian literary pantheon is therefore bound to be controversial. Yet, renewed interest in Ukraine in the wake of independence and the popular intellectual currency presently enjoyed by postcolonialism suggest that there is no time better than the present for making such an effort. Despite some reductionist tendencies, Luckyj's "supplement to existing full biographies" (p. ix) presents a useful compendium of information on the Ukrainian Gogol that will doubtlessly help stimulate fresh debate.

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*Two Lands, New Visions: Stories From Canada and Ukraine.* Ed. Janice Kulyk Keefer and Solomea Pavlychko. Trans. Marco Carynnyk and Marta Horban. Regina: Couteau Books, 1998. xvi, 312 pp. \$15.95, U.S. \$13.95 paper. Distributed in the United States by General Distribution Services, 85 River Rock Dr., ste. 202, Buffalo, NY 14207.

Between the covers of this book there is much good reading. For a start, there are two masterpieces of the novella genre: Yurii Izdryk's "Father" and Yurii Vynnychuk's



"Day of the Angel." Both have finely tuned plots with startling climaxes (the *unerhörte Begebenheiten* of novella theory) that no reviewer with a conscience would prematurely disclose to potential readers. Vynnychuk is best known for breaking taboos against sex and violence in Ukrainian letters, Izdryk for philosophically dense, even obscure, fiction. Here they recommend themselves as artists of the perfectly balanced narrative. (Bohdan Zholdak's "Karma-Yoga," with its *unerhörte Begebenheit* of self-castration, a story not without its whimsical attractions, does not match the other two in aesthetic economy and discipline.)

Then there is Vasyl Portiak's magnificent "Exodus," the story of a journey without beginning or end undertaken by a group of social outcasts through the least visible crevices of a threatening urban environment. The protagonists, pursued by an imprecisely defined but hostile political order, wander without hope but with heroism, without the vision of a promised land but with dignity. The setting, despite hints at post-Chornobyl Kyiv, is not localized. It is a mythical place, where events surely have a secret meaning. Divining the secret, however, is the business of individual readers. The inscrutable authorial voice pre-empts nothing.

Or, again, there is Oksana Zabuzhko's splendid phantasmagoria "I, Milena," constructed around the old but ingeniously renovated motif of the insentient object that comes to life and intrudes into human affairs. Here the object is the television set, whose virtual, on-screen reality at first begins to comment on the heroine's flesh-and-blood life, and then takes control it. The work, deliciously complex as it is, issues an open invitation to critics to analyze its feminist and media-critical implications. Its sole flaw, perhaps, is a certain overkill at the end: the pyrotechnics of the climax are the outcome, one feels, more of Zabuzhko's love for baroque bravado than of the aesthetic logic developed in the first three-quarters of the story.

A point of clarification is in order at this point. The book has two parts. The first comprises translations into English of ten recent stories by authors living in Ukraine and writing in Ukrainian; the second, of ten prose pieces written in English by Canadians with a connection to Ukraine. The four items described above, which impressed this reviewer most, all come from the first part of the collection, the most striking aspect of which is its variety. At one end of the spectrum, a few of the Ukrainian stories are quite traditional. Their aesthetic assumptions are those of realism, and their authors adopt clear social and moral stances. Thus Yevhenia Kononenko, in her "Elegy About Old Age," pulls our heartstrings apropos of the plight of hungry old women in the brave new world of neo-capitalist Ukraine, and invites us to condemn their businesswomen daughters and their hip and cynical granddaughters. Svitlana Kasianova does something similar in "Cold Medicine," except that the social group for whom she musters sympathy consists of country girls coping, or failing to cope, in the predatory city (more precisely, among the predatory men of the predatory city). Predatory men in the guise of new-style "democratic" politicians are the object of more frontal attack in Roksana Kharchuk's sarcastic satire "Always a Leader."

Oles Ulianenko's "Orders" is stylistically in an altogether different key. As in most works by this inheritor of Zolaesque naturalism, moral outrage at examples of the degradation of the human being is combined with a confronting manner of presentation. Stream-of-consciousness narration disorients the reader as to the sequence and context of events, while repeated depictions of the human body as abused, diseased, dismembered,

putrefying, and otherwise violated render the reading of Ulianenko no laughing matter. In the case of "Orders" the occasion for the reader's distress is the topic of Soviet military action in Afghanistan. No less challenging to the reader, though for different reasons, is Taras Prokhasko's "Necropolis," a highly erudite and sophisticated experiment with literary form designed, one conjectures, to illustrate some philosophical commonplaces associated with post-structuralism.

The "mainland" half of *Two Lands: New Visions*, then, presents pieces of short prose whose wide range of styles and themes would urge caution upon any critic intent upon generalizing about them. In one of the two introductions, Solomea Pavlychko—well known in Ukraine as a sometimes controversial literary scholar—offers a vivid overview of contemporary Ukrainian literature in which she links literary phenomena to the often grim developments in the social and economic spheres since independence. But several of her observations seem only partly to match the works actually present in the anthology. "Young writers wallow in depression and pessimism: they view the world through the eyes of the grotesque and satire" (p. i), Pavlychko believes. Indeed, several of the ten writers represented do engage in satire and present images of reality exaggerated and distorted in various ways. Yet this is not tantamount to the failure of faith and hope that we call pessimism. Only in a very few cases—Ulianenko and perhaps, with the usual postmodern reservations, Prokhasko—do the works in the anthology develop a pessimistic view of the world and the human being in it. Portiak, with his celebration of the indestructible dignity of the human being, is actually optimistic. Roksana Kharchuk's satire, while critical of social reality, implies the possibility of its improvement. Some of the works are simply difficult to locate on the scale between pessimism and optimism, their main interest lying elsewhere—with the aesthetic problem of the well-made narrative (Izdryk, Vynnychuk, Zholdak). These latter works, naturally, sit uneasily alongside the allegation that a "breakdown of narrative" (p. iv) is a "general tendency" to be observed in the Ukrainian short story today.

Pavlychko believes that the contemporary Ukrainian short story "does not resemble classic national instances of the genre" (p. ii), with the exception of Ulianenko and Portiak (p. v). It is certainly true that Ulianenko's tragic naturalism is strongly reminiscent of Vasyl Stefanyk. But it is also true that Kononenko's sense of period, her social and psychological portraiture, and her satirical irony hark back to Volodymyr Vynnychenko. The humour and devilry of Vynnychuk and Zabuzhko recall Nikolai Gogol. And there is little in the anthology that will strike the reader as formally unprecedented.

Pavlychko is entirely correct to identify as important and innovative the re-emergence in Ukrainian literature of women's voices informed by feminism (these are clearly audible, in different ways, in the stories of each of the four "mainland" women in the anthology). On the matter of an ostensible new regionalism in Ukrainian letters, she somewhat overstates the case, as do the most articulate "regionalists," Yurii Andrukhovych and his circle in Ivano-Frankivsk. (Andrukhovych, without doubt the best-known of the contemporary non-traditional Ukrainian writers, remains mysteriously unnamed in this introduction.) The sophisticated self-propaganda of these Western Ukrainian writers has made much of their debt to the heritage of Austria-Hungary. But it is doubtful that an unprejudiced reader would detect anything so markedly Central European in the stories by Izdryk, Prokhasko, and Vynnychuk as to set them apart from the others.

The largest, and most polemical, claim is the one that Pavlychko makes first: that "[Ukrainian] literature today has lost its bearings" (p. i). Certainly the ideological and aesthetic unison of Soviet days, secured by a constant threat of coercion, is gone. Certainly texts written today vary greatly from one another, and among writers there is more public dissension than agreement. But this, surely, deserves a more approving metaphor—perhaps "Ukrainian literature has become more polyphonic," or, if one were not afraid of sounding a bit romantic, "Ukrainian literature has found a new creative freedom."

One might, then, have reservations about Pavlychko's introduction. As an editor, however, she is first-rate: she has succeeded, within the narrow compass of only ten items, in giving the reader works of high literary merit and a fair representation of what is going on in the new Ukrainian prose.

Pavlychko makes no allusion to the Canadian half of the book. The task of explaining why one might combine Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian prose is left to her co-editor, the Canadian writer Janice Kulyk Keefer. Kulyk Keefer believes that book brings together what she calls "'distance' cousins" (p. ix)—not estranged relatives whom one might call distant, but ones who have been separated through accidents of politics and history. Behind the anthology, then, is a desire to restore what is perceived as the natural and proper cohesion between a source culture and an emigrant culture. The intended addressees of this Ukrainian/Ukrainian-Canadian anthology are those Ukrainian Canadians who wish for a sense of their "ethnicity" informed by "the complexities of history, both 'old-world' and 'new,'" and the new-world complications of "class, gender, politics, and religion" (p. x). The project of this book, clearly, is Canadian-driven, and the inclusion of a Ukrainian half in the collection is intended as a means for enriching the sense of identity of a particular group of Canadians.

Can mainland Ukrainian literature really fulfil this function, however? Perhaps because history is often seen as one of the paramount sources of identity, Kulyk Keefer claims that the Ukrainian works "emphasize ... complex historical and political contexts" (p. xi). But do they? History in this sense—the detailed, mimetic, social history that fascinates the Canadian stories—is seldom of great concern to the Ukrainian writers. Again, because an image of the homeland is a useful anchor for an "ethnic" identity, Kulyk Keefer suggests that the Ukrainian stories help "discover[] something of what it is like to live in contemporary Ukraine" (p. xiii). Perhaps some of the more traditional stories may be read this way, but on the whole this prose is not primarily interested in reliably recording social experience. More often its purpose is better served by distorting social realia or inventing imaginary ones.

Kulyk Keefer is right to point out that the greatest difference between the Ukrainian and Canadian stories lies in the fact that "the Ukrainians are so obviously at home in the literary and larger culture of their country, whereas their Canadian counterparts are still defining for themselves what their own place within or in relation towards Canadian culture might be" (p. xii). This clarifies very well the scope and the limitations of the Canadian stories: they are, first and foremost, case studies in the identity question. For this reason one can speak of them collectively in a way that would be impossible for the Ukrainian half of the collection.

Any quest for identity is consequent upon the belief that one has not yet found it, or found it to one's satisfaction. It is the outcome of a sense of lack, of discomfort, of

unhappiness. One way of dealing with this unhappiness is to regard it as somebody's fault. Practically all of the Canadian stories are about fault, and most therefore share a common atmosphere of resentment, just as they share the habit of referring to traditional Ukrainian foods.

Mostly the resentment is muted. The personae of the narrators (nine out of ten are first-person narrators, and of these nine, seven are women, like all but one of the Canadian authors) do not, as a rule, feel resentful on their own account. They are too mainstream, established, and confident for that. They belong mostly to the class of people who do "video research proposal[s] on youth and ethnic retention" (p. 203) or work "in an art gallery as an assistant curator" (p. 224). Their resentment is on behalf of the downtrodden of earlier generations—their grandmothers and mothers. Barbara Scott, in "Oranges," would have us resent the society in which one's grandmother was so poor that she had to wear rayons and acrylics and could not usually afford to buy one's mother an orange. Often the resentment has a feminist dimension. Mary Borsky, in "Myna," asks us to resent not only the bad old mores that made Myna's parents throw her out of home for getting pregnant, but also the man who did the deed but refuses to take responsibility.

Myrna Kostash, whose "Ways of Caring," unlike almost all the other Canadian contributions, is set in Ukraine, explores the resentments born of historical injustice—of the rule of lord over peasant, of one ethnos over another. Also unlike most of the other authors, she makes the resentment non-fictional, contemporary, and her own: "I cannot bear the old woman in the kerchief who kisses [Russian-Canadian media personality Michael Ignatieff's] hand and bursts into tears. I want her to hiss. I want her to ... sink her brass teeth into his left pinky" (p. 267). The only other author who brings anger so close to the narrator's persona is Kathie Kolybaba. Her "Lunch Hour with a Soviet Citizen" paints the frustrations of a middle-class Canadian working mother with a visiting Ukrainian relative who is determined to stay and oblivious of implied obligations to be self-effacing and industrious. This is a fine satirical sketch of the little inhumanities to which immigration, that archetypal situation of the human being in modernity, tempts both immigrant and host. Martha Blum's "Two Triangles," a narrative of a Jewish woman's tribulations in the Second World War, is surprisingly free of resentment, celebrating instead the occasional decency of human beings even in extreme circumstances.

The theme of the quest for identity determines the mood of the Canadian stories in other ways as well. Looking for the authentic, historically contextualized self is, evidently, a serious business, and little humour or playfulness penetrates this prose. Nor is there much room for other-than-realistic views of the world or for provocative uses of language. Usually there is narrative, but it is not of the essence: it serves to organize the tableaux that clarify how various people, circumstances, and things help explain who *we* are. Chrystia Chomiak makes this point in her story, "The Still-Boiling Water." An anecdote (one of several sisters fell into a basin of hot water) becomes not the *unerhörte Begebenheit* that gives impetus to a linear plot, but an occasion for storytelling by the narrator's aunts and grandmother that maps their social and experiential universe.

The identities that are sought and explored in the Canadian stories are not always, first and foremost, "ethnic" identities. Marusia Bociurkiw's story, "The Children of Mary," is, perhaps, the one that focusses most deliberately upon identity as the product of class, gender, generation, ethnic background, sexual orientation, education, urban or



rural experience, and much besides. Lida Somchynsky, in "The First Lady," considers how particular identities are rendered less than significant by the alarming fact of human mortality.

There is one Canadian story that does not fit in with the rest: Ray Serwylo's "Lost Winters of Emerald and Silver." To be sure, the story begins with a profession of traditional Ukrainian identity ("We are—all of us—we are *kumy*," p. 189), and the image of a coherent émigré community is developed quite fully here. But Serwylo's story is not about the identity of "me" or "us." It is about the impenetrable mystery of the others, the outsiders who make up their own rules, and the people who become incomprehensible by association with them.

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In the final analysis, do the two halves of this book manage to go together in the way that Janice Kulyk Keefer hopes? Probably not. The "Ukrainianness" of the Ukrainian-Canadian stories is something entirely different from the self-awareness of the mainland Ukrainian prose, and the reunion of separated "cousins" remains purely formal: they are in the same room, but they speak different same languages, metaphorically as well as literally.

But none of this prevents *Two Lands, New Visions* from being a very good book, well worth reading from cover to cover. Readers are likely to experience, on the occasion of more than one story, the seduction of narrative. They will also learn a good deal about what it is to be Ukrainian-Canadian.

One of the factors that secures the excellence of this book is the quality of the Ukrainian-to-English translations by Marco Carynnyk and Marta Horban. These read very well indeed. Where this reviewer was able to compare them with the Ukrainian originals it was clear that Carynnyk and Horban had produced a natural English while remaining strictly faithful to the authors' (frequently difficult) texts. The translators outline some of the technical difficulties they encountered in a short afterword.

The volume closes with biographical notes. In keeping with one set of customs, the Ukrainian authors give places and dates of birth, details of their studies and professional achievements, and their main publications. The Canadians, following another tradition, are more circumspect about themselves, and none discloses a fact of some importance to their identity: their age.

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Marko Pavlyshyn. *Kanon ta ikonostas*. Introduction by Ivan Dziuba. Kyiv: Chas, 1997. 448 pp.

The appearance of this collection of Marko Pavlyshyn's critical essays is a notable event in Ukrainian cultural life. The leading Australian scholar of Ukrainian literature, Pavlyshyn has been recognized as one of the most influential voices in the critical debates on contemporary Ukrainian culture, in particular those concerning postmodernism, post-



colonialism, and canon formation. His sober, sophisticated, and insightful contributions have unfailingly been a welcome alternative to the often shrill yet lightweight polemics, if not squabbles, about these issues in many Ukrainian periodicals. The present volume brings together some of Pavlyshyn's most important essays written over the span of a dozen years from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s. A full bibliography of his publications from 1977 to 1995 is provided in the appendix.

Ivan Dziuba's thoughtful introduction clearly shows the fascination that he, a Ukrainian critic who entered his profession under Soviet rule, has upon encountering a critical voice remarkably free of the complexes still existing to this day, if perhaps unconsciously, among critics educated in Soviet Ukraine. Dziuba repeatedly expresses his admiration for the thoroughness and professionalism of Pavlyshyn's research and for the high intellectual level of his argument. Contemporary Ukrainian literature, Dziuba believes, is fortunate to have such an erudite, sophisticated, "ironically postmodernist" critic as Pavlyshyn writing about it.

The book also contains several of Pavlyshyn's essays on earlier Ukrainian texts and on Ukrainian literature and culture in Australia, which reveal the breadth of his scholarly interests. Adapting the name of a popular American book series, what we have here is a tome of "The Portable Pavlyshyn." But it is his essays on contemporary, non-diasporic Ukrainian literature that comprise the largest section of the book. In them the reader can follow Pavlyshyn's attempts, from the early 1980s onwards, to identify in that literature texts that break with, or at least destabilize, the hegemony of the formal and ideological strictures of socialist-realist writing. As an honest critic writing from a standpoint that values both formal skill and independent thinking, however, he is often forced to acknowledge that many such ambitious texts, by authors often held in high regard either by the Soviet or the dissident establishment (among them Oles Honchar, Mykola Rudenko, Ievhen Hutsalo, Pavlo Zahrebelny, and Volodymyr Drozd), should ultimately be considered instructive failures. Nevertheless, Pavlyshyn does encounter a number of authors—Valerii Shevchuk, Iurii Andrukhovych, Vasyl Stus, and Ihor Kalynets—whom he singles out as producers of texts that represent major aesthetic achievements, and sometimes (as, for instance, in the case of Andrukhovych's novel *Recreations*, of which an expert English translation by Pavlyshyn was published in 1998 by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press) a veritable epistemological breakthrough (p. 237). But even when he expresses clear admiration of a particular author's work, Pavlyshyn subjects it to a thorough and detailed analysis. It is clear that he enjoys much more writing about the texts that he does like, but he never closes his eyes to the occasional problems that he encounters in them.

In his essays Pavlyshyn tends to favour the genre of close reading. Yet his close readings are never hermetic. On the contrary, he often creatively introduces into his argument references to other national literary traditions, particularly to the German Romantics and modernists and to critics ranging from Lukács, Adorno, and Jauss to Terry Eagleton and Barbara Herrnstein Smith.

Somewhat apart stand three "purely theoretical" essays that Pavlyshyn wrote in the early 1990s. I would not hesitate to call them milestones of contemporary Ukrainian critical discourse. The first of them, which provided the title for the entire volume, is a bold and clear challenge to the practice of "fixing up" the literary canon that has occurred in Ukraine since the late 1980s, and to the entire concept of the canon and its function.

(Pavlyshyn argues that in the case of Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine we are dealing with the canon as iconostasis—a canon that consists of the authors and by and large neglects the texts.) The usually ironically reserved Pavlyshyn is outraged by the combination of the quick addition of previously banned authors as martyrs with the quiet preservation or uncritical reaffirmation of the presence in the canon of certain authors and their both aesthetically inferior and morally suspect works. He argues for a radical change in critical discourse and for a thorough re-examination of the very notion of the canon and of the functions of author and text as parts of the literary tradition.

The other two theoretical essays have served as ground-breaking attempts at introducing into the current Ukrainian cultural consciousness the notions of post-modernism and post-colonialism; to a large extent, the two essays formed the basis for the reception of these notions in Ukraine. Pavlyshyn had the formidable task of summarizing the extraordinarily prolific postmodernist and post-colonialist discourses in the West and of suggesting ways in which their use in the Ukrainian context could be productive. His outline of these phenomena strikes me as a little too coherent and straightforward, but I fully share his view of them as offering contemporary Ukrainian culture a way out from the hegemony of old binary oppositions, and a means by which to conduct a critical yet tolerant and pluralistic rethinking of Ukrainian culture, both past and present, and of its place in the larger global cultural condition.

We need statements about the Ukrainian cultural process by others who would share Marko Pavlyshyn's unflagging belief in the potential of current Ukrainian literature and would exhibit the same lucid, dignified, and sophisticated argumentation found in his writings. At the same time, let us hope that he will continue writing about Ukrainian literature for many years to come and that his works will inspire new generations of writers and critics, both in Ukraine and the diaspora, to try contributing the kinds of texts he is calling for to the Ukrainian literary discourse.

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Vilen S. Horsky. *Istoriia ukrainskoi filosofii: Kurs leksii*.  
Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1996. 280 pp.

Among recent Ukrainian textbooks in the history of Ukrainian philosophy, this is the first one to present a coherent survey grounded in a fresh, well-thought-out definition of the subject. Designed for university students, the book is based on the author's 1993–95 courses at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy University, where he serves as head of the philosophy department. Each of the book's twelve chapters opens with a thematic outline and closes with a select bibliography and a list of questions for discussion.

The first chapter is the methodological key to the book. It defines the author's conception of the history of Ukrainian philosophy, his understanding of the purpose and parameters of the subject. The specific nature of Ukrainian history calls for a special approach here. Since the Ukrainian people has been stateless for most of its history, the higher institutions of learning, at which philosophy is normally cultivated, have tended to be non-Ukrainian. Hence, unlike most historians, the historian of Ukrainian philosophy

cannot adopt an institutional approach and confine himself to the philosophy done at academic institutions in Ukraine. Thus Horsky proposes a "culturological" approach, according to which the historian's task is to describe the development of the philosophical ideas produced by Ukrainians as an integral part of Ukrainian culture. By approaching philosophy as a cultural phenomenon, the historian extends its thematic and stylistic limits to their maximum. He treats philosophy not as a science, but rather as disciplined reflection on the meaning of life, on the purpose or possibilities of human existence, both individual and national. Insofar as philosophy encompasses questions of national identity and destiny, it marks a higher stage in the development of national consciousness and can be described as the self-consciousness of a national culture.

As to its form, Horsky regards philosophy not as a set of propositions, but rather a dialogue among different worldviews or ideas. The genres or styles in which this dialogue is conducted can vary: philosophical ideas may be found not only in philosophical treatises but also in scientific theories, literary works, political tracts, religious writings, and moral instructions. Thus Horsky's history of Ukrainian philosophy encompasses three kinds of philosophical production: (1) philosophical theories produced by professional thinkers at academic institutions; (2) the "philosophical culture of the Ukrainian people," i.e., the philosophical ideas at the core of various worldviews represented in Ukrainian culture or at the foundation of various texts belonging to Ukrainian culture; and (3) the "philosophy of the national idea," i.e., the attempts at defining the distinctive features of the Ukrainian outlook on life or national character and the purpose of national existence. The latter is inadequately explained in Horsky's textbook, and one has to turn to his article "Ukraina v istoryko-filosofskomu vymiri" (*Filosofska i sotsiologichna dumka*, 1993, no. 4: 10–31) to grasp what he has in mind.

Besides providing the broadest criterion of philosophy, the culturological approach entails a definite criterion of "Ukrainian." What determines whether a thinker, theory, or idea belongs to Ukrainian philosophy is the cultural context of his or its generation and functioning: if it emerges from or plays a role in Ukrainian culture, then it belongs to Ukrainian philosophy. I agree with Horsky that this is a more fundamental and reliable criterion than a thinker's national origin, national consciousness, place of work, or language. It is a necessary condition, but, contrary to what Horsky implies, it is not a sufficient condition for being counted as Ukrainian: to distinguish thinkers and ideas that are part of Ukrainian culture from those that have merely influenced Ukrainian culture, some additional factors must be taken into account. Furthermore, Horsky seems to violate his own criterion when he asserts that all theories produced by professional philosophers working in Ukraine (in the sense of an ethnic or state territory) belong to Ukrainian philosophy simply because such theories by their very nature are quite remote from Ukrainian cultural developments.

I agree with Horsky that metaphysical and epistemological theories constitute something like isolated islands within national cultures. Nevertheless they are part of national cultures. But what makes them part of this or that national culture is not the territory but the institutions where they originate. In my view, philosophy done at Ukrainian institutions, whether they are located on Ukrainian (state or ethnic) territory or not, belongs to Ukrainian culture, while philosophy done at non-Ukrainian institutions, even if these are on Ukrainian territory, is not part of Ukrainian culture. This disagree-

ment leads me to question Horsky's treatment of a number of nineteenth-century thinkers as Ukrainian philosophers.

Finally, the culturological approach to philosophy determines the periodization of the history of Ukrainian philosophy: this periodization conforms to the general scheme of the history of Ukrainian culture. Thus Horsky isolates three periods in the development of Ukrainian philosophy: Kyivan Rus', the Cossack period, and the nineteenth through early twentieth century. In the first period, philosophy consisted of the basic ideas of a religious worldview that informed the Greco-Slavic culture of Rus'. These ideas were articulated in translated and original literature and monumental art works, not in theoretical systems. In the second period, from the beginning of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, the impact of the Renaissance and Reformation on traditional Ukrainian culture gave rise to a distinctive baroque culture in which not only philosophical ideas but also systematic philosophy played an important role. Philosophy as a special theoretical activity was cultivated at Ukrainian institutions of higher learning and culminated, eventually, in the thought of Hryhorii Skovoroda. In the third period, thanks to the influence of Romanticism on Ukrainian culture, the philosophy of the national idea emerged to complete the development of Ukrainian culture and philosophy. While systematic philosophy was practiced at universities in Ukrainian territories, the philosophical ideas that had the greatest impact on Ukrainian culture were articulated not by professional philosophers, but by writers, scientists, and political theorists. The first period is covered in one chapter, the second period in three chapters, and the third period in seven chapters.

In his presentation of the historical material Horsky adheres admirably to his theoretical scheme. He sacrifices completeness to clarity by selecting the most important and interesting thinkers and concentrating on their main doctrines. Underneath the evident breaks the continuities between the different periods are emphasized. The result is an elegantly organized, concise text. The Christianization of medieval Rus' stimulated some original thinking, which Horsky characterizes as practical and existential. Its main achievements are the moral ideals of the warrior and the saint, and the historiosophical ideal of the Christian land, which was represented by Rus'. The idea of philosophy as lived wisdom was preserved in the second period of Ukrainian philosophy, in which the Orthodox hierarchy and laity employed humanist and Reformationist ideas from western Europe to resist the Polish-led Counter-Reformation. In the seventeenth century the synthesis of early-Enlightenment trends with the local tradition gave rise to a distinctive Ukrainian baroque culture, in which philosophy became a separate intellectual field cultivated in the higher schools for the first time. By the early eighteenth century it evolved, according to Horsky, from a religiously oriented discipline based on ancient and patristic thought to an empirically inclined investigation of man, society, and nature. It played a major role in promoting the values of "civic humanism" in society. The philosophical potential of this tradition was realized in Skovoroda's thought, which at the same time negated it and reverted to the ancient idea of philosophy as lived wisdom. Horsky accepts Mykola Shlemkevych's observation that Skovoroda exemplified a distinctively Ukrainian ideal of the intellectual who renounces society for the sake of spiritual freedom, an ideal that helped preserve Ukrainian cultural values during periods of oppression.



Over half the book is devoted to the third period, which begins with the spread of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, particularly Kant's, Fichte's, and Schelling's ideas, in Ukraine. Horsky singles out Nikolai Gogol (Mykola Hohol) and ties him closely to the philosophical tradition represented by Skovoroda. The Kyiv school of religious philosophy in the first half of the nineteenth century tried to reconcile faith and reason, borrowing ideas from German idealism and Patristic thought; according to the author, it seems to have influenced the outlook of some members of the Cyrillo-Methodian Brotherhood. It is in this circle that the philosophy of the Ukrainian national idea originated. Horsky outlines Mykola Kostomarov's, Panteleimon Kulish's, and Taras Shevchenko's idealized accounts of Ukraine's past and visions of her future, which had a decisive impact on the development of national consciousness. In the 1860s members of the brotherhood laid the foundations of the Hromada movement. From its midst, Horsky shows, came further contributions to the philosophy of the national idea: Oleksander Potebnia's linguistic research confirmed the importance of language in a nation's cultural life, while Mykhailo Drahomanov's political theory recognized nationality as the basis of free association and of cultural, social, and political progress.

Among the next generation of Ukrainian intelligentsia, Horsky discusses Trokhym Zinkivsky's theory of nations as the chief agents of history, and Ivan Franko's depiction of the relation between the people and its leader in his literary works. After outlining the doctrines of nine professional philosophers who taught at universities in Russian-ruled Ukraine at the turn of our century, Horsky turns to the philosophical contributions of four prominent Ukrainian intellectuals who were active in Ukrainian political life. He discusses Bohdan Kistiakovsky's theory of scientific methodology, Volodymyr Vernadsky's speculations about humankind's role in cosmic evolution, Mykhailo Hrushevsky's conception of history in general and of Ukrainian history in particular, and Volodymyr Vynnychenko's "Concordism," a project of moral and social reform.

The final chapter deals with philosophical currents after World War I within and outside Soviet Ukraine. Horsky focusses on Mykola Khvylovy's historiosophical theory of the "Asiatic Renaissance," the mechanist-Deborinist controversy among Soviet philosophers in the 1920s, and the suppression of philosophy in the USSR in the 1930s. He points out that it was only in the 1960s, when new branches of philosophy—the philosophy of science and the history of Western and Ukrainian philosophy—were developed, that philosophy revived in Ukraine. The main contributions to Ukrainian philosophy outside Ukraine were, in Horsky's estimation, Dmytro Dontsov's totalitarian ideology of nationalism, V'iacheslav Lypynsky's historiosophical theory of the elite, and Dmytro Chyzhevsky's work in the history of Ukrainian philosophy.

In Horsky's broad survey, two chapters seem problematical to me—chapter 7 on the Kyiv school of religious philosophy, and chapter 10 on academic philosophy in Ukraine at the turn of our century. Both chapters deal with metaphysical and epistemological theories developed by professional philosophers who had no or very little relation to Ukrainian culture. Although their ideas were remote from the cultural, social, and political concerns of the Ukrainian people, and although many of these philosophers were of Russian descent and all of them expressed their ideas in Russian, my main objection to counting them as Ukrainian philosophers is that they were affiliated with imperial, not Ukrainian, institutions. In this respect they were very different from the philosophy professors who served in the Ukrainian academies of the seventeenth and eighteenth



centuries; hence, they should be treated as members of the Russian philosophical community.

Horsky's *Istoriia ukrainskoi filosofii* is not only an excellent textbook, but also, thanks to its methodological sophistication, the first coherent theory of the history of Ukrainian philosophy to overcome the inconsistencies and limitations of Chyzhevsky's theory. In this capacity it provides a solid framework for a future systematic and comprehensive study of the history of Ukrainian philosophy.

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John Milner. *Kazimir Malevich and the Art of Geometry*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996. x, 237 pp. U.S. \$50.00 cloth.

Since the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been a growing interest in exploring the art of those individuals whose work was officially opposed by the former Communist regime. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the case of the avant-garde, whose modernist focus proved to be too ideologically and politically controversial for it to coexist with the Soviet government's sanctioned style of socialist realism. Kazimir Malevich, often touted as the "father of the Russian avant-garde" for his development of Suprematism in 1915, has been among those receiving the greatest attention. Jean-Claude Marcadé's *Malévitch* (Paris, 1990), Rainer Crone and David Moos's *Malevich: The Climax of Disclosure* (Chicago, 1991), and Charlotte Douglas's *Kazimir Malevich* (New York, 1994) are but a few of the more recent scholarly studies on the artist, while several retrospective exhibitions, held in Russia, western Europe, and the United States, have heightened the broader public's awareness of Malevich internationally.

John Milner's investigation into Malevich centres on one very exciting aspect of his work—arithmetic and mathematical proportion, and the fundamental role they played in establishing a geometric structure for his entire oeuvre. Milner argues that the *arshin* and *vershok*, the old and now obsolete standards by which materials were measured in Russia, provided the framework for Malevich's compositional structure (one *arshin* equals 71.12 cm., and sixteen *vershki* make up one *arshin*) from his early figural paintings through his first exhibition of Suprematist works in 1915 and in the years thereafter. Milner's excellent analysis of Malevich's paintings reveals the depth and precision with which this system pervaded his working methodology, going so far as to arrange the actual installation of his Suprematist paintings at The Last Futurist Exhibition "0,10," held in Petrograd from 17 December 1915 to 17 January 1916, according to an *arshin-vershok* grid. As Milner points out on numerous occasions, the significance of Malevich's method has its ties to mysticism and the symbolic nature of measure, "an organizing force that promoted generative rhythms resulting in harmony" (p. 12).

Milner lays the groundwork for Malevich's interest in the cosmology of symmetry and proportion as an interest shared by many of his contemporaries in both the Russian Empire and in western Europe, particularly France. The work of the French Symbolists—Paul Sérusier, Maurice Denis, and Paul Gauguin, for example—whose work was rich in that kind of mysticism, was accessible through the extensive collections of the Moscow

merchants Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov, who made them available to Russian artists for viewing in their respective homes. The journals *Mir iskusstva* and *Zolotoe runo* regularly featured articles on the subject, and the publication of the ideas of Charles Howard Hinton and Peter Ouspensky on the fourth dimension in the early years of the twentieth century provided a fertile climate for the kind of artistic path Malevich would undertake.

In the unfolding of Malevich's career in the Russian Empire, we learn of his interaction with other members of the Russian avant-garde, including Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, Mikhail Matiushin, and Ivan Kliun, and of his gradual departure from a Western artistic vocabulary towards an interest in more native themes and subjects for his work. The peasant becomes Malevich's central focus, with which, Milner states, "he is confidently determined to develop a new vision ... based upon Russian sources of folk and ikon painting" (p. 27). Milner provides a cursory explanation of the importance of the harvest, of the seasons of the year, to the life of the peasant and how they relate to specific works, but he does not elaborate much further. Such agricultural elements carry deep ritual, religious, and spiritual significance for the peasant, often carrying a cosmology of their own. The merging of that indigenous tradition with Malevich's attempt to impose a harmonious ordering of their world through mathematical systems of proportion carries political implications for which Milner's largely formal approach does not allow. One might consider Malevich's integration of these two components as an attempt to carry what he understood as "the spirituality of the peasant's burden" (Malevich's phrase, quoted in Valentine Marcadé, "The Authenticity of Ukrainian Art Compared to the Work of Other Progenitors of 20th-Century Avant-Garde Art," in *Ukrainska avangarda 1910-1930* [Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 1991], 70) into another dimensional realm, a metaphoric solution to the oppression experienced by the rural peasant and other social, ethnic, and religious groups in the unstable climate of the pre-World War I years in the Russian Empire.

A consideration of socio-political issues and national differences would have been especially useful in Milner's discussion of wordplay in several of Malevich's Futurist works, particularly *Portrait of Ivan Kliun* (1913, plate 105), *Portrait of a Builder* (1913, plate 107), and *Aviator* (1914, plate 162). Milner's reference to the right split eye of the figure in the first two images and the omission of the right eye in the latter piece are certainly suggestive of visual and verbal exchanges, yet his decision to suggest *oko* as a Russian word for eye rather than *glaz* is unclear. *Oko* is the Ukrainian word for eye; *glaz* is the usual Russian word, with *oko* being used on only rare occasions. If *oko* is the appropriate analysis for decoding Malevich's word games, as seems to be the case, then one must consider the possibility that the artist is switching between both languages, something that David Burliuk, with whom Malevich was closely acquainted, also did. Malevich was born near Kyiv in 1878 and spent his childhood there before moving to Moscow. At the time, the Ukrainian nationalist push for a political identity separate from Russia was on the rise, ultimately resulting in Ukraine's proclamation of independence in 1918. The integrity of the Ukrainian language was a primary issue. After thirty years of suppression in the Russian Empire, this language had only recently been legalized there as a result of the reforms following the Revolution of 1905. While he aptly points out Malevich's interest in switching between the Russian and Latin alphabets and addresses the artist's consideration of western European culture throughout the text, domestic issues

within the empire itself draw little of Milner's attention. It is only with the Revolution of 1917 and the rise of the Bolsheviks to power that we see Malevich responding to his immediate environment, redirecting his art towards less controversial endeavours during the Soviet period.

Milner's focus on analyzing proportion and geometry in Malevich's work has left other closely related issues unanswered. In addition to those mentioned above, Milner has neglected to consider Malevich's own first name as a possible reference to the "Ka" character in the *Aviator* and its autobiographical significance in the 1914 opera *Victory over the Sun*. It would have also been interesting to know when the *arshin-vershok* system became obsolete and whether another system of measuring materials was available for Malevich to use during this time period. How does Malevich's application of the system compare to that of his contemporaries? *Kazimir Malevich and the Art of Geometry* is provocative and enlightening, offering a good framework for further research on Malevich and his avant-garde contemporaries in the Russian Empire.

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Petro Karmansky. *Mavpiache dzerkalo (Lysty z Kanady i pro Kanadu do "Kanady")*. Prepared by Myroslav Shkandrij. Winnipeg: The Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Canada, 1998. 94 pp.

In June 1913 the modernist poet Petro Karmansky came to Winnipeg at the invitation of the Ukrainian Teachers' Association to lecture on Ukrainian literature and civilization at a privately organized summer course for Manitoba's bilingual Ukrainian-English public-school teachers. His arrival coincided with growing criticism of Manitoba's bilingual schools by a Liberal-led reform movement and with the dismissal of Ukrainian teachers from public schools in Alberta by that province's Liberal government. Not unexpectedly, in September Manitoba's notoriously corrupt Conservative administration, which had been exploiting the bilingual school system for partisan ends since 1905, appointed Karmansky to teach Ukrainian at the provincial Ruthenian Training School in Brandon. Simultaneously Karmansky was enlisted as a regular contributor to *Kanada*, a weekly launched by the Conservatives and their Ukrainian agents in anticipation of the provincial elections that would take place in 1914.

During the ensuing eight months Karmansky published over fifty items in *Kanada*. The present volume brings together all but one of the twenty-six articles that appeared under the title "Mavpiache dzerkalo" (A Monkey's Mirror). Karmansky regarded this series of articles as a complete work that could and should be republished as a separate volume. In his introductory remarks Myroslav Shkandrij argues that Karmansky's Canadian sojourn marked a turning point in the poet's intellectual and literary evolution. In "Mavpiache dzerkalo" Karmansky not only abandoned the introspective lyricism so characteristic of his earlier poetry and turned to social and political satire; he also began re-evaluating his principled alienation from society and public life and transforming himself into a political activist and civic poet.

Reading "Mavpiache dzerkalo" one realizes that this transformation was a gradual process. If his Canadian writings have a new focus, the sensibility and attitudes that inform "Mavpiache dzerkalo" remain those of the isolated and alienated aesthete who is repelled by the vulgarity and materialism of the modern world, contemptuous of the uncultivated masses and their philistine leaders, and fearful of democratic levelling and the erosion of social deference. Karmansky's Canada is a cultural wasteland where women spend all their time shopping, moving pictures are the only recognized art form, and museums and art galleries display nothing but agricultural implements and "cheap photographs of vulgar Jews and jowly farmers." It is a country populated by greedy and acquisitive boors who are intolerant of cultural diversity and have openly declared that the Ukrainian language "has not, does not, and will not exist."

The Ukrainians who migrated to Canada fare no better. Karmansky asserts that, with few exceptions, they consist of the lazy dregs of Galicia, self-satisfied vulgarians awed by Canadian coarseness and brutality, who scorn their Ukrainian heritage, wear expensive hats and thick bracelets, and allow their souls to be contaminated by the guile and crass materialism that pervade Canadian society. Karmansky's most withering and caustic remarks are reserved for the students, teachers, journalists, and community activists who made up the Ukrainian-Canadian "intelligentsia." Indeed, it is this group's alleged perfidy—disdain for the Ukrainian language, collaboration with the Ukrainophobic Liberals, unrestrained Anglophilism, and above all its monumental pretentiousness—that constitutes the central theme of "Mavpiache dzerkalo."

Karmansky dismisses the intelligentsia as tattered beggars and putrid idlers, morally bankrupt liars and idiots, who cannot even dream of an education like his and who despise the European culture that they cannot possibly appreciate. Posing as saviours of the Ukrainian immigrants, the intelligentsia and its press have sold themselves to their new Anglo-Canadian masters, demoralized the immigrants with populist, socialist, and anticlerical notions, and made it impossible for genuine idealists with a real education to work on behalf of the Ukrainian people in the New World. While he identifies and viciously disparages several prominent Ukrainian members of the Liberal Party and nonpartisan critics of the Conservatives, Karmansky neglects to mention or criticize any of the reprehensible actions for which the Manitoba Conservatives and their Ukrainian agents were notorious. Also spared any criticism and singled out for praise are Galician-educated Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests and Bishop Nykyta Budka, whose authority had been challenged by the intelligentsia and who also happened to be firmly entrenched in the Conservative camp.

Karmansky's foray into political journalism provoked the first and most sensational literary scandal to shake the Ukrainian-Canadian community. It also provided an unanticipated windfall for Anglo-Canadian opponents of bilingual public schools. After some of his articles, and a poem that described Canada as a "sly, base harlot," were translated into English and published in major Canadian dailies, Karmansky was branded a "racial firebrand" who "slurred Canadian institutions" and threatened to undermine the very foundations of Canadian nationhood. When he returned to Galicia in May 1914 even the Conservatives were glad to see Karmansky leave, while Bishop Budka advised the poet to forget about returning to Canada in the near future.

The publication of "Mavpiache dzerkalo" will be of interest to students of modern Ukrainian literature and Ukrainian-Canadian history. Karmansky's work has elicited much



interest among literary scholars recently, but few are aware of his Canadian adventure or acquainted with "Mavpiache dzerkalo." The present volume finally makes this "missing link" in Karmansky's literary evolution available. Historians will welcome the publication of a document that left its mark on the final outcome of the Manitoba school question and also sheds light on the widening gulf between the secular intelligentsia, especially the editors of *Ukrainskyi holos*, and Bishop Budka, Karmansky's patron and the only community leader to earn accolades from the poet.

There are a few minor typographical and factual errors in the preface and endnotes (e.g., Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky first visited Canada in the fall of 1910, not in 1911 or 1913). The volume would have benefitted from a lengthier introduction and notes on the individuals and institutions mentioned in the text. Shkandrij briefly sketches the historical context within which "Mavpiache dzerkalo" was conceived, and indicates that Karmansky's image of Canada and the Ukrainian-Canadian community was a simplistic and distorted one. Nevertheless, readers unfamiliar with Canadian history and the people and institutions targeted by Karmansky will fail to appreciate just how much deliberate misrepresentation and malicious defamation of individuals and institutions there is in "Mavpiache dzerkalo." Most Ukrainians were not settled on lands "unfit for convicts"; East European Jews did not follow Ukrainians to Canada to exploit them—their migration began fifteen to twenty years earlier; the Liberals never even contemplated the prohibition of the Ukrainian language, literature or private schools; and *Ukrainskyi holos* and its regular contributor Orest Zerebko were articulate and outspoken critics of Anglo-Canadian intolerance and philistinism who were consistently pilloried for their Ukrainian "nationalism" in the Anglo-Canadian press. Countless other distortions and misrepresentations which go well beyond the boundaries of satire could be added to this list. But these are minor quibbles. We are indebted to Shkandrij for locating, assembling, and deciphering the long-forgotten and until now almost inaccessible political feuilletons produced during Karmansky's brief Canadian sojourn.

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Stella Hryniuk and Jeffrey Picknicki. *The Land They Left Behind: Canada's Ukrainians in the Homeland*. Intro. by Nadia Valášková. Photographs by František Řehoř. Winnipeg: Watson Dwyer, 1996. vi, 108 pp. \$24.95 paper.

As one turns the pages of this book, one feels as if one is holding an album containing the photographs of a large Galician Ukrainian peasant family. The pictures therein depict various aspects of daily life: religious and other celebrations, routine labours, moments of joy and grief, family heirlooms, and memorable events. Seemingly familiar fathers, children, and grandparents peer out at us. And we, as if enchanted by the rhythms of the distant nineteenth century, follow the peasantry along their life's path. Some of them pause on their way to the fields; without stopping what he is doing, a harvester looks up and smiles; elsewhere a Hutsul blacksmith repairs a horseshoe without paying attention to passers-by.



In this book's 124 photographs, the circle of life, from the construction of a peasant cottage, labour, and celebrations to the final repose of a human body and commemorative rituals, is depicted not by a detached observer, but by an ardent friend of the Ukrainian people who loved the natural world and history of the Galician land. This Czech researcher and writer, ethnographer and folklorist, and talented artist and collector, František Řehoř, left behind a rich scholarly legacy, a significant part of which was 350 photographs that he took in the 1880s and 1890s in Galicia. These 9-by-12-cm. glass plates are preserved in the National Museum of Ethnography in Prague. Until recently they were known only to a few scholars, but now, thanks to the diligent efforts of several people dedicated to Ukrainian studies, it has become possible for many others to enjoy them. The fruits of Řehoř's creative labours have been restored to us by others who also love and respect the Ukrainian national heritage.

For six years the project to publish Řehoř's photographs was co-ordinated by its organizer, Stella Hryniuk. A major contribution to its realization was made by Nadia Valášková of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. Additional assistance was provided by Myroslava Diadiuk and Tania Semeniv of the Central State Historical Archive in Lviv and by Nevenka Koscevic and Vladimira Zvonik of the Elizabeth Dafoe Library of the University of Manitoba. Financial support came from the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate and the Shevchenko Foundation in Canada.

Řehoř devoted a large part of his all-too-brief life of forty-two years to studying the traditions and customs of Galicia's inhabitants. He visited many Ukrainian villages there to collect ethnographic materials, and while living among the peasantry he recorded the gems of their folklore and documented the life and folkways of these toilers and farmers with great love and respect. His legacy includes a collection of two thousand items of Ukrainian folk crafts and folk art, about three hundred scholarly and encyclopedia articles, and diaries, journals, and extensive correspondence. His professional interests connected him with many well-known and even exceptional scholars, writers, and museologists. Řehoř made his last trip to his beloved Galicia in 1899. Ivan Franko wrote that Řehoř's untimely death was a tragedy for the Ukrainians of Galicia.

The photographs in this book were taken in over thirty places in Galicia, including the Hutsul region. They can be divided into thematic groups: traditional occupations, clothing and domiciles, and celebrations and rituals. Correspondingly the book contains chapters titled "House and Home," "Working the Land," "Supplementary Occupations," "A Woman's Work," "To Market to Market," "Some of the People," "The Built Landscape," "Special Days," "Easter," and "To the Other World."

The photographs register the most important and distinctive episodes of agricultural production (tilling, sowing, grain and potato harvesting, milling, and so on) and other peasant occupations (smithing, cooperage, stoneworking, peat extracting). The photographs of bazaars and fairs contain many interesting details about peasant manufacturing and crafts: there we see pottery, clothing, textiles, footwear, and means of transportation. It seems as if we ourselves are at the busy, noisy fair in Kosiv, where people went not only to buy and sell, but to socialize.

The features of folk architecture and settlement, which Řehoř diligently studied, are well represented in the photographs: the village street plan, the layout of a farmstead, the various kinds of agricultural and residential buildings, and churches. There are also interesting depictions of women's work and the family's division of labour. Folkways are

reflected in the photographs of family and religious celebrations, traditional rituals and pastimes, games, and dancing. We see peasants who have gathered at a church at Easter, waiting to have their baskets of Easter breads, eggs, and other food blessed; young people performing ritual *haivky* and games; and sorrowful images of funeral and burial rituals depicting not only the ceremonies, but all of their traditional attributes, the features of the cemetery, the types of crosses erected, and their artistic forms.

The most important element in the photographs is the attention that Řehoř accorded to the peasants themselves. He created a gallery of images by age, gender, and occupation that exceptionally fully and aptly detail the anthropological features of the Western Ukrainian ethnographic groups and other ethnic minorities who lived among them.

Řehoř showed great professionalism in his choice of subjects to photograph and in the way he photographed them. The logical progression and comprehensiveness of his depictions allows us to liken them to a chronicle. Řehoř's approach was not accidental: he was planning to write a scholarly monograph on the ethnography and folklore of Galicia. Although his intention unfortunately remained unfulfilled, it has been realized in part through the publication of *The Land They Left Behind*. In it many readers of Ukrainian origin will find something of personal value: it will awaken memories of one's own childhood and youth or vivify relatives' tales about their past lives in their native land.

Scholars will, no doubt, use this book as a new source of information that fills certain gaps in our knowledge about the cultural-historical legacy of the Ukrainian people. Students will find it to be a wonderful illustrated textbook containing unique ethnographic materials. The well-researched commentaries by Hryniuk and Picknicki make the book accessible and understandable to a wide readership.

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Iurii Makar et al, eds. *Ievropa: idei ta protsesy. Materialy naukovooho sympoziumu, 4-5 chervnia 1998*. Chernivtsi: Prut, 1998. 191 pp.

This volume consists of the papers delivered at a symposium in Chernivtsi on 4 and 5 June 1998 that was organized by the Bukovynian Centre for Political Research and supported by the Ukrainian Office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Most of the papers by the Ukrainian participants are in Ukrainian, while the contributions by the Russian and Romanian participants are in Russian.

Most of the papers deal with different aspects of European integration and discuss its prospects, the approaches to regional integration in Central and South-Eastern Europe, and Ukraine's role in these processes. On the whole the papers demonstrate their authors' good understanding of current international trends. They provide the Ukrainian reader not only with information about the process of integration that is currently underway in the West, but also a realistic assessment of Ukraine's chances of becoming "part of Europe."

Chernivtsi's Anatolii Kruhlashov discusses the two possible directions Ukraine can take to integrate into wider international structures—the European Union and the Russia-led Commonwealth of Independent States. He points to the growing gap between

Ukraine's declarations about "joining Europe" and its lagging behind with long overdue market reforms, and concludes that Ukraine is in an increasingly weaker position vis-à-vis the West as its consumer market continues to shrink and illusions about the country's special role in European security fade away.

Ukraine's choice between the European Union and Russia is also discussed in a paper on Russia's geopolitics by Volodymyr Fisanov (Chernivtsi). Fisanov, who is well acquainted with the latest Western and Russian literature on the subject, points to the potential danger for Ukraine of NATO's expansion and consequent possible deterioration of Russia's relations with that alliance. He rejects the role of Ukraine as a buffer state between NATO and Russia, and advocates Russian-Ukrainian co-operation as long as relations between the two countries will be built on the principle of equality and mutual respect. Fisanov admits, however, that the Russian political elite is unlikely to recognize Ukraine as an equal partner in the years to come. The future that he foresees for Ukraine in the international arena is one of strong political ties with the West and continuing economic dependence on Russia.

Russian-Ukrainian relations are also discussed in passing by Andrei Makarychev (Nizhnii Novgorod) in his paper on the international activities of the Russian regions. He points to the differences between the two most powerful regional leaders of Russia—Iurii Luzhkov and Boris Nemtsov—on the issue of Sevastopol. The papers by Sergei Grigorishin (Serhii Hryhoryshyn) of Chernivtsi and Ștefan Purici (Stefan Purich) of Suceava present two interesting views on the formation of Romanian foreign policy and the dynamics of Ukrainian-Romanian relations.

A number of contributions deal with the current crisis in the Balkans. Sergei Romanenko (Moscow) and Ihor Burkut (Chernivtsi) discuss the fate of the Slavic idea in former Yugoslavia. Romanenko examines the troubled history of the Southern Slavs to understand why the idea of Slavic unity did not work there and probably never will. Burkut discusses the resurrection of a religion-based Orthodox Slavic ideology in predominantly atheistic Serbia and concludes that it has been largely a response to the West's support for Catholic Croatia and both Western and Islamic support for the Bosnian Muslims. It appears that the Serbs had little choice but to return to their religious and cultural roots in order to strengthen their ties with Russia and the other predominantly Orthodox states of the Balkan region.

Besides the above well-researched papers, the collection contains short summaries of other conference presentations (some of the latter are limited analyses of a few Western publications that happened to be translated into Russian or Ukrainian), two short pieces by "young authors," and two review articles. None of them benefit the volume. Instead they transform it into something in between the old, Soviet-style collections of summaries of conference presentations and Western collections of selected articles.

Despite these shortcomings, *Ievropa: idei ta protsesy* is an interesting addition to the literature on the international politics of Eastern Europe and the Balkans and a valuable source on the current attitudes of Ukraine's intellectual elites toward European integration. By funding it and the symposium, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation has enabled voices from regional scholarly centres to be heard.

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**Recent and Forthcoming Monograph Titles:** Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920*. Oleh Lysheha and James Brasfield, trans., *The Selected Poems of Oleh Lysheha*. Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire: The Archival Heritage of Ukraine, World War II, and the International Politics of Restitution*. Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *The Ottoman Survey Register of Podolia (ca. 1681): Defter-i Mufasssal-i Eyalet-i Kamaniçe*.

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б—b	ĩ—i	y—u
в—v	й—i	ф—f
г—h	к—k	х—kh
г—g	л—l	ц—ts
д—d	м—m	ш—sh
е—e	н—n	щ—shch
є—ie	о—o	ю—iu
ж—zh	п—p	я—ia
з—z	р—r	ь—omit
и—y	с—s	ий—y in endings of personal names only.

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