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Yaroslav Hrytsak · Martin Schulze Wessel (Eds.)

Revolution and War

Ukraine and the Great Transformation of Modern Europe

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Editors:
Prof. Dr. Yaroslav Hrytsak
Prof. Dr. Martin Schulze Wessel

Editorial assistance:
Lena Lopatschowa, M.A.
William Templer

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Yaroslav Hrytsak, Martin Schulze Wessel

Introduction

This collection of articles contains materials from the first of several conferences organized by the German-Ukrainian Historical Commission (until January 2023 German-Ukrainian Historians' Commission). The Commission itself arose in the conditions of the war, which in the spring of 2014 began in the Donbas immediately after the Euromaidan and the Russian annexation of the Crimea. In the summer of 2014, a group of German historians came to Kyiv on their own initiative to express their solidarity with their Ukrainian colleagues and Ukraine. During the Kyiv meeting, it was decided to create a German-Ukrainian Historical Commission, and one of the main directions of its work was the organization of annual conferences with the participation of the wider public.

The first conference was held in Berlin in May 2015. Its thematic focus were the wars and revolutions in Ukrainian history and their impact on the transformation of Europe. The choice of such a topic was natural in view of the circumstances at that time. But the organizers of the conference talked about more than just responding to the challenges of the current situation. During the Euromaidan, the Russian-Ukrainian war was not only about the fate of Ukraine or Russia, but also about the future of the European continent. However, this was not the first time that the Ukrainian question played such an important role. The course of the First and Second World Wars, the 1917 October Revolution and the world communist system it generated largely depended on what was happening in and around Ukraine. And a few centuries earlier, the Cossack Revolution of 1648 under the leadership of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi and the entry of the Cossack state into the Moscow kingdom marked the beginning of the birth of the Russian Empire as a great European state.

In other words, it is impossible to understand the transformation of Europe without considering Ukrainian events and develop-

ments, just as the current Ukrainian situation is impossible without the appeal of European history. The strength and superiority of the German-Ukrainian Historical Commission is that it naturally links these two perspectives. In the imagination of Ukrainians, the West was represented not so much by France or England, but primarily by Germany. On the other hand, German and Ukrainian history have been closely linked since medieval times, and this link reached its greatest intensity during the two world wars, during the first (1918) and second (1941–1944) German occupation of Ukraine.

The European perspective that was laid out for the first conference of the German-Ukrainian Historical Commission is programmatic for the work we have done since then. In the following conferences, which we dedicated to the topic of the Holodomor, the 1917 revolution in Ukraine, and the German occupation of Ukraine during the Second World War, we also dealt with European references and comparisons from time to time, and in individual cases – as in the conference on the topic of "reconciliation" – also with global references.

The organizers of this conference on "Revolution and War. Ukraine and the Great Transformation of Modern Europe" wanted to show the interconnection between these stories and their impact on world history. This approach makes the articles, which have been written in the aftermath of the conference and therefore may not fully reflect the current state of research, still a worthwhile read. During the conference, we hoped that all the shocks that Ukraine experienced in the years 1914–1945 were already a matter of the past, and that a large-scale war on Ukrainian lands was impossible. Now, as this book goes to print, the Russian army is waging a war in Ukraine against Ukrainian troops and Ukrainian civilians, and the Ukrainian issue is again at the center of world geopolitics.

We cannot know how this story will end. But we are aware that without a serious discussion of Ukrainian history and European history, especially in moments of military and revolutionary crises, today's war won't be the last time violence will return in its most disgusting and dangerous way.

(partially translated from Ukrainian by Lena Lopatschowa)

Timothy Snyder

Ukraine and the Sense of Modern History

Transcription of Timothy Snyder's Opening Lecture at the First Conference of the German-Ukrainian Historians' Commission, Berlin, May 28th-29th, 2015

Transcription by Drivalda Delia

The basic claim that I would like to make is that Ukraine is a kind of missing piece from a common history of Europe. In other words, the strongest reason for there being German-Ukrainian historical engagement is that without it, a common European history is impossible. This claim I will defend in a weaker version, and then in a stronger version.

In the weaker version, what I want to argue is this: To all of our conventional narratives, and to all of our conventional periodization of European history, Ukraine fits, Ukraine adds something. Ukraine provides elements of analysis that are otherwise missing.

In the weak form of my argument, I want to argue that if we move through the periods of history as we are taught them and as we teach them, we find at each point that Ukrainian history is necessary. It supplements, it adds something. For example, if one were to consider a central problem of the early medieval period, state-building in Europe, Ukraine provides an incredibly interesting case. The theme of the Vikings as state builders is very common in European history, whether England or France. That the Vikings encountered a declining Turkish-speaking population (one that had perhaps converted to Judaism) and formed with them a condominium: that is not so common. That is what Kyivan Rus' was.

The same holds for Christian conversions, another major theme in European history. In the case of Kyivan Rus' – much of the terri-

tory of which is now Ukraine – we have a typical example of an eastern model of conversion. In Eastern Europe, as in northern Europe, conversion was a political calculation for leaders. Unlike in northern Europe, conversion involved a choice of missionaries, a choice between competing Christian offerings. In the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries, the choice of Rome or Byzantium was a result of strategic competition between missionaries and strategic choices inside ruling groups. Rulers in Eastern Europe, in territories that we now tend to see as forever Orthodox or forever Catholic, converted back and forth multiple times for essentially strategic reasons. Often they were pagan before they did this. Sometimes they were Muslim before they did this. In Eastern Europe, in Kyivan Rus', we have the phenomenon of Christian conversion but with the additional strategic element of a choice, once which was hesitant and indeed made and remade several times, which makes the matter more interesting.

Then, of course, not long after the Christian conversions, in the early history of Kyivan Rus', we have perhaps the encounter of settled states and nomads, a major theme in world history for about a thousand years. An example of that encounter is the confrontation of the Kyivan Rus' and the Mongols in the early 13th century. So, the collapse of the Kyivan Rus', the success of the Mongols, is a small example of a general trend. But here as elsewhere, there are some particular elements of color, the most important of which is that this early medieval state, Christianized and then destroyed, actually persists in another form.

So what happens after the collapse of Kyivan Rus' in the 13th century? Many of its elements as a medieval state survive. They survive in the form of Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which not only controls what was the territory of Kyivan Rus', but takes up its language of law, language of state – which was called Chancery Slavonic. In that specific sense, Lithuania is an organic continuation of Kyivan Rus'. What is also interesting about this moment is the moment of separation between the history of Muscovy and the rest of Kyivan Rus'. The history of Muscovy is a much closer encounter with the Steppe Empire than that of Rus' or Lithuania. Muscovy was

in fact part of the Steppe Empire for a long time, whereas most of what was the Kyivan Rus' was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for about 500 years.

Any five hundred years are important, but in those 500 years, some of the typical phases of European history took place, such as, for example, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Unlike Muscovy, Ukraine experienced the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. It experienced the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in variations, in combinations, which might be unfamiliar but fascinating. The Reformation in Ukraine meant conversions from Orthodoxy straight to Protestantism. The Reformation could involve not just Catholics and Protestants but also a tri-party competition between Catholics and Protestants in a territory where the Orthodox were. The elites of what is now Ukraine converted *en masse* from Orthodoxy to Protestantism. And many of their children and grandchildren converted to Catholicism. You have this fantastically interesting trajectory which is embodied in the elite families, a major chapter in the history of Reformation and Counter-Reformation which would enrich our understanding of the events if it were to be included.

The same goes for the Renaissance. The idea of reviving classical forms of education was realized in the academy in Kyiv, which is the oldest and most significant centre of modern education in the Orthodox or East Slavic world. The Kyiv academy used Latin, it used what they considered a classical curriculum. We might see it as Baroque, but they saw it as classical. Its language of instruction was Latin as well as Polish; when Muscovy annexes Kyiv, this academy is the largest institution of higher education in Muscovy, for the simple reason that there were no others in Muscovy at the time. It is from Kyiv that the educated elites come in the following generations.

One can make a similar point about the age of European exploration. Whereas most of the Western European powers increased their wealth and power by going to sea, Poland moved by land to the east. During the Age of Exploration, the Ukrainian economy

was integrated into the European and world economies, but rather as a supplier. Ukraine was the most fertile territory in Europe, and after 1569 agricultural goods in particular were a source of revenue for local and then for Polish magnates. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, however, was in some sense itself an object rather than a subject of the new world economy. It had practically no ships. It had to rent ships when it went to war. The economy of the Age of Exploration had much to do with the exchange of gold and silver from the New World for grain and any raw materials from Ukraine. This brings us to a major theme which I will explore in the second part of this lecture. That is the theme of colonization. In speaking of colonization, I want to make the stronger form of the argument that European history makes no sense without Ukrainian history. In the weak form, I maintain that familiar stages of medieval and early modern history become richer when Ukraine is included. In the strong form of the argument, I maintain that modern European history makes no sense without empire as a central theme, and that Ukraine is the place that enables such a history to cohere without an artificial distinction between Europe and the rest of the world.

The themes that run through both European and world history are colonization and reactions to colonization, and Ukraine is where these themes meet. Therefore, Ukraine is the place which allows us to put world history and European history together.

But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me first clarify what I mean when I talk about the early modern period in Ukraine and the Age of Exploration. Ukraine embodies some of the major trends of early modern history in a way which is suggestive of the modern. Ukraine in the early modern period is a terrain of economic exploitation, it is a terrain of colonization, it is a terrain where the Jews and the Poles bring an economic model from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to Ukraine with enormous success in terms of their own earning –but also with enormous political consequences which separates the mass of the population from the rest.

But because the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation overlap in time in this part of the world, it is also the period

of the language question. The elites of Ukraine largely convert in their linguistic practices to Polish or even to Latin. And also, because this is the time of the Reformation, the mass of the population, which is largely Orthodox, is separated by a thin strip at the top which becomes Roman Catholic (or sometime after 1596, Uniate, what we now call Greek Catholic). In other words, in the early modern Ukraine, you see an overlap of economic exploitation, linguistic differentiation as well as religious practice; which brings us to a theme, namely that of the Cossack uprisings. And in a sense this brings us to the national question: because arguably, the national question in Ukraine does not appear later than in other places but in fact earlier than in other places.

If you read Cossack documents of the mid-17th century, they are strikingly close to a 19th-century articulation of national difference. Ukraine is a very interesting place to think about the national question, not because there are so many extreme Ukrainian nationalists running around today – there are actually indeed so many extreme Ukrainian nationalists running around today, despite what one might read in German newspapers – but because the national question was discussed in a significant way very early on. When romanticism came to Ukraine, at about the same time as Polish and German romanticism, its theme could be the relatively recent Cossack past. Incidentally, romanticism arose not in the west of the country, but came from the east, from Kharkiv.

The discussion of the national question over the course of the 19th and the early 20th centuries was extremely interesting, embodying some of the positions which we only later critically discussed ourselves. There is a famous debate in the early 20th century between a state-building and a folkish romantic (populist) tradition of the nation. Viacheslav Lypynsky made the very interesting argument that nation-building depends on state-building, rather than the other way around. State-building depends in turn, he maintained, on co-opting elites from various traditions – be they Jewish, Polish or Russian in their cultural orientation. This is an argument which is relevant in contemporary Europe, not just contemporary Ukraine.

On the other side was Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the most important Ukrainian historian of the time. Hrushevsky took a more populist position and located the continuity of Ukrainian history in the speech and customs of Ukrainian people. That debate was taking place in multiple languages and in a sophisticated way around a century ago in Ukraine and about Ukraine.

This brings me as far as I want to go in the weak version of this argument. The weak version for having a German-Ukrainian commission is that European history as we understand it makes no sense without Ukraine. The conventional periodizations and themes require Ukraine. Ukraine makes them more interesting. Ukraine confirms them. Ukraine offers new fields of research within the paradigms that we take for granted.

There is a stronger version of the argument, which I want to make now.

European history is in crisis. There is no common European history, not at the level of elementary schools, not at the level of universities, not at the level of political discourse of Europe. In Europe every time there is a commemoration, every time there is a political crisis, there is a contest which is not based on an authentic version of history, but upon competing national myths. One can make fun of the Americans for not knowing history. That would take the rest of my time to do, but the Americans have common points of reference. Strikingly, Europeans do not. A lot of what passes for a political crisis in Europe is in fact a historical crisis.

Be that as it may, what I want to claim is that the big problems in 21st-century Europe require conceptualization and reconceptualization of the major problems of European history, world history. This can only be achieved by looking at Ukraine. For the remainder of the lecture, I would like to concentrate on how the problem could be solved.

Ukraine is the place that allows us to break out of the constraints which we are living within. Ukraine is the place which allows us to see European history in a broader way, in a freer way – and in a way which might be more appropriate in the century we are living in.

Why would this be true? A colleague of mine writing on Nietzsche wrote: "If you want to understand a philosopher, first assume that the philosopher is correct." I want to start my argument from that particular point.

Let's assume for a moment that contemporary Russians and contemporary Ukrainians agree and are right about something, i. e. that the stakes of the Ukrainian-Russian war are not Ukraine or Russia but Europe itself. Both sides say this. What do they mean? Again, let's assume that they are right, despite our confusion. Naturally, that perspective is foreign in Greece or Portugal or Scandinavia. It is largely absent in Germany and in France. But that *is* the perspective, both of Russian propaganda and the people that made the revolution in Maidan, in Kyiv. Let's assume for a moment that this is true, because I think it is.

Another small methodological point. We are starting from the outside perspective, from outside Europe, and that might be helpful. But I want to emphasize that these are in fact two very different outside perspectives that are in concord on one issue and perhaps only that issue: namely that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was about Europe. If Russians and Ukrainians agree – and let's assume they are right, and I think they are right – how could they be right? The average protester in Maidan, on the one hand, and Vladimir Putin and the Russian klepotocratic elite on the other, understand something which Europeans can take for granted and therefore do not notice.

I have in mind that the European solution to economic problems, problems of sovereignty, is based on a simple bit of political theory.

That simple bit of political theory goes something like this: there are three levels of politics: civil society, the sovereign state, and the European or international level. Each of these three reinforces the others. When Ukrainian protesters say we need the European Union, we need an association agreement with the European Union, they are following this political theory. They are using civil society to reach out to Europe to strengthen the sovereignty of the state. All

three parts are necessary, none excludes the others, they reinforce one another.

When President Putin argues that there is no such thing as civil society and that the European Union is decadent and must be destroyed, he is starting from the same premises as Ukrainian protestors, and drawing different conclusions. The Russian view of politics is that nothing else is real except the sovereign state. Civil society is not real and the European Union is not real. If you start from those premises, you destroy level one and you destroy level three. What is left is sovereignty, but sovereignty that is unchecked by civil society and not reinforced at the European level of politics. In other words, we are left with hierarchical sovereignty, a world of power.

So what I am trying to say is that Russians and Ukrainians have something right: They disagree about what should be done about it, but I think their analysis of the European Union is in fact correct and, if I may say so, more profound than what currently is coming out of the European Union.

The way this leads to the new view of European history is that it allows us to make a different kind of sense of the main issue of the 20th century in Europe, which is: How to think about empire and how to think about the end of empire. So let me now move back in time to the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century. Let me discuss events which were endlessly commemorated last year but which, in my view, require a different kind of interpretation, and that is the beginning of the First World War.

I think the way to think about the First World War is as a decolonization crisis inside Europe itself. We are used to thinking of the Greek state or the Serbian state or the Romanian state or the Bulgarian state as examples of national history. Fine. They are national history, but there is a larger picture here: the beginning of the era of decolonization.

The era of decolonization begins not in Africa nor in Latin America or Asia. It begins in Europe itself. We like to dignify the Serbian movement and the Greek movement and all the others as European national movements, but they are also decolonial. The le-

gitimating arguments and the political tools that they used to break up the Ottoman Empire are roughly the same tools that will be used around the world a century later. This decolonial formula succeeds on its own terms, by weakening an empire, the Ottoman one. The new nation-states are created but the final culmination of its success is the First World War, which destroys all of the major European land empires.

The First World War happens because of the success of a strategy of national unification. Serbia turns against the Habsburg Monarchy the same kinds of tools that had been turned against the Ottomans. These include the propaganda claim that empires as such are doomed, and that the nations are the way for the future. They include covert actions across the border for which the state does not take responsibility, even though the state has a hand in them. Those are also elements of the contemporary Russian war in the Ukraine, in case you missed the reference.

If we think about it this way, then we have a different way of understanding what happens in the next part of the 20th century, in the 1920s and '30s. We think about the 1920s and 1930s in terms of the failure of nation-states. Nation-states arise, they have parliamentarism for 15 minutes or 15 years, not very long, and then they are overwhelmed by the Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. Once we have noted the very interesting fact that every nation-state created after the First World War is destroyed before or during the Second, we need to draw conclusions. How can we think more deeply about this?

What happens in the interwar period, I think, is an intellectual victory of decolonialism, which is how I would characterize the rise of the nation-states. Extraordinarily, although Serbia starts the First World War, it is not only a military victor, it is also the intellectual victor. The idea that the nation-state is the idea for the future is accepted at least rhetorically by the Bolshevik (then Soviet) leadership, by the American leadership and in principle by all the victors. It is even accepted by the Germans, who promised and indeed sponsored nation-states during the war itself. The principal enunciated

by all was self-determination. So you have a Serbian intellectual victory, you have the end of the land empires of Europe. But you also have some obvious problems with the postwar solution: the solution seems to be the same thing as the prewar problem.

What happened in the 1920s and 1930s is the Balkanization of more of Europe. The solution which was found for southeastern Europe spreads to East-Central Europe. You have more nation-states that prove to be untenable. What does this invite? What this invites is neocolonialism: not the old sea empires that have won the First World War, not the defunct land empires that have lost it, but something new: the attempt to balance the power of maritime empires by applying colonial practices within Europe itself. This brings us to the Soviet Union and to Nazi Germany.

The fundamental thing Soviet Union and Nazi Germany have in common is that they try to Europeanize, in a geographical sense, the general practices of colonialism or imperialism.

What the Nazi Empire in Europe is about is the application, at least as Hitler saw it, of settler colonialism inside Europe itself. What Stalinism was, in Stalin's own words, was an internal colonialism. So Soviet modernization, Soviet industrialization, is an attempt to use the state to pass through the capitalist stage of history, which as Lenin said, included a final colonial stage of history. Now, admittedly, the Soviet idea was to go through the capitalist state so you can get to something better, to socialism. But the whole history of Soviet Union is one of not getting through the colonial stage (the self-colonial stage) and of staying in it forever.

So what happens in the 1930s and 1940s is that these two rival attempts of transcending the nation-states, these two rival attempts of bringing global imperialism inside Europe itself, meet. They meet first in agreement in the period from 1938–1941 in which, together, they dismantle the European system of nation-states. The period of 1938–1941 is the period when Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Yugoslavia all cease to exist. This is because for this kind of imperialism the state is simply in the way. Then the second moment of contact is the moment of contact after

1941, when these two neo-empires, with their very different approaches to how you restore an empire, fight a war over the central territory which they both regard as crucial for their imperial projects, which is Ukraine.

By *"Lebensraum"* Hitler meant before all else Ukraine. Ukraine was to be the territory which allowed Germany to become not only autarchical and self-sufficient, but to break all the rules of conventional capitalist economics and to become something different and special and pure. For Stalin, Ukraine was the crucial political territory which would allow the Soviet Union to exist, and he said as much. For both Hitler and Stalin, Ukraine was exceptional and crucial, a place that brought ideological demands into colonial practice. The Second World War, at least the European part of the Second World War, was above all things a battle between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army for control of Ukraine. The agreement about the centrality of Ukraine, and disagreement as to whose colony it should be, is the reason why Ukraine is the most dangerous place in the world to live in between 1933 and 1945.

This also means, if one is going to think about the 20th century from an Arendtian point of view, the place to start is not in Moscow and not in Berlin. The place to start is in Ukraine. And I would like to note that Hannah Arendt herself understood this; and if one goes back and reads *Origins of Totalitarianism*, it is striking how often she actually mentions Ukraine. It is also striking how much she knew about Ukraine, including things which we have in the meantime forgotten. So if we make this move, if we accept her premise that the 20th century is introduced by the previous history of empire, and understand the clash between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as having to do with a kind of commonality, a kind of agreement that Ukraine is a colonial territory which is worth possessing as territory, how then do we see the rise of European Integration after the Second World War?

This notion that empire is the key category meets resistance. It meets resistance from the myth of European integration. If you believe the European integration myth, you also believe that the agents

of history were nation-states (that learned from war) as opposed to empires (that were disintegrating). What I would suggest, and here I hope it is not too controversial, this whole idea that the European nation-states learned from the Second World War or learned from the Holocaust is, as a first approximation at least, nonsense.

If you look at the origins of the European integration project, I think its sources go much deeper. I think there is a world historical context here, and that world historical context is the end of the imperial project as such. Land empires fail after the First World War, and maritime empires fail after the Second. The European Union arises as a process of imperial management. It is begun after the failure of neo-imperialism (Germany and Italy) with the help of failing maritime empires (France, the Netherlands and Belgium), and then in its first enlargement includes further failing maritime empires (Great Britain, Portugal, Spain).

When the Federal Republic of Germany goes to France or to Benelux after the Second World War, it is not going to the places which were most harmed by the German invasion. More French soldiers fought on the Axis side than on the Allied side, which is why it is unlikely that there will ever be an official French history of the Second World War. So it is not that Germany is going to these places that were destroyed by the war. That's the myth but it's not true. It is going to places which are suitable partners for a different kind of economic project: managing the end of empire. Germany loses an empire in 1945, as the Netherlands will in 1949, as Belgium will in 1960, France in 1962, and so on. The German attempt to establish a land empire in Eastern Europe was a failed imperial project.

Germany loses its colonial possessions. It loses them dramatically, it loses them decisively. More dramatically and decisively than the others. And so Germany, as the Federal Republic, shifts to the idea of Europe. In that light, what happens in the European integration is post-imperial from the very beginning and all the way through, because the other partners, the other major partners in the European Project, are also countries which lose their empires. The

period 1945–1991 is where European countries lose their empires, but Germans have the advantage of losing theirs first, most dramatically, most decisively in every respect. However, the French lose theirs, the Portuguese lose theirs, the Spanish lose theirs, the Dutch lose theirs and the British lose theirs. These are the states which are the major players in the project of European integration.[1]

Europe is imperial management, it is a post-imperial project. Now, that is the story which cannot be told as myth, because that is the story that includes Europeans losing war after war after war, and that includes colonial crimes most Europeans would prefer to forget. The Germans lose their war most decisively, most quickly, which is again why they have an advantage here. However, the French, and the British, and the Portuguese, and the Spanish, and the Dutch all also have to lose morally compromising wars before the European Union can happen. That is not the myth. That is the history. The myth is that all Europeans learnt something in 1945. The history is that Europe went through a two-generation-long bloody post-colonial period, which brought, slowly and incrementally, one by one, post-imperial countries into the European project. That is, I think, how it actually happened and that will be a way for all this to make a kind of sense.

Now the reason why the European Union can be a solution is that, like an empire in this narrow respect, it provides a huge internal market over a large territory. Politically speaking, it most definitely is not an empire. Politically speaking, what the European Union does, is privilege the idea of state sovereignty, whereas empires view small states as not states at all. The sovereign state is privileged within the European Union and that is historically new. Empires are always in one way or another hierarchical. The EU, if anything, is a kind of affirmative action for smaller and weaker states. It is not that EU weakens sovereignty. That is a myth and a misunderstanding. That is exactly the reverse. What the EU does is to make the small states' sovereignty possible, and that is the politi-

1 The lecture was held in 2015, before Brexit.

cal solution of which I think the Europeans themselves are half-conscious, which makes the EU so interesting, which brings us to how we understand the enlargement of the EU after 1989.

Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are rival imperial projects. The Soviet Union wins in 1945 but it loses in 1989. When it loses in 1991, it ceases to become an imperial project in the same way. What happens then is extremely interesting. What happens then is a "return to Europe," as East Europeans said at the time. Now what happens is not mainly nationalism. If the new European elites in Poland or Lithuania or the Czech Republic or Hungary had been truly nationalistic, they would have not wanted to join the European project. On the contrary: they wanted to join the EU because they were fully aware of the weaknesses and problems of the nation-state, because that was their own history.

In the early 1990s, the East European leaderships wanted to join the EU and the EU wanted nothing to do with them. This by the way is one more example of how the EU is not an empire. It does not want to grow. It has to be forced to grow.

So the point is that there is a diagnosis coming from Eastern Europe in the 1990s, which I think was correct, that the European Union allows us to solve our problems of sovereignty, that arriving at the nation-state is not the end of history, because nation-states are not tenable.

What the East Europeans realized is that in order to be sovereign they had to join the EU, and what I would stress is that what is interesting here is that this means that joining EU, which happens in 2004, 2007, 2013 is not a solution to the problems of the Second World War. It is really a solution to the problems of the First World War. The countries that joined the EU in the first decade or so of the 21st century, these are largely the same countries that were created as nation-states after the First World War (or their successors). This is also the zone under Soviet domination after WWII. The enlargement of the EU in this century, the way I see it, is a response to the events of one century ago; it is an answer to the question of what to do after empire, which was posed in 1945 but was also posed in

1918, and indeed in the Balkans before that. The EU is a way of solving the decolonization problem inside Europe itself and this is what is interesting about it.

What is fascinating is that EU is post-imperial in two different senses: you can go there if you lose an empire. That is the story up to 1989: the European project gathers up post-imperial metropoles. You can also go there if you have been part of someone else's empire, which is the story of 1989: the European project gathers up post-imperial peripheries. The EU is post-imperial in both of these ways, which I think is a tremendous accomplishment actually, one which is overlooked. If this theory of the EU is right, where would this bring us in terms of understanding the contemporary moment – or what might we be able to say about the European history in general?

I just want to make three very brief claims. The easiest claim to make is that if any of this is right, or if the scheme is right, or if there is something to be gained by making European history coherent by adding these global elements to it, then Ukrainians and Russians are right to say that the contemporary events are not about them so much – they are about Europe. They have an understanding of the political theory of the EU and that the political theory of the EU is itself an answer to the great problem of European history, which is what you do after empire.

The second conclusion that I would want to draw from this is that buffer states are impossible. It is impossible for Ukraine to be a buffer state of the European Union because the EU is not a state, the EU is rather the realization of an idea of how politics works after empire. And Ukraine cannot be a buffer to it, because theoretically the EU exists to draw in flawed states, and practically because Ukrainians want to join to improve their flawed state. Insofar as they cannot join they are going to be drawn, not by their own actions, but by the actions of Russia in another direction. Ukraine as a nation-state is not tenable for the same reason that no European nation-state is tenable.

The third conclusion that I would want to draw is the significance of political history itself. If it is right that Ukraine helps us to

understand European history, it is in a serious way, it is in this way of taking European concepts and Europeans myths of themselves and go in deeper. It allows us to see some of the undercurrents of European history and allows us to get through some of the myths that Europeans or West Europeans or Central Europeans have of themselves. In other words, that in so far as Ukraine and Russia are interesting, it is because they let us see through ourselves into things that are deeper, and I stress this point because it is the opposite of what happens so much.

What has happened so much in the discussion of Ukraine is that Europeans export to Ukraine concepts they would never dream of applying to themselves because they are so superficial and condescending. And all of this *Identitätsgequatsche*, this babbling about identity basically – all of these arguments that there are ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians, or he speaks this language and she speaks that language: that whole European and especially German rhetoric is, not to put too fine a point on it – colonial. Those are things that West and Central Europeans would not say about themselves. Germans would not say that if an Austrian speaks German he is therefore really German or that there should be another *Anschluss*. No one would think of saying that.

The fact that someone speaks Russian in Kyiv might lead people to say, in the German press for example, that maybe there is some kind of ethnicity here or there is some kind of language or some kind of identity. The *Identitätsgequatsche* is a way of not taking history seriously. It is a European detour around the realities of European history.

It is a shortcut, which can hurt Europe itself. because if it is true that the European Union is based upon a serious political theory, which takes civil societies seriously, which takes the state seriously, which takes the international level seriously. Then if Europeans are convinced to use arguments about ethnicity and language, which are colonial, they are not just morally wrong, they are logically wrong, and they are empirically wrong. If Europeans use colonial

arguments about their immediate eastern neighbors, they are undermining the logic of their own project.

If the Europeans get used to this kind of identity talk, which of course Moscow encourages them to do, they are undermining their own project. because it contradicts their own project. In the long run, it might make their own project untenable, which is another way of saying that Ukraine cannot be treated as a buffer state. If Europe is an idea and Ukraine is a test of the idea, then what the Europeans say about the idea will in the long run matter.

So fundamentally what I am trying to say is that these events of European history which we all commemorate – the First World War, the Second World War, the end of communism – are not just things to be put behind plexiglas. These are turning points into European history which is, I think, more global and more palpable and more interesting perhaps than we are used to seeing it.

If it is right that European history can be understood in terms of empire and post-empire, if it is right that Ukraine is crucial to broadening European history so that we can see the themes for what they are, that has implications for how we see the present and how we think about the future. It would mean that if we bracket off Ukraine we are failing to understand Europe. And if we are failing to understand Europe, if we do not see what made the European Union the special creation that it is, it is unlikely that Europeans will be able to keep that institution alive.

Andreas Kappeler

German Perceptions of Ukraine since the 17th century

Abstract: The German perceptions of Ukraine were closely connected with wars and revolutions. The uprising of the Cossacks and peasants in 1648/49 and the following wars catapulted Ukraine into the center of public attention. From then on it had a firm place on the mental map of Europe. A second upsurge of interest took place during the Great Northern War, when Ivan Mazepa, hetman of the Ukrainian Cossacks, in 1708 transferred allegiance from Tsar Peter I to the Swedish king Charles XII. While in the 17th century Ukraine was regarded through a Polish lens, now Russia became the main focus of reference. The integration of the Cossacks and most Ukrainian territories into the Russian Empire led to a decline in interest, but Ukraine retained its place on the mental map of Europe until the end of the 18th century, as the publication of Johann Christian von Engel's *Geschichte der Ukraine und der ukrainischen Kosaken* (1796) (History of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks) shows. In the second half of the 19th century, the image of Ukraine as the land of free Cossacks was gradually supplanted by the image of a land of peasants.
During the 19th and 20th centuries, Ukraine lost its place on the mental map and lay in the shadow of Russia. Ukrainians now were generally regarded as Russians. The First World War and the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–21 once again awakened German interest in Ukraine, which was instrumentalized as a pawn in the war with Russia. This scenario was revived during the Second World War, but after 1945 Ukraine virtually disappeared from the mental map. Only with the Euromaidan revolution of 2013/14 and the following military intervention by Russia did Ukraine once more become a hot spot of politics and public awareness in Germany. However, after a short time public interest in Ukraine began again to wane. Today traditional Russocentric views and Great Power attitudes toward Ukraine persist. Knowledge of Ukraine and its history is still limited. A brief overview of German perceptions reveals that during the 17th and 18th centuries Ukraine was well-known in Germany and still retained a place on the mental map of Europe.
Key words: war and revolution; perceptions of Ukraine; mental map of Europe; Ukrainian Cossacks; Ukrainian peasants; Russian Empire; Ukraine in Great Power politics

Ever since Euro-Maidan and the current Russo-Ukrainian war put Ukraine into the news headlines in recent years, there have been repeated complaints that the world of politics, the media and academia were unprepared to face the events unfolding in Ukraine and therefore ill-prepared to respond to it appropriately. The discipline of Eastern European Studies has also been accused of a similar failure. Whether or not such accusations are justified, what is quite clear is that Ukraine had no fixed place in our cognitive map of Europe.

Ukraine stands in the shadow of Russia, a country that has held a monopoly on interpretation of the history of Eastern Europe in Germany for two centuries. To this day Russia has still not accepted that the Ukrainians are an independent nation, treating it instead as a constituent part of an 'all-Russian' people, or of what they refer to as the "Russian world" (*russkij mir*). And that same perception has been widely accepted in the West. Ukraine has tended not to be perceived as an autonomous actor, and policies of the great powers have tended to ride roughshod over its interests. Only occasionally and for short intervals have Ukrainians managed to emerge out of the shadow of Russia in the course of history, most notably on occasions when they were being instrumentalized for the purposes of world power politics. The topics in question were principally concerned with Germany and/or Prussia on one hand, and Russia and/or the Soviet Union on the other, which parties had a marked tendency to practice their politics on the backs of the peoples that lived between them. From the time of the three partitions of Poland at the end of the 18th century until the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939, the Poles were the people most prominently affected by this tendency. These days it is Ukraine that in the eyes of some German and Russian politicians, diplomats and historians is seen as worthy of neglect and sometimes even perceived as being part of Russia.

In this article I look into how this erasure of Ukraine has come to pass by means of exposing some of the basic lines that comprise perceptions of Ukraine in Western countries since the mid-17th

century.[1] For the first two centuries of the reception of Ukraine, I rely on my study *From the Land of Cossacks to the Land of Peasants.*[2] The second period from the middle of the 19th century up to the present is treated here only cursorily. For the sake of simplicity, I shall generally speak of a 'German' perception, despite the fact that both Austrian and Swiss attitudes will be included in my remarks.

The topic of this volume, 'Revolution and War', can also serve as a *Leitmotiv* for the history of German perceptions of Ukraine. Just as the Maidan Revolution and the on-going Russian-Ukrainian war have brought Ukraine into the limelight in recent times, in previous centuries too it was revolutions and wars that provided the stimulus arousing the interest of the German public in Ukraine. Following this thinking, we find the most important burning points located in the 17th and early 18th centuries, in the first half of the 20th century and in the period since the Maidan Revolution in 2013/14.

Land of the Cossacks

The history of the German perceptions of Ukraine begins with the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who appear in the sources in the 16th century. They were the embodiment of the ideas of war and revolution by dint of their armed conflicts with the Ottoman, Tatar and Polish armies, their involvement in the Thirty Years' War, as well as in wars and acts of pillage of their own, and by their participation as leaders

1 On the following, see for an overview: Dmytro Doroschenko. *Die Ukraine und Deutschland. Neun Jahrhunderte deutsch-ukrainischer Beziehungen*. Munich 1994; Volodymyr Sichyns'kyi. *Ukraine in Foreign Comments and Descriptions from the VIth to the XXth Century*. New York 1953; Dmytro Nalyvaiko. *Ochyma zachodu. Retseptsiia Ukrainy v zachidnii Evropi XI-XVIII st.* Kyiv 1998. http://litopys.org.ua/ochyma/ochrus.htm (accessed February 10, 2020).

2 Andreas Kappeler. *Vom Land der Kosaken zum Land der Bauern. Die Ukraine im Horizont des Westens vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert*. Vienna et al. 2020. See also idem. "Ukraine in German-Language Historiography", in *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 29 (2005): 245–264.

in a number of popular uprisings. The Ukrainian Cossacks were at the time subjects of the Polish king, and thus Ukraine was viewed in Germany as in other countries through Polish eyes. The most influential work was for a long period the first description of Ukraine, *Description d'Ukranie qui sont plusieurs Provinces du Royaume de Pologne* by Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan, who worked as a military engineer in the service of Poland between 1631 and 1648. It was published in 1660 (the first edition 1650 under another title is extremely rare), and subsequently reprinted a number of times and translated into several languages. However, a German translation was not published until 1780, but this pioneering work was used in Germany as a source already before.[3] Its date of first publication is no coincidence, as it was the popular uprising of 1648 that suddenly cast Ukraine into the historical limelight. However, Beauplan had completed his book already before the revolt.

The dramatic armed confrontations between the Ukrainian Cossacks and Poland, the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Tatars were closely followed in the German contemporary press within various newspapers and brochures. Wars and popular uprisings provided one of the favorite subjects for reportage by the early modern press.[4] I have analyzed four German newspapers in Frankfurt/

3 Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan. *Description d'Ukranie qui sont plusieurs Provinces du Royaume de Pologne*. Rouen 1660, http://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO_%2BZ164599601 (accessed February 10, 2020); English translation: Andrew B. Pernal (ed.), *Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan. A Description of Ukraine*. Cambridge 1993; German translation: Johann Wilhelm Moeller (ed.). *Wilhelm le Vasseur, Sieur de Beauplan:* Beschreibung der Ukraine, der Krim, und deren Einwohner. Wrocław 1780, http://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO_%2BZ164599601 (accessed January 15, 2020).

4 Compare Malte Griesse (ed.). *From Mutual Observation to Propaganda War: Premodern Revolts in their Transnational Representations*. Bielefeld 2014. In this book (pp. 127–157), see: Frank Sysyn: *Framing the Borderland: The Image of the Ukrainian Revolt and Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi in Foreign Travel Accounts*.

Main, Hamburg and Leipzig.[5] From March 1648 on, they reported regularly on the upheaval among the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who 'plunder, rob, and burn all they can'. The papers tell us that they took one city after another and either massacred their inhabitants or sent them to the Crimea as prisoners. They took their war booty back with them to the Zaporozhian Sich, the centre of the Cossacks on the lower Dnipro. The temporary alliance of the Cossacks with the Crimean Tatars, who were vassals of the Ottoman Empire and were said to have a total of more than 200,000 fighting men available, sparked great fear at the time, when the 'Turkish Fear' was omnipresent in Germany. In the autumn of 1648, newspapers reported on the advance of the Cossacks to the north as far as the Lublin area and towards the west to the outskirts of the city of Lviv, which was then unsuccessfully besieged. In several battles the Cossack rebels defeated armies of the king of Poland, their legitimate ruler, which alerted the authorities in Germany in an epoch of frequent popular uprisings. Even more disturbing was the fact that tens of thousands of Ukrainian peasants joined the Cossacks, and killed or chased away their lords, mostly Polish nobles, and many Catholic priests. The terrible massacres of the Ukrainian Jews, perpetrated by the Cossacks and peasants, that took place during the year 1648, were mentioned only in a few papers, and were addressed only briefly in other contemporary sources except six Hebrew chronicles.[6] During the uprising, the inhabitants of many towns also chose the side of the Cossacks, declaring, it was reported, that it was better 'to die

5 See Kappeler, *Vom Land der Kosaken*, 71–84. I do not here indicate the titles and quotations of the newspapers, but rather refer generally to my book. The newspapers are available on URL: https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/zeitungen17. See also several publications by Iurii Mytsyk.

6 See Joel Raba. *Between Remembrance and Denial: The Fate of the Jews in the Wars of the Polish Commonwealth during the Mid-Seventeenth Century as Shown in Contemporary Writings and Historical Research*. Boulder, Col. 1995; idem. "Das Schicksal der Juden in der Ukraine während des Aufstands von Khmel'nyts'kyi im Spiegel zeitgenössischer Veröffentlichungen", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 37 (1989): 387–392.

under the Cossacks than to live with the Poles'. The rebels were supported by Orthodox priests, among them the Patriarch of Jerusalem, which refers to the religious causes underlying the uprising, mainly the discrimination of the Orthodox Christians in Poland-Lithuania.

At the center of attention stood Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi (1595–1657) as leader of the Cossack host and the Cossack army. On one hand, he was perceived as a cruel and cunning barbarian; on the other, he was respected as a brave military commander and sometimes even as an educated man. According to several papers, the goal of the Cossacks was to achieve an independent political body under his leadership: 'No Waywode or Starosta ruling over it, but their own land given to them freely to rule as their own particular principality', a goal eventually achieved in what later was called the Hetmanate. Thus, the Zaporozhian Cossacks came to be perceived in Germany and other Western countries not only as military actors, but also as an autonomous political body.

This perception was little altered at first by the fact that in 1654, the Cossacks agreed to submit to the protection of the Tsar in Moscow. The newspapers reported less about the agreement of Pereiaslav between the Cossacks and other representatives of the Ukrainians and Tsar Aleksei than about the years 1648/49; they did not consider that agreement as the epochal incorporation of Ukraine into the Russian Empire, as it is often seen today. Only one newspaper gives details about the oath in Pereiaslav in a report from Moscow (and not from Poland as most other sources). In several newspapers we find fictitious reports about the military occupation of Ukraine, the abduction of the metropolitan from Kyiv to Moscow, and several other harsh measures of integration. Only several weeks later the newspapers denied these 'fake news', which were obviously part of Polish anti-Russian propaganda.[7]

Thus, in the middle of the 17th century Ukraine appeared for the first time in the spotlight of European politics. The very first en-

7 Kappeler, *Vom Land der Kosaken*, 84–91.

counters that the German public had with Ukraine took place in the context of war and revolution. The reader of the contemporary newspapers was confronted with a picture of the Ukrainian Cossacks as bands of warriors and insurrectionists fighting against Poland, who had also swept the Orthodox peasantry, city-dwellers and priests along with them. Since 1649 the term 'Ukraine' became current in the newspapers, designating in the main the land of the Cossacks on the Dnipro. The revolt of 1648 and the following war with Poland were among the top news reports in the German press during those years.

Since the 1650s, several extensive treatises of the revolt of 1648 and the war of the Cossacks with Poland-Lithuania were published in Gdańsk (Joachim Pastorius), Venice (Maiolino Bisaccioni, Alberto Vimina) and Paris (Pierre Chevalier). Despite the broad coverage of the topic in the German press, no book devoted exclusively to Ukraine was published in Germany until the second half of the 18th century. However, the topic of Ukraine was covered in several descriptions of Poland-Lithuania.

The most interesting among them is the 'Summary, Yet Thorough Description of the Kingdom of Poland: Especially of Podolia (or the so-called Ukraine) and Bordering Areas', published in Nuremberg in 1672.[8] In this brochure (66 p.) the word 'Ukraine' appears in the title of a separate publication for the second time (after Beauplan) and for the very first time in Germany. Although Ukraine had been divided between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy in 1667, according to this brochure it includes all parts of Ukraine in its present dimensions, even 'Black or Red Russia/Ruthenia' (*Ruś* in Polish) with Lviv, which had belonged to Poland since the 14th century. 'All this together up to the river *Borysthenes* [Dnipro] and the Black Sea, and in the West up to the river *Nester* [Dnister] is

8 *Summarisch-, doch gründliche Beschreibung des Königreichs Polen: insonderheit Podolien (oder der sogenandten Ukraine) und angrenzender Landschafften*. Nuremberg 1672, https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10778487_00007.html (accessed March 20, 2020).

now designated by one single name and is called the Ukraine … The whole Ukraine, on both sides of the big river *Borysthenes* or Nepr, is inhabited by one people who call themselves Cossacks'. So not only the territory but also the people is regarded as an entity. This is the first and, as far as I can establish, the only Western text published before the 19th century that explicitly defines Ukraine in its actual borders, inhabited by one people. Instead of the name 'Ukrainians', which was not used in Germany and other countries until the 18th century, the term 'Cossacks' is used as what was common at this time. Although the 'Summary, Yet Thorough Description' is devoted to the whole of Poland, its focus is on Ukraine, with a special emphasis on Podolia and the history of the Cossacks. The remarkable anonymous brochure has hitherto not attracted the interest of historians.

The *Two Books about the Republic of Poland* by Christoph Hartknoch (1644–1687), published in 1687 in Königsberg, is a scholarly work, written in Latin. The Prussian historian gives an overview of the history of Ukraine and the other parts of Western Rus' from Prince Volodymyr in the 10th century to Prince Danylo of Halych in the 13th century, and on to the history of the Cossacks and their revolt until the division of Ukraine between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy in 1667. The term Ukraine is understood in a more narrow sense as in the 'Summary Description', and means the lands of the Cossacks on the Dnipro. In a chapter 'Respublica Kosakorum' Hartknoch gives the first thorough description of the Cossack order after Beauplan, with emphasis on the election of the Hetman and the different administrative posts and the army.[9]

After the years 1648–1654, Ukraine appeared a second time on the international stage at the beginning of the 18th century. It became a

9 Christoph Hartknoch. *De RepublicaPolonica* Libri 2. 3d ed., Leipzig 1698. https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10778625_00007.html (accessed January 20, 2021).

favorite topic within public discourse, when Hetman Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709) caused a sensation by changing sides from the Russian Tsar Peter (the Great) to the Swedish King Charles XII. Mazepa had become known in the West already earlier, when he was elected Hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossacks in 1674 and fought as Peter's ally against the Tatars and Turks.[10] Two German journals published biographies of the Hetman, 'Die Europäische Fama' (in 1704), his first (and only contemporary) portrait. He was characterized as an intelligent, brave, shrewd and well-educated man, which contradicts the traditional image of the 'barbarian' Ukrainian Cossack.

This positive image disappeared, when Mazepa together with a number of his Cossacks allied himself with the Swedish king in 1708. During the first weeks after this move, German newspapers wrote about this step in a neutral tone. Mazepa is reported to have the ambition of reigning over Ukraine as sovereign prince. Soon the majority of the newspapers and journals changed their mind and condemned Mazepa as a betrayer of his rightful ruler. Public opinion in Germany was heavily under the influence of Russian propaganda and several newspapers published Peter's polemic manifests. After the defeat of Charles XII and Mazepa in the battle of Poltava in 1709, Ukraine and its Cossacks ceased to feature in the headlines of the German press.

Mazepa is the second Ukrainian after Khmel'nyts'kyi to become visible in the West as a personality. He remained well-known until the 20th century, although not as a warrior and statesman but as the young lover of a Polish Countess while serving as a page at the Court of King John II Casimir Vasa. The Countess was married to a

10 For the German contemporary sources on Mazepa and its time and the respective references, see Kappeler, *Vom Land der Kosaken*, 125–35. See also Astrid Blome.*Das deutsche Russlandbild im frühen 18. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zur zeitgenössischen Presseberichterstattung über Russland unter Peter I.* Wiesbaden 2000, 114–123; Theodore Mackiw.*Mazepa im Lichte der zeitgenössischen deutschen Quellen*. Munich 1963.

much older Count. Upon discovering the affair, the Count punishes Mazepa by tying him naked to a wild horse and setting the horse loose, dispatching him off to Ukraine. This legend was narrated and disseminated by Voltaire and became the topic of romantic poems (Byron, Victor Hugo), paintings (Horace Vernet) and compositions (Franz Liszt). Later it was trivialized and Orientalized; in 1919 a silent film 'Mazeppa, the Popular Hero of Ukraine' was shown in the German cinemas.[11]

After Poltava the Cossacks lost most of their privileges and autonomy. In Germany interest in the Russian Empire and its ruler was growing fast. Most information about Ukraine from this time on came from Russia to the West, and the Polish perspective was substituted by a dominance of a Russian optic. Now, the official Russian term 'Little Russia' was increasingly in use, but it did not replace the term 'Ukraine' until the 19th century. Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in the middle of the 17th century had found a place on the cognitive map of Europe and remained there during the first half of the 18th century.

A first example of this continued presence is a map printed in 1720 in Nuremberg by Johann Baptist Homann's publishing house, in which Ukraine is represented as a distinct territory.[12] Beauplan's maps had provided the template for the new rendering. The title

11 See Thomas Grob. "Der innere Orient. Mazepas Ritt durch die Steppe als Passage zum Anderen Europas", *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, 56 (2005): 33–86; *Kappeler*, *Vom Land der Kosaken*, 279–288. The silent film directed by Martin Berger is available in a Dutch version on youtube in full: https://youtu.be/nhsH1YlaOws (accessed Oct. 5, 2021). See also the painting 'Mazeppa and the Wolves', by Horace Vernet (1826) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vernet,_Horace_-_Mazeppa_and_the_Wolves_-_1826.jpg (accessed Oct. 5, 2021). Byron's poem 'Mazeppa' can be read here: https://www.poetryverse.com/lord-byron-poems/mazeppa.

12 For the map, see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ukrania_quae_et_Terra_Cosaccorum_cum_vicinis_Walachiae,_Moldoviae,_Johann_Baptiste_Homann_(Nuremberg,_1720).jpg (accessed March 20, 2021)

'Ukrania' (instead of 'Ukraina') had also been taken from Beauplan, using a version of the name that is easier to pronounce in Romance languages – as in the Spanish term 'Ucrania', for example. Since Beauplan had drawn up his maps in the first half of the 17th century, the map largely reflects geographic realities as before 1648, not the situation at the beginning of the 18th century. Thus Kharkiv, which had been founded in 1654, is missing, and the left bank of Ukraine and Smolensk, which had both become part of Russia in 1654/67, are portrayed as being part of Poland-Lithuania. On the other hand, 'Kiovia moscovitica' is shown as part of Russia. The heading *Ukrania, quae et terra Cossacorum* once more reveals the close association between Ukraine and the Cossacks. For this reason, it is surprising that the map encompasses practically the whole of the territory of present-day Ukraine that was settled at that time, as far as Przemyśl in the west and Novhorod-Siverskyi in the north. An exception is represented by Chernivtsi in the Ottoman Principality of Moldova. To the east and the south, Ukraine borders on the territory of the Don Cossacks, an area under Russian rule, as well as *Tartaria, deserta*, and *campi desertiet inhabitati*, a stretch of largely uninhabited land controlled by the Crimean Tatars. The map, which was very popular at the time, is notable for its richness of detail, so that even small villages, minor bodies of water, transport routes and larger forests are marked.


VKRANIA
quæ et
TERRA COSACCORVM
cum vicinis
WALACHIAM, MOLDAVIAM, MINGRELIÆ,
TARTARIÆ PROVINCIIS
exhibita
a Ioh. Baptista Homanno
Norib.
Segmentus
MAGN DUCAT
PALAT S. MOLENSCO
NOVOGROD
SEVERI
DUCAT
TERRA ZAPORO
DUCAT
PALATINAT
CZERNIHO
VIENE
VOLHYNIA SUPERIOR
VOLHYNIA
KIOVIENSIS
VOLHYNIA INFERIOR
RUSSIA RUBRA
PALAT
POGUT
UKRAINA
PODOLIA INFERIOR
WALACHIA
TRANS
SILVANIA
TARTARIA
BUDZIACENSIS
MOLDAVIA
BULGARIA
TRANSALPINA
SANDJACATUS
PARS
NICOPOLIENSIS
PONTUS
M. A


RUSSIA
MOSCOVITICA
TARTARIÆ
MOSCOVITICÆ PARS
SEVERIENSIS
DUCATUS
Deserta sine aqua
CAMPI DESERTI
COSACCI CIRCASSI
DESERTUM ASOVIENSE
KIOVIA
TARTARIA
NAGAIENSIS
SINUS ASOVIENSIS
MARE DELLE ZABACHE
PALUS MÆOTIS
KABARDINKI
CIRCASSI TARTARI
EUXINUS
MARE NIGRUM.

A second example of Ukraine's continuing presence is provided by Zedler's monumental *Great Complete UNIVERSAL LEXICON of All Sciences and Arts*, a compilation of earlier lexicons.[13] It summarizes the knowledge about Ukraine in Germany one century after its appearance on the mental map of Europe. In Volume 49, which was published in 1746, we find an entry for 'Ukraine' covering five columns, in Volume 6 an article under the heading 'Cosacken', which deals almost exclusively with the Ukrainian Cossacks.[14] In this lexicon, the territory of Ukraine is restricted to central Ukraine, excluding Galicia in the West and Sloboda Ukraine (with Kharkiv) in the East, but including the Polish provinces of Podolia and Volhynia. The name Ukraine, we are told, means 'borderland' in Slavic languages, an expression that refers to the southern frontier of Poland-Lithuania with the Tatars and the Turks.

Once again, the close connection between Ukraine and the Cossacks is emphasized. According to this source, the majority of Ukraine was inhabited by Cossacks, whose name means 'robber' in the Slavic tongue. At another point in the text, the word is (incorrectly) derived from the Slavic *koza* (goat). In both articles, the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks is described in detail, and on the whole accurately. They had served as a forward wall to Christianity until they began their repeated risings against Polish rule from the end of the 16th century on. The rebellion under the leadership of Hetman 'Boydan Chmielniski' was 'even more brutal than earlier revolts' of the Cossacks. There follows an account of the violent confrontations of the period, events for which a fuller account is given in the entry for Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi.[15] We are told this figure, 'a very renowned General of his Cossacks … of very great natural intelligence, and very cunning, hardy and brave as well',

13 Johann Heinrich Zedler. *Grosses vollständiges UNIVERSAL LEXICON Aller Wissenschafften und Künste*. vols. 1–50. Halle, Leipzig 1732–1754, http://www.zedler-lexikon.de/(accessed March 23, 2021).

14 Ibid., vol. 49 (1746), esp. 484–488; vol. 6 (1733), esp. 1401–1405.

15 Ibid. vol. 15, esp. 988–989.

unleashed a peasant rebellion and declared himself protector of the 'Greek religion'. In the end, the account tells us, he submitted to the Tsar of Moscow, although 'many of his nation' put up 'strong resistance'.

We are told that Ukraine is rich in grain and other foodstuffs. The *topos* of the fecund Ukraine has a long history from the 16th to the 20th century, and is mentioned in many Western sources. Zedler mentions also the second long-lasting *topos*: liberty. The inhabitants of Ukraine are 'extraordinary lovers of liberty, to such an extent that they cannot tolerate even the mildest form of subservience'. So by the 18th century, we can see that the myth of the love of freedom of the Ukrainians (and especially of the Cossacks), which appeared already in the early newspapers, was popular in Germany. The Ukrainians are bold and magnanimous, and love getting drunk. The peasants we are told were 'simple serfs' – an opinion that certainly applied to the parts of Ukraine within Poland-Lithuania at the time. Unexpectedly, a short observation appears at the end of the text on the situation of the Jews, who we are informed are, according to a source from 1561, in a better position in Ukraine than in other countries. There is no mention in any of the entries of the massacres against the Jews in the year 1648. Zedler's article on Kyiv as one of the rare Western sources mentions the Kyivan academy, 'a great university' with all faculties except medicine.[16] Lviv is famous by dint of its multi-confessional population with three bishops (Roman-Catholic, Armenian and 'Greek') and a synagogue.[17]

Despite these numerous bits of information, the Russian Empire was arousing much more interest than Ukraine. The entry on Russia was the most comprehensive of all articles on any country included in Zedler's *Universal Lexicon*, taking up no less than 67 columns, more than ten times the space of the article on Ukraine. What is

16 Ibid., vol. 15, esp. 695–697.

17 Ibid., vol. 17, esp. 50–53.

more, there were also a further 13 columns in the detailed entry on Peter the Great.[18]

Nevertheless, one might well say that educated Germans in the middle of the 18th century had material enough to be well informed about the history and present of Ukraine and the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Even as late as the last few years of the 18th century, the first general histories of Ukraine were published. In 1788 the *Annals of Little Russia or History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks of Ukraine and Little Russia*, by Jean Benoît Schérer (1741–1824), were published in Paris in two volumes. The author was born in Strasbourg and studied in German universities. The work was to appear one year later in an abridged German translation in Leipzig under the title *History of the Ukrainian and Zaporozhian Cossacks*. The work portrays in great detail the geography and history of Ukraine, and especially of the Cossacks. It represents the best comprehensive description of Ukraine, published in the 18th century. Schérer used Ukrainian and Russian sources and he betrayed sympathy for the struggle of the Cossacks for freedom.[19]

The peak and at the same time the final expression of the German perception of Ukraine in the Age of Enlightenment was marked by the publication of the first scholarly history of Ukraine in accordance with the standards of the time, printed in Halle in 1796 under the title *History of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks, as well as of the Kingdoms of Halych and Vladimir*.[20] It was the first

18 Ibid., vol. 32, esp. 1907–1974. See Eckhard Matthes. *Das veränderte Russland. Studien zum deutschen Russlandverständnis im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen 1725 und 1762.*Frankfurt am Main et al. 1981: 366–390.

19 Jean-Benoît Schérer. *Annales de la Petite-Russie: ou histoire des Cosaques-Saporogues et des Cosaques de l'Ukraine, ou de la Petite-Russie, depuis leur origine jusqu'à nos jours; suivie d'un abrégé de l'histoire des hettmans des Cosaques, & des pièces justificatives*,vol. 1–2. Paris 1788; idem, *Geschichte der ukrainischen und saporogischen Kosaken*, ed. by Karl Hammerdörfer. Leipzig 1789.

20 Johann Christian von Engel. *Geschichte der Ukraine und der ukrainischen Cosaken wie auch der Königreiche Halitsch und Wladimir*. Halle 1796; Rudolf A. Mark. "Johann Christian von Engel (1770–1814) als Historiograph der Ukraine", *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 36 (1987): 191–201.

full monograph of a German author with the term 'Ukraine' in its title and devoted entirely to Ukraine. Its author, Johann Christian von Engel (1770–1814), had studied in Göttingen under August Ludwig Schlözer, and had also written a history of Hungary. In Engel's account as in most others of the epoch, the Cossacks are placed in the foreground: the portraits of Khmel'nyts'kyi and Mazepa appear at the very beginning of the book. The main element of their history was the battle for freedom: 'The dumb Ukrainian people rises to the idea of a free state and organizes itself as a military-Spartanic republic'.[21] Consequently, Engel is critical on the politics of Poland and Russia. He tells us that Ukraine is 'in its scale similar to a kingdom, a fertile, naturally richly endowed land, a dividing wall between the cultivated Europe and the wildness of Asia'.[22] Thus. Engels is expressing the three most important *topoi* that survive to this day, that of freedom, of fertility and on Ukraine's position between East and West. Engel's history appeared as the 48th volume of a general world history, in which Ukraine surprisingly found its own separate place.

Engel had been in the service of Austria since 1791, and it was thus natural that the second part of his work should be dedicated to the history of Galicia and Volhynia, published for the first time already in 1792/93. Galicia had come under the rule of the Habsburgs in 1772 and had not fallen, like the rest of Ukraine, to Russia. In the following decades this new Austrian crownland was discovered by Austrians and Germans, but Engel and the authors of the early travel reports did not regard it as part of Ukraine.[23]

Engel commences the 400 pages of his comprehensive work with the following remark:

21 Engel, *Geschichte*, 3–4.

22 Engel, *Geschichte,* 1–2: 'ihrem Umfang nach einem Königreiche gleich, ein fruchtbares, von der Natur reich ausgestattetes Land, eine Scheidewand des cultivirten Europa von dem wilderen Asien'.

23 See Kappeler, *Vom Land der Kosaken*, 240–253.

'In my decision to become a historian of a people [the Cossacks], unconversant in the arts of peace and knowing only rough manners and the arts of war, now already disappeared as a people as a result of their incorporation into the gigantic mass of the Russian Empire … I voluntarily renounce the glory and reward that will be shared by any widely-read writer of the history of a powerful, cultivated, and independent people'.

His statement proved to be justified. His book did not have any new edition nor was it translated into other languages. Its influence on public opinion was therefore limited. Engel's history was in some respects a swan song of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Their importance waned as they were increasingly integrated into the Russian Empire. From then on the perception of Ukraine was no longer colored by the Cossacks, but concerned the simple Ukrainian people and their customs and manners. The land of the Cossacks became the land of the peasants.

Land of the peasants

A start on this new vision was made by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) in his 'Journal of my journey in 1769':

'One day Ukraine will become a new Greece: the beautiful heaven of this country, the joyful nature of its people, their musical nature, their fertile land, etc. will be awakened: out of so many small savage peoples, as were the Greeks once too, will emerge a civilized nation: their boundaries will extend to the Black Sea, and from thence into the world."[24]

Herder prophesises that cultural renewal in Europe will come from the 'younger' peoples of Eastern Europe (in the Early Modern men-

24 Johann Gottfried Herder. 'Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769', in *Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. by Bernhard Suphan. Vol. 4. Berlin 1878: 343–461, here 402.

tal map imagined as Northern Europe), among them the Ukrainians. In place of the fierce warlike Cossacks who had themselves made history, Herder describes a passive, joyful, musical nation that only awaits its awakening. While the Ukrainians are a harmless, cultureless people, they have the potential, if civilized, to become 'a mannered nation' ('*eine gesittete Nation*') that can spread far and wide. Herder's *Journal* was not published until 1846, but his general ideas had a great influence on the national awakening of the Slavs.

Herder's *Journal* was not a travel report, he never visited Ukraine. But in his time the genre of travelogue became popular. For the first time since Beauplan, authors wrote about their own impressions. Among the early travelers to Ukraine were several Germans. Two of them visited Volhynia and Podolia (the 'Polish Ukraine') in 1780/81 resp. 1783, shortly before its incorporation into the Russian Empire in the third partition of 1793. Johann Wilhelm Möller (1748–1807), the translator of Beauplan's 'Description of Ukraine', was a physician who was sent to the Polish-Ottoman border in order to fight against the plague; the military engineer August Friedrich Ephraim Hammer (or Hammard) (1749–1805) visited Russian troops in southern Ukraine.

In their travel reports, published in 1804 resp. 1788, they describe the Ukrainian peasants in the spirit of romanticism.[25] Similar to Herder, they idealize them as beautiful, simple, artless, peaceful and joyful: 'Games, music, songs and dances include the characteristics of this people' and its genius promises a great future.[26] On the other hand, they are raw, lazy and superstitious and have to be educated and 'civilized'. Their villages are miserable, but less so than the Polish ones. Möller mentions the beautiful Ukrainian girls with their pigtails around their heads. Hammer and Möller visited also

25 C.F. E. Hammard. *Reise durch Oberschlesien zur Russisch-Kayserlichen Armee nach der Ukraine und zum Feldmarschall Rümanzow-Sadunajskoy*, vol. 1. Gotha 1787; Johann Wilhelm Möller. *Reise von Warschau nach der Ukraine in den Jahren 1780 und 1781*. Herzberg am Harz 1804.

26 Hammard, *Reise*, 160.

the small towns of Volhynia and Podolia with their 'Russian' churches and Jewish innkeepers and merchants. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, they describe the Jews in a neutral tone without any prejudices. Hammer mentions the uprising of the *Haidamaks*, Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants, who in 1768 committed terrible massacres among the Poles and Jews in the Podolian town of Uman'. In 1787 Möller made a second journey on a float to southern Ukraine and he is the first German author to give a description of this region, recently annexed by Russia, in his diary.[27] Hammer and Möller are the first Germans writing about Ukrainian peasants, after the short remarks of the newspapers about the peasants who had joined the rebellious Cossacks in 1648/49.

The third German important to mention here is Johann Georg Kohl (1808–1878), who visited Ukraine in the years 1837/38. His travel report, published in 1841 in not less than three volumes, is by far the most extensive and richest in content.[28] Kohl came from Russia to Sloboda-Ukraine and Kharkiv, then traveled through left-bank Ukraine to the Black Sea and finally to Odessa. He describes in detail the life of the peasants. They are by nature farmers and shepherds and only rarely live in the cities. He idealizes the idyllic Ukrainian villages with their clean white cottages and flower gardens and the singing girls with floral wreathes on their heads. Kohl meets with members of the petty nobility, Cossacks by origin, and mentions their patriotism. He is the first author describing in detail the large cities of Kharkiv and Odessa, the first with a predominantly Russian, the second with a polyethnic and multi-religious character. Kohl's work contains valuable information about the Ukrainian language, literature, folksongs and historiography.

27 Johann Wilhelm Möller. *Reise von Volhynien nach Cherson in Russland im Jahre 1787*. Hamburg 1802.

28 J.G. Kohl. *Reisen im Inneren von Russland und Polen*, vol. 1–3. Dresden, Leipzig 1841: vol. 2. *Die Ukraine. Kleinrussland*; vol. 3. *Die Bukowina, Galizien, Krakau und Mähren*; idem, *Reisen in Südrussland*, vol. 1. *Neurussland – Odessa – Ausflüge in die Steppen – die Krim*. Dresden, Leipzig 1841. On Kohl and his work, see Kappeler, *Vom Land der Kosaken*, 223–240.

Kohl uses the terms 'Little Russia', 'Little Russians' and 'South Russia' more often than 'Ukraine' and 'Ukrainians'. But this does not mean that the Ukrainians are regarded only a sub-group of the Russians: They are a distinct nation with their own language and history. Kohl shows comprehension and sympathy for the Ukrainians and criticizes the Great Russians. He even notes a deep antagonism between the two peoples. The Ruthenians of Austria, whom he describes in a separate volume, are also part of the Little Russia people, an opinion that few adhered to in that period. Kohl was a prominent German travel writer of the time. But his books were not re-edited or translated. So their influence on the public opinion was limited. In general, the interest in Ukraine was rapidly abating in the middle of the 19th century.

Four years after Kohl's books, a collection of Ukrainian folksongs, translated into German, was published under the title *The Poetic Ukraine*. Its editor and translator Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819–1892) had spent several years in Russia.[29] In the work's foreword, the author explains the goal of his work: 'to take by my hand the children of a foreign land and to introduce them in my German fatherland'. These 'children' require the instruction of educated German adults who had a '*mission civilisatrice*' in the East. This attitude reflects a German-Ukrainian cultural hierarchy. Bodenstedt repeats the observations of the travelers about the Ukrainian peasants, singing, dancing and writing poetry. 'Thus may the fragrant songs, like the lamenting winds, be blown to the Germans, and may they recount to the Germans how the children of Ukraine once loved and fought'. This alludes to the epic ballades (*dumy)* about the heroic past of the Cossacks. Bodenstedt's collection did not find many readers. The generally growing disappearance of Ukraine from the mental map is reflected by a shortened new edition of *The Poetic Ukraine*, published in 1866 under the title *Russian Poets*.[30]

29 Friedrich Bodenstedt (ed. and transl.). *Die Poetische Ukraine. Eine Sammlung kleinrussischer Volkslieder*. Stuttgart 1845.

30 Idem. *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7. Berlin 1866, 8–220.

Thus, the Ukrainian folksongs found an echo in Germany but the Ukrainian peasant people was not expected to have a high level of literature. Even Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko was to fail to gain admittance to Europe's cultural space. Before 1914 only three minor collections with German translations of his poems had been published, two of them in Chernivtsi/Czernowitz, in Austrian Bukovina.[31] A curious exception did not concern Shevchenko's poetry but rather his biography. In 1862 the popular journal *Die Gartenlaube* (gazebo), published a long sympathetic article about the life and work of the poet, deceased one year before, along with his portrait.[32] Despite its extraordinary wide circulation of 100,000 copies, the article left almost no written traces. Its title 'A Russian poet's life' reveals that for a broader German public Ukraine was again a white spot.

On the other hand, Ukrainian themes, represented in literature, written in Russian and Polish, had an important impact on the Western image of Ukraine. First of all, the works of Mykola Hohol'/Nikolai Gogol were translated into German since the 1840s. His early tales, relying partially on folklore, give a romantic picture of the Ukrainian village with its small landholders and peasants; his dramatic novel *Taras Bul'ba* is about the Cossacks and their heroic past. In the beginning Gogol was perceived as a Malorussian, later he became famous as a Russian writer. Another example is Henryk Sienkiewicz's historical novel *Ogniem i mieczem* (With Fire and

31 On this topic, compare Alois Woldan. "Zur Rezeption der ukrainischen Literatur im deutschen Sprachraum", in *Ukraine. Geographie – Ethnische Struktur – Geschichte – Sprache und Literatur – Politik – Wirtschaft – Recht* ed. by Peter Jordan et al. Vienna 2001 = Österreichische Osthefte 42 (2000): 3–4, 609–628.

32 [Hermann Leopold Zunk.] "Ein russisches Dichterleben", in *Die Gartenlaube* 1862, no. 28: 437–438. https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Ein_russisches_Dichterleben. (accessed February 8, 2021). See Mykola Zymomrja. "Das Ferment der Rezeption von ŠevčenkosLeben und Schaffen im Lande Herders. Zur Problematik der Aufnahme, Bewertung und Interpretation von Taras Ševčenkos Werken in Deutschland", in idem. *Deutschland und Ukraine. Durch die Abrisse zur Wechselseitigkeit der Kultur*. Fürth 1999, 17–96.

Sword), giving a critical picture of the Zaporozhian Cossacks; it became popular in Germany.

After 1850, interest among the German public in Ukraine quickly receded. Looking at 19th-century maps of Europe, one sees that Ukraine has disappeared from them completely. All one can see is the two empires into which Ukraine was merged.

In the great encyclopaedias of the late 19th century, Ukraine received substantially less space than it had in Zedler's *Lexicon* in the middle of the 18th century. The entry for 'Ukraine' in *Brockhaus* and *Meyers Konversationslexikon* at the end of the 19th century take up a mere 18 resp. 17 lines, while the entry in Zedler has 300 lines.[33] Equally slim is the entry for 'Kleinrussland' (Little Russia), in which the history of the region is integrated into the history of Russia. Little Russia, the entry in Meyer tells us, 'is the centre and *Heimat* of the Southern or Little Russian tribe (see Russians)'. Thus, in Germany then the idea that saw the Little Russians as a constituent part of the all-Russian people seems to have already taken root. However, the entry 'Kleinrussen' in Brockhaus tells us that the Little Russians distinguished themselves from the Great Russians, mostly by their language.

Surprisingly, both encyclopaedias, which had a wide circulation of approximately 200.000 copies, contain a long and well-researched entry on 'Little Russian (language and) literature').[34] They did not restrict itself to the country's folklore, but presented its readers with the 'high' literature since the time of Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi at the end of the 18th century. Taras Shevchenko, 'the greatest poet of Little Russia', the reader is told, was celebrated as 'an arch-enemy of tyranny and despotism, who championed liberty and enlightenment built upon the nation and advocated the most sublime ideas of love of the

33 *Brockhaus Konversations-Lexikon,* 14th ed., vol. 16. Leipzig et al. 1892–1896: 487; *Meyers Konversationslexikon,* 4th ed., vol. 15. Leipzig, Vienna 1885–1892: 980–981. https://www.retrobibliothek.de/retrobib/index.html (accessed March 20, 2021).

34 Meyer, vol. 9, 829–831; Brockhaus, vol. 10, 407–408.

fatherland'. The article even deals with medieval literature of the Rus' without subsuming it under the category of Russian literature. All of this suggests that the author of the entry may have been either a Ukrainian native or a Slavist with sympathy for Ukraine. The author of the longer article in Meyer could be Omelian Ohonovs'kyi (1833–1894), professor of Ukrainian philology at the University of Lviv.[35] So it seems that even at the end of the 19th century, Ukraine could still count on a few advocates in German-speaking countries. They came mostly from Austrian Galicia, where the Ukrainian national movement and culture blossomed around the end of the 19th century.

The Ukrainians in Austria-Hungary, referred to at the time as Ruthenians, were recognized as a separate nationality, in contrast to the policy of the Russian Empire. Their fortnightly journal *Ruthenische Revue,* later called *Ukrainische Rundschau,* concerned itself with a wide range of topics covering the politics, culture and literature of Ukraine. The change of name bears witness to the growing orientation of Ruthenians towards the Ukrainians living under the Russian Empire. Ukraine's most prominent historian, Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi (1866–1934), taught at the University of Lviv, and it is no coincidence that the first translation of the first volume of his monumental *History of the Ukraine-Rus'* was published in 1906 in Leipzig.[36] This publication gave the German-speaking public for the first time in more than a century the material they needed to inform themselves on the history of Ukraine and to become acquainted with its national historical narrative.

35 Ohonovs'kyj as a collaborator of Meyers is mentioned in Anna Kochanowska-Nieborak. *Das Polenbild in Meyers Konversationslexika des 'langen' 19. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt/M. 2010, 123–124.

36 Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi. *Geschichte des ukrainischen (ruthenischen) Volkes*, vol. 1: *Urgeschichte des Landes und des Volkes. Anfänge des Kijever Staates*. Leipzig 1906. The numerous other volumes of the work have not been translated into German to this day. Instead, a multivolume English translation of the work is being published in Canada, begun in 1997.

Pawn in the game of the great powers

But it was only with the outbreak of the First World War that the Ukrainians were to suddenly come out from the shadow of Russia. This confirms the decisive part played by wars and revolutions in the German perceptions of Ukraine. The connection with Russia remained dominant. Germany and Austria did not think of Ukraine as an independent actor. Instead, they attempted to play the Ukrainians off against Russia, the Soviet Union and also against Poland.[37] Aside from that, Ukraine was also seen as an object of economic exploitation, as a provider of raw materials.

A Union for the Liberation of Ukraine made up of Ukrainian emigrants from Russia was active in Vienna since 1914. It published an 'Appeal to the Public Opinion of Europe', calling for the establishment of a Ukrainian state as a protective buffer for Europe against Russia. The Union published a journal, the *Ukrainische Nachrichten,* and numerous other texts, including summaries of Hrushevs'kyi's history of Ukraine and a fundamental geographical work on the Ukraine by Stepan Rudnyts'kyi.[38] In his work, Rudnyts'kyi presented ethnic Ukraine, which at the time did not exist as a state, as a self-contained geographical space, in contrast to the Polish and Russian spatial visions, and allocated Ukraine a separate place on the map of Europe.

In 1914, Germany was even less prepared than it is today to respond to the appearance of Ukraine as an object of interest in political circles and among the general public. While it is true that Ukraine

37 For the history of German-Ukrainian relations and German perceptions of Ukraine from the end of the 19th century to 1939, I have relied on Frank Golczewski. *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939*. Paderborn et al. 2010, which contains exhaustive references.

38 Stepan Rudnyts'kyi. *Ukraine. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinfassliche Landeskunde.* Vienna 1916. Compare Guido Hausmann. "Das Territorium der Ukraine: Stepan Rudnyts'kyis Beitrag zur Geschichte räumlich-territorialen Denkens über die Ukraine", in *Die Ukraine. Prozesse der Nationsbildung* ed. by Andreas Kappeler. Cologne et al. 2011, 145–157.

was discussed in some isolated articles – including an idea proposed in 1888 by philosopher Eduard von Hartmann of creating a 'Kingdom of Kiev' in order to dismantle Russia in part – such discussions remained no more than a fringe phenomenon. During the First World War, however, plans to achieve the 'decomposition' or 'disintegration' of Russia began to take shape. A number of pamphlets and polemics dealing with Ukraine began to appear, mostly based on writings of Ukrainian emigrants.[39] Prominent examples of such works include several brochures written by national politicians Dmytro Dontsov and Ievhen Levyts'kyi.[40] Conservative Baltic Germans Paul Rohrbach and Axel Schmidt argued for the creation of an independent Ukrainian state as a bulwark against Russia: '*Wer Kijew hat, kann Moskau zwingen*' ('Whoever has Kyiv can coerce Moscow') was how Rohrbach put it in 1916. Debates took place between 'sympathisers of Ukraine' and 'sympathisers of Russia' that recall the modern-day arguments that have gone on since the Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014. Leading academics participated in these debates, with historian Johannes Haller and Russian translator Karl Nötzel advocating self-determination for Ukraine, while historians like Otto Hoetzsch (from a Russian point of view) and Slavists like Alexander Brückner (from a Polish perspective) argued against it.

On February 9, 1918, Ukraine returned to the international stage when the Ukrainian People's Republic, which had proclaimed its independence on January 25, concluded a separate peace with the Axis Powers in an arrangement known as the '*Brotfrieden*' ('Peace for Bread'). The agreement was followed by the occupation of Ukraine by the German Reich and Austria-Hungary and the creation of a new 'Ukrainian state' under a puppet government led by Hetman Pavlo Skoropads'kyi (1873–1945). His most important

39 See Golczewski, *Deutsche*, 197–239; Claus Remer. *Die Ukraine im Blickfeld deutscher Interessen. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1917/18.* Frankfurt am Main 1997.

40 For example, Dmytro Dontsow. *Die Ukrainische Staatsidee und der Krieg gegen Russland.* Berlin 1915; Eugen Lewicky. *Die Ukraine der Lebensnerv Russlands*. Stuttgart, Berlin 1915.

task was to supply the then starving cities of Vienna and Berlin with grain. This expectation was based on the traditional *topos* of fertility in the image of Ukraine as Europe's breadbasket. In 1918, Rohrbach and Schmidt founded a German-Ukrainian society; it published a magazine that made the case for working closely together with the Ukrainians.

The First World War, the creation of a nation state – albeit a short-lived one – and the occupation of Ukraine by the Axis powers signaled the end of Ukraine's status as a mostly unknown country in the German-speaking world, a position it had been in up from the middle of the 19th century. For the very first time, the word 'Ukraine' began to appear in the names of a series of states: the Ukrainian People's Republic, the West Ukrainian People's Republic, the Ukrainian State (the official designation of the Hetmanate), and in the title of the successful competitor of these bodies, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic.

So the Ukrainians had returned to the field of German vision. The Ukrainian immigrants to Germany were to contribute to this return to focus, among them Skoropads'kyi and his former Foreign Minister, historian Dmytro Doroshenko. They had contacts with official German authorities, and in 1926 founded the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Berlin, which began publishing valuable studies in the German language, organized lectures and awarded scholarships. In the interwar period, a number of articles on Ukrainian history were also published in specialized German journals, the authors of which were mostly Ukrainian emigrants.

In 1926 Ukraine was to hit the headlines all over the world when Symon Petliura (1879–1926), the most important leader of the Ukrainian People's Republic, was shot dead in Paris.[41] His assassin, Samuel (Sholom) Schwartzbard, was arrested and ultimately acquitted by the jury after his trial in Paris. In his defence, Schwartzbard

41 David Engel. *The Assassination of Symon Petliura and the Trial of Scholem Schwarzbard 1926–1927. A Selection of Documents.* Göttingen 2016; Golczewski, *Deutsche*, 493–505.

had claimed as his motive for the killing that Petliura had been responsible for the murder of tens of thousands of Ukrainian Jews in 1919 and 1920. This allegation was unfounded, as Petliura had sharply criticized antisemitism and excesses against Jews. However, in the chaos of the Civil War, he had been unable to control sections of his army and of the Ukrainian peasants who had committed the pogroms along with the Russian White Army. The killing of Petliura by a Jew who had probably been commissioned to do so by the Soviet Union reinforced antisemitic tendencies among Ukrainian nationalists. At the same time, the sensational Schwartzbard trial provided the basis for a stereotype of Ukrainian antisemites and nationalists that was stoked up by Soviet propaganda.

The 15th edition of the encyclopedia *Großer Brockhaus* (1928–1935) provided confirmation that Ukraine had arrived again in the German consciousness.[42] Volume 19, published in 1934, contains three informative entries: 'Ukraine', 'Ukrainer' and 'ukrainische Literatur'. The most important reference point for the edition is now the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, its territory and its population. The brief treatment that is provided on Ukraine's own separate history largely follows the national narrative from medieval times via the early modern period up until the 19th and early 20th centuries. Folk culture and popular literature are once more given extensive treatment. The image of Ukrainians as a peasant people had survived – the only illustration in the articles depicts a Ukrainian woman in traditional costume. In these times, Ukrainians were engaged in a struggle, the encyclopedia declares, against the dismantling of their nationhood and for the preservation of their folk heritage. The entries illustrate that while Ukraine was perceived as a separate unity, it was not thought to be on a level with independent states, such as Hungary, to which the encyclopedia dedicated four times as much space.

42 *Der Große Brockhaus. Handbuch des Wissens in zwanzig Bänden,* 15th ed., vol. 19. Leipzig 1934, 248–251.

In the 1930s the Soviet Union shut itself off from the outside world. That isolation affected the perception of the famine, engineered by the Soviet leadership, which cost the lives of almost four million Ukrainians in 1932/33. Yet these events did not meet with any official reactions by the governments in Germany and other countries, although German diplomats and specialists such as Otto Schiller reported regularly on the famine in Ukraine.[43] We do not know how well the general public was informed, because there are no representative studies on the echo in the German press. An analysis of the Austrian newspapers shows that they regularly reported about the famine, the terrible suffering and mass deaths of the peasants and the Soviet policy causing the catastrophe.[44] The right-wing and Catholic newspapers published more articles on the famine than the liberal and social-democratic press, the leading newspaper *Freie Neue Presse* was reluctant and careful. The Catholic *Reichspost* became the mouthpiece of the Baltic German Ewald Ammende (1893–1936) and the Viennese cleric, Cardinal Theodor Innitzer (1875–1955), who informed about the famine and appealed to the world for relief aid for the starving peasants. Ammende wrote a book *Muss Russland hungern?*, published in Vienna in 1935, and an English edition followed a year later. It contains 21 moving photos by the Austrian engineer Alexander Wienerberger in Kharkiv. Ammende's book is the first monograph about the famine and the only written in German up to this day. It makes a direct connection between the famine disaster and Moscow's settling of accounts

43 Paolo Fonzi. "Non-Soviet Perspectives on the Great Famine-Genocide. A Comparative Analysis of British, Italian, Polish, and German Sources", in *Nationalities Papers* 48 (2020): 444–459; Guido Hausmann."Verweigerte Verflechtung. Die ukrainische Hungersnot 1932/33 in der deutschsprachigen Historiographie", in *Hungersnöte in Russland und in der Sowjetunion 1891–1947. Regionale, ethnische und konfessionelle Aspekte* ed. by Alfred Eisfeld, et al. Essen 2017, 25–37; Guido Hausmann and Tanja Penter. "Instrumentalisiert, verdrängt, ignoriert. Der Holodomor im Bewusstsein der Deutschen", *Osteuropa* 70, nos. 3–4 (2020): 3–14.

44 Andreas Kappeler. "Das Echo des Holodomor. Die Hungersnot von 1932/33 in der österreichischen Presse", *Osteuropa* 70 no. 12 (2020): 123–143.

with the Ukrainian national communists, which was occurring at the same time.[45]

Thus, the Austrian and probably also the German public had the opportunity to become better informed about the famine of 1932/33. However, the dramatic events of these years, with the seizure of power of the National Socialists in Germany and the civil war in Austria, diverted the attention of the public opinion from the events in faraway Ukraine. The famine, later named *Holodomor*, did not have a lasting impact on the German perception of Ukraine. In this respect, it is notable that the title of Ammende's book as well as of many of the articles in the newspapers did contain the term 'Russia' instead of 'Ukraine', despite the fact that the texts are primarily concerned with events in Ukraine. It suggests that Ukraine was not firmly enough anchored in the popular imagination that it could be located by the reader without use of the name of Russia to provide orientation.

National Socialist Germany continued in the tradition that instrumentalized Ukraine as a pawn in its conflicts with Poland and the Soviet Union. In this effort, it exploited nationalist groups, most prominently one wing of the Organization of Ukrainian nationalists (OUN) and their leader Stepan Bandera, who for their part also placed renewed hope in Germany. Such National Socialists as Alfred Rosenberg, Georg Leibbrandt and Hans Koch were among those who sought to encourage Ukrainian nationalism, and supported their goals of achieving a level of political autonomy for Ukraine. They were, however, unable to overcome Hitler's ideological racism, his ideas on *Lebensraum, slawische Untermenschen* and his policies of exploitation.

Nazi Germany's particular interest in Ukraine is reflected in the fact that a large proportion of the academic monographs on Ukrainian history published in Germany between 1800 and 1950 – that is to say, over a century and a half – appeared within the five years

45 Ewald Ammende. *Muss Russland hungern? Menschen- und Völkerschicksale in der Sowjetunion*. Vienna 1935; idem, *Human Life in Russia*. London 1936.

between 1939 and 1943.[46] The authors of such works included Ukrainians connected with the *Ukrainisches Wissenschaftliches Institut* (Dmytro Doroshenko, Borys Krupnyts'kyi, Ivan Mirchuk), as well as veteran German Ukrainophile Axel Schmidt. All such works followed the Ukrainian national narrative and most of them were worthy of being taken seriously as academic works, giving as they paid no more than a minimal nod to National Socialist ideology.

I will refrain from dealing with German perceptions of Ukraine during the Second World War. Suffice it to say that when more than two million Ukrainian forced laborers were abducted and brought to Germany, many Germans and Austrians experienced their first personal contact with Ukrainians, albeit not at an eye-to-eye level, but in a relationship of master and maid-servant. The victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War was and is until this day largely monopolized by Russia and the Russian people, soldiers and victims, while Ukraine and the Ukrainians are virtually absent in the German discourse on the war.

After the end of the Second World War, Ukrainians were to disappear almost completely from the mental map of Europe. Most of the Ukrainian emigrants who arrived in Germany at the end of the war would travel on to North America. Those who remained found a centre of gravity in the *Ukrainische Freie Universität*, whose campus was spread out from Prague to Munich, but despite its considerable published output, its influence was to remain weak.[47]

46 Doroschenko, *Die Ukraine*; Andrii Jakowliw. *Das deutsche Recht in der Ukraine und seine Einflüsse auf das ukrainische Recht im 16.–18. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig 1942; Borys Krupnyckyj. *Geschichte der Ukraine von den Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1920* Leipzig 1939, 2nd ed. 1943; idem. *Hetman Mazepa und seine Zeit (1687–1709)*. Leipzig 1942; Ivan Mirtschuk (ed.). *Handbuch der Ukraine*. Leipzig 1941; Axel Schmidt. *Ukraine – Land der Zukunft*. Berlin 1939; There are also other monographs by Franz Obermaier (1942) and Michael Tsouloukidze (1939). On this topic, see also Golczewski, *Deutsche*, 971–979.

47 On the Free Ukrainian University in Munich, see its current website: https://www.ufu-muenchen.de/de

The Soviet Union was now almost exclusively referred to as Russia, and its inhabitants, including its Ukrainian population, were perceived as Russians. The shadow of Russia had again fallen over Ukraine. This is illustrated by the headings under which two books by the well-known Ukrainian Slavist, philosopher and German resident Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi on the culture and literature of ancient Rus': *Holy Russia* and *Outline of the history of ancient Russian literature* were published (in 1961 and 1968 resp.).[48] In the texts of neither book, however, does the author use the terms *Russland* or *(alt-)russisch*, preferring instead the expressions "*Rus*'" and *ostslawisch* (eastern Slavic), which make clear that this period was not exclusively part of the Russian heritage.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was to alter the mental map of Europe dramatically. Almost nobody had considered the possibility that the Soviet Union might disappear and that an independent Ukraine should emerge from its remnants. The referendum on independence and the presidential election of December 1, 1991 in Ukraine came as a complete surprise. Though Ukraine had now become an independent state, German perceptions have changed only slowly.

The surprise mass movement known as the Orange Revolution in Autumn 2004 brought Ukraine suddenly onto the TV screens of German parlors and pubs. But when the West did not go to Ukraine's aid and the orange blossoms began to wilt, when it turned out that it had not been a revolution after all, interest in Ukraine soon waned once more. In 2013/14, the Euromaidan and the Russian intervention brought Ukraine again into the spotlight of the media and of politics. For the third time, revolution and war was dragging Ukraine onto the stage of mass consciousness. The situation was similar to the years 1648 and 1654, when a successful revolution led to the outbreak of a war and caused Ukraine suddenly to

48 Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi. *Das Heilige Russland. Russische Geistesgeschichte 1. 10.–17. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg 1959; idem, *Abriss der altrussischen Literaturgeschichte*. Munich 1968.

be perceived as an independent actor. Now German politicians, journalists and scholars became aware of the basic lack of knowledge about Ukraine. Many articles and books were published, among them (for the very first time) numerous translations of Ukrainian literary works into German. But again, the interest in Ukraine was soon back on the wane. Old stereotypes are still present in German perceptions of Ukraine. Many are still unwilling to accept the Ukrainian state as an independent actor. For numerous politicians, business leaders and diplomats, Ukraine remains of interest only as a pawn in the relations with Russia. This way of thinking in terms of great power categories takes no account of Ukraine and its interests. Ukraine is seen by many as an artificial nation, a land that actually belongs to Russia and the so-called 'Russian world' and one that lacks its own culture, language and history.

When we look back on German perceptions of Ukraine since the 17th century, we note three events that triggered an upsurge of interest. The uprising of the Cossacks and peasants in 1648/49 and the following wars catapulted Ukraine into the center of public attention. From then on it had a firm place on the mental map of Europe. Although German interest in Cossack Ukraine decreased after the time of Mazepa and with the integration of the Cossacks and most Ukrainian territories into the Russian Empire, it kept this place until the middle of the 18th century. The following perception as a country of peasants was not specifically Ukrainian, but part of a widespread idealization of peasant societies; during the 19th century Ukraine lost its place on the mental map and was perceived as a part of Russia. The First World War and the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–21 again awakened German interest in Ukraine, which was instrumentalized as a pawn in the war with Russia. However, after the collapse of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Ukraine was perceived in the main as part of the Soviet Union. When National Socialist Germany again tried to instrumentalize Ukraine, it came back into German perceptions for a short time, but after the Second World War Ukraine lost its place on the mental map of Europe. With the Euromaidan revolution and the following war, Ukraine

became again a hot spot of politics and publicity in Germany. However, after a short time the public interest in Ukraine began to again decrease.

The German-Ukrainian Historical Commission is trying to improve the visibility of Ukraine on the mental map of Europe and to convince German public opinion that Ukraine should not be perceived as a geo-strategic playing field, but that it is an independent country with its own rich culture and long history which was and is still linked to Germany.

Ricarda Vulpius

Temporary Alliance or Permanent Submission? The Meaning of the Pereiaslav Agreement of 1654 in the Context of the Russian Empire*

Abstract: The interpretation of the Pereiaslav Agreement, by which the Cossacks of the Ukrainian Hetmanate submitted themselves to the Russian tsar in 1654, remains controversial to this day. Too little attention has been paid to the Muscovite government's understanding of imperial expansion when it requested that the Cossacks become subjects of the tsar. The decisive factor for the tsarist interpretation of the Cossack oath of allegiance is the at least 200-year-old Muscovite tradition, as it had already come into effect with the subordination of Novgorod in 1478: Accordingly, the tsarist side insisted on the notion of not being a ruler who concludes treaties with his subjects, but one who exclusively grants clemency.

This understanding of subjecthood had developed in the late 14th century from the 'kiss of the cross', the core of the subordination of East Slavic nobles to the service of the Moscow princes. Already this sacrally underlined, personal bond of the nobles to the Moscow grand prince did not stand in a private-law tradition of vassalage and did not establish a contractual relationship, as was common in the spirit of the feudal system between liege lord and vassal in Western Europe. In the Moscow case, rather, the oath ritual performed with the 'kiss of the cross' stood for a political arrangement that placed the inequality of the participants at the center of the agreement.

This understanding also gave rise to the pragmatism with which the tsars shaped their concept of subjecthood to their own liking, depending on their needs. Depending on the region and specific interests, 'subjecthood' provided for entirely different

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degrees of actual integration into the administrative system of the empire and of political penetration. This dynamic concept granted the tsarist governments great flexibility in accepting new subjects.
Thus, when the representatives of Novgorod or the Cossacks of the Hetmanate wanted to commit the tsar to specific contractual terms, the Moscow side, referring to submission as an act of mercy, categorically refused to enter into any obligation on their part. This notion of tsarist power as a source of grace remained a central component of Russian imperial thinking into modern times.
Keywords: Pereiaslav Agreement, Cossacks of the Ukrainian Hetmanate, oath of allegiance, subjecthood, act of grace, clemency, Muscovite tradition, kiss of the cross, pragmatism, Russian imperial thinking

Some 360 years later, the Pereiaslav Agreement is still causing sharp disputes. In the 1654 agreement, the Cossacks of the Ukrainian Hetmanate submitted to the tsar of the Russian Empire. Thus, the agreement of 1654 marked a turning point in the history of Ukraine and in all of Eastern Europe: since then, Ukrainian history has been closely linked to Russian history. The intentions and reasons that led the Cossacks to agree on the one hand and the tsar to accept the Cossacks on the other, as well as the related understanding of the agreement itself and its political consequences, have been interpreted and evaluated in a variety of ways by Ukrainian and Russian historians up to recent times.[1] Thus, as late as 2004,

1 In the abundance of literature, at least seven different interpretations of the Pereiaslav Agreement are elaborated, interpreted as 'temporary alliance', 'personal union', 'real union', 'vassal status', 'protectorate', 'autonomy', or 'incorporation', depending on the author's reading. Brian Davies. "The Road to Pereiaslav: Ukrainian and Muscovite understandings of Protectorate, 1620–1654". *Cahiers du monde russe* 50, nos. 2–3 (2009): 465–494; J. Basarab. *Pereiaslav 1654. A Historiographical Study*. Edmonton 1982; M. I. Braichevskyi. *Annexation or Reunification: Critical Notes on One Conception*. Munich 1974; V. Prokopovych. "The Problem of the Juridical Nature of the Ukraine's Union with Muscovy". *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States,* vol. 4, no. 3 (1955): 918–946; H. Fleischhacker. "Die politischen Begriffe der

heated debates arose among politicians and historians on the question of whether the 350th anniversary of the Pereiaslav Agreement should be celebrated or mourned in Ukraine.[2]

The historical argumentation with which the Russian Federation recently sought to legitimize the annexation of Crimea in violation of international law recalled another anniversary of Pereiaslav: Nikita Khrushchev, head of state and party of the Soviet Union, had handed over the Crimean peninsula to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in 1954, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of 1654, which was celebrated with great pomp. Crowned by the gift of Crimea, the 1954 Pereiaslav Agreement was celebrated as the 'reunification of Ukraine with Russia.'[3]

However, the statements of the Central Committee of the CPSU delivered at that time, declaring Pereiaslav to be the culmination of a natural and inexorable process of 'reunification' of the Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox peoples of Rus', cannot stand up to historical

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Partner von Pereiaslav". *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 2, vol. 3 (1954): 221–231. O. E. Günther. "Der Vertrag von Pereiaslav im Widerstreit der Meinungen". *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 2, no. 3 (1954): 232–257; B. E. Nolde. *Ocherki russkago gosudarstvennago prava*. St. Petersburg 1911. English translation: "Essays in Russian State Law". *Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the US: The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States,* vol. 4, no. 3 (1955): 873–903, here 886.

2 O. O. Rafal's'kyi. *Pereiaslavs'kyi dohovir Ukrainy z Rosieiu 1654 roku: Retrospektyvnyi analiz*. Kyiv 2004; Pavlo Sokhan' et al. (eds.). *Pereiaslavs'ka rada 1654 roku: Istoriohrafiia ta doslidzhennia*. Kyiv 2003; O. I. Hurzhii, I. Oleksandr, and T. V. Chukhlib (eds.). *Pereiaslavs'ka rada ochyma istorykiv, movoiu dokumentiv*. Kyiv 2003; Andrzej Gil. *Dekret prezydenta Leonida Kuczmy o obchodach 350 rocznicy Kozackiej Rady Pereiaslawskiej 1654 r., i jego znaczenie dla wewnętrznej i zevnętrznej sytuacji Ukrainy*. Lublin 2003; Stephen Velychenko. "1654 and All That in 2004". *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 30, no. 1 (2005): 97–122.

3 *Tezisy o 300-letii vossoedineniia Ukrainy s Rossiei, 1654–1954 gg*. Moscow 1954. I. Boiko, V. Golobutskii, and K. Guslistyi (eds.). *Vossoedinenie Ukrainy s Rossiei*. Moscow 1954. For a summary and study on the topic of how the theses of 1954 generated an official historiographical reading that was to last for almost 30 years, see Basarab, *Pereiaslav 1654*, 179–187.

research.[4] In fact, such a view of things has nothing to do with the feeling of the contemporaries of the 17th century. Rather, it was constructed with broad impact in the first place only in 1836, when Nikolai Ustrialov won a competition announced by the Minister of Education with his first officially approved textbook on Russian history. The goal of the competition was to write a textbook that would prove the unity of 'Polish, Lithuanian and Russian history' against the backdrop of the Polish Uprising of 1830/31.[5]

In view of the numerous historical myths disseminated today in connection with Russia's War in Ukraine the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it seems particularly important to point out that the view of 1654 as a 'reunification' – and thus the view of Ukrainian history as a component of a grand Russian historical narrative – is an invention that was created only in the 19th century for political reasons and subsequently instrumentalized by the tsarist government for the Russian quest for great power.[6]

In fact, in the mid-17th century, the Russian tsar and the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church were only laboriously persuaded to comply with the request to incorporate the Cossack Hetmanate into the Moscow Empire. The danger of getting into a new war with Poland-Lithuania with incalculable consequences was obvious. In addition, there was great mistrust about the seriousness of the Cossack request – after all, news reached the tsar that

4 Stephen Velychenko. "The Origins of the Soviet Interpretation of Eastern Slavic History. A Case Study in Policy Formulation". *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 46 (1990): 221–253; Nataliia Iusova. "Heneza kontseptu davnorus'ka narodnist' u radianskii istorychnii nautsi". *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 6 (2001): 65–85; Serhy Yekelchyk. *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination.* Buffalo, N. Y. 2004; Iurii Mytsyk. "Dovkola archivu Pereiaslavs'koi rady': Mify ta realii dzherel'noi bazy". *Archivy Ukrainy* 4–6 (2003): 11–23.

5 David B. Saunders. "Historians and Concepts of Nationality in Early Nineteenth-Century Russia". *Slavic East European Review* 60, no. 1 (1982): 44–62, here esp. 58–61.

6 Ricarda Vulpius. *Nationalisierung der Religion. Russifizierungspolitik und ukrainische Nationsbildung 1860–1920.* Wiesbaden 2005.

the Cossack hetman Khmel'nyts'kyi had formed an alliance with the Crimean Tatars.[7]

At this point, however, it should be less about the question of what motives were ultimately decisive for both sides agreeing to the Pereiaslav Agreement having such a decisive impact on the further fate of Left and Right Bank Ukraine. Rather, against the backdrop of Russian imperial history, this contribution poses the question how to characterize the Russian understanding that underlay the Pereiaslav Agreement.

Historians of almost all provenances have so to date agreed on one point in their assessment of the Pereiaslav Agreement – namely, that the tsarist empire and the Hetmanate, as a consequence of their completely different political-social character, understood the agreement differently even at the time of its conclusion and interpreted it differently even more so in its aftermath.

Also, there has long been a broad consensus that the Cossack expectations in 1654 were that the agreement was at least a temporary military alliance between unequals, at most the status of a protectorate, but by no means an unconditional and irrevocable subordination to tsarist rule. Rather, the Cossack side expected protection from Moscow against Poland and the Tatars, while it saw itself as obliged, while maintaining its internal political structure, to provide Moscow with military support against Poland and protection of the Russian southern flank against Tatar incursions. However, the sources do not reveal the exact state-political structure of the Hetmanate that Khmel'nyts'kyi assumed after taking the oath.

But what expectations did Muscovy associate with the Pereiaslav Agreement? Previous literature has repeatedly emphasized that Moscow neglected the Hetmanate in the years following the agreement, that the tsar was reluctant to station significant military forces on the Hetmanate's territory, and that he did not seek a close bond

7 Hans-Joachim Torke. "The Unloved Alliance: Political Relations between Muscovy and Ukraine in the seventeenth century", in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter* ed. by Peter J. Potichnyj et al. Edmonton 1992: 39–66.

with the Cossack upper class until the 1670s. Reference was made to the Russian Orthodox Church's dislike of the Ukrainian clergy, who were accused of heresy and Latinization by their involvement with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism and their openness to reform.[8] The Russian perception of Ukraine as a gateway to the West and a place of intellectual unrest was outlined. In addition, the homeland of the Cossacks, with its numerous rebellions and refuge for escaped peasants, was also considered a place of social instability.[9] Finally, the Cossacks, with their conception of freedom, caused great distrust in Moscow. Elections and self-government, which played a prominent role not only within the Hetmanate but also within the ecclesiastical brotherhoods of Ukraine, were considered indicators of heightened political awareness and were reason enough to consider the Hetmanate a problematic region.[10]

But to conclude from this that Moscow, only decades after Pereiaslav, had wanted to give the Agreement a changed character towards the unconditional submission of the Hetmanate to the Tsar's scepter (Hans-Joachim Torke), and that Moscow in 1654 would not yet have had a clear agenda regarding the future political relationship of the Hetmanate to the Tsar's lands, as it had not yet had any great significance for Moscow (Brian Davies), all of this – and this is the central thesis of this contribution – fails to recognize the Russian understanding of subjecthood as it had long since emerged in the middle of the 17th century and as it was now. From the tsar's point of view, this understanding also applied from the very beginning to the Cossacks of the Hetmanate after they had taken the oath of allegiance.[11]

8 Davies, The Road to Pereiaslav, 466–467; Torke, The Unloved Alliance, 56.

9 Paul Robert Magosci. *A History of Ukraine*. Toronto 1996, esp. 170–171.

10 Davies, The Road to Pereiaslav, 467.

11 Torke, The Unloved Alliance, 57; Davies, The Road to Pereiaslav, 492.

Muscovy's Understanding of Tsarist Subjecthood

It is worth taking a close look at the dispute of 1654 between the Cossacks of the Hetmanate and the Tsar's envoy Vasily Buturlin. Before taking their own oath of submission, the Cossacks asked the Russian boyar Buturlin to swear an oath for the tsar as well – an oath which was also to state that their special Cossack rights and freedoms would be preserved even after they had become subjects of the tsar.

The dismissive response of the tsar's envoy Buturlin was characteristic: "It is not a proper matter for us to swear an oath for the tsar (to nepristoinoe delo, chto za gosudaria im vera chinit'); it has never been a custom with us for subjects to swear oaths for tsars (chto za nikh, gosudarei, poddannym vera davat'); rather, subjects swear an oath to the tsar (a daiut veru gosudariu poddannye)."[12]

Even if in the end the Cossacks were satisfied with the fact that they were merely promised that the tsar would preserve their rights and freedoms and that a document to that effect would be drawn up later, the basic problem was laid out here and would continue to plague Russian-Ukrainian relations for centuries to come. While from the point of view of the Cossacks the Pereiaslav Agreement, including the later formulated "articles" on their rights and freedoms, had the character of a treaty, the tsar granted these freedoms merely out of mercy – the cornerstone of the centuries-old tradition of Moscow's concept of subjecthood.

Let us take a closer look at the concept of subjecthood as it had evolved from the internal Russian context. In the late 14th and early 15th centuries, the 'kiss of the cross', performed by the 'kisser of the cross' (krestotseloval'nik), advanced to become the centerpiece of

12 9.10.1653–5.2.1654, No. 205 (423–490): "Stateinyi spisok russkogo posol'stva vo glave s V. Buturlinym o torzhestvennoi vstreche poslov naseleniem Ukrainy, o Pereiaslavskoi rade, usloviiach vossoedineniia Ukrainy s Rossiei i o priniatii prisiagi naseleniem ukrainskich sel i gorodov", in: *Vossoedinenie Ukrainy s Rossiei. Dokumenty i materialy v trech tomach*. Vol. 1–3, here vol. 3: 1651–1654. Ed. by P. P. Gudzenko et al. Moscow 1954: 465.

the subordination of East Slav nobles to the service of the Moscow princes.[13]

The historian Petr Stefanovich has convincingly demonstrated that this sacrilegiously exalted personal bond of the nobles to the Moscow grand prince was not in a private law tradition of vassalage, that it did not establish a contractual relationship, as was common in the spirit of the feudal system between liege lord and vassal in Western Europe.[14] There, the vassalitic oath of allegiance as an expression of the private-law relationship between prince or king and noble retinue had even been constitutive of vassalage since the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th century.[15]

In the Russian case, on the other hand, the oath ritual performed with the kiss of the cross in the Moscow Grand Duchy stood for a political agreement, which was not understood as a contract, but as an acceptance into one's own sovereignty, granted only by grace on the part of the ruler.

13 On the genesis and significance of the 'kiss of the cross', see P. S. Stefanovich. "Krestotselovanie i otnoshenie k nemu tserkvi v Drevnei Rusi". *Srednevekovaia Rus'* 5 (2004): 86–113; H. W. Dewey, A. M. Kleimola. "Promise and Perfidy in Old Russian Cross-Kissing". *Canadian Slavic Studies* III, no. 2 (1968): 327–341. B. Feodorov. "O forme prisiagi v Rossii so vremen iazychestva do tsarstvovaniia Petra Velikago". *Otechestvennyia Zapiski* 17 (1824): 387–410.

14 However, the oath of fealty had developed from the simple oath of loyalty only in the course of a progressive process of feudalization. The similarity between an oath of allegiance and one of feudal fealty thus remained detectable in language for a long time, although the research presumes the existence of two qualitatively clearly distinguishable oaths of loyalty during the Middle Ages. On the debate between legal historians on the character of the oath of loyalty used under Charles the Great, see André Holenstein. *Die Huldigung der Untertanen. Rechtskultur und Herrschaftsordnung (800–1800).* Stuttgart, New York 1991: 25–27, 115–118; Dietlinde Munzel-Everling. "Eid" in *Handbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*. Vol. 1, ed. by A. Cordes, H. Lück et al. Berlin 2012: columns 1249–1261.

15 Petr Sergeevich Stefanovich. "Religiozno-eticheskie aspekty otnoshenii kniazia i znati v domongol'skoi Rusi". *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 1 (2004); idem, "Krestotselovanie".

Central to the process of submission in the form of the oath of allegiance was henceforth the notion of the inequality of the participants, in which the ruler granted the grace to admit someone into his realm. This conception of the ruler granting grace (*milost'*) in contrast to the ruler making a treaty already came into play during the subjugation of Novgorod to the Grand Duke of Moscow. While the representatives of Novgorod wanted to commit Tsar Ivan IIII to certain treaty conditions and only then were willing to accept him as their ruler, as Russian *Gosudar'*, the latter, referring to the submission as an act of grace, categorically refused to enter into any obligation on his part.[16]

The rule of the *Gosudar'* did not recognize any obligatory restrictions of his power towards his subjects, no contractual relations. The concept of *Gosudar'* in the sense of a ruler acting by grace, which was still new in the political life of Moscow Rus' at the end of the 15th century, nevertheless had analogies to the sphere of private law as a public law concept. Thus, as a householder, the *Gosudar'* possessed all rights over his property, including his servants. Also in the court books of 1497 under Tsar Ivan III and in those of 1550 under Tsar Ivan IV, the owner of unfree people (servants, *kholopy*) is called a *Gosudar'*. When it became common to refer to the rule of the Moscow Grand Duke as *Gosudar'*, it was obvious that the dignitaries in Ivan III's entourage, when turning to their ruler by analogy with the private law expression, referred to themselves accordingly as 'servants', as *kholopy* of the Grand Duke. It was no longer a question of the relationship between the prince and his retinue, as it had been in the times of Kyivan Rus', but of that between the ruler and his high-ranking subjects.[17] The upper class did not become unfree people at all, they kept their personal freedom, and could freely dispose of their family property. But the ruler did not have to consult

16 B. Floria. *Ivan Groznyi*. Moscow 2002: 98.

17 Borisov cites as the earliest example Prince Fedor Khovanskii's self-designation as "cholop tvoi, gosudar'" to Grand Duke Ivan III in 1489. N.S. Borisov *Ivan III*. Moscow 2000: 574.

with them anymore, could punish critics and above all was not bound to them by any contract.[18]

In this way, even before the establishment of the multiethnic empire, even in the course of consolidating the prominent position of the Moscow principality in the struggle over who would succeed the rule of the Golden Horde, the central components of the concept of subjecthood were laid out in the internal Russian context. These components were also applied when, in the 16th century, after the conquest of the Muslim-influenced Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, it was a question of incorporating for the first time representatives of a high-ranking and at the same time non-Christian culture with the oath of allegiance.[19] It was the same concept of subjecthood with the oath of allegiance as its constitutive element – and this is what is special in the inter-imperial comparison – that came into play in the incorporation of the carriers of the high culture of the Kazan Khanate as in the "gathering of the lands of Kyivan Rus'" by the Grand Duchy of Moscow in the decades before.[20] Here lies the key to understanding the indissoluble intertwining of the formation of a Russian unitary state and a Russian empire.

However, if one follows the American historian Eric Lohr and understands the incorporation of the Hetmanate Ukraine of 1654 as the starting point and paradigm for the concept of Russian subjecthood in an imperial context, it would make sense to assume that in 1654 Moscow itself was not yet fully aware of how close and lasting the relationship with the Hetmanate was to become.[21] In fact,

18 On the position and importance of a *cholop* as part of the political elite of the Moscow kingdom, see A. A. Gorskii. "O proiskhozhdenii "cholopstva" moskovskoi znati". *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 3 (2003): 80–83.; M. Poe. "What did Russians mean when they called themselves "Slaves of the Tsar"?". *Slavic Review* 57 (1998), no. 3: 585–608. Floria, *Ivan Groznyi*, 99.

19 *Polnoe Sobranie Russkich Letopisei (PSRL)*, vol. 29. St. Peterburg 1841: 62.

20 For a detailed treatment on this topic, see Vulpius, *Die Geburt des Russländischen Imperiums*, 53–99.

21 Eric Lohr. *Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union*. Cambridge 2012: 29. Lohr refers to the analysis of the Russian legal scholar Nolde. If one takes a

however, the agreement did not correspond to a zero hour of imperial expansion. Rather, it already had "blueprints" for incorporation into the subjecthood that reached back into the history of the formation of the Moscow Empire.[22] The concept of political grace, which matured in the 15th and 16th centuries, shaped Russian subjecthood without exception until the end of the tsarist empire. Knowledge of this concept is the key to understanding the subjecthood as Moscow conceived it for the Hetmanate in 1654.

Perpetual Subjecthood?

Secondary literature sometimes suggests that the term "perpetual allegiance" (*vechnoe poddanstvo*), which also appeared in the oath of allegiance of the Hetmanate Cossacks in 1654, is not an indication that the Russian side actually considered the oath to be 'perpetual'. Rather, 'perpetual' allegiance in the Russian understanding merely meant that the submission was related to the lifetimes of those who took or received the oath.[23]

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closer look, however, it turns out that Nolde merely described the case of the Hetmanate Ukraine as the origin of the formation of the system of "Russian regional autonomies". Nolde, *Essays in Russian State Law*, 873.

22 The existing research base on Russian subjecthood in the pre-modern period is thin. The book by V. Trepavlov. *'Belyi Tsar'. Obraz monarcha i predstavleniia o poddanstve u narodov Rossii XV–XVIII vv*. Moscow 2007: 134–197 mainly considers the question of how the indigenous ethnic groups perceived their 'subjecthood', not the Russian conception of 'subjecthood'. Important legal-historical studies omitting the imperial dimension of subjecthood are: V. M. Gessen. *Poddanstvo, ego ustanovlenie i prekrashchenie*, vol. 1–2, St. Peterburg 1909; M. Woltner. "Untertanenschaft von Westeuropäern in Russland bis Peter einschließlich". *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 3 (1938), no. 1: 47–60. V. B. Nikolaev. *Poddanstvo Rossiiskoi Imperii: Ego priobretenie I prekrashchenie (istoriko-pravovoi analiz). Avtoreferat diss*. Nizhnii Novgorod 2008.

23 Prokopovych, The Problem of the Juridical Nature. Prokopovych, however, overlooked the fact that the 'eternal poddanstvo' was a mixture of personal and state-bound allegiance, and that in this way the riddle of an oath taken 'in perpetuity' and yet always to be repeated could be solved. Already in the

In fact, Russian policy provided that, despite the eternity clause, the oath of all subjects had to be taken anew at each change of ruler, both at a change of throne on the Russian side and – as in the case of the admission of entire ethnic groups – at a change of ruler on the side of the subjugated indigenous people, and this even into the 19th century.[24]

This political culture of regularly repeating oaths of 'perpetual allegiance' makes sense, however, if one understands admission to the state federation as an act of grace, which could only be granted by the person of the ruler. Thus the admission into the subjecthood was indissolubly connected with the person of the ruler or required a renewal at his departure from power and at the accession of a successor.

Irrespective of the fact that the oath had to be renewed, however, every successor to the monarch had an inherent right to continue to rule over these subjects. Here, the ambiguous position of the concept of Russian subjecthood between personal and state ties becomes clear, as it originated in the 15th century and continued into the early 19th century. From the Russian point of view, the principle of 'once a subject, always a subject' applied, despite the fact that the oaths had to be repeated.

Kyivan Empire, the tradition had developed that the oath of allegiance was taken to a ruler's successor even if the ruler himself was still alive. This was, as it were, a 'dynastic oath of allegiance'. Compare Dewey & Kleimola, Promise and Perfidity, 328.

24 This is attested by the countless oaths of allegiance in the source editions on the multi-ethnic empire such as *Kazakhsko-russkie otnosheniia v 16–18 vekakh. Zbornik dokumentov i materialov.* Alma-Ata 1961; *Kazakhsko-russkie otnosheniia v 18–19 vekakh: Zbornik dokumentov i materialov.* Alma-Ata 1964; N. F. Demidov (ed.). *Materialy po istorii Bashkirskoi ASSR,* vol. 1–4. Moscow, Leningrad 1936–1954; *Kazakhsko-russkie otnosheniia v 16–18 vekakh: Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1–2. Moscow 1957.

Pragmatism

If one follows these explanations, according to which the Pereiaslav Agreement is to be understood against the background of the traditional concept of Russian subjecthood with the act of mercy as its cornerstone, then it becomes understandable how the Russian evaluation of the Pereiaslav Agreement could only turn out: from the tsar's point of view, it was unthinkable to see in the maintenance of Cossack freedoms a question of legal claims based on the reciprocity of a subjugation treaty. Concessions from Moscow were granted merely by grace of the ruler and arose mostly from temporary pragmatic considerations. Thus, from the Russian point of view, the maintenance of Cossack rights and freedoms was not a treaty issue, but merely a question of how long they would be graciously granted.

As a counterargument to the thesis that for Moscow the Pereiaslav Agreement was seen from the outset as a permanent subjugation of the Hetmanate to tsarist rule, it could be argued that Moscow was by no means single-mindedly committed to a closer integration of Hetmanate Ukraine into the Russian state. In fact, there can be no doubt that closer integration did not occur until the 1670s. Further steps towards the strengthening of rights and freedoms, and finally the complete dissolution of the Hetmanate, were ordered only in the 18th century.[25]

However, if one compares the case of the Hetmanate with the entry of the Nogai Tatars, the Kalmyks, the Bashkirs, and the Kazakhs into Russian subjecthood in the 17th and 18th centuries, it becomes clear that even in these cases, nominal subjecthood was by no means immediately accompanied by a process of ever closer ties and administrative penetration.[26]

25 Zenon E. Kohut. *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760–1830s*. Cambridge MA 1988; Andreas Kappeler. *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine*. Munich 1994: 89–106.

26 Trepavlov, "Belyi Tsar", 134–197.

The Russian historian Vadim Trepavlov and Pavel Shablei, who has followed him, have recently considered how the common Russian term for subjecthood in the eighteenth century, *poddanstvo*, can be analytically grasped in light of its different perceptions in the center and in the periphery as well as the various degrees of its realization. In a first step, Trepavlov identifies as a prerequisite of subjecthood a) the conclusion of a corresponding agreement and b) the use of the term denoting this status.[27] In order to distinguish between nominal and real subjecthood, the Russian historian suggests four criteria: 1) the inclusion of a territory or a people in the highest state symbolism – in the great tsar's title or in the great state coat of arms; 2) the taxation of the indigenous people living there for the benefit of the state; 3) the extension of the All-Russian legislation as well as the jurisdiction of domestic authorities in the territory of the formally incorporated ethnic group; and 4) the territory's membership in one of the state's administrative units.[28]

These criteria are very helpful for several reasons. They are the first attempt to differentiate the complex process of imperial incorporation in the Russian Empire. They are suitable for establishing the disparity between formal incorporation into the *poddanstvo* and actual integration into the administrative system of the Russian Empire and for determining the degree of political penetration on the basis of analytical criteria. Finally, they are helpful in measuring the different perceptions on the Russian side and on the side of the incorporated peoples against uniform standards.

And yet, the aforementioned criteria cannot do sufficient justice to the complexity and heterogeneity of the Russian concept of subjecthood. The attempt to grasp the transition from nominal to real

27 V. Trepavlov. "Prisoedinenie narodov k Rossii i ustanovlenie rossiiskogo poddanstva (problemy metodologii izucheniia)". *Etnokul'turnye vzaimodeistviia v Evrazii*, vol. 2. Moscow 2006: 198–205; Pavel Shablei. "Poddanstvo v Aziatskoj Rossii: istoricheskie mysli i politiko-pravovaia kontseptualizatsiia". *Vestnik Evrazii* 3 (2008): 99–122; Trepavlov, "Belyi Tsar", 134.

28 V. Trepavlov. "Dobrovol'noe vchozhdenie v sostav Rossii: Torzhestvennye iubilei i istoricheskaia deistvitel'nost'". *Voprosy istorii* 11 (2007): 155–163.

subjecthood administratively is ideal-typical and conceived from the contemporary knowledge of completed state formation. However, it neglects the important dimension of the *intentions* of the contemporaries. It takes too little account of what constituted the respective interest of the Russian center in the natives of the various regions at a given point in time, and to what extent this interest made certain aspects of subjecthood important and set other aspects aside, without necessarily striving for a different level of integration of the subjects.

Understanding the tsarist concept of subjecthood from its medieval origins

However, it was precisely this interest, which varied from region to region and from time to time, and the different priorities associated with it that made the actions of the tsarist governments and their servants so flexible and pragmatic that, apart from the demand for loyalty and obedience, no component of the concept of subjecthood could be said to have had the same validity in all regions at all times. For example, while in the Far East of the empire the motto of tribute collection was 'give or die', in the South *iasak* payments were only to be accepted if the locals provided them voluntarily. In case of unwillingness, nothing was to be demanded, although the *iasak* payment had actually even been stipulated as a condition of subjecthood in the act of grace.[29] Russian interests determined the course of action. In the East, the purpose of imperial expansion

29 "Gramota imp. Anny khanu Abulkhairu i vsemu kazakhskomu narodu o priniatii ikh v rossiiskoe poddanstvo". *KRO* 1, no. 28 (19.2.1731): 40–41, here 40. However, the *iasak* commitment of the Kazakhs had been weakened compared to the initial plans of the Russian government representatives. The document of admission stated that they were to "pay iasak as the Bashkirs did", whereas previously there had been talk of delivering 4,000 fox skins annually. "Pis'ma khanov Abulchaira (…) imp. Anne o priniatii imi rossiiskogo poddanstva". *KRO* 1, no. 27 (2.1.1731): 37–40, here 38.

was primarily 'white' gold (i. e. sable). In the South, it was to secure a geopolitically significant region to enable trade with India and China and the import of horses. In the East, they proceeded by force of arms and enforced subjecthood according to the law of the victor. In the South and North Caucasus, they tried to win over the steppe peoples by playing out tribal antagonisms on a voluntary basis and integrating them into the empire.

Therefore, if one wants to understand the Russian concept of subjecthood as it was applied to the Hetmanate in 1654 from the Russian point of view, according to the standards of the Russian contemporaries, it seems appropriate to understand it again from its origin. Only with the understanding of tsarist subjecthood as an act of grace of the ruler does it become explicable why any attempts to get at the phenomenon legally or administratively must remain unsatisfactory. From the concept of the act of grace, on the other hand, it becomes understandable that Russian 'subjecthood' can only be grasped as a situational category, which was handled flexibly depending on the region and also within it, depending on the conditions, and that it does not allow for ideal types. *Poddanstvo* – and here the Russian term should be retained in order to make it clear that we are not talking about subjecthood as an analytical category but about the specifically Russian understanding – was a dynamic system from the very beginning.[30] One and the same concept deliberately provided for different degrees of 'naturalization'. These could not be sharply distinguished from one another, but rather merged into one another. It was precisely this gradualness, which allowed

30 This statement is also true for the centuries before the concept of *poddanstvo* appeared in the 17th century. On the flexible and inconsistent pace of the Moscow principality's integration policy after the respective officially declared incorporation of indigenous ethnic groups, see Andreas Kappeler. "Ethnische Minderheiten im Alten Russland (14.–16. Jahrhundert): Regierungspolitik und Funktionen". *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 38 (1986): 131–151, esp. 145.

the policies of the tsarist governments such great flexibility; that was not so much a weakness as the great strength of the concept.[31]

Undoubtedly, the declaration of subjecthood, as in the case of the Hetmanate, did not yet mean real submission.[32] This was true for many relations between the Russians and indigenous peoples, including the Kalmyks and Bashkirs in the 17th century and the Kazakhs in the 18th century. It is also possible to agree with the analysis that all these aforementioned ethnic groups, for their part, proceeded from an understanding that conceived of Russian 'subjecthood as 'free vassalage', a temporary alliance with Russia as an ally, rather than an unconditional and perpetual subjugation.

The vagueness and ambiguity of interpretation of the concept of Russian subjecthood undoubtedly also harbored major problems. Thus, the flexible Russian policy could serve as a spark for revolts if, in the view of Cossacks and Bashkirs, it violated treaty terms.[33] However, the advantages of this flexible conception of subjecthood far outweighed the disadvantages for the Russian side.

Indeed, contrary to the view of some historians, the absence of legal norms from the spirit of the concept of grace led to the success

31 The plea to understand *poddanstvo* as a situational category is somewhat different from the principle of 'separate deals' that Eric Lohr uses to describe the Russian practice of agreeing on a specific arrangement of rights and obligations with each annexed group. The term 'separate deals' rightly points out that there was no generally applicable code of duties and rights for all subjects incorporated through immigration or annexation, but suggests that such agreements, once concluded, permanently characterized the respective subjecthood. 'Situational subjecthood', on the other hand, refers to the fact that wholly different forms of subjecthood occurred over time with one and the same treaty partner. See Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*, 2.

32 Kundakbaeva's description of an 'orientation to subjecthood' (*priniatie poddannicheskoi orientacii*) to characterize the state of play between nominal but not (yet) actual subjecthood seems particularly apposite here. Z. B. Kundakbaeva. *"Znakom milosti E. I. V.". Rossiia i narody Severnogo Prikaspiia v XVIII veke*. Moscow 2005: 279.

33 Shablei, Poddanstvo v Aziatskoi Rossii.

of Russian imperial policy rather than its failure.[34] Flexibility and pragmatism in dealing with *poddanstvo* were Russia's decisive trump card in ceaselessly continuing and consolidating its territorial expansion. Once, from the Russian point of view, 'perpetual' subjecthood had been fixed in writing, whether as a result of victors' law, at the end of a successfully pursued policy of decomposition, or because of an inter-imperial threat situation that – as in the case of the Hetmanate – caused non-Russian peoples to seek refuge in the Russian Empire, *poddanstvo* persisted as the embodiment of a basis of a claim to real rule, even in the case of merely nominal rule. The ascription of *poddanstvo* was therefore much more than the legal status designation of an individual used to describe membership in the Russian Empire. *Poddanstvo* was itself an instrument of Russian expansionist policy. *Poddanstvo* was the establishment of a legal position that could be – and was subsequently used – to justify punitive expeditions and interference in internal affairs at a time to be determined at will by Moscow, precisely in order to achieve real subjecthood in the first place.[35]

34 For a different point of view, see, for example, Shablei, Poddanstvo v Aziatskoj Rossii, 99–122.

35 The head of the Orenburg Commission, Ivan Nepliuev, summarized the value of oath-taking even among 'volatile peoples', such as the Middle Horde of Kazakhs in 1742 as follows: "Even if their oath-taking cannot be relied upon, as an exceedingly volatile and unfaithful people, yet by it (by means of the oath) the perpetual right to the subjecthood of I. K. H. [Her Imperial Highness, R. V.] is affirmed (vechnoe pravo o poddanstve)". In: *Kazakhsko-Russkie Otnosheniia*, 18.11.1742, no. 105, 270. The oath of submission of the Nogai Tatars of 1557 also demonstrates the importance of the process from Moscow's point of view. Although the Nogai Tatars had a completely different understanding of their oath, Moscow persistently returned to the legal position once established (from its point of view) and used it as an argument for sustained submission. Andreas Kappeler. "Moscow and the Steppe: The Relationship with the Nogai Tatars in the 16th Century". *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 46 (1992): 87–105.

Conclusion

Despite the useful distinction between nominal and real subjecthood, nominal admission to Russian subjecthood was not limited to the completion of formalities. Rather, the act of admission itself constituted the establishment of a permanent claim of the Russian side to the non-Russian population, regardless of whether tsarist rule over the nominally new subjects had actually already been exercised or not, and also regardless of the question of whether the admission had taken place by force or on a superficially voluntary basis.

The act of admission into the subjecthood embodied a claim to allegiance on the part of the Russian side. It constructed a new political identity for the native population, which, from the Russian point of view, was still to be preserved even if the bearers of this new identity had changed their will to belong to the empire. From the Russian point of view, once the act of absorption had taken place, it legitimized any measures that served to perpetuate the subjecthood or to increase administrative penetration. It was precisely the stages of administrative penetration, which were not defined by the Russians, that allowed for a flexible interpretation of poddanstvo, depending on the region or ethnic group.

From the Russian point of view, the Pereiaslav Agreement was an act of grace by which the Cossack Hetmanate entered the tsar's subjecthood. It was in the nature of the act of grace that it was decided unilaterally and was not subject to any external restrictions. From this point of view, the maintenance of Cossack freedoms could not be a question of legal claims based on the reciprocity of a subjugation treaty, but only a question of how long the tsar was willing to grant its validity.

This dimension of the act of mercy was mostly ignored in the interpretation of the Pereiaslav Agreement in previous literature, as well as the embedding of the approach to the Cossacks in the centuries-old political tradition of the expansion of the Moscow Empire. In fact, however, the inclusion of the Hetmanate Cossacks in the

tsar's subjecthood was closely related to many other 'accessions' to subjecthood that the Moscow Empire had made with other steppe peoples.

However, two aspects gave the Pereiaslav Agreement a special significance from the Russian point of view as well. First, with the political entity of the Hetmanate Ukraine, the Tsarist Empire for the first time accepted non-Russian Orthodox Christians who were even subject to the same Patriarchate of Constantinople to which the Moscow Church itself had belonged until the mid-15th century. This religious and cultural familiarity was reflected in the articles of the agreement in that, for the first time in the imperial expansion of the Moscow Empire since 1589, no hostages were taken as body pledges when they were admitted as subjects.[36]

Most importantly, in the case of the Cossack Hetmanate's incorporation of 1654, the old Russian tradition of admission to tsarist subjecthood according to the principle of grace clashed for the first time with Western European legal traditions as they had prevailed in the Polish-Lithuanian Empire and by which the Ukrainian Cossacks were deeply influenced. Serious disputes were inevitable.

36 The practice of hostage-taking established itself in the Moscow Empire in connection with the subordination of the Kabardinian princes into the Tsar's subjecthood in 1589, and from then on became one of the most important imperial instruments of the Russian Empire in the incorporation of non-Christian subjects in the south and east. S. A. Belokurov (ed.). *Snosheniia Rossii s Kavkazom (1578–1613 gg.),* no. 10. Moscow 1889. For a detailed account of the practice of hostage-taking under the Russian concepts of *tal'* (in medieval times), *zaklad* (in the sixteenth century) and *amanat* (from 1610 onwards), see Vulpius, *Die Geburt des Russländischen Imperiums*, chap. 3.

Yurii Shapoval

Ukraine Within the Conflict Dynamics of 1914 to 1945

Abstract: The paper considers the place and role of Ukraine in European history from 1914 to 1945, the period of the two world wars, and also analyses the influence of those historical events on Ukraine as a state and nation. The author especially emphasizes the interconnection of war and state building vs. state division. It should be noted that during this period Ukraine was divided not only in a territorial sense, because the wars created new borders, but also the Ukrainian nation itself was subject to an ideological division. The First and Second World Wars showed that Ukraine was an object of the expansionism of other European powers, which tried to use the resources of Ukrainian nationalism, to 'create' or 'abolish' the Ukrainian state on the vast chessboard of Europe. Nevertheless, most importantly in that period, the Ukrainians created themselves, not in the ethnic sense but as a political nation.
Keywords: Ukraine, war, state, division, expansionism, nation

During the Southern War – or as it is better known in the West, the Crimean War – the great surgeon Nikolai Pirogov once called war itself a 'traumatic epidemic'. War is a trauma in the literal sense as well as a trauma of consciousness and thought. But war is not just a trauma. Charles Tilly once remarked that war builds the state, and the state in turn brings forth war. As events unfolded in the first half of the 20th century, they delivered ample proof for the veracity of this claim. It is worth mentioning how Winston Churchill saw the two world wars; in his mind, considered as an entity they formed a 'Second Thirty Years' War', a war which, as it is well known, brought about a new Europe.

The First and Second World Wars led to the demise of empires on a global scale and accelerated their transformation into nation-states. In turn, nation-states concentrated unprecedented resources and power over individuals and social, ethnic and racial groups.

As we all know, in both world wars Ukraine was in the midst of some of the most severe fighting. From August 1914 on, the Eastern European empires were fighting a war of attrition, to the point of total mutual exhaustion. In consequence of the ensuing power vacuum in the region, a Ukrainian state was able to emerge. In the spring of 1939, in a small area of Transcarpathia, the first European armed conflict broke out after World War One. For the first time after the fighting from 1917 to 1920, an attempt was made to declare Ukrainian independence; this took the form of the Carpathian Ukraine under the leadership of Avhustyn Voloshyn.

Without a doubt, wars and revolutions divide society. They reduce society to a stage of an extremely simple, indeed an archaic morality. They reduce established human and societal relations to a simplistic distinction between friend and foe. When in 1914, the states crossed the fatal line of armed confrontation, an infernal carnival started in their capitals; there, patriotic demonstrations mobilised the masses under their respective propaganda slogans, 'kill the German!', 'kill the Frenchman!', 'kill the Russian!'. 'Whenever you see him, kill him', penned the Soviet author Ilya Ehrenburg. These words were written after June 1941; arguably, they were to become the most widely used propaganda slogan against the German occupying force.

There is not much more to be said about hatred. So let me now turn to division. For Ukraine, the problem of division goes back to her very beginnings. However, the wars and revolutions of the 20th century seem to have brought it to its most extreme forms. To this, there is a formal or more factual aspect and a more informal or politico-cultural aspect. Let us begin with the former. During the First World War, 3.5 million Ukrainians served in the Russian Army, and

a further 250,000 in the Austro-Hungarian Army. The total number of Ukrainians serving in the Red Army during the War of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany was between six and seven million; sources vary as to the exact number. According to Soviet records, up to 100,000 people went through the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) while it was active.

Now let us turn to the informal or cultural and political side. Here there was a division between supporters of the Ukrainian Central Rada on one side, and those who sincerely hated its leaders on the other. Most of all they hated Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi; in particular, they made fun of his alleged habit of writing his historical studies during sessions of the Central Rada instead of attending to matters of state. Furthermore, there was a division between the adherents of Pavlo Skoropads'kyi's Ukrainian state and those who saw it as an authoritarian, pseudo-monarchic concoction, which was unviable on its own, thus having to rely on the 300,000 bayonets of the German occupation forces as well as the remnants of the tsarist civil and military authorities. Then there was the division between the ardent supporters of the 'famous accountant', as Mikhail Bulgakov called him, that is Symon Petliura, and those for whom his name has become associated with chaos, incompetence and antisemitism. Moreover, we should not forget the disunity between the Ukrainian patriots in Austria-Hungary and Russia, which was exacerbated by the political and mental particularism of Ukrainians living in the West and on the Dnieper.

Finally, in today's Ukraine there is a political and ideological abyss between those who under President Viktor Yushchenko were called occupiers and those who are supposed to be considered 'one's own people'. By this logic, everybody who stood on the side of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917 to 1920, later on of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, are 'our people', while the whole rest are to be considered occupiers. And what about the national communists Oleksandr

Shums'kyi, Vasyl' Shakhrai, Serhii Mazlakh, Mykola Skrypnyk, Volodymyr Zatons'kyi, and the commander of the Red partisan detachments, Sydir Kovpak? (I could easily go on with this list.) As the events of 1914 to 1945 show, in Ukraine 'occupiers' often had previously been 'occupied', and collaborators had previously sworn allegiance to completely different ideals.

Obviously, there were also real occupiers. And their statehood war was also brought about by the First World War. In his 'Secret Diplomatic History of The Eighteenth Century', Karl Marx once claimed that Moscow attended to and received its strength from the vile and worthless school of Mongol slavery, and that its power relied on the sole fact that it had acquired virtuosity in the art of enslavement. But here we are talking about the regression of the Muscovite state into slavery, which is to a certain degree encoded in its history. If we take the 1917 February Revolution as our basis for comparison, the Bolshevik October coup was such a regression. The latter entailed a refeudalisation of Russian society. Party and state functionaries took the places of princes, the USSR was to become, even if not immediately, a restored Russian Empire. Bolshevism brought about forms of society which essentially became forms of slavery, even if all this was combined with modernisation and legitimised through it. Whatever contradicted or opposed these new sociopolitical forms was subjected to annihilation. Like a ghost from a bottle, Bolshevism rose from the muddled aftermath of the First World War and through fantastic hyperbole immediately gained colossal proportions.

In a letter sent on June 26, 1920, from Kharkiv to Lenin, Felix Dzerzhinsky wrote on the situation in Ukraine: 'Broadly speaking, the situation here is improving […]. Each of our honest workers sent into the province finds his piece of ground, and results are already to be seen. However, those workers are exceedingly few. The local communists are rather immature and follow only their petty interests […]. In the field of my expertise, here there is a rich

harvest to be had. It is safe to say that the entire middle intelligentsia here consists of Petliura's men. The absence of Ukrainian Chekists is a huge obstacle in our fight'. That is why there was this necessity to control the 'immature' communists, the 'Petliurovtsy' and other 'enemies of the people'; it became imperative for the authorities to annihilate them, as was to be proven in Ukraine after the emigration of the leaders of the failed Ukrainian People's Republic to the West.

Joseph Goebbels insisted that the war with Stalinist Russia was first and foremost an ideological war waged by the state based on ideology. The Soviet Union was such a state based on ideology.

That is why Bolshevism waged an ideological war against what once had been the Ukrainian People's Republic or what even only was a reminder of its former existence. Wars do not begin just when the shooting starts – although there was a lot of shooting when Ukraine was being turned communist. The war in Ukraine began when the Bolsheviks deployed their 'reliable' cadres, when they organised the Holodomor and when they annihilated the peasantry and the intellectuals, that was the basis of the national movement. In the end they created, using Vasilii Grosman's aphorism, a 'system of the Gosstrakh', which means a terror state, that is a system of discursive tyranny, to say nothing of the physical terror.

Once, Heraclitus stated, 'war is the father of all things'. In that sense one might consider that war is not the prolongation of politics but conversely, politics are the prolongation of war. The First World War, which was prolonged through the egotism of the ruling elites, gave birth to monsters such as Russian Bolshevism, German National Socialism and Italian fascism. It created the temptation to organise mankind into militarised bodies living in barracks. The Second World War led to the downfall of Nazism and fascism. However, in 1945 the Western powers made a pact with the devil in Yalta's Livadia Palace. This brought about what was called the

'socialist camp' and divided the world up into two hostile halves, each characterised by an adversarial way of thinking.

The First and Second World Wars without any doubt and in an often brutal manner showed that Ukraine was a mere object of the expansionism of the belligerent powers. In 1914, Austro-Hungary was seeking to annex Podolia and Volhynia. Germany had even more ambitious plans. At the beginning of the war, the 'steel king' August Thyssen stated that Russia would have to cede her Baltic provinces, her partition of Poland and the Donbas, including Odessa, Crimea and the region bordering on the Sea of Azov to Germany. But Russian autocracy had set its sights on war aims of its own. Promulgating the motto of the 'unification of all Russian lands' under the rule of the tsar, Russia was seeking to annex Galicia, Bukovina and Carpathian Ukraine.

In Hitler's plans, Ukraine occupied a special place. These plans required the conquest of Ukraine. In particular, she was to be an integral part of the implementation of his 'famine plan' (*Hungerplan*), which provided for the starvation of the inhabitants of the occupied territories of the USSR in order to obtain additional food supplies for the German military and the population of Germany. In Ukraine, the Nazis aimed at the total annihilation of the Jews and also the systematic extermination of the Slavs. In Ukraine alone, one million Jews lost their lives, and Babyn Yar and Kyiv were to become places of remembrance of the genocide committed on the Jewish population.

Joseph Stalin never forgot that the Ukrainians, in the years 1917 to 1920, had demonstrated their longing for independence. He did not only fiercely combat open opponents of the Bolsheviks but constantly sought out 'separatists' and 'national dissenters' among the Ukrainian pro-communist elite and expressed mistrust of no less than the entire Communist Party of Ukraine. He was afraid to loose Ukraine because he understood that there would be no USSR without her.

When we take a closer look at the trajectory Ukraine was taking within the dynamics of conflict of 1914 to 1945, we will notice certain peculiarities, for example in the way the resources of Ukrainian nationalism were used. During World War One, Austro-Hungary allowed the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) to propagate the idea of an independent state in POW camps in which Ukrainian soldiers were held. The SVU established a publishing house in Vienna and sent its representatives to a number of countries. In the mid-1920s und during the Second World War, Stalin allowed the Ukrainians to express a degree of national identity, provided this did not collide with the interests of the Soviet government. Paradoxically, it was the Red emperor who let the nationalists' long-held dream of uniting all Ukrainian lands become reality by increasing of the territory of the Ukrainian SSR by a quarter and of its population by eleven million. However, this came to an end with Stalin's infamous 1945 toast 'To the Great Russian people!', followed by a full reversal of policy.

Hitler also used Ukrainian nationalism based on purely opportunistic intentions of his own. But again, this came to an end when he said in September 1941 that Germany had created the Baltic states and Ukraine in 1918, while at present the Germans were no longer interested in the existence of the Baltic states and a free Ukraine.

These examples are sufficient to state that during the global cataclysms of 1914 to 1945, Ukraine was either 'created' or 'abolished' by different players on the vast chessboard of Europe. Nevertheless, most importantly in that period the Ukrainians created themselves, not in the ethnic sense but as a political nation. This process is not yet finished. Obviously, here we have to take into consideration, to phrase it delicately, the very peculiar attitudes of the Europeans towards today's Ukraine.

Heraclitus was right: war indeed is the father of all things. The present Russian aggression against Ukraine, this new traumatic epidemic,

does not only bring destruction. It has turned into a means of consolidating our society, a powerful unifying influence, a supporting factor in the ongoing formation of our political nation and civil society. It is difficult to predict what form these will finally take in the ultimate configuration of Ukraine. However, it is safe to say that they will take form.

Translated from Ukrainian by Andreas R. Hofmann

Ilya Gerasimov

Ukraine's Postcolonial Revolution and Counterrevolution

Abstract: The paper analyzes the 2014 Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine as a new post-transitional phenomenon. The author relies on the hypothesis that the post-Soviet transition period ended sometime after 2010, and states that Ukraine is the only post-Soviet and post-transitional country that seeks its version of a new collective self not in a reinvented historical past, but in the unknown future. This search manifested itself in the Euromaidan, which actually does not fit any of the common explanatory models applied to it: it was neither a civil war nor a bourgeois-democratic, anticolonial or color revolution.

The model of a national liberation movement seems to fit better; however, the formation of a new Ukrainian nation was not the cause, but the result of Euromaidan. Ukraine broke radically with the politics of identity and focused instead on discussing new common values, a collective national subjectivity and a new, post-transitional Ukrainian nation. Consequently, the author suggests that the most exact description for the Euromaidan would be a postcolonial revolution.

This revolution released the forces of societal self-organization and created a hybrid, inclusive version of Ukrainness. This project of hybridity does not necessarily threaten but may even enhance the cultural component of Ukrainness, because even "ethnic Ukrainians" are quite diverse.

However, the author points out several threats to this "new" hybrid Ukrainian nation. A potential counterrevolution could result from the activity of Ukrainian nationalists, interested in building a society based not on values but on fixed identities. They perceive Ukrainness only in terms of normative culture and language, secured by legislation, and are concerned with the prospects of hybridization, which also means relativization of identity roles. These Ukrainian patriots have a greater political weight than hybrid "new" Ukrainians. Even more dangerous is the failure of Ukrainian intellectuals to formulate and spread the program of a new, inclusive Ukrainness. This means, that the danger of a "postcolonial counterrevolution" comes not only from the nationalists relying on the well-established tradition of identity politics,

but also from the inability of Ukrainian society to articulate and broadly discuss versions of hybrid Ukrainness.
Keywords: postcolonial revolution, Ukraine, Euromaidan, transition, nationalists, hybrid identities, common values

> Nearly a generation has passed since Central and Eastern Europe embarked on its historic transition from communism to capitalism and democracy. Many people both in the region and beyond have little or no memory of the old systems, nor the remarkable transformation path that brought the people and countries in the region to where they are today.
> David Lipton, IMF First Deputy Managing Director, October 2014[1]

This chapter takes as its starting point the hypothesis that the post-Soviet transition period ended sometime after 2010, prompting a radically diverging course of social dynamics in countries such as Ukraine and Russia. Naturally, this does not mean that the historical transformation of former Soviet societies has stopped, or that they have arrived at a certain "final destination". I also do not wish to imply that the dominant mode of conceptualizing post-Sovietness – Transition Studies, in their multiple iterations – is no longer relevant. Scholars are free to measure the existing state of affairs in post-Soviet countries against some normative "points of arrival",[2] but ordinary people cannot live their entire lives in the limbo

1 David Lipton. "Foreword", in *25 Years of Transition Post-Communist Europe* ed. by James Roaf, Ruben Atoyan, Bikas Joshi, Krzysztof Krogulski. Washington, D.C., International Monetary Fund 2014: ix. https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2014/eur/eng/pdf/erei_sr_102414.pdf (accessed August 5, 2021).

2 The term "point of arrival" apparently was introduced and conceptualized by Vladimir Gel'man, see his "Regime Transition, Uncertainty and Prospects for Democratisation: The Politics of Russia's Regions in a Comparative Perspective". *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 6 (1999): 939–956, esp. p. 943; idem. "Post-Soviet

of endless "transition" to some "real" worthy existence. The generation born after the collapse of the USSR was coming of age in the early 2010s. In fact, all those born after 1985 have had no practical experience of the "old regime", and hence no clear "point of departure" in "communist authoritarianism". To them, "transition" is but a synonym of life itself or history, having no self-evident characteristics or rigidly defined goal. In the quote above, David Lipton delicately characterizes the present stage of post-communist transition of East Europeans as simply "where they are today". In order for a society to hold together, its members should know, where exactly "they are today", and why. The ideology of "transition" forms the social psychology of fellow travelers with one-way tickets, each ready to disembark at any moment. They had left the "socialist station" a quarter-century ago, and the bright future is still nowhere in sight, so unless they reinvent themselves as regular commuters brought together daily by commonality of life experience and immediate goals, the "transition express" traveling one-way will soon be deserted. Arguably, this reinvention of positive, "post-transition" sense of belonging became the main driving force behind social and political transformations of the past several years, in Ukraine and Russia.

When viewed from this angle, the "post-transition" society appears as much more anomic and unstable compared even to the immediately post-1991 society, still structured by the commonality of a very recent Soviet experience and the shared visions of the ideal future. This is why any claims about the dictate of a certain "historical legacy" or "national spirit" over the present situation completely miss the point: 25 years of self-conscious "transition" were spent on relativizing the grip of all structural preconditions formed before 1991. Nobody and nothing can be blamed for the present condition of the "transitionals", and there is nowhere to seek a ready solution: they have to negotiate themselves some sort of society-wide consensus on the meaning and terms of their coexistence. The turn from

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Transitions and Democratization: Towards Theory-Building". *Democratization* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 87–104, esp. 88, 94.

"transiting" to just "being" is possible only through a creative act of self-invention, which can mobilize society by presenting a convincing dynamic model of unity that individuals can relate to: in the past, present, or future. Almost all post-Soviet countries fell back on some sort of reinvented historical past or religious fundamentalism (with the exception of the Baltic republics that found cohesion in the idea of integration with the present-day Europe). Specifically, Russian "entrepreneurs of groupness" persistently exploited the strategy of building an "affective community" beyond any formal institutions and clear ideologies, using the imagined past as the reservoir of strong civic emotions, masterfully exploited by the regime.[3] There is, however, one post-Soviet society that has broken with the general trend and embarked on the quest for a new collective self not in the invented past or someone's else present, but in the unknown future. It is Ukraine, with its complex phenomenon of Euromaidan. I argue that this is a new, post-transition phenomenon that has had a great potential for constituting a radically different, unprecedented type of society within post-Soviet space.

Following closely the "Ukrainian events" and putting together a thematic forum "Ukraine and the Crisis of 'Russian Studies': Participant Observation of History in the Making" for *Ab Imperio* Quartely (published in early December 2014),[4] I realized that the explanatory models employed by political analysts and social scientists to describe Euromaidan and its aftermath poorly fitted in with the observable reality. After the dramatic confrontations in Kyiv in January and February 2014, and in particular the escalation of violence in the east of the country starting from April, the choice of models became rather limited. The two most popular have been those of "revolution" and "civil war". In common parlance, both designations are used bearing distinctive political connotations:

3 See Serguei Oushakine. *The Patriotism of Despair: Nation, War, and Loss in Russia*. Ithaca 2009; idem. "Remembering in Public: On the Affective Management of History". *Ab Imperio* 14, no. 1 (2013): 269–302.

4 *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 22–229.

opponents of the new Ukrainian regime, in Russia and in the West, prefer speaking of a civil war, thus recognizing equal legitimacy of the Kyiv authorities and separatists, and their equal responsibility for the bloody conflict. Analytically, this labeling is misleading. Doubtless, since early 2014, Ukraine has seen an escalation of intercommunal violence, with citizens of the same country killing each other, often on political grounds. Yet not every intercommunal conflict means a civil war, for example those associated with land disputes, banditry, or hate crimes. Civil war appears as a productive analytical concept when it implies the principled clash of opposing collective subjectivities, "two truths" that cannot find a compromise and are determined to seize supreme authority in the nation. Such was the Spanish Civil War 1936–39 or the Russian Civil War of 1918–1920. In modern Ukraine, the "Maidanites" have revealed a distinctive subjectivity, articulated political ideals and social program. What is the "truth" of their armed opponents, their alternative program for Ukraine? There is no such program and no interest in Ukraine, as the leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk "republics" from the outset explicitly announced their ultimate goal to secede and join the Russian Federation.[5] One can respond to this with an example of the archetypal civil war of the nineteenth century – the U.S. Civil War that was about secession from a federation. This historical parallel only underscores the inappropriateness of the "civil war" model to analyze Ukrainian events: did American Confederates dream about joining neighboring Mexico? Did they oppose the North because they felt themselves to be "ethnic Mexicans" and were afraid that the "Washington Junta" would make them speak English instead of Spanish? Separatism is an understandable cause for a rebellion (whether instigated by a foreign power or not), why should it be masked by something else?

5 This was announced on May 12, 2014 at a press conference by Denis Pushilin, then leader of the Donetsk People's Republic. See *Sovet Donetskoi narodnoi respubliki prosit Rossiiu rassmotret' vopros o vkhozhdenii DNR v RF*// http://novorossy.ru/news/news_post/sovet-doneckoy-narodnoy-respubliki-prosit-rossiyu-rassmotret. (accessed August 5, 2021).

Finding the concept of "civil war" unproductive, one is left with the idea of Euromaidan as a revolution. Even so, a popular typology of revolutions does not fit well with the case of Ukraine. The notion of *bourgeois-democratic revolution* is occasionally employed when discussing Maidan and post-Maidan political developments, primarily because the most visible public figures associated with the movement belong to the educated middle-age, middle-class stratum (in the forum published by *Ab Imperio*, this point was advanced in comments by Kharkiv sociologist Oleksiy Musiyezdov).[6] This classical formula is overburdened by many decades of political and academic debates, and in its original meaning "*bourgeois-democratic revolution*" can be used in the modern world only as a metaphor. It was coined and developed by Marxist ideologues and social scientists in the nineteenth century specifically to denote the radical transformation of society from feudalism to capitalism, when a new hegemonic class overthrows the old one and brings the political superstructure into accordance with the already transformed socioeconomic basis (from monarchy to a constitutional regime).[7] Maidan took place in a society with a capitalist market economy and an institutionalized political democracy. It overthrew no monarch but rather a legitimately elected president, and expressed distrust of the parliament (or at least the majority of its members). However, it did not question the very values and principles of capitalist economy and parliamentarism. Technically speaking, the rise of independent Ukraine on the ruins of the Soviet Union back in 1991 can be described as *a bourgeois-democratic*

6 Oleksiy Musiyezdov. "Vospriiatie Maidana: sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie osnovania identichnosti v postsovremennom obshchestve". *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 161–8.

7 The subsequent theoretical crystallization of the concept of "bourgeois revolution" as a historical stage preceding the proletarian revolution, and the ensuing debates among different interpretations of this idea central to Marxism, were rooted in the original sketchy outline provided by Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in 1852. See Karl Marx. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Chicago 1907.

revolution inaugurating a new political and economic regime, which was not dismantled by the Euromaidan revolution. Perhaps the only thing that Maidan shared with historical "bourgeois" revolutions was a common reliance on the European tradition of political liberalism that acknowledged the right of popular rebellion against tyranny.[8] Maidan was very Lockean in spirit in its declaration of civic subjectivity toward and disobedience of a government that disregarded people's rights and interests, but hardly "bourgeois" in practical terms.

The revolution in the form of an *anticolonial uprising* makes sense when people rise up against either direct or indirect alien rule. Twenty-five years of transition after the end of the USSR largely have invalidated any claim for the direct response to the alleged colonial status of Ukraine and Ukrainians (whether actual or retrospectively imagined). Indeed, anticolonial rhetoric plays a rather marginal role in Ukrainian public discourse, as can also be seen in the roundtable of Ukrainian sociologists, "Regions of Ukraine: What Separates Us and What Brings Us Together?" published in the forum.[9] The main goal of the meeting of social scientists from several Ukrainian cities in April 2014 was to elaborate a position of active research and civic solidarity by social scientists – the theme of expressing one's personal subjectivity and enhancing the active public role of the profession was central to most speakers. Only a few of them (employed by the state police academy) resorted to the language of colonial dependence – and then only to explain the motivation of separatists, not revolutionaries. It is not only probably inaccurate to frame the evident political, economic, and especially cultural dependence of Ukraine and many Ukrainians on Russia in

8 In his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), John Locke claimed that a revolution was an obligation and a civic duty if a government abused the rights and interests of citizens. John Locke. *Two Treatises of Government.* New York 1965, particularly §§ 220–230.

9 "Regiony Ukrainy: Chto nas raz'ediniaet i chto ob'ediniaet? Mnenia sotsiologov. Materialy kruglogo stola. Khar'kov, 18 aprelia 2014". *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 123–160.

the recent past in colonial terms; more importantly, it seems that many Ukrainians find it offensive to even think of themselves as former "colonials". The very refusal to play the subaltern card as an ultimate justification for the Ukrainian revolution can be explained by their fundamental incompatibility. Subalternity can be found as a significant social condition in Russia, Belarus, or Uzbekistan, but just imagine characterizing the Ukrainian Euromaidan with the authoritative declaration by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak:

> Subalternity is a position without identity. … Subalternity is where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognisable basis of action.[10]

Anticolonial revolution is a powerful act of transcending one's subalternity, but not one's embedded dependence on the former colonial master. The most highly articulated anticolonial revolutions are set within the imperial political sphere and are framed by the imperial political imagination: rejection does not necessarily beget emancipation.[11] In the soft version of anticolonial resistance, former subalterns manage to coordinate collective action, but only in the name of their traditional moral economy and framed by local knowledge.[12] Thus, in neither case is there room to express one's own distinctive subjectivity (untampered with by the former imperial overlords) as the main driving force of the uprising. The anticolonial paradigm just does not fit the imagined community of Ukrainians and the vision of Ukraine "from the Syan to the Don"

10 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular". *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 4 (2005): 476.

11 This argument is substantiated in Jeremy Adelman. "An Age of Imperial Revolutions". *American Historical Review*, vol. 113, no. 2 (2008): 319–340.

12 This point has been extensively elaborated by James C. Scott. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven 1979; *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance.* New Haven 1985; and recently: *Decoding Subaltern Politics: Ideology, Disguise, and Resistance in Agrarian Politics*. Abingdon and New York 2012.

that integrates the many regional and local knowledges in Ukraine. Equally important is that this self-sufficient Ukraine does not depend on the mental map of the would-be colonizer – the Russian Federation, because Russian mental maps envision Ukraine today within absolutely different spatial, cultural, and historical dimensions.

The model of *national revolution* or *national liberation movement* seems to better fit the realities of Maidan and the public discourses making sense of it. In the *Ab Imperio* forum, quite a few contributors argued along these lines (most forcefully, Volodymyr Kulyk).[13] Among the explanatory models reviewed so far, only "national revolution" is theoretically possible after the long period of "transition". The essentially Romantic concept of "national awakening" (even in the deliberately structuralist rendering of Miroslav Hroch) allows a sudden outburst of national mobilization almost anytime, regardless of the general dynamics of the society. Besides, the abundance of interpretations of the phenomenon of "nation" provide ample opportunities to cast Maidan in national terms. This seems all the more appropriate given the high visibility of Ukrainian nationalists on Maidan and at the front of the Russo-Ukrainian war that followed, as well as the centrality of the discourse of nation-building in post-Maidan Ukraine. Whatever one's understanding of nation (as either ethnic, political, cultural, or territorial community), "national revolution" implies the rise of some preexisting nation to complete sovereignty. This model can be combined with the anticolonial framework ("anti-imperial struggle") or the idea of bourgeois revolution ("internal liberation movement"), but in any version and combination one fundamental condition remains in place: initially, some sort of a national compound rises to the ultimate consciousness as an entity, and then it moves on to eliminate all obstacles on its path to sociopolitical self-realization. This (essentially Hegelian) historical scenario can be recognized in the story of the downfall of the Soviet

13 Volodymyr Kulyk. "Ukrainian Nationalism since the Outbreak of Euro-Maidan". *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 94–122.

system in 1989–1991, quite typical for the twentieth century. Think of the Baltic republics of the USSR that demanded the right to self-determination as a way to restore some preexistent condition of "violated wholeness": national purity unhindered by Russian/Soviet admixtures, and statehood ruined by the Soviet annexation. The ethnoculturally homogeneous and fully developed nation expressed itself in coordinated linguistic and artistic acts (such as the "Singing Revolution" of September 1988 on the Tallin Song Festival Grounds that gathered together well over 100,000 Estonians), lacking only one final element: political sovereignty.

As can be seen in the materials of the *Ab Imperio* forum, this rhetoric was employed by a rather marginal group of Maidan activists (mostly by nationalists), and does not correspond to the general social and political dynamics of the movement, from November 2013 through January, to post-revolutionary developments. In this broader perspective we see that the main pre-Maidan political force representing organicist nationalism ("integral nationalism" in the Ukrainian political tradition) – the all-Ukrainian movement "Svoboda" ("Freedom") has dramatically lost its popularity amid the unprecedented national mobilization. There is no contradiction here: what we are seeing in Ukraine is the process of national mobilization and consolidation (the majority of observers agree on that); only that here this process takes the opposite course compared to standard twentieth-century national movements. There was no real preexistent historical Ukrainian state to be restored within its original borders, and no homogeneous nation in agreement about its composition. No collective national instinct or will led to Euromaidan. On the contrary, it was Euromaidan as an event, a social structure, and a political process that stimulated the expression of individual subjectivities of people and greatly intensified and accommodated their exchange of ideas and opinions – whereas the main contribution of the preceding decade of Ukrainian history had been the elaboration of a set of common values that provided the necessary cumulative effect of community-building to the mass-scale exchange of ideas.

According to a comprehensive poll by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology conducted on the eve of Euromaidan (September 13–23, 2013), 40.5 percent of Ukrainians supported integration with the EU, 35 percent wanted to join the Russia-led Customs Union (CU), 13.4 percent were undecided, and 10 percent were ready to accept any decision imposed on them.[14] Not only was there no general "national consensus" on the desired course to be taken (and hence, arguably, no single "nation"), – the 10 percent of "swing voters" guaranteed the support of any decision made by the government by a formal majority (50 vs. 35 or 45 vs. 40). It is quite possible that this poll became one of the reasons Yanukovych dared to sabotage the EU association procedure in favor of the Russian option. To be sure, by June 2014, the number of those interested in integration with the Russian CU had decreased by half, while the share of EU supporters had grown from 40.5 percent to 52.7 percent.[15] But this dynamics only proves that the change of public opinion was a result of the Euromaidan revolution, not its cause. The emerging broad consensus on a number of key topics manifested the formation of a collective national subjectivity and the new Ukrainian nation. Individual people with active civic positions stepped forward to protest the abuse of their rights by the tyrannical regime, and in the course of their collective action a new type of solidarity emerged, and a new Ukrainian nation came into being. The Ukrainian nation became the product of the revolution, not its perpetrator. Thus, it is even linguistically inaccurate to call this revolution a "national liberation movement".

Finally, there is a trend of fashioning Euromaidan as yet another *color revolution*. This concept has been formed within the transitology paradigm. In scholarly literature it is recognized that color revolutions seek to remove "barrier regimes" blocking democratization,

14 "Bolee 40 % ukraintsev khotiat v ES, 35 % – za soiuz Putina, – opros". http://censor.net.ua/n255282 (accessed March 10, 2015).

15 "V Ukraine rekordno vyroslo chislo storonnikov evrointegratsii i protivnikov TS, – opros". http://censor.net.ua/news/292570 (accessed March 10, 2015).

and as such are but a milestone somewhere in the middle of the long transition process from communism, and not "true" revolutions.[16] The dominant popular take on "color revolutions" perceives them as little more than special operations by some powerful political actors (hence the names that sound like coded secret plans: the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, the Grape Revolution in Moldova, and so on). Code words or not, the names of color revolutions are really meaningless – but we cannot say this about the Ukrainian revolution of 2014 that immediately proclaimed itself the Revolution of Dignity.[17] The name of the Ukrainian revolution alone presents a decisive argument against comparing it to color revolutions. "Dignity" is a fundamental quality of one's developed subjectivity (cf. Latin *dignitas* – worthiness). The Revolution of Dignity could have been produced only by self-conscious moral and political subjects, having it in mind not just to topple the irritating government but to impose their subjectivity as a new system of coordinates for the revolutionary society. Communicating this content requires a lot of words and practical actions, it cannot be signified by any single color or plant. Likewise, it has little value from the vantage point of political tactics, but a tremendous significance for global historical dynamics, which is practically immune to any political technologies. Over a century ago, one of the most perceptive Russian political thinkers, Petr Struve (incidentally, a staunch opponent of Ukrainian independence), concluded that the Russian revolution

16 See Lincoln A. Mitchell. *The Color Revolutions*. Philadelphia 2012.

17 The name became widespread between December 11, 2013 – when it was probably used for the first time in mass media – and February 28, 2014, when it was cited in a publication "as the most common name of the Ukrainian revolution". See Iuliia Luchik. "Revoliutsiia hidnosti". *Den'*. (December 11, 2013). http://www.day.Kyiv.ua/uk/blog/politika/revolyuciya-gidnosti (accessed August 5, 2021); Iaroslav Pritula. "Vid Revoliutsii Hidnosti do hidnogo zhittia". *Ekonomichna pravda*. (February 28, 2014). http://www.epravda.com.ua/columns/2014/02/28/423251 (accessed August 5, 2021).

of 1905 failed because it did not prioritize the ideal of "personal worthiness":

> Personal worthiness (*godnost'*) is a sum of certain spiritual qualities: endurance, self-control, scrupulousness, and prudence. A progressing society can be built only on the basis of the idea of personal worthiness as both the foundation and yardstick of all social relationships. Whilst the eternal idealist aspect of liberalism has been embodied in the idea of freedom and distinctiveness of the individual, the eternal realist aspect of liberalism is represented by the idea of personal worthiness.[18]

Ukrainian Euromaidan has succeeded where the Russian 1905 revolution failed in the twentieth century, and this plane of comparison seems to be much more suggestive and relevant than the context of recent "technical" "color revolutions".

None of the concepts briefly outlined above fit the structural circumstances of Euromaidan: after almost 25 years of post-communist transition, a revolution broke out with quite atypical characteristics. The 2014 revolution was not purely "political" or "civic". Its participants from different cultural backgrounds were concerned with stressing its culturally Ukrainian character, using the main symbols of Ukrainian cultural identity: language, patriotic greetings, key figures of the literary canon, dress, and imagery. Even so, the main thrust of Euromaidan was directed at transcending all fixed identities ("civic" vs. "ethnic," "political" vs. "cultural", etc.) and negotiating a truly nation-wide consensus. As has been stressed by Yaroslav Hrytsak, the radical break with the politics of identity (central to anticolonial and national liberation movements of the twentieth century) is what sets Ukraine apart from its neighbors, first of all – Russia:

18 Petr Struve. "Intelligentsiia i narodnoe khoziaistvo (1908)", in *Patriotica: Politika, kultura, religiia, sotsializm* ed. by Petr Struve. Moscow 1997: 203.

> the Ukrainians of Euromaidan are preoccupied with modernization and values, whereas Putin's Russia worries about security and identities …. national issues were not the only items on its [Maidan] agenda – in fact, they were not even central. Neither were, for that matter, questions of language or historical memory.[19]

This distinction drawn by Hrytsak is a key to grasping the unprecedented uniqueness of what is happening in Ukraine. The emerging broad consensus on a number of key topics manifested the formation of a collective national subjectivity and the new – post-transitional – Ukrainian nation. This new nation was capable of elaborating a future agenda for itself, based on its own interests formulated in the process of broad discussion, within the framework of common values, and largely ignoring any "historical scenarios" as represented by the EU or Russia. This is what makes the Euromaidan a unique example of a truly *postcolonial revolution* – in contrast to the familiar type of anticolonial revolutions. The latter constituted the sovereignty of the nation but failed to conceptualize this sovereignty as a value in its own right, unmediated by opposition to the former colonizer or integration with a new benevolent superpower. Euromaidan was focused on formulating and promoting new common values – a quintessentially creative act of positive self-determination, that largely relativized the importance of external political influences (whether threatening or encouraging). Judging by the public discourse, Ukrainians have few illusions about the merits of the European bureaucracy, the efficiency of the EU economy, or the record of intercultural tolerance in Western Europe. "The European choice" has been used as a metaphor, a shorthand for the set of common values elaborated in the course of public debates over the past years. Ukrainian revolution is postcolonial because it not only set out to overthrow the political and economic hegemony of a tyrant (foreign or domestic) but also released the forces of societal self-organization. Even more: the public agenda of revolution. and

19 Yaroslav Hrytsak. "Ignorance Is Power". *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 218–229.

particularly of the post-revolutionary period, has been defined predominantly by the citizens of Ukraine and on their terms, not by Yanukovych or Putin (and the need to respond to their "initiatives" – a camouflaged form of dependence). Judging by the rhetoric of leaders of Ukrainian public opinion, the emerging type of "new Ukrainians" do not define themselves by negating everything "colonial" (thus effectively remaining within the hold of colonially imposed mental frames). They are creatively minding their business, inventing a new country for themselves, and when they have to respond to outside pressure, they frame the response in their own terms.

There is nothing metaphysical about these generalizations: the new Ukrainian subjectivity reveals itself in empirically verifiable and even statistically quantifiable social interactions, on the micro- and macro-scale. One of the most vivid expressions of the new type of solidarity through coordinated social action has been provided by the volunteer movement in Ukraine that I have discussed in detail elsewhere.[20] Suffice it to mention that between May and October 2014, almost 80 percent of Ukrainians donated their time, money, or property to the army or refugees from the occupied territories.[21] Arguably, the very process of state building after February 2014 has been stimulated, guided and even staffed by grassroots citizens' initiatives.

The term "postcolonial" reflects the intradisciplinary logic of development of a scholarly inquiry into the development of new societies, rather than the study of an actual colonial experience. Postcolonial Studies revisited Colonialism Studies of the mid-twentieth century just as the latter came to deconstruct the older Empire Studies. Fiery anticolonial rhetoric notwithstanding, postcolonial

20 Ilya Gerasimov. "Ukraine 2014: The First Postcolonial Revolution. Introduction to the Forum". *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 22–44.

21 "Pochti 33 % ukraintsev perevodili den'gi armii". *Pravda* (October 21, 2014) http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/10/21/7041506/. (accessed August 5, 2021).

social thinking is still conspicuously rare in the post-Soviet societies, with its deconstruction of the manipulative power of hegemonic discourses – including those of nation and nationalism.[22] Thus, "postcoloniality" of a revolution implies its ability to overcome invisible domination by producing new original meanings instead of mirroring those of the former oppressor, only turned upside down (which is a "revolution" in its original literary meaning). "Postcolonial revolution" is an analytical construct that helps scholars to reconstruct the logic of events and (ideally) to predict the responses of the object of analysis to different situations. Like a "bourgeois revolution" or "national liberation movement", it is not a "thing" – just our more or less accurate description of it, and only from one angle. A potential value of such a description depends on its ability to identify more segments of observable reality as "facts" and reconstruct the logic of their dynamics.

Within the model of Euromaidan as a postcolonial revolution marking the end of postcommunist transition, the main focus is on the character of the new subjectivity and the type of social groupness that it promotes. This model explains the evident enthnocultural diversity of headliners of the Euromaidan public sphere and the prevailing strategy of inclusive interpretation of Ukrainness. In a word – its persistent, if under-reflected, hybridity as a new phenomenon in Ukraine, or rather as a familiar phenomenon that has changed its modality – from a sign of marginality and parochialism to a trendy and mainstream personal quality.[23] Hybridity is a logical product of a postcolonial revolution striving to accommodate and integrate local subjectivities, in stark contrast to classical revolutions. In the nationalist social imagination obsessed with defining fixed identities, hybridity was perceived as marginal and parochial – precisely because every hybridity (linguistic, cultural, or economic)

22 Ilya Gerasimov, Sergey Glebov, and Marina Mogilner. "The Postimperial Meets the Postcolonial: Russian Historical Experience and the Postcolonial Moment". *Ab Imperio* 15, no. 2 (2013): 97–135.

23 This argument is elaborated in detail in Gerasimov. "Ukraine 2014", 32–36.

was equated with backwardness. The closer a group approached some uncompromised "ideal type" the higher its social status was. The spontaneously emerging new hybrid version of Ukrainness is the main result of the Ukrainian revolution, and the prospects of the Euromaidan regime depend on its ability to accommodate and sustain that hybridity, envisioning a community equally embracing Russian Ukrainians, Jewish Ukrainians, Tatar Ukrainians and many other combinations.

It is important to stress that the project of hybrid Ukrainness does not necessarily threaten but may even greatly enhance the cultural ("ethnic") component of it. A national canon, twentieth-century style, is always an arbitrary (selective and repressive) nomination of certain local characteristics to the role of the compulsory national standard. A regional dialect becomes the linguistic norm of "high" language marginalizing other dialects; one type of local dress, repertoire of songs, or cuisine would rise to the status of national importance, making all the rest objects of ethnographic research at best. Even "ethnic Ukrainians" themselves are so diverse that a single mandatory national canon has to be discriminatory toward some.

Using the model of a postcolonial revolution forging a new – truly hybrid, "post-identity" and post-transition society – we can reconstruct a profile of a potential "postcolonial counterrevolution". In the logic of our analysis, this role appears to be reserved not by the "usual suspects" – the strongest military adversaries (the Russian Federation or separatists), or "non-Ukrainian" forces within – say, the Russian-speakers of Odessa. The postcolonial emancipation reveals itself through expressing one's own subjectivity and negotiating a society-wide agreement on common values, which makes a postcolonial identity hybrid by definition. The opposing trend would purge hybridity and impose some predetermined normative sociocultural identities, demanding that all individual subjectivities conform with this rigid and mandatory norm. Getting back to the fundamental distinction suggested by Yaroslav Hrytsak, we can identify a crucial analytical and practical division between the society built on values and the society built on fixed identities. The for-

mer is an open system, based on self-organization and spontaneous development through trial and error; the latter is a rigid structure populated by people following predetermined scenarios and social roles. Modern-day Russia fits ideally this analytical model, but not only Russia. Within Ukraine, the greatest threat to the postcolonial condition of the future is presented by archaic romantic nationalism, which is as identity-centered and fixed on the glorious past as is Putin's Russia. Only unlike Putinists, these people are Ukrainian patriots and have much greater political weight than hybrid "new Ukrainians". In the Facebook argot, their structural similarity with Putinists have been conveyed through mirroring terms "*Vatniki*" and "*Vyshevatniki*" – I would translate them as "Turncoats" vs. "Trench coats", reactionary opportunists vs. militant patriots. The original words literally refer to different pieces of garment: turncoats are *vatniki*, proletarian or military quilted jackets for winter, wadded coat; the opposite notion mixes this with a reference to *vyshivanka*, the Ukrainian national shirt with embroidery. In our model, the similarity between the two is deeper than those between rival Facebook gangs: both those with a fixation on the Soviet past and those fixated on the Ukrainian national past (imagined in terms of ethnoconfessional exclusivity) are "identity Nazis". They are equally hostile to the new Ukrainian project, only the Trench Coats are much more dangerous, as can be seen by the recent scandal with the so-called "history laws" promulgated by the Ukrainian parliament.[24]

The identity politics implies a complex worldview transcending purely political or cultural aspects, and even creating one sacrificing its ideological preferences for the sake of sustaining the wholeness

24 See John-Paul Himka. "Legislating Historical Truth: Ukraine's Laws of 9 April 2015". *Ab Imperio* (April 24, 2015). https://www.academia.edu/12056628/Legislating_Historical_Truth_Ukraines_Laws_of_9_April_2015 (accessed August 15, 2021); Tom Parfitt. "Ukraine's 'History Laws" Purge It of Communist Symbols but Divide the Population". *The Telegraph* (June 30, 2015). http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11674511/Ukraines-history-laws-purge-it-of-communist-symbols-but-divide-the-population.html (accessed August 5, 2021).

of the identity-centered worldview. A telling example can be found in the Facebook post by a contributor to the forum in *Ab Imperio*, a Ukrainian political scientist and activist upholding liberal political views, Volodymir Kulyk. On July 11, 2015 he reposted with approval the following statement:

> Now I understand the homophobes better. Though by no means sharing their attitude to same-sex love, I understand what did they feel when in their friends status updates began the parade of rainbow user picks. I feel the same reading endless posts and discussions promoting the only [politically] correct viewpoint – that the Ukrainian language experiences no problems in Ukraine, that there is no difference in [using] Russian or Ukrainian, and … anyone who is not satisfied with the present language situation and wants to give preference to the Ukrainian is a Trench Coat (*vyshyvatnik*) and Farion.[25]

It is interesting how the antigay rhetoric – so massively and seemingly without any motivation promoted by the Russian official propaganda (including well-known gay persons) – appears as a meaningful metaphor to Ukrainian nationalist activists. The comment added by Volodymyr Kulyk himself shows that the antigay metaphor was not accidental:

> I feel the same way. Only what concerns me is not the perspective of losing good relations with my loved ones (no one among my family and friends have a different view of this issue – in contrast to the rainbow thing), but the realization that the mantra about the absence of problems with the language probably will win, and will remain with my problem alone, that is, with a minority of upset like-minded people. Therefore, instead of rainbow user picks I'll use another example. The next day after the first election of President Obama, we had lunch in Washington with a group of American colleagues,

25 The original post by Otar Dovzhenko: https://www.facebook.com/otardovzhenko/posts/10153350531180873?fref=nf. [no longer accessible]

> most of whom were effervescent with joy of victory. Only one lady in her late fifties bitterly said: yesterday I lost my chance to see a woman becoming my President. In the same manner, it seems, I am losing the hope, born with the independence and enhanced by the revolution, to see my language normally functioning in the society, and not just "among our kind" (*sered svoikh*) or for the camera.[26]

Feeling uncomfortable about the antiliberal homophobe metaphor, Kulyk substitutes it by a seemingly very different – progressive and feminist one. Despite the opposite political message, epistemologically this is the same organicist metaphor perceiving social and political interests in terms of constant biological entities (gay people or women). This essentialist point of view, presenting the society as an assortment of fixed social and cultural identities, unites even the most liberal Ukrainian nationalists with their sworn enemies, the Putinists. More than the explicit Other in their midst (a Russian-speaking enclave in Kyiv or Odessa), they are concerned with the prospects of hybridization promising relativization of all one-dimensional rigid identity roles. They perceive the true Ukrainness only in terms of the normative culture and language, whose status is secured and imposed by legislation. Active participants in Euromaidan (like Volodymyr Kulyk), these people are structurally predisposed to oppose a postcolonial revolution and the new, post-transition and postmodern type of hybrid society that it brings.

Even more dangerous is the failure of Ukrainian intellectuals to formulate and popularize the program of new Ukrainness. They embody and promote this program on a subdiscursive level, as a set of social practices never rationalized and articulated. This includes the strategy of cultural and linguistic bilingualism, forging political and business alliances across ethnocultural divides, and creativity in formulating new values and social goals.[27] However, when chal-

26 https://www.facebook.com/volodymyr.kulyk/posts/972839446081316. [no longer accessible]

27 See Gerasimov, "Ukraine 2014," 32–36.

lenged directly by Trench Coats, they are confused and do not know how to respond, as there are no elaborated discursive strategies to rely on. The following example vividly illustrates this point. On November 30, 2014, the scandalous figure of Ukrainian politics, MP Irina Farion, posted on her Facebook page:

> Noctunal greetings to a certain Biriukov. What has he barked about the right to communicate in the language of occupant. Listen, Muscovite, you and your language is the best trophy for Putin. … No volunteering of yours will help you. Value and learn the language of the soil that holds you …[28]

A former communist, associate professor of Ukrainian Language, and ultranationalist politician, Farion has a scandalous reputation even among Ukrainian nationalists. What is interesting is the reaction that her assault provoked from the people embodying the new hybrid Ukrainness. The immediate target of her attack, a "Russo-Banderite" Yuri Biriukov, leader of the major volunteer association Wings of Phoenix, invited to the Ministry of Defense to coordinate army reforms and advise to the Minister, responded briefly:

> Nothing invigorates and cheers in the morning as this does … Even obscene language seems redundant in this post, everything is clear here without it.[29]

The original post by Farion received 535 likes, Biriukov's response – about 4100 likes, but the broader support notwithstanding, it is disturbing to see how Biriukov literally remained speechless in response to the known "identity Nazi". He suggested that his immediate reaction was cursing, but he censored even this meaningless

28 https://www.facebook.com/IrynaFarion/posts/888965211116548?fref=nf [no longer accessible], translated into English by the author.

29 https://www.facebook.com/yuri.biriukov/posts/1526060924329386 [no longer accessible], translated into English by the author.

statement as redundant, because "everything is clear". Without articulating their social and cultural program, numerous leaders of public opinion and practical state-building of Russian, Jewish, or Tatar origins announced their wholeheartedly embraced Ukrainness – implying that "everything is clear without it".[30] Apparently, it is not. Leaders of a postcolonial revolution, they appear as subalterns that "cannot speak" – that is, master the hegemonic public discourse, which inevitably doom them to failure in the mass society organized around the public sphere. The danger of a "postcolonial counterrevolution" stems not only from the Trench Coats relying on the well-established tradition of identity politics, but also from the inability of Ukrainian society to articulate and broadly discuss versions of a new, hybrid and inclusive Ukrainness.

There is nothing unusual about this conclusion. After all, the French Revolution was subdued not by the armies of the old regimes of Russia or Prussia but by their own leading trench coat man, Napoleon Bonaparte; the liberating potential of the Bolshevik Revolution was terminated not by General Vrangel or Admiral Kolchak, but by Comrade Stalin – also a fan of trench coats. If the project of the Ukrainian postcolonial revolution fails, this will be caused not by any "fifth column" or Russian invasion, but by the Ukrainian patriots dreaming about a regime of fixed identities and mistrusting the open society of common values and hybrid identities.

30 The new type of hybrid "New Ukrainians" with some basic prosopography is discussed in Gerasimov, "Ukraine 2014". One of them, the "Yid-*Banderite*" Borislav Bereza – the Jewish speaker for the Ukrainian nationalist movement the Right Sector, also responded to Farion. Usually posting in Russian, he wrote in Ukrainian, dismissing the language purism claims of Farion as coming from a former communist, "either stupid, or sick" (https://www.facebook.com/borislav.bereza/posts/1017565228269583 [no longer accessible]). Recently elected to the parliament, a popular politician, Bereza could not articulate any alternative position switching to Ukrainian as another "self-evident" argument of the "true Ukrainianness" of himself and his fellow Russian-speaking Ukrainian patriots.

Philipp Ther

Ukraine in Postcommunist Transformation: The Problems of Regional Divergence in Historical Perspective

Abstract: The article deals with the social and economic transformation of Ukraine after independence. The main focus centers on regional and social inequality and is based on historical and more recent economic data about the capital Kyiv and various regions of Ukraine. The finding is that compared to other countries in East-Central Europe such as Poland and Slovakia, Ukraine has an especially high regional divergence. The poverty in rural regions is an impediment for general growth, and a major cause of mass labor migration which weakens the demography of Ukraine and again long-term growth prospects. The data also show that the poorest regions of Ukraine have a lower per-capita GDP level than some developing countries in the global South. These data might be slightly corrected by remittances from the EU, but the dire situation calls for a regional and local development strategy. The article also argues for a need to study the current and past transformation of Ukraine on this level.

Keywords: Ukraine, transformation, economic reforms, regional divergence, social inequality/GINI.

The transformation of Ukraine is a much too complex process to be dealt with in a single article or lecture. This is not only due to the many upheavals and caesuras in the history of Ukraine since it gained independence 30 years ago. The complexity of transformation is also expressed in this very term, which can be broadly defined as an accelerated and synchronous change of the political system,

the economy, society and culture.[1] Transformations can be distinguished from long-term structural changes by their outset; usually they were triggered by deep, revolutionary caesuras. In the 20th century the dissolution of the Soviet Empire and Union in the years 1989–91 is an obvious example, but the end of World War I and II initiated similarly deep, though of course different transformations. Such a cyclical vision of history instead of the older Marxist and liberal paradigms of linear progress in history may help to understand better, why sometimes transformations can end up in a return to older patterns of history, e. g. the renaissance of Russian imperialism in its Soviet (or recently Putinist) disguise, or the continuities between aristocratic feudalism and the Soviet kolkhoz system, and again recent patterns of large land ownership in post-communist Europe.

In this cyclical vision of history, there are periods of accelerated and synchronous changes – the synchronity refers to the simultaneity of transformations in politics, the economy, society and culture,[2] although these spheres cannot be strictly separated but are intertwined – and periods in which these changes slow down and become partial. Which tendency in the cycle prevails can only be assessed with some temporal distance. Historians might still lack that distance in view of independent Ukraine, nevertheless the Russian aggression in 2014 was certainly a deep caesura finishing an earlier period of post-1989/91 transformation, which was after all built on territorial security and the universal acceptance that pre-existing republican borders in the Soviet Union are respected. Former Yugoslavia deviated from this pattern of transformation in peace, as did some post-Soviet regions in the Caucasus, the Fergana Valley and in Moldavia, but overall the absence of wars was an important

1 This definition goes back to a famous article by Claus Offe. "Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa". *Merkur* 4/505 (1991): 279–292.

2 On the problem of synchronicity, see Claus Offe. *Der Tunnel am Ende des Lichts. Erkundungen der politischen Transformation im Neuen Osten*. Frankfurt am Main 1994.

precondition of later economic recovery. Hence, the intervention in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea can be regarded as the end of the post-Soviet period of transformation in peace, the recent Corona pandemic might one day also be regarded as an event dividing history in a time before and after. Independently which caesura the single researcher might prefer, it is worth trying to historicize the post-communist transformation.[3] Ukraine finds itself in a highly conflictual international context already since 2004, when Putin intervened for the first time massively into Ukrainian politics, though at the time still by peaceful means. This combination of external pressure and massive internal tensions are specific, although in other ways the transformation of Ukraine follows structural patterns which are present in other post-Soviet states: the presence of oligarchs, who have built up a lot of political power as well or even run the country, a weak rule of law and high level of corruption that are ultimately a consequence of oligarchic structures, and problems of democratic representation and participation. Nevertheless, Ukraine has managed to build up a democracy, and it is a pluralistic country with free media and open political competition. Compared to other post-Soviet states, and even some EU-member states, which are suffering from a severe antidemocratic and anti-liberal backlash, that is not a small achievement.

While a clear end of the period of post-communist transformation is up for discussion, it is also difficult to identify its beginning. The end of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine is an obvious caesura, but the development towards democratization, pluralism, and more market elements in the economy, including the genesis of the oligarchs, already commenced after Mikhail Gorbachev had proclaimed Glasnost and Perestroika. So in many ways 1986 might be an adequate starting point for historians writing

3 See as an attempt my book: Philipp Ther. *Europe since 1989: A History*. Princeton 2016. This study (that will hopefully appear in Ukraine in 2022) also contains a rich bibliography and a wide range of citations which I did not include in this article.

about the transformation of Ukraine. It should be added that historians are latecomers in the field of transformation studies or "transitology", as it is most often termed in the United States in reference to "transition". Therefore historians can and should learn a lot from previous social science studies, and above all use the data created by analysts working in the 1990s and later periods. The term transition, however, is teleological, it was created for analyzing the "dual transition" from a planned to a market economy, and from communist dictatorships to democracy.[4] In the past three decades since the end of the Soviet Union, Western historians and social scientists unfortunately had to learn (once more) that capitalism can exist without democracy, and that previous steps of democratization can be reversed and can be replaced by an anti-liberal and nationalist authoritarianism. Since the global crisis of 2008/09, this has been the trend all over Eastern Europe, including states which had the good fortune to join the EU and were once considered as frontrunners of transition and the more encompassing transformation.

After this long overture, it is high time to mark the limits of this brief article (which is based on an even briefer lecture for the first conference of the German-Ukrainian Historians' Commission. By now a similar Austrian-Ukrainian commission has been established as well, which is a logical continuation of the long tradition of studying Ukraine at the University of Vienna[5]). It is obviously impossible to cover all spheres of transformation in Ukraine, in fact that would amount to a book about the contemporary history of Ukraine. Therefore, this article will focus almost entirely on socio-economic history and two major aspects, the regional divergence between

4 See as an early example for the usage of the term dual transition: David Lipton and Jeffrey D. Sachs. "Poland's Economic Reform". *Foreign Affairs* 69/3 (1990): 47–66.

5 See www.ukrainian-austrian-association.com. – Accessed May 6, 2019. This was somewhat overlooked in Veronika Wendland's overview of Ukrainian studies, which is nevertheless very informative about Germany. See Anna Veronika Wendland. "Hilflos im Dunkeln. 'Experten' in der Ukraine-Krise: eine Polemik". *Osteuropa* 9–10 (2014): 13–34.

urban and rural parts of Ukraine, and the reasons why the high growth after the turn of the millennium was not sustainable even in the centers of growth. This focus is also taken in view of studies by renowned economists such as Paul Krugman or Joseph Stiglitz, who haven proven that a too great discrepancy between rich and poor regions, and groups in societies, are major obstacles for economic growth and development.[6] Since the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s and their radicalized version after the turn of the millennium have exacerbated regional and social inequality all over post-communist Europe, in part even intentionally, this path of reforms should be reassessed critically to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future. Any developmental framework or even IMF plan for Ukraine should take this into account.

Although these social history foci may appear specific and leave aside for the most part the political transformation towards pluralism and democracy, they can be better studied and interpreted in a comparative framework. Consequently, this article refers often to Poland, which started out in the early 1990s with a similar low GDP per capita like Ukraine, and of course to Russia, the largest and most powerful successor state of the Soviet Union. Both of the aforementioned foci are built on macroeconomic data. While most transitologists rely on national statistics for entire countries (which are in turn often based on the data of the respective national banks), these are broken down here for Ukraine on a regional level in the second half of the article. Unlike in Poland, this is impossible for the 1990s because there is a lack of data, but since the year 2000 the Ukrainian

6 See Paul Krugman. "Increasing Returns and Economic Geography". *The Journal of Political Economy* 99/3 (June 1991): 483–99; Joseph Stiglitz. *Freefall: America, Free Markets, and the Sinking of the World Economy*. New York 2010. See also various publications on global inequality by the political economist Branko Milanovic. There also is a connection between high inequality and levels of corruption. See the large-scale comparative study by Kristýna Bašná. "Income inequality and level of corruption in post-communist European countries between 1995 and 2014". *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 52/2 (2019): 93–104.

State Statistical Office (Ukrstat) has collected economic data for all the regions of Ukraine. The data on Ukraine were then made comparable by using the data for purchasing power adjustment by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW).[7]

Most Ukrainians of the older and medium generation of course know through their own experience that their country had a very rough start into the transformation. The Swedish economist Anders Åslund calculated for Russia that the crisis of the 1990s was worse than the World Economic Crisis in the United States in the 1930s. The same is certainly true for Ukraine.[8] This is not only visible in the sharply reduced GDP, but in many other data as well, such as on unemployment, personal incomes, poverty rates, etc. Since independence, Ukraine has lost more than seven million inhabitants, around one seventh of its population.

There are multiple causes why Ukraine went through such a deep crisis in the 1990s. In a broader comparative vision of Eastern Europe, one should distinguish between "old states" that existed before 1989, although with limited sovereignty (such as Poland and Hungary), and "new states" that became independent in 1991. The dissolution of the Soviet Union weakened the state and the existing legal frameworks, and of course also the economy of its successor states because it interrupted many supply chains. The weakness of the state and of competent governance was a structural problem, for which the neoliberal reformers of the 1990s were badly prepared. In fact, their preoccupation with privatization, liberalization and

7 See the publications of the State Statistical Service of Ukraine and the Statystychnyi zbirnyk "Rehiony Ukrainy". Much data can be accessed on the website of the State Statistical Office of the Ukraine (http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/, and following the links "publikatsii", "rehional'na statystyka" and for earlier years "arkhiv").
The data in Hryvnia were then converged by foreign exchange rates and purchasing power parities into Euros. These data were taken from the *WIIW Handbook 2012*, Countries by indicator, Table II/4.18. (for the convergence position, see 64).

8 Anders Åslund. *Building Capitalism. The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc*. Cambridge 2002, 118.

deregulation and their ideologically rooted anti-statism further weakened the state structures.

The depression of the 1990s was a common pattern of the post-Soviet states, and also resulted in a growing distance from Poland, which started to recover economically in 1991/92.

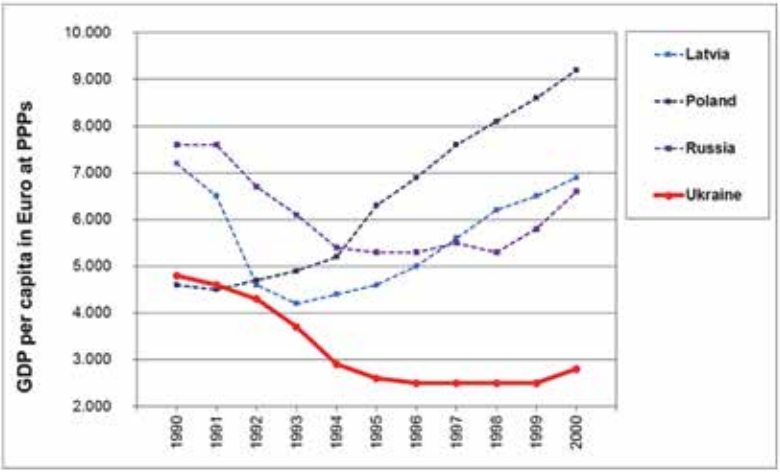

Fig. 1: Transformation Crisis und Economic Growth 1990–2000
Source: WIIW Report – Table I/1.5

Of course, the GDP is a limited and recently increasingly disputed economic indicator, but it has the single advantage that it can be tracked down to the regional and local level.

Statistics on life expectancy reveal more about living standards, poverty and the quality of the health and education systems. That encompassing indicator reveals that independent Ukraine plunged indeed into a very deep economic and social crisis, even without a phase of radical reforms like in neighboring Russia under Yegor Gaidar. The greater continuity is visible in statistics on life expectancy; these did not decline as deeply as in Russia, but after the millennium, when it recovered there, it stagnated at a low level.

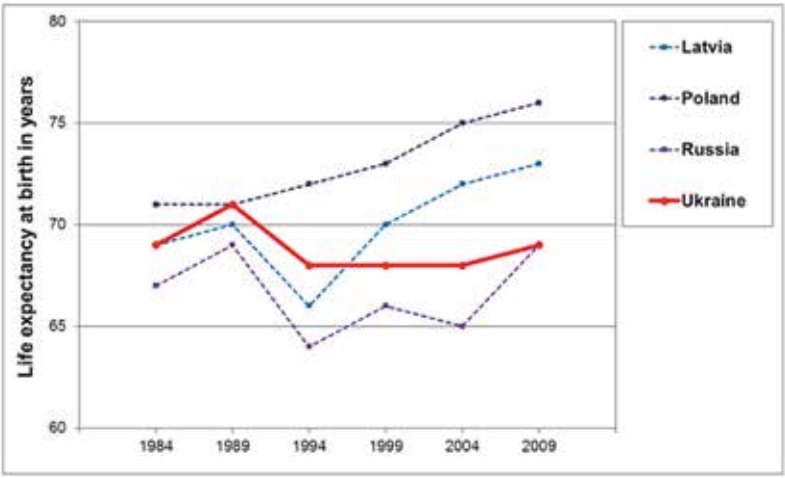

Fig. 2: Life Expectancy 1984–2009
Source: World Bank Data Catalog

Considering the disastrous macroeconomic context, it remains remarkable that Ukraine has remained stable and peaceful for more than two decades, and that a civil society emerged that took up defending it against an anti-liberal backlash, we might even say counter-revolution, as occurred in Putin's Russia and more recently in Hungary.

Yet, five structural problems have been burdening Ukraine since independence: The privatization in favor of the *nomenklatura* (among them were also young party activists) has benefited an upcoming class of oligarchs, associated with an undemocratic amalgam of economic and political power, pervasive corruption, the dependence on old industry exports, and the neglect of agriculture and rural areas, on which this article will focus later on.

After the turn of the millennium, Ukraine recovered somewhat from its previous economic downturn. The annual GDP growth rates reached a minimum of 5 % in the first half of the decade; in 2004 Ukraine even registered a record growth of 12.1 % (this was a record not only for Ukraine, but for all post-communist states).

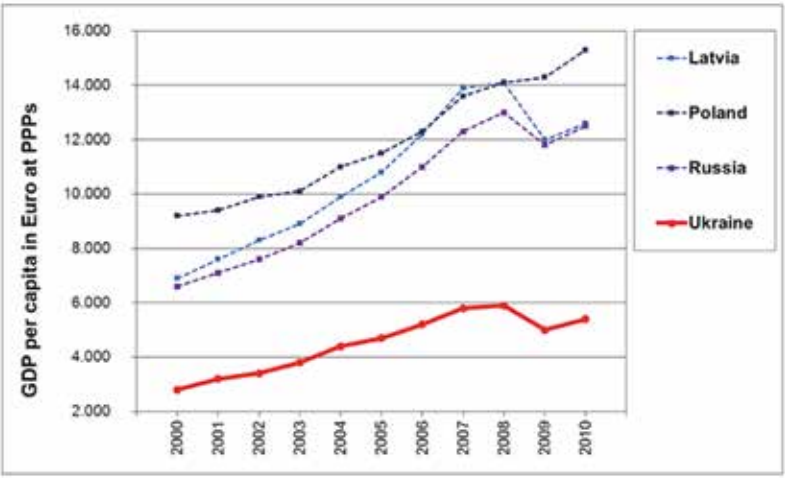

Fig. 3: Economic Growth 2000–2010
Source: WIIW Report – Table I/1.5

That also means that the so-called Orange Revolution would be the first revolution ever that occurred in a phase of economic boom. If one takes the criteria developed by Hannah Arendt, Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly and other major theoreticians of revolution,[9] the Orange Revolution was only a regime change, but did not result in a lasting political and social transformation. The main reason was not just a lack of change at the top, but the fact that the so-called revolution did not spread to the provinces as in Czechoslovakia in 1989 or in Poland in 1980/81 and to a lesser degree in 1989.[10] In 2004, the

9 See Hannah Arendt. *On Revolution*. New York 1963, 13–52; Charles Tilly. *European Revolutions 1492–1992*. Oxford 1992, 8; Theda Skocpol. *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. Cambridge 1994.

10 See James Krapfl. *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989–1992*. Ithaca 2013. There is no comparable book on Poland, but the trade union movement Solidarność was able to establish itself throughout the entire country and even among peasants already in 1980/81. See on the sad history of Solidarność after 1989: David Ost. *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe*. Ithaca 2005.

oligarchic power cartels remained mostly intact, and the opportunity for a deep, structural change was missed. Things became worse when Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko, the two leaders of the mass demonstrations, became embroiled in a personal feud.

The economic boom since the year 2000 was shaky as well, and the new wealth was unevenly distributed. This becomes especially obvious in view of the statistics not about regional inequality. The data below reveal the rising gap between the per capita GDP in the capital Kyiv compared with two very poor regions in the West, the Ternopil und Transcarpathian Oblast.

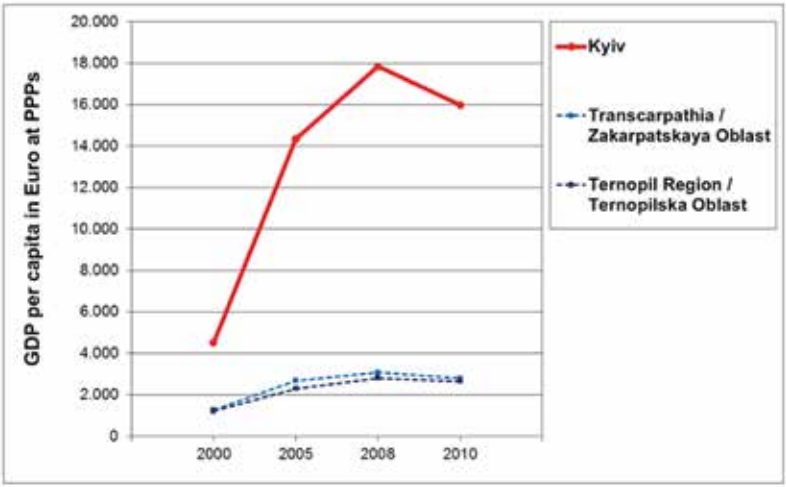

Fig. 4: Regional Divergence in the Ukraine
Source: Statistical Volume "Regions of Ukraine"

The rural regions almost stagnated; in 2000 their GDP was, adjusted in current exchange rates and purchasing power, little more than 100 Euros a month. Of course, one should consider the remittances of labor migrants and the grey economy which are not counted in GDP statistics, while capital cities profit from the fact that most big companies have their seat there and thus their turnover is accounted as part of the regional or local GDP.

Nevertheless, it remains a fact that the per capita GDP of some Ukrainian regions is lower than in developing countries such as Morocco or large parts of India. That needs to be mentioned to an international and Central European audience because some of these poor areas are located ca. 500 km from Austria or Germany, and having those pockets of poverty has of course an impact on the entire larger region of Central and Eastern Europe, above all through labor migration.

The lack and decay of public infrastructure in rural districts in former Galicia or the Carpathians is very visible. The problem is not just bad streets, but also a lack of companies which could process the food, wood and other produce that these poor regions can still produce. Hence, the closure of so many former kolkhozes, dairies, wood-processing plants, etc. is catapulting these areas of Ukraine back to an array of structural disadvantages last seen in the late 19th century. The regional disparities are, as mentioned, an obstacle to economic growth in the entire country and serve to create miserable living conditions for millions of people.

A very common socioeconomic reaction to poverty is labor migration, which is briefly mentioned here because historians should study transformation likewise "from below". Millions of Ukrainians migrated to the EU (or until 2014 into the Russian Federation) in order to find a job. But this employment has its social sideeffects. Labor migration splits families and leaves children with only one parent or necessitates that children grow up watched over by their grandparents. In Poland, these children are labeled "*Euro-sieroty*" – literally "Euro-orphans". Their parents have the advantage that they do not need a visa to return home or work abroad because of freedom of movement in the Schengen Area (which, however, is no longer intact since the multiple ravages of Covid-19[11]).

11 This article was originally commissioned by the DUHK in 2014. I have sought to update it as much as possible. Most data on Ukraine are contained in my earlier book *Europe since 1989*, and I am grateful to Lena Lopatschowa for her support in obtaining more recent data on regional GDP.

In Ukraine the situation for the children of labor migrants used to be much worse because of the visa requirements to enter the EU, border controls and the fear of deportation if on a tourist visa that has expired. The lifting of visa requirements by the EU has improved the situation for split families. Nevertheless, the problem of geographic distance remains except for Ukrainians working in neighboring countries. Therefore, sometimes children fail to see their parents for years on end. These aspects of the economic transformation deserve further studies as much as the political reforms from above, because they also are decisive for the formation of human capital, a factor pivotal for Poland's economic performance since 1991.

Compared to Ukraine, the situation in rural Poland has improved significantly since its accession to the EU, and "Polska B" is not as poor as it used to be. That is due to the transfer payments from Brussels, which have surpassed the legendary Marshall Plan, which was pivotal for the economic recovery of postwar Western Europe. The rising difference between rural Poland and rural Ukraine can be proven by data, or on a more anthropological level by simply crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border. However, the EU accession and the prior accession process partially invalidate the often-made comparisons between Poland and Ukraine. EU membership provided incomparably better preconditions for investors, political reforms, administrative reforms (an often underrated factor in Polish "success stories" that focus on economic reforms) and the general populace.

Poland has profited from the EU accession specifically by reducing regional divergence. While the gap between poor and rich regions in Poland has decreased since the EU accession of Poland in 2004, Ukraine has retained one of the highest regional disparities of all transformation countries. This great internal divergence started in the mid-1990s, slightly delayed compared to Poland, but with comparable results. In 2005 Kyiv had a GDP per capita that was six times higher than that of most rural regions in Ukraine (Poland had reached such a disparity around the turn of millennium). While

Poland has slowly reduced regional disparities since 2004, the opposite is the case in Ukraine. According to the most recent data available from Ukrstat for 2018, the discrepancy between Kyiv and poor rural regions has risen to a ratio of 7:1.[12] In contrast to the century's turn, poverty is not restricted to the Galician regions, about which Szczepanowski has written in his book on the "Galician misery" in the late 19th century.[13] Chernivtsi is now at the bottom of all regions in regard to regional GDP, and there are pockets of poverty in Central Ukraine. On the positive side, one can note that not only Kyiv but also other large cities such as Kharkiv and Dnipro are doing relatively well. But these cities and oblasts could also attain higher growth rates if they were surrounded by regions that were less poor.

These regional GDP statistics do not mean that village dwellers in the west and southwest are necessarily worst off. Ukrainian peasants have at least the possibility to cultivate their own food in a garden or a plot of land, and the GDP of the Bukovina would be higher if it included the remittances of people working in or commuting to the nearby EU. But since labor migrants earn their income somewhere abroad, it is not added to the GDP of their home region. Moreover, the national and regional GDP statistics do not take into account purchasing power differences. As is common knowledge, life in Kyiv is several times more expensive than in a Carpathian village, but that is not taken into account in standard national or regional GDP statistics.

12 See Ukrstat, Valovyi rehional'nyi produkt u rozrakhunku na odnu osobu, 2018. According to these statistics, the per capita GDP (in Hryvnia) in 2018 for Kyiv was 283,097 Hryvnia, while for the Oblast Chernivtsi it was only 37,441 hrn. Zakparpatska oblast was second lowest with 41,706 hrn. See http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/, and following the link "rehional'na statystyka" (accessed April 19, 2021).

13 See Stanisław Szczepanowski. *Nędza Galicji w cyfrach i program energicznego rozwoju gospodarstwa krajowego*. Lwów 1888. Szczepanowski made comparisons which were at the time very original with India, China and southern Europe.

Moreover, poor people in cities and industrial areas rarely have a garden or other means to make ends meet on a low subsistence level. Hence, living standards for the lower middle class and the poor in industrial centers in Eastern Ukraine and southeastern Ukraine might be even lower than in Bukovina and rural Galicia, although the per capita GDP is much higher in large cities. This needs to be mentioned because it might partially explain the higher participation in the 2014 revolution in urban centers, along with other causative factors such as the presence of students, higher levels of education and politicization, and the presence of a larger middleclass with small entrepreneurs, who were a bastion of the 'Maidans' mobilized in various Ukrainian cities. One may also conclude that the Revolution of Dignity was a genuine social revolution, and not just a political one.

Ukraine had the misfortune prior to the revolution that the kind of investment common in its centers of growth was not sustainable. Similar to other latecomers to transformation like Romania or Latvia, most of the foreign direct investments in Ukraine were allocated to the finance and real estate sector, or for buying up companies. This marks a major difference with Poland, Czechoslovakia (and its successor states), as well as Hungary and Slovenia, which initiated their reforms already in 1989/90 and were able to attract considerable direct foreign investments in commerce and industry.[14] Besides timing, geography was likewise a crucial factor; international investors calculated that they could readily export the produce from these western-most post-socialist countries to the older established EU countries. Western investors came to southeastern Europe and the post-Soviet countries later on and with smaller funds on hand. The table below displays the difference between the FDI in Poland and Ukraine.

14 On these two kinds of foreign investment and their impact during the global financial crisis, see: Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits. *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*. Ithaca 2012. Although the study does not cover Ukraine, nonetheless much of value can be learnt from it.

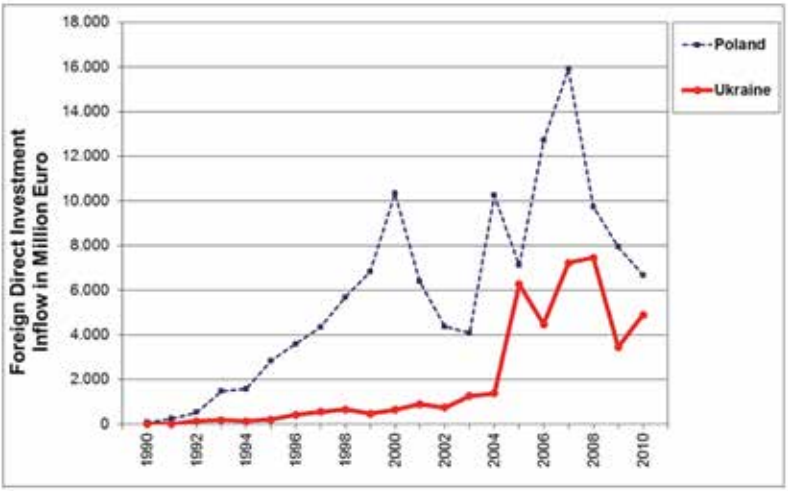

Fig. 5: Foreign Direct Investment 1990–2010
Source: WIIW Report – Table I/2.8

But what is even more important was the difference in the quality of the FDIs. Ukraine obtained much more speculative capital steered toward the banking and the real estate sector. Moreover, a high proportion of the lending was dished out as foreign currency credit.[15] In Ukraine, almost 50 % of the entire lending was in foreign currencies such as the Euro, Swiss Francs or Japanese Yen. This was fine as long as the local currency was stable, but as a result of the crisis of 2008/09, the Hryvnia was devalued several times.

One can summarize that Ukraine's decade of growth ended in a bubble that burst with the global crisis.[16] That is also true for the

15 J. Stiglitz has criticized this as 'predatory lending'. Joseph Stiglitz. *Im freien Fall. Vom Versagen der Märkte zur Neuordnung der Weltwirtschaft*. Munich 2011, 216–18. On the proportion of foreign currency credit in Ukraine, see also: http://derstandard.at/1289608695744/Fremdwaehrungskredite-Kartenhaus-aus-Euro-Franken-und-Yen-wackelt (accessed October 5, 2021).

16 The most encompassing analysis of the global financial crisis is provided in Adam Tooze. *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*. London 2018.

capital Kyiv, where the boom suddenly ended in 2009. This is visible in the statistics below that compare Kyiv with other cities in the larger region of Central and Eastern Europe.

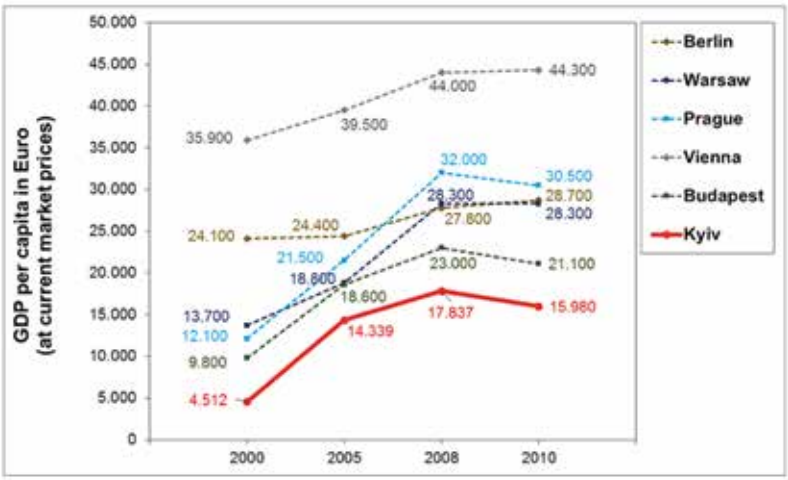

Fig. 6: Economic Development of the Capital Cities
Source: Eurostat Regional Statistics + Statystychnyi zbirnyk "Rehiony Ukrainy" (Kyiv)

Why did the bubble burst so messily? A major reason was the aforementioned foreign currency loans. Besides Latvia (where foreign currency loans amounted to 90 % of all lending), Ukraine was the worst hit by the global financial and economic crisis, and its GDP shrank by more than 15 % in 2009.

Like Latvia, Romania and Hungary, the Ukrainian state budget and economy could only be saved by a "rescue package" from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Of course, that package was also designed to save the foreign and national banks which had granted the Ukrainian government, companies and consumers very large credits. The foreign currency credit bubble in Eastern Europe must be considered as a joint failure of the East and the West, but above all of Western investors who poured excessive funding into post-communist Europe based on exaggerated expectations of profit.

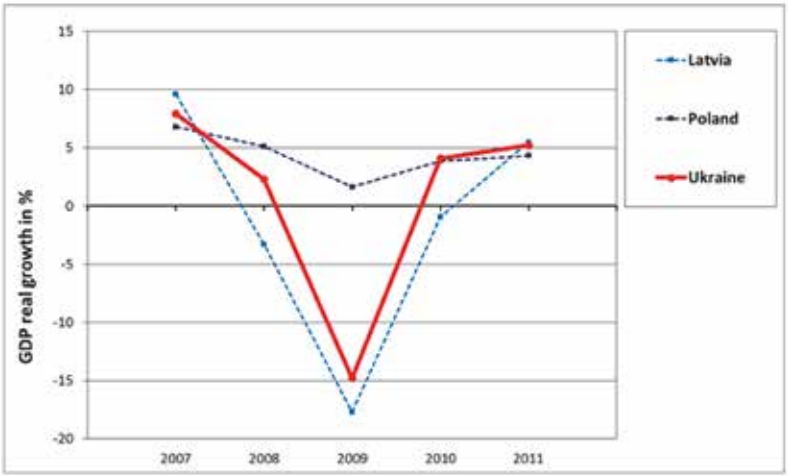

Fig. 7: Recession 2008
Source: WIIW Report – Table I/1.6

The roots of Eastern European bubble and the over-investment of foreign currency credit in Ukraine was neoliberal deregulation of global finance around the turn of the millennium. Adam Tooze has shown that in his seminal book on the crash; I have also discussed the strategies and practice of Western banks and other investors in Eastern Europe in *Europe since 1989*.[17]

Obviously, the West did not want to see Ukraine descend into a default and political chaos. Hence, the IMF created a "rescue package", that was also supported by the EU. Leaving aside the questions who was actually rescued, the IMF package could have served as a kind of starting fund for the new government under Viktor Yanukovych, who came to power just in the right moment to reap the benefits of that program. As Ukrainians learned that most of the money was basically stolen, while the debt remained. This was another major precondition for the revolution in the winter of 2013/14.

17 See Ther. *Europe since 1989*, the chapter on 'predatory lending', 221–226.

The history of *post-communist transformation* in Ukraine ended with the toppling of Yanukovych in 2014. Since then it has managed a peaceful transition of political power twice, with two new presidents and parliaments elected. As I stated before, that is not a small achievement. Moreover, the attack of Russia was counter-productive, it did not split Ukraine along linguistic lines, but rather united the country and helped to cover over older regional and political differences. Ukraine suffered territorial losses with few chances to regain control of Crimea or Donetsk and Luhansk in the near future, but it stabilized as a state, a democracy and a nation.

Nevertheless, the economic situation remains difficult, because Russia prevents a transformation in peace, and this serves to deter international and domestic investors. Covid-19 is creating economic havoc and deepening social inequality. What will the country need in the near future, besides some degree of international and domestic political stability? Historians are not trained in the arts of the policy advisor, but based on the experience of transformation up to 2014 and until the Covid-19 pandemic and its continuing ravages, it is clear that Ukraine now needs a post-oligarchic transformation, where power cartels, informal trusts and systemic corruption are destroyed or at least weakened, and the major faults of post-communist transformation are overcome. Unfortunately, recent research does not paint a rosy picture in this regard, since to date there has been only little institutional and elite change after the 2014 revolution.[18] Future economic reforms need to strengthen the urban and rural middle class, not a small group of oligarchs. As the mass demonstrations in 2004 and the revolution in 2014 demonstrate, Ukraine possesses sufficient human resources to be a more successful country.

Perhaps it is fitting to end with a personal note: In the winter of 2013/14, I was in close contact with Ukrainian friends and colleagues whom I knew from previous research stays (that involved

18 See Yuriy Matsiyevsky. "Revolution without regime change: The evidence from the post-Euromaidan Ukraine". *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51 (4) (2018): 349–359.

completely different topics). I was deeply impressed by the fund raising for the Maidan in Kyiv and other cities, the organization of transport to the capital, the changing shifts among the demonstrators, and the entire enterprise of popular social and political mobilization. If a society can organize this, it should be able to be much more successful economically than in the three decades since independence.

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Andrii Portnov

The Soviet Past in Ukrainian Politics of Memory (1991–2017)

Abstract: The article summarizes politics of memory of post-Soviet Ukraine since the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) until 2017, with the focus on state politics as conducted by five Ukrainian presidents: Leonid Kravchuk, Leonid Kuchma, Viktor Yushchenko, Viktor Yanukovych and Petro Poroshenko. It claims that in post-Soviet Ukraine, a single national historical narrative has not taken shape, and two narratives coexist and compete in society: a slightly modified Soviet paradigm and a nationalist narrative. The topics of history and language in Ukraine served as the ideal marker of political differences. At the same time, the more or less conscious strategy of preserving ambiguity by the authorities as a means of avoiding social conflict has until recently preordained cautious state politics of memory. The events of the Orange Revolution in 2004 showed the mobilizing potential of nationalism and democratic slogans, but also the dangers of regional divisions. All of this complexity was reflected in the Maidan protests of 2013–2014, which showed both the strength and the internal diversity of Ukrainian civil society. The 'Leninfall' and decommunization initiated on the Euromaidan grew in scope in the wake of Russian aggression and clearly showed that the problem of Ukraine's policies towards its Soviet past has a direct connection with the country's relations with contemporary Russia.
Key words: Ukraine, Soviet Union, Communist past, politics of memory, Euromaidan, decommunization, Leninfall, regionalism.

Attitudes towards the Soviet past permeate the cultural practices of contemporary Ukraine. In this article, I seek to demonstrate the multidimensionality, and more importantly, the contradictory nature of Ukraine's relationship to its experience of Sovietness (which is also multidimensional and complex) and to analyze the main components of this relationship. My focus is on official policies

of memory and the various responses to them by significant groups within society. I want to emphasize from the outset that the range of these responses and the degree of disagreement within society over them is substantially different from Ukraine's neighboring countries, where there is more of a consensus when it comes to memory. After the Maidan in 2013–2014, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the outbreak of war on the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (bordering Russia in eastern Ukraine), civic life in Ukraine took on new dimensions, especially in conjunction with the sudden incursion of physical violence into every sphere of that civic life. And it is precisely the subject of 'decommunization' in the context of the Maidan, the war, and the search for symbolic separation from Russia that has become the subject of embittered political, legal, and historiographical debates.

1. The Soviet Past and Post-Soviet Ukraine

Ukraine in its current borders and ethnic and social structures is largely the product of Soviet policy, which was in turn a string of responses and suggestions to the claims of different strands of the Ukrainian national movement, questions of foreign policy, and the Kremlin's changeable understanding of the nature of the Soviet order. Alongside repressive measures, customarily described as 'Russification,' in the Soviet Union nationality served as a "pervasively institutionalized social and cultural norm."[1] This was one of the reasons that the collapse of the Soviet regime took the form of the disintegration of a formally federal state.

A key characteristic of the Ukrainian experience of Sovietization was that the eastern, southern, and central parts of the country, including the capital of Kyiv, came under Bolshevik control as early

1 Rogers Brubaker. "Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism," in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism* ed. by John A. Hall. Cambridge 1998: 272–306, here 287.

as the end of 1919. From 1921, Soviet Ukraine experienced so-called *korenizatsiia* (that is, policies of support for national language and cultures),[2] which laid the groundwork for the above-mentioned "institutionalization of nationality." In 1932–33, Soviet Ukraine endured a large-scale man-made famine (which later came to be known as the Holodomor), to which no fewer than three million peasants fell victim.[3] In the second half of the 1930s, the republic was subjected to mass repressions, the elimination of the national intelligentsia, and reforms to the Ukrainian language that brought it closer to Russian.[4]

The region usually called "Western Ukraine" (former Eastern Galicia of the Habsburg Empire) and its main city, Lviv, were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1939 as a result of German and Soviet military aggression against Poland. After the end of World War II, this newly-acquired territory (like Bukovyna, taken from Romania, and Transcarpathia, taken from Hungary) was incorporated into the USSR. The post-war Sovietization of these western Ukrainian regions was distinctive in several important ways. On the one hand,

2 For more on *korenizatsiia*, see Terry Martin. *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca 2001; Francine Hirsch. *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca 2005; Elena Borisenok. *Fenomen sovetskoi ukrainizatsii 1920–1930-e gody*. Moscow 2006.

3 Within the copious literature on the 1932–1933 Great Famine, for recent works see Timothy Snyder. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York 2010; Norman M. Naimark. *Stalin's Genocides*. Princeton – Oxford 2010; Alexander J. Motyl, Bohdan Klid. *The Holodomor Reader. A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1932–33 in Ukraine*. Edmonton 2012. On the work of the influential Ukrainian scholar of the Holodomor, see S. V. Kul'chyts'kyi. *Holod 1932–33 rr. v Ukraini iak henotsyd: trudnosti osmyslennia*. Kyiv 2007. For an example of the subject's treatment in recent Russian historiography, see Viktor Kondrashin. *Golod 1932–33 godov: tragediia rossiisko i derevni*. Moscow 2008. For an overview of scholar "genocide debates" around the Great Famine, see Andrii Portnov. "Der Holodomor als Genozid. Historiographische und juristische Diskussionen". *Osteuropa* 1–2 (2020): 31–50.

4 Cf. George Y. Shevelov. *The Ukrainian Language in the First Half of the Twentieth Century (1900–1941): Its State and Status*. Cambridge 1989.

one of the components of this Sovietization was the ethnic Ukrainianization of Lviv and other cities, which had been predominantly Polish and Jewish before the war.[5] On the other, Soviet support for Ukrainian language and culture in the region was limited to the Soviet canon, while a taboo was imposed on those elements of national culture that were declared to be "bourgeois nationalist." A key component of repressive measures was the banning of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) in 1946 (though this was officially formulated as a voluntary dissolution and incorporation into the Russian Orthodox Church).[6]

Having been part of Poland until 1939 and not having experienced either the man-made famine or the Soviet repressions of the 1930s, western Ukraine was an important center of Ukrainian language, culture and oppositional sentiments in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkrSSR). The anti-Soviet nationalist underground was suppressed at the beginning of the 1950s, and repressive measures, after the underground was finally subdued, affected no less than 10 percent of the population there.[7] It appears that the strength of the nationalist underground was one of the reasons that in western Ukraine – unlike in western Belarus, which was annexed at the same time – Soviet authorities opted not to rush to force the

5 For more on the Sovietization of Lviv, see William J. Risch. *The Ukrainian West: Culture and the Fate of Empire in Soviet Lviv*. Cambridge 2011; Tarik Cyril Amar. *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City Between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists*. Ithaca 2015.

6 A general overview of the history of the UGCC can be found in Bohdan R. Bociurkiw. *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939–1950)*. Edmonton 1996.

7 Among the many works on the Ukrainian nationalist underground, one that is particularly laudable is Grzegorz Motyka. *Ukraińska partyzantka, 1942–1960*. Warsaw 2006. See also a comparative work on anti-Soviet underground movements in Eastern Europe: Grzegorz Motyka, Rafał Wnuk, Tomasz Stryjek, and Adam F. Baran. *Wojna po wojnie. Antysowieckie podziemie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach 1944–1953*. Gdańsk – Warsaw 2012.

local press to operate in Russian.[8] In any case, after the end of World War II, the boundaries of the Ukrainian SSR moved significantly to the west and now included territories where Ukrainian was the language of the cities (and not just the villages, as it had been in the eastern and southern regions of the republic), where local memory of anti-Soviet resistance was preserved, and where the UGCC continued to operate underground.

The borders of contemporary Ukraine were established in 1954, when the Crimean peninsula was 'transferred' from Soviet Russia to Soviet Ukraine by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. This transfer, prompted mainly by considerations of infrastructure (the peninsula's dependence on supplies of water, energy, and food from mainland Ukraine), took place ten years after the forced deportation of Crimean Tatars from the peninsula on the alleged grounds of collective "treason against the Motherland" during the Nazi occupation.[9] Crimean Tatars were not granted the right to return to their place of origin after the renunciation of Stalin's cult of personality in 1956 and were forced to wait until the late 1980s to be allowed to do so.

Overall, Ukraine occupied a unique place in the contradictory structure of the Soviet Union – a formally federal state – in which the state-forming nation (Russians) were essentially deprived, as Yuri Slezkine has aptly observed, of their own national apartment.[10]

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8 Roman Szporluk. "West Ukraine and West Belorussia: Historical Tradition, Social Communication, and Linguistic Assimilation," in *Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* by Roman Szporluk. Stanford 2000: 109–138.

9 For more on the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, their exile in Central Asia and return to the late Soviet Ukraine, see Gul'nara Bekirova. *Piv stolittia oporu. Kryms'ki tatary vid vyhnannia do povernennia (1941–1991 roky). Narys politychnoi istorii*. Kyiv 2017; Brian Glyn Williams. *The Crimean Tatars. From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest*. Oxford 2016; Greta Lynn Uehling. *Beyond Memory. The Crimean Tatars' Deportation and Return*. Basingstoke 2004. See also Kerstin S. Jobst. *Geschichte der Krim: Iphigenie und Putin auf Tauris*. Berlin 2020.

10 Yuri Slezkine. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism". *Slavic Review*, 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414–452. For more on the problem of the place and role of the Russian nation in

In the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR), there was no distinct Communist Party or Academy of Sciences, as there was in Ukraine. The sense that "the Russian nation, its history and culture dissolved into Union-wide history and culture" elicited concern and objections from some Russian nationalistic groups, including segments of the academic elite of the USSR.[11] At the same time, from the point of view of some of the cultural elites of the union republics, the main problem and threat remained centralization and Russification. And although the formation of the Soviet cultural canon took place with the participation of local (including Ukrainian) party and intellectual elites, Ukrainian Soviet historians, for example, had much less room to maneuver ideologically than their colleagues in Moscow or Leningrad.[12]

The collapse of the Soviet Union was mainly the result of a profound internal crisis of the system, attested to by the failed military operation in Afghanistan (1979–1989) and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, and the incapacity of the Soviet planned economy to supply the population with consumer goods. The USSR collapsed along the borders of its fifteen republics. Their independence movements emerged to a large extent in response to the disintegration of the center, although the Ukrainian SSR and its leadership played a particular role in the disintegration process.[13] In the late 1980s, beginning in Moscow, there was also a move to fill in the blank spots in history; the most resonant of these were the Molotov-Ribbentrop

Soviet nationalities policy, see David Brandenberger. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956.* Cambridge 2002.

11 See, for example, *Akademik Oleg Nikolaevich Trubachev. Ocherki. Materialy. Vospominaniia*. Moscow 2009: 135–162.

12 On the analysis of Ukrainian political and intellectual elites' participation in the formulation of Soviet ideology and policies in Ukraine, see Serhy Yekelchyk. *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination*. Toronto 2004.

13 On Ukraine's role in the collapse of the USSR, see Serhii Plokhy. *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*. New York 2014.

pact, which began World War II, and the mass shooting of Polish officers by the NKVD in Katyń in the spring of 1940.[14]

Recalling the last years of perestroika, the Kyiv historian Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi wrote that the majority of his colleagues lagged behind the rapidly-changing state of affairs, and their texts were already outdated by the time they made it into readers' hands.[15] The reason for such 'late comings' was, above all, that Ukrainian historians only began to elucidate a given previously-forbidden subject after Moscow had signaled its approval. This is why the first article that wrote approvingly about the leading Ukrainian historian who had established that the Ukrainian historical process was distinct from Russia's, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, was published not in Ukraine but in the Moscow-based newspaper "Izvestiia" (12 February 1988).[16] The fact of the Great Famine 1932 –1933, which was a taboo in Soviet times,[17] was first acknowledged in the Moscow-based magazine "Kommunist" in November 1987, in an article by the agrarian historian Viktor Danilov.[18] And it was in Moscow that the crucial decisions were made regarding the legalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (which was able to emerge from the underground in September 1989,

14 For more on Katyń and the memory of this criminal act committed by Soviet authorities, see Aleksandr Gur'ianov (ed.). *Ubity v Katyni. Kniga pamiati pol'skikh voennoplennykh – uznikov Kozel'skogo lageria NKVD, rasstreliannykh po resheniiu Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) ot 5 marta 1940 g.* Moscow 2015; Aleksander Etkind, Rory Finnin, Uilleam Blacker et al. *Remembering Katyn*. Malde 2012; Claudia Weber. *Krieg der Täter. Die Massenerschiessungen von Katyn*. Hamburg 2015.

15 S. V. Kul'chyts'kyi. "Istoriia i chas. Rozdumy istoryka ". *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 4 (1992): 10.

16 S. Tsikora. "K chitateliu cherez polveka". *Izvestiia* (February 12, 1988). For more on Hrushevsky, his academic works and their role in the Ukrainian national movement, see Serhii Plokhy. *Unmaking Imperial Russia. Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History*. Toronto 2005.

17 On Soviet strategies and practices of the Holodomor denial, see D. B. Bedeneev, and D. B. Budkov. *Zaruchnytsia hlobal'noho protystoiannia: trahediia Velykoho Holodu 1932–1933 rr. v Ukraini u konteksti "kholodnoi viiny" (1945–1991 rr.)*. Kyiv 2013.

18 V. P. Danilov. "Oktiabr' i agrarnaia politika partii". *Kommunist* 16 (1987): 28–38.

after forty years) and the return of Crimean Tatars to Crimea beginning in 1989.

Ukraine's declaration of independence was approved by the Supreme Soviet of the UkrSSR on 24 August 1991, immediately after the failed putsch in Moscow and Mikhail Gorbachev's ouster as president of the USSR. On 1 December 1991, 90.32 % of voters cast their vote in favor of Ukraine's independence. It was only in Crimea that support for independence was not overwhelming (54.19 % were in favor); in the remaining oblasts, including those in the south and east, the percentage of votes in favor of independence was no lower than 80 % (in Dnipropetrovsk 90.66 %, in Kharkiv 86.33 %, in Donetsk 83.9 %).[19] To understand these figures, it is important to remember that millions of people viewed political independence as, among other things, a path to the quick resolution of economic problems. As early as the late 1980s, political slogans calling for the transfer of more economic power to the republics were being used by miners on strike in the Donbas, a region bordering Russia where coal mining dominated. The economic reality of the early post-Soviet years quickly turned these optimistic expectations into deep disillusionment and strengthened feelings of nostalgia for the 1970s (the Brezhnev years) associated with relative social stability.

The Ukrainian state that emerged as a result of the disintegration processes of the late 1980s and early 1990s – the *de jure* and *de facto* successor to the UkrSSR – granted the right to citizenship to everyone living on its territory, regardless of their knowledge of Ukrainian or other ethno-linguistic traits. At the same time, post-Soviet Ukraine was immediately confronted with the problem of historical legitimacy, which was worsened by the fact that there was no turnover of elites in the country. Symbolic of this was the 1991 election of Leonid Kravchuk, a high-ranking Soviet functionary, to the presidency. Isolated former dissidents who were co-opted into the upper

19 For more on the early years of independence, see Volodymyr Lytvyn. *Politychna arena Ukraini: diiovi osoby ta vykonavtsi*. Kyiv 1994; Georgiy Kasianov. *Ukraina 1991–2007. Ocherki noveishei istorii*. Kyiv 2008.

echelons of power did not last long there as a rule; they played more of an ornamental role, legitimizing the post-Soviet political elite.

An important consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union, though short-lived, was the outlawing of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), declared by the Supreme Soviet of the UkrSSR in August 1991. Not all that long after, on 19 June 1993, the founding meeting of a new party was held in Donetsk; this new party, after cursory discussion, decided to keep the old name: Communist Party of Ukraine. And in the next elections, in 1994, the Communists got 100 seats in parliament (one quarter of the total). The 'new' Communist Party of Ukraine relied less on Marxism-Leninism and more on slogans calling for integration with Russia and the "defense of East Slavic civilization." But most importantly, the CPU was a very convenient partner for post-Communist political elites. In December 2001, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine declared the 1991 ban on the CPU to be unconstitutional.[20]

2. Regional Differences and an Ambivalent Center

The fact that social and economic expectations were not going to be attainable, which was already clear by 1992, had a serious impact on processes of regulating the new state's symbolic landscape. The fundamental question of how to relate to the Soviet past and its symbols was decided with an ambivalence that was characteristic of post-Soviet Ukraine. Importantly, despite the fact that Ukraine was a unitary state, this question was answered at the level of local elected authorities, which led to significant differences between regional initiatives. On 1 August 1990, by a decision of the city council of people's deputies, the Lenin monument in Chervonohrad, in Lviv oblast, was taken down. Other localities in eastern Galicia soon followed suit. In Lviv the Lenin monument was replaced by a

20 Cf. the narrative of the history of the CPU by its permanent head, Petro Symonenko. *Gazeta 2000* 24 (14–20 June 2013).

monument to Taras Shevchenko, the Ukrainian national poet who had no statue in Soviet Lviv. In other localities, Lenin was often replaced by monuments and plaques dedicated to the leaders of the local nationalist movement, especially Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych.

The Ukrainian underground's history can by no means be reduced to its anti-Soviet aspects; it also entailed the ethnic cleansing of the Polish civilian population of Volhynia, with tens of thousands of victims,[21] collaboration in Nazi policies of Jewish extermination,[22] and cruel massacres of undesirable representatives of other currents of Ukrainian political life. But it was the anti-Soviet struggle after the end of World War II that became the main justification for the commemoration of Stepan Bandera, a political terrorist and the leader of the radical wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), who spent nearly the entire war in a special barracks at the German concentration camp Sachsenhausen and was killed by a Soviet agent in Munich in 1959[23]; and also of Roman Shukhevych, the supreme commander of the underground Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), who was killed in an operation that revealed his hiding place in 1950. The post-Soviet regional canonization of Bandera is a good example of an external break from the Soviet

21 On the Volhynian massacre of 1943, see Grzegorz Motyka. *Od rzezi wołyńskiej do akcji "Wisła". Konflikt polsko-ukraiński 1943–1947*. Cracow, 2011; Ihor Iljushyn. *UPA i AK. Protystoiannia v Zakhidnii Ukraini (1939–1945)*. Kyiv 2009; Timothy Snyder. "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943". *Past and Present* 179 (2003): 197–234. Compare Andrii Portnov. "Clash of Victimhoods: The Volhynian Massacre in Polish and Ukrainian Memory". https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/clash-of-victimhood-1943-volhynian-massacre-in-polish-and-ukrainian-culture/ (accessed April 3, 2021).

22 For more detail, see Per Anders Rudling. "The OUN, the UPA, and the Holocaust: A Study in the Manufacturing of Historical Myths". *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 2107 (2011).

23 A broad range of texts on Bandera and his historical depictions are collected in Tarik Cyril Amar, and Yaroslav Hrytsak (eds.). *Strasti za Banderoiu*. Kyiv 2010. Compare Andrii Portnov. "Bandera. An Invitation to a Calmer Conversation". http://khpg.org/en/1608808731 (accessed April 3, 2021).

ideological canon (in which Bandera was perhaps the main anti-hero). Conceived as an important element of the de-Sovietization of urban space, monuments to Bandera were, as a rule, restrained in their stylistic elements, mimicking (consciously or subconsciously) Soviet monuments to leading military commanders: the pedestals unfailingly high, the hero concentrated and steadfast.

If in Soviet Ukraine, street and city names had been a key ideological tool of the central authorities, in post-Soviet Ukraine the question of renaming was one that vividly illustrated regional differences. Street renaming was most consistently carried out in Lviv. The main task given to a special commission of historians created by the city council was to eliminate Soviet names. In adopting new names, their starting point was "reflecting the Ukrainian character of the city."[24]

In the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, a less consistent policy was adopted, which resulted in the coexistence of Soviet and post-Soviet names and monuments. The Lenin monument at the very heart of the city, on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square, formerly October Revolution Square), was taken down, but the nearby monument on Khreshchatyk Street, near Besarabs'ka market, was retained. Meanwhile, Odesa was an exception among southern and eastern Ukrainian cities. Thanks to the determined efforts of mayor Eduard Hurvits, Lenin monuments were systematically removed from the center of the city, and the streets were renamed. The example of Odessa demonstrates that regional differences in symbolic politics could result not only from differences in the local population's historical memory, but also from the motivations of local authorities.

On the whole, many people interpreted eastern Ukraine's passivity when it came to the symbolic reshaping of urban and rural space as evidence of the weakness of national self-consciousness,

24 For an analysis of Lviv's renaming, see Yaroslav Hrytsak, Viktor Susak. "Constructing a National City: The Case of L'viv", in *Composing Urban History and the Construction of Civic Identities* ed. by Jan Czapliczka, and Blair A. Rubel. Washington – Baltimore 2003: 140–164.

which still needed to be awakened. Moreover, this 'awakening' was understood not as a constructive project, but more as bringing them out of national lethargy, getting rid of Soviet amnesia, returning to the norm. The idea of "derussifying" Ukraine was not openly discussed, and it never became state policy. But as a means of explaining the behavior of a substantial segment of the country's population, it became quite widespread, including in nationalistic writings.

A key component of "derussification" (which, to repeat, was never systematically conducted on the state level) was expanding the use of the Ukrainian language, and simultaneously, ridding it of its Soviet codification in the 1930s and the post-war years. Ukrainian was granted the status of Ukraine's only state language; state protection for Russian was established by the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine. A key characteristic of the linguistic situation in Ukraine was that legal norms (for example, mandating that people who hold government posts know Ukrainian) were never observed in practice, and Russian continued to dominate in the spheres of politics, business, and mass media. At the same time, by the late 1990s, school education had almost entirely been switched over to Ukrainian (with the exception of Crimea), and Russian was taught much less in schools than it had been in the late Soviet period.[25] Situational bilingualism (choosing Ukrainian or Russian depending on the context) became another of Ukraine's unique characteristics, as did the lack of a politically homogenous group of 'Russian speakers.' In

25 On the linguistic situation in Ukraine, see Juliane Besters-Dilger (ed.). *Language Policy and Language Situation in Ukraine: Analysis and Recommendations*. Frankfurt am Main 2009; Volodymyr Kulyk. "Normalisation of Ambiguity: Policies and Discourses on Language Issues in post-Soviet Ukraine", in *History, Language and Society in the Borderlands of Europe* ed. by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa. Malmö 2006: 117–140. A detailed description of language policy and public discussions of language during Yanukovych's presidency can be found in Michael Moser. *Language Policy and the Discourse on Languages in Ukraine under President Viktor Yanukov*ych. Stuttgart 2013. On the post-Maidan tendencies, see Volodymyr Kulyk. "National Identity in Ukraine: Impact of Euromaidan and the War". *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (June 2016): 588–608.

other words, a person's language of everyday communication in post-Soviet Ukraine was not a definite indicator of his or her political preferences.

One aspect of history that needed to be integrated into an official narrative was the 'Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945,' the memory of which had been shaped in large part by Soviet policy from the second half of the 1960s through the 1980s. The main strategy for integrating the war into a new historical framework was its humanization: shifting attention to the heroic deeds and suffering of 'ordinary people' while simultaneously highlighting the mistakes and cruelty of the Soviet leadership. It is telling that even in western Ukraine, alongside the mass erection of memorials to the nationalist underground, memorials to Soviet soldiers were not taken down and did not become targets for vandalism. Their de-Sovietization and adaptation to new circumstances was often accomplished, for example, by adding a sculpture of the Virgin Mary mourning the fallen.[26]

A national narrative was embedded most systematically in history textbooks.[27] The issue of integrating the activities of the nationalist underground (the aforementioned UPA) into a new Ukrainian version of the war was solved by emphasizing its resistance to the Wehrmacht and drawing attention to the allegedly democratic evolution of the nationalist movement after 1943, while glossing over their anti-Polish and anti-Jewish activities. The goal of simple Ukrainians, whatever side they were fighting on, was, these textbooks declared, a flourishing and free Ukraine; this was supposed to lay the groundwork for post-1991 veteran reconciliation. At the same time, every attempt to gain official recognition of members of

26 A detailed analysis of one example of this sort of monument in the town of Slavskin Lviv oblast can be found in Andriy Portnov. "Pluralität der Erinnerung. Denkmäler und Geschichtspolitik in der Ukraine". *Osteuropa* 6 (2008): 197–210.

27 An analysis of school textbooks can be found in Natalia Iakovenko (ed.). *Shkil'na istoriia ochyma istorykiv-naukovtsiv. Materialy robochoi narady monitorynhu shkil'nykh pidruchnykiv z istorii Ukrainy.* Kyiv 2008.

the nationalist underground as war veterans and the rehabilitation of UPA on the state level ended in failure.

By the early 1990s, it was becoming clear that there were sharp contradictions in post-Soviet Ukraine's compromise-based politics of history. On the one hand, the Soviet authorities were depicted as something foreign and external. On the other, descriptions and official commemorations of World War II continued to be dominated by the Soviet ideologeme of the 'Great Patriotic War.' On the whole, Ukraine's disjointed symbolic initiatives pointed to a logic once formulated by the journalist Ostap Kryvdyk: "We should disentangle the honor, service, and talent of ordinary people living in the Soviet Union from the evil of the Soviet empire…Everything that was Ukrainian in this system was accidental to it, not intentional."[28] Such an argument postulated that Bolshevism was an external threat that forcibly drew Ukraine into its orbit, and the question of Ukrainians' participation in the creation of the USSR and the implementation of its policies was resolved by the juxtaposition of the 'merits and heroic deeds of individual people' and the 'evil of the Soviet empire.'

Nevertheless, history textbooks written roughly along these lines appeared in a pluralist landscape, where the main alternative national framework consisted of isolated elements of Soviet mythology, populism, and nostalgia, which could very roughly be called a 'post-Soviet' identity – a poorly articulated collection of concepts, the centerpiece of which was weak interest in the national question but principled opposition to exclusively ethnic nationalism.[29]

When speaking about the early years of Ukraine's independence (and, in actuality, the later ones as well), we should not exaggerate either the consciousness of local opposition to the official line or the intentionality of state policy. An unambiguous application of the concept of 'nationalizing state' to Ukraine raises more than a few

28 Ostap Kryvdyk. "Ukraine's Soviet Schism Narrowing". *Kyiv Post*, no. 9 (August 2007).

29 John-Paul Himka. "The Basic Historical Identity Formations in Ukraine: A Typology". *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28, no. 1–4 (2006): 483–500.

questions.[30] A much more useful way to understand its state policy is a recognition of its profound situationality. The search for a strategy that would legitimate Ukraine and its post-Soviet elites, but would also not spark national, linguistic, or religious conflict, with a constant eye on Russia, was done by feel. Society's interest in history and its blank spots decreased dramatically and lost the tinge of dissidence. Ukraine's socio-economic problems became the backdrop to early presidential elections in 1994, which were won by a Russian-speaking technocrat who in Soviet times had been director of a major rocket factory in Dnipropetrovsk: Leonid Kuchma.

3. Varieties of Centrism

During his presidential campaign, Kuchma promised to deepen ties with Russia and grant Russian official status. Being elected, however, he opted rather for a careful policy of centrism, one component of which was an intuitive understanding of history's potential to create conflict. And Kuchma did not want conflicts in that domain. Kuchma's centrism took the form of hijacking the middle-of-the-road (reasonable) position and simultaneously portraying his opponents as dangerous extremists: 'nationalists' to the right and 'Communists' to the left. Meanwhile the positive elements of his program consisted of the 'universal' values of stability and well-being, intermingled with contextual and ornamental ideological bromides.[31]

The innovation in Kuchma's politics of history was the regionalization of symbolic historical events. The power vertical became much more rigid under Kuchma than it had been under Kravchuk, and therefore in all cases the initiative and idea for a given celebration originated at the center and was merely carried out in the

30 Volodymyr Kulyk. "Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Beyond Brubaker". *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 27, no. 1–2 (2001): 197–221.

31 Volodymyr Kulyk. "Iazykovye ideologii v ukrainskom politicheskom i intellektual'nom diskursakh". *Otechestvennye zapiski* 1 (2007): 308–309.

regions. Sometimes anniversaries that should theoretically come into ideological conflict were celebrated in parallel, but in different places and addressed to different audiences. For example, the 85th birthday of Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, the former head of Soviet Ukraine who oversaw repressive measures against dissidents, was celebrated at the same time as the birthday of one of the leaders of the dissident movement, Viacheslav Chornovil, who had been imprisoned under Shcherbytsky.[32] This cynicism (or special form of pragmatism) was intended to deprive history of its mobilizing power. The commemoration of Shcherbytsky serves as a local example of what Sergei Oushakine has described as the secondary utilization of familiar Soviet symbolic constructions in the absence of symbols that could adequately reflect the post-Soviet situation and experience.[33] More than once, Kuchma used familiar Soviet symbols, endowing them with new meaning: for example, in 1998 the president created the honor of 'Hero of Ukraine' using the familiar Soviet five-pointed star, now hanging from a ribbon in the colors of the state flag (blue and yellow).

President Kuchma's attitude towards the subject of the Communist past can be described as striving not to solve but to allay the contradictions between the explanatory frameworks that competed and coexisted in the country: national and Soviet. This was reflected in state policy regarding the memory of the nationalist underground. Without calling into question the basic components of the narrative of the 'Great Patriotic War,' the government created a working group of historians that recommended that UPA fighters be recognized as war veterans.[34] Although this proposal did not find support on the national level, in parliament, in individual western

32 Vladimir Kravchenko. "Boi s ten'iu: sovetskoe proshloe v istoricheskoi pamiati sovremennogo ukrainskogo obshchestva". *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2004): 329–368, here 348.

33 Sergei Oushakine. "Byvshee v upotreblenii: postsovetskoe sostoianie kak forma afazii". *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 100 (2009), magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2009/100/ush55.html (accessed April 3, 2021).

34 For details see Wilfried Jilge. "The Politics of History and the Second World War in Post-Communist Ukraine (1986/1991–2004/2005)". *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 1 (2006): 50–81.

Ukrainian oblasts the regional councils decided to pay UPA veterans a pension out of the local budget.

Having won the 1994 elections with pro-Russian slogans, Kuchma had to find a new ideological linchpin for the next elections. This linchpin became the centrism described above, formulated in such a way that he could win over the right-leaning electorate. What made this possible was portraying Kuchma's main rival, the leader of the CPU, Petro Symonenko as a symbol of the 'Communist threat.' In the first round of the 1999 elections, Kuchma received 36.49 % of the vote. But the combined vote total of just three left-wing candidates was higher than Kuchma's, and Symonenko took second place with 22.24 %. In the second round, Kuchma positioned himself as a centrist and as the guarantor of the preservation of statehood in the face of the threat of the victory of a Communist candidate. This wiliness paid off. Kuchma garnered 56.25 %, Symonenko 37.8 % of the vote. In this way, Kuchma became the first (and so far, the only) president of Ukraine to win two elections in a row.

A year before the second presidential campaign, on 26 November 1998, Kuchma signed a decree creating Holodomor Memorial Day, which was meant to be commemorated on the fourth Saturday in November. This laid the initial groundwork for the politics of history of his successor, Viktor Yushchenko.

Towards the end of his second term as president, Leonid Kuchma published a book called "Ukraine is not Russia". At that moment, the president was seriously compromised by accusations of involvement in the killing of journalist Georgiy Gongadze (September 2000) and illegal arms sales to Iraq (it should be noted that the former has not been proven to this day, and the latter accusations were formally withdrawn), and the name of his book was seen in Ukraine as something ironic, rather than the product of serious reflection.[35] The relevance of both the name of the book and of Kuchma's presidential strategy only became clear five years later.

35 See Leonid Kuchma. *Ukraina ne Rossiia*. Moscow 2003. Compare Gleb Pavlovskii. "Perechityvaia zanovo: nedootsenennye mysli Leonida Kuchmy". https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/progulki-s-mechtatelyami/(accessed April 3, 2021).

4. The Dilemmas of 'Orange' Ukraine

The events of the 'Orange Revolution' in late 2004 had wide-reaching consequences for Ukrainian society.[36] On the ideological level, the political struggle of 2004 strengthened the popularity of the explanatory formula of "two Ukraines" which overestimated regional divisions inside the country.

The thesis of 'two Ukraines' (that is, a nationally conscious Western Ukraine and a Sovietized and Russified Eastern Ukraine) reduced the repertoire of motivations for political choice and identification to a simplified scheme, which created exclusive notions of norms and deviations from them. Moreover, it co-opted a discriminatory attitude towards part of the country's population that had taken root in intellectual publications in the mid-1990s and that was a reaction to the failure of efforts to 'Ukrainianize' Ukraine and the desire to place all responsibility for this failure on the authorities or on the strength of the Russo-Soviet tradition.[37]

The image of a 'deeply divided society' was presented not simply in terms of political conflict, but as a 'geopolitical war,' the war of 'European' western Ukraine against the 'zombified' and therefore 'pro-Russian' east. This portrayal was the main challenge facing the symbolic policies of new president Viktor Yushchenko. Sometime after the Orange Revolution, the local authorities in five oblasts in eastern Ukraine decreed that Russian had the status of a 'regional' language on the territory under their control. And although the goal of these decrees was purely propagandistic (according to international and Ukrainian law, only the central government has the

36 Among the books dedicated to the Orange Revolution, particularly valuable is Alexandra Goujon. *Révolutions politiques et identitaires en Ukraine et en Biélorussie (1988–2008)*. Paris 2009.

37 See in particular the essays of Mykola Riabchuk. *Dvi Ukrainy: real'ni mezhi, virtual'ni viini*. Kyiv 2003. For a fuller description of Ukrainian discussions elicited by Riabchuk's theses, see Ola Hnatiuk. *Pożegnanie z imperium. Ukraińskie dyskusje otoż samości*. Lublin 2003.

power to make such a decision), they emphasized the 'division' within the country.

Considering the existing situation, the rhetoric of Yushchenko's speeches on historical topics was dominated by the themes of reconciliation and the unity of the nation, including during World War II. The president posited that even if the nation had not been unified during the war in its means of fighting, it had been so in its goals: millions of Ukrainians (albeit on different sides of the front) "loved their state, their Ukraine…The entire Ukrainian nation fought as one for their state."[38]

The practice of juxtaposing and integrating seemingly antagonistic symbols is typical for Yushchenko's speeches. Addressing UPA veterans, he used the Soviet ideological construct of the 'Great Patriotic War'; in conjunction with his assertion that the Ukrainian nation was united during the war, the president mentioned both General Nikolai Vatutin, fatally wounded fighting against UPA partisans, and the UPA supreme commander Roman Shukhevych.

This policy of 'veteran reconciliation' quickly showed itself to be ineffective, much like Yushchenko's other unifying policies, whether in the ecclesiastical or linguistic sphere. Towards the end of his time in office, he was increasingly open about his one-sided support for the nationalistic narrative.

The subject that was of primary symbolic significance for Yushchenko was the formal international recognition of the 1932–33 man-made famine as "an act of genocide of the Ukrainian people."[39]

38 Quoted in Viktoria Sereda. "Osoblyvosti representatsii natsional'no-istorychnykh identychnostei v ofitsiinomu dyskursi prezydentiv Ukrainy i Rossii". *Sotsiolohiia: teoriia, istoriia, marketynh* 3 (2006): 191–212.

39 A description of state policies on Holodomor commemoration can be found in Georgiy Kasianov. *Danse macabre. Holod 1932–1933 rokiv u politytsi, masovii svidomosti ta istoriohrafii (1980-ti – pochatok 2000-kh).* Kyiv 2011. See also Wilfried Jilge. "Holodomor und Nation. Der Hunger im ukrainischen Geschichtsbild". *Osteuropa* 12 (2004): 147–163; Johann Dietsch. *Making Sense of Suffering. Holodomor and Holocaust in Ukrainian Historical Culture*. Lund 2006. Compare the most comprehensive analysis of the Ukrainian state memory politics in Oleksandr Hrytsenko. *Prezydenty i pamiat'. Polityka pamiati*

A symbolic act along these lines was adopted by the parliaments of more than ten countries, although the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada did so only after its counterparts in Estonia, Canada, Argentina, Hungary, Italy and Lithuania. The Verkhovna Rada recognized the Holodomor as a genocide on 28 November 2006. Deputies changed the text of the president's proposed legislation, replacing the phrase "genocide of the Ukrainian nation [*natsiia*]" with "genocide of the Ukrainian people [*narod*]," apparently seeing the first as ethnic and the second as political. According to the law that was passed, the "Holodomor of 1932–33" was an "inhuman method to annihilate millions of Ukrainians, serving as confirmation of the criminal nature of the authorities of the time," and publicly denying the genocide should be considered "desecration of the memory of millions of victims of the Holodomor as well as disparagement of the Ukrainian people."[40]

The 75th anniversary of the Holodomor in 2008 was the key event in Yushchenko's symbolic politics. In conjunction with the occasion, memorials were established in Kyiv and outside Kharkiv.[41] The SBU organized a series of exhibitions of archival documents; regional "Memorial Books" with lists of those who died of hunger were published; in most schools there were lessons dedicated to the Holodomor. In officials' public appearances, the phrase "Holodomor genocide" (*Holodomor-henotsyd*) became customary.

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prezydentiv Ukrainy (1994–2014): pidhruntia, poslannia, realizatsiia, rezul'taty. Kyiv 2017.

40 Law of Ukraine Nr. 376-V "On the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine." 28 November 2006. Available at http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/376–16 (accessed April 3, 2021).

41 Across the country, by the end of Yushchenko's presidency, there were no fewer than 400 physical memorials to the victims of the Holodomor. The majority of these are unassuming crosses in cemeteries or small monuments (some erected before Yushchenko came to power). See an attempt to catalog these monuments: Anna Kaminsky (ed.). *Erinnerungsorte an den Holodomor 1932/33 in der Ukraine*. Leipzig 2008.

Observers described the political significance of the active exploitation of the subject of the mass famine of 1932–33 as a means of symbolic demarcation from the Soviet past, a project of 'rebirth' for the memory of a tragedy that took place precisely in southern and eastern Ukraine. Furthermore, for Yushchenko the subject of the Holodomor was not so much a political calculation as a manifestation of his deeply personal connection to the subject and his interest in the history of Ukraine in general. The president even appeared in "The Living," a documentary film about the famine by the director Serhii Bukovsky, where he talked about the extinction of his native village in Sumy oblast.

The Orange Revolution ended with a peaceful rerun of the second round of presidential elections, which came about as the result of mass protests and compromise among Ukrainian elites, with the participation of international arbiters. From the very beginning of his presidency, the powers of which were seriously limited by constitutional reform, not to mention the exaggerated image of a 'divided country,' Viktor Yushchenko proved himself to be a weak president. In the politics of memory, this weakness was clearly visible in his inability to put his ideas into action in southern and eastern Ukraine. For example, the local authorities in Dnipropetrovsk refused to carry out a presidential decree mandating the removal of monuments to Soviet figures who were guilty of Communist crimes. On 2 July 2007, the commercial court of Poltava oblast ruled that the actions of the Poltava oblast administration (headed by a presidential appointee) in erecting a memorial plaque to Symon Petliura were illegal. On 19 September 2007, the same court required the oblast administration to remove the plaque.[42] In this instance, President Yushchenko was powerless against the decision of local authorities, and the monument to Petliura, one of the leaders of the

42 On the court ruling, see http://www.korrespondent.net/main/208104 (accessed April 3, 2021).

1917–1921 Ukrainian revolution and one of the main antiheroes of the Soviet narrative, was not put up.[43]

Beginning in 2006, Ukraine was beset by a monument war, in which the two sides were the two major political forces: the 'orange' supporters of the president and the 'white-blue' Party of Regions of Viktor Yanukovych, Yushchenko's main opponent in the falsified elections that had been overturned by the Orange Revolution. The first side supported historical initiatives related to the national movement and figures who had often been overlooked in the Soviet version of the past; the second group was in favor of Soviet symbols, and occasionally symbols of the Russian Empire. These opposing symbolic initiatives were completely deaf to the other side's position. It was in this heightened emotional state that Ukraine came to its 2010 presidential elections.

5. The Failure of a New Version of „Multivectorality"

Viktor Yanukovych's defeat of Yulia Tymoshenko in the winter 2010 by several percentage points was not the first time in the history of independent Ukraine that a politician came to power using pro-Russian slogans. What made the situation unique was that the person elected to the highest state office was someone who had recently been seen as a completely compromised figure. In contrast to Yushchenko in 2005, in 2010 Yanukovych immediately set out to cement his authority and establish strict control over the entire decision-making hierarchy.

43 Symon Petliura became synonymous with anti-Jewish pogroms during the revolutions and civil wars of 1917–1921 in Ukraine. He was shot on 25 May 1926 in Paris, and his killer cited revenge for these pogroms as the motivation for his actions before a French court. The jury exonerated the killer. Among the many publications on Ukrainian-Jewish relations during the years of 1917–1921, particularly noteworthy for its even-handedness is Henry Abramson. *A Prayer for the Government. Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920*. Cambridge, 1999.

At first, President Yanukovych's symbolic policies more or less matched his campaign rhetoric. The Victory Day parade on 9 May 2010 was held in the familiar style of the Brezhnev era. On the official level, there was no mention of 'veteran reconciliation,' nor of aspects of the war like the Holocaust, the deportation of Crimean Tatars, the fate of Soviet prisoners of war, or repressive measures on territory liberated from the Nazis. On the eve of Victory Day in Luhansk, signs prepared by the Communist Party of Ukraine with portraits of Stalin were hung (one of them bearing a message of thanks to the "father of the nations" from Charles de Gaulle). And in Zaporizhzhia near the offices of the local CPU a bust of Stalin was unveiled. At the time, the CPU was part of the ruling coalition and the new government formed after Yanukovych's electoral victory. On New Year's Eve 2011, the Stalin bust was blown up. Those responsible, from the nationalist organization "Tryzub" (Trident), were prosecuted under the terrorism statute. And after some time, the bust itself was restored.

When it came to the central question of his predecessor's symbolic politics – the international recognition of the Holodomor as a "genocide of the Ukrainian nation" – Yanukovych also sharply changed course. In a speech at the European Parliament soon after his election, he declared that he did not consider the Holodomor a genocide of the Ukrainian nation. Although the section about the Holodomor had been restored to the president's official website right before his visit (it had been removed immediately after the change of power), this did not change the new official assessment of this event as a "common tragedy of the nations of the USSR." On the whole, the worry that the new authorities would 'forget' about the Holodomor entirely was soon dispelled. In summer 2013, Yanukovych signed a decree on the preparation of commemorative events dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Holodomor to be held in November.

From the first months of Yanukovych's time in office, the main irritant of the national intelligentsia was the minister of education, Dmytro Tabachnyk. Infamous for his offensive statements about the

Ukrainian language and about western Ukrainians, Tabachnyk introduced an initiative to 'depoliticize' school history textbooks and coordinate their contents with Russia. This 'depoliticization' began with the 5th-grade textbook (for ten-year-olds). As of 1 September 2010, mentions of the Orange Revolution, the phrase "man-made Holodomor," and the notion that in 1939–1941 the Soviet authorities 'punished patriots' in eastern Galicia disappeared from that textbook.

Shortly before the 2011 school year, Tabachnyk's ministry published a new textbook of 20th-century Ukrainian history. Contrary to expectations, this textbook did not offer a new explanatory paradigm and was neither a restoration of the Soviet narrative nor the adoption of a Russian depiction of history. It would be more accurate to call it a compromise version of national history with certain neo-Soviet accents. For example, in describing the Soviet partisan movement during World War II, the textbook notes that it was "initiated by the people themselves [and] international in its composition," while in presenting the history of the post-war nationalist underground, the text emphasizes that it did not have mass support among the population of western Ukraine.[44]

President Yanukovych and his inner circle came from the Donbas – the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, on the border with Russia, where the economy is dominated by coal mining and heavy industry. The Yanukovych clan consciously stoked feelings of a unique Donbas patriotism, the conviction that the region "feeds the country" and "delivers what it promises" (*ne gonit porozhniak*).[45]

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44 O. I. Pometun, N. M. Hupan. *Istoriia Ukrainy. Pidruchnyk dlia 11 klasu zahal'noosvitnikh navchal'nykh zakladiv*. Kyiv 2011: 48, 55.

45 For more see Ararat L. Osipian, Alexander L. Osipian. "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution". *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization,* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2006): 495–517; Ararat L. Osipian, Alexander L. Osipian. "Regional Diversity and Divided Memories in Ukraine: Contested Past as Electoral Resource, 2004–2010". *East European Politics and Societies* 26, no. 3 (August 2012): 616–642.

On the whole, through its actions (and even more its rhetoric), the Yanukovych regime fostered a sense of threat to cultural and national identity among a significant part of the country's population (for the sake of fairness, it should be noted that many of Yushchenko's initiatives elicited analogous feelings). Moreover, the new authorities' initiatives furthered the opposition between 'national history' and 'denationalized history'; as a result, there was very little room in public debate for critical assessments of history. Whatever room there was, was divided between supporters of nationalist and Soviet narratives; this was all the more noticeable because radical figures dominated both sides.

Measures taken by the new authorities in the realm of symbolic politics never reached the level of 'multivectorality' of the Kuchma era. The ambitions of the Yanukovych regime, not far removed from authoritarianism, were deprived of an intelligible ideological foundation and rested more on business interests and opportunistic calculation, including maneuvering between the European Union and Russia. The apogee of such policies was the Yanukovych government's refusal to sign an association agreement between Ukraine and the EU at the Vilnius summit in November 2013. This decision provoked public protests, demonstrating the unwillingness of millions of Ukrainians to accept corrupt politics. And in December 2013, after students protesting in the center of Kyiv were beaten viciously by the police, the Maidan became an unstoppable mass movement. On 22 January 2014, after the first protesters were killed on Hrushevsky Street, new ground was broken in the history of political violence in post-Soviet Ukraine: before then, no one had ever been killed in Ukraine during mass protests.

6. The Maidan, 'Leninfall' and 'Decommmunization'

The political and economic situation in Ukraine right before the Euromaidan could be described as a deep crisis of sovereignty and of the state as such. In terms of public opinion, on the one hand

there was an awareness that further development would be impossible given an economy dominated by oligarchic clans and thoroughgoing corruption. On the other hand, the mythology of Europe as a space of freedom of speech and movement, economic development, and rule of law was widespread. For many who took part in the protests on the Maidan, 'Europe' was placed in symbolic opposition to both the Yanukovych regime and the Soviet past. The former – Yanukovych – lost legitimacy once and for all, having failed to ensure that protesters' rights would be observed and to avoid violence. And the 'Soviet,' especially with the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas, came to be associated for many with Putin's Russia and its aggressive policies.

As the Maidan was a complex phenomenon, its dynamics and symbolism still await serious anthropological, sociological, historical, and social psychological study.[46] Its development and Ukrainian society's subsequent reaction to events in Crimea and the Donbas were a vivid illustration of the fact that in Ukraine, the language of everyday communication cannot be equated with ethnic self-identification, while the latter is not identical to political loyalty. In other words, the hypothesis that all Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine are pro-Russian was disproven in the spring 2014. The phenomenon of Ukrainian political nationalism and its manifestations continue to need rigorous analysis and a new, dynamic lexicon to describe it.[47]

46 See the essay collections: Viktor Stepanenko, and Yaroslav Bylynskyi (eds.). *Ukraine after Euromaidan: Challenges and Hopes.* Bern 2014; David R. Marples, and Frederick V. Millis (eds.). *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution.* Stuttgart 2015; Katharina Raabe, and Manfred Sapper (eds.). *Testfall Ukraine. Europa und seine Werte.* Berlin 2015 and others. For an overview of post-Maidan's Ukraine politics of memory, see Tomasz Stryjek. *Ukraina przed końcem Historii. Szkice o polityce państw wobec pamięci*. Warsaw 2014.

47 See important observations on this point made by Ilya Gerasimov. "Ukraine 2014: The First Postcolonial Revolution. Introduction to the Forum". *Ab Imperio* 3 (2014): 22–44; Tatiana Zhurzhenko. "From Borderlands to Bloodlands". http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2014–09–19-zhurzhenko-en.html (accessed April 3, 2021); Andriy Zayarnyuk. "A Revolution's History, A Historians' War ". *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2015): 449–479.

A large role in post-Maidan Ukraine's identity formation was played by so-called 'decommunization,' the first expression of which was the dismantling of Lenin monuments. The first of these took place on the night of 8 December 2013, across from the Besarabs'ka market in Kyiv. This event, which elicited ambivalent responses at the time among Maidan supporters (it happened at night, without legal authorization, and was carried out by activists from the far-right party Svoboda), set in motion a 'Leninfall,' first as a grassroots movement and later on as a state-sponsored policy. Up until the end of the summer 2017, 1320 monuments to the founder of the Soviet state were removed all around Ukraine.

Particularly significant were the removals of Lenin monuments in two major eastern Ukrainian cities: in Dnipropetrovsk on 22 February 2014 and in Kharkiv on 28 September 2014. In these two cases, as in the majority, the monument was taken down at night with passive non-intervention by the police and active participation by far-right groups. These groups' involvement prompted concerns among many commentators (including internationally) that Lenin would be replaced by symbols of radical Ukrainian nationalism.

The decommunization laws adopted on 9 April 2015 by the Verkhovna Rada can be seen as an attempt to regulate the 'Leninfall' and simultaneously to offer a political response to the general demand for a different sort of self-identification vis-à-vis Putin's Russia. There were four of these laws:

- Recognizing members of various Ukrainian political organizations over the course of the 20th century (including the nationalist underground during World War II) as "fighters for Ukraine's independence";
- Establishing a Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on 8 May to celebrate victory in World War II (until 2015 Ukraine had celebrated victory in the "Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945") and keeping 9 May as the Day of Victory over Nazism;
- Granting open access to the archives of the Communist regime from 1917–1991 and transferring all relevant documents to a new

archive under the auspices of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory;
- Condemning the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes and forbidding the propaganda of their symbols (calling for criminal punishment for preparing or using such symbols; renaming cities and towns named after Soviet figures).

The political logic of the laws is obvious: symbolic separation from the Putin's Russia. Their legal formulation and the portrayal of history they propose elicit a fair few questions. The final law in particular – forbidding the propaganda of Communist and Nazi symbols – provoked a great deal of criticism, including from a legal point of view. Analysts pointed to the fuzziness of the concept of "propaganda" and the potential for it to be applied arbitrarily; and to the lack of a clear list of banned symbols; to the unjustifiably harsh punishments for preparing and using banned symbols (up to 5 years' imprisonment), etc. On the whole, the law has the potential to seriously limit freedom of expression, which violates the Constitution of Ukraine and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.[48] It is unsurprising that experts at the Council of Europe's Venice Commission spoke out, demanding that the laws be altered and reiterating Ukrainian experts' main criticisms.[49]

48 Volodymyr Iavors'kyi. "Analiz zakonu pro zaboronu komunistychnykh symvoliv". http://khpg.org/index.php?id=1430493970 (accessed April 3, 2021). Cf: Kateryna Dronova. "Bor'ba s prizrakami kommunizma. Parlament pozvolil sebe lishnego". http://nv.ua/opinion/Dronova/borba-s-prizrakami-kommunizma-parlament-pozvolil-sebe-lishnego-44393.html (accessed April 3, 2021). See also a detailed analysis in David R. Marples. "Decommunization, Memory Laws, and "Builders of Ukraine in the 20th Century". *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 39 (2018): 1–22.

49 "Ukraine law banning Communist and Nazi propaganda has a legitimate aim, but does not comply with European standards, say constitutional law experts of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR". https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2400293&Site=DC & BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE (accessed April 3, 2021).

At the same time, it bears noting that several compromises lurk behind the laws' rather radical formulation. Notably, those who took part in the nationalist underground are recognized as "fighters for Ukraine's independence," but they are not granted the status of veterans of World War II nor do they receive state benefits analogous to those given to Red Army veterans. The latest attempt to have UPA veterans officially recognized as veterans of the war occurred in parliament after the Maidan and after Yanukovych had fled, on 14 October 2014. A proposal to add this question to the parliamentary agenda was put to a vote seven (!) times, but it never obtained the needed support.

After the Maidan, the question of banning the Communist Party in Ukraine was also hotly debated. This initiative arose in reaction to the CPU's active support of separatist and pro-Russian movements. The snap elections in fall 2014 were the first time that the CPU did not meet the threshold to enter parliament. The far-right party Svoboda also did not do so. Court proceedings on the question of banning the CPU were repeatedly postponed, until on 16 December the Administrative Court of Kyiv upheld the Ministry of Justice's ban of the CPU. The very next day, Amnesty International characterized this decision as "a flagrant violation of freedom of expression and association" and called for its immediate reversal.[50]

The director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, Volodymyr Viatrovych, said in an interview that the decommunization laws were intended to forestall the "production of *sovok* [i. e., Soviet identity – A. P.] in future generations" and noted that in the territory controlled by the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, people "live in the Soviet past."[51] This characteriza-

50 "Ukraine: Communist Party ban decisive blow for freedom of speech in the country". https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/12/ukraine-communist-party-ban-decisive-blow-for-freedom-of-speech-in-the-country/ (accessed April 3, 2021).

51 Volodymyr Viatrovych. "Nashe zavdannia – shchob sovok ne vidtvoryvsia v maibutnikh pokolinniakh". http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2015/04/10/7064423/ (accessed April 3, 2021).

tion of the situation is extremely reductionist. Nonetheless, monuments have become one of the symbols of the war. On 17 April 2015, a Lenin monument was taken down in Kramatorsk, which had previously been under the control of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR), and on the following day, 18 April, a Lenin monument was reconstructed in Novoazovsk, which in turn had come under the control of the DNR.

The Institute of National Memory reported that until the end of 2016, the names of 32 cities, 955 villages, and 51,493 streets were "decommunized."[52] The names of Soviet officials were mostly replaced by the figures from Ukrainian political and literary canon. One should note that not every Soviet name was supposed to be changed. "Decommunization" did not include Soviet Ukrainian artists and writers, Soviet heroes of the Second World War or astronauts even if they were high-ranked party or military officials in the USSR.

In some cases local political elites tried to preserve the Soviet name by re-inventing its non-Soviet meaning. The most telling example was the case of the city of Dnipropetrovsk, named in 1926 after Grigory Petrovsky, an old Bolshevik and the head of the Soviet Ukraine's government. Newly elected after the Maidan mayor and city council proposed to preserve the name "Dnipropetrovsk" by "re-thinking" Petrovsk as a reference to St. Peter instead of the old Bolshevik. Their logic was predominantly non-ideological, and was based on the city dwellers' fears of potential costs of renaming. Still, the Ukrainian parliament voted for renaming Dnipropetrovsk into Dnipro on 19 May 2016.

The name of one of the biggest Ukrainian cities just became shorter. But who will replace Lenin on the pedestals? Up to now his place in the very centers of the cities and villages usually remains empty. To respond to the anxious claims that Lenin will be replaced by Stepan Bandera – the symbol of radical Ukrainian nationalism –

52 "U Viatrovycha prozvituvaly pro tysiachu povalenykh Leninykh". http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/12/27/7131067/(accessed April 3, 2021).

the Institute for National Memory claimed that in Ukraine there are only 40 Bandera monuments and 34 streets named after him. Even more, all of them are located in two historical regions of western Ukraine – East Galicia and Volhynia. But on 7 July 2016 something exceptional happened – Moskovsky Avenue in Kyiv was renamed Bandera Avenue. The following summer, on 1 June 2017, the Kyiv avenue named after the Soviet general Vatutin was renamed into Avenue of Roman Shukhevych, the commander of the UPA. By means of those decisions of the Kyiv city council, the commemoration of disputable nationalistic figures crossed the geographical borders of western Ukraine.

7. Conclusions and Perspectives

In post-Soviet Ukraine's twenty years of independence, a single national historical narrative has not taken shape. Two narratives coexist and compete in society: a lightly modified Soviet paradigm and a nationalist narrative (largely, though not exclusively, based on the historical memory of Ukrainians in western parts of the country and in diaspora).

To this day, history has served more as an instrument of division than of consensus in Ukraine. Since the socio-economic programs of the main political forces are practically identical, the topics of history and language – easily understood by society – have been cast as the ideal marker of political differences. Thus the subject of monuments to Soviet figures or of veterans' rights was revived time and again as electoral campaigns approached, but then receded after elections were over.

The authorities' more or less conscious strategy of preserving ambiguity as a means of avoiding social conflict preordained cautious state politics of memory. The events of the Orange Revolution showed, on the one hand, the mobilizing potential of nationalism and democratic slogans, but on the other, they seriously heightened the problem of the diversity of the regions, which could not be

reduced either to absolute formulas of unity or to an antagonistic image of 'two Ukraines.' This diversity includes disagreements in large segments of Ukrainian society over the memory of World War II.

All of this complexity was reflected in the Maidan of 2013–2014, which showed both the strength and the internal diversity of Ukrainian civil society. Ukraine on the Maidan was not exclusively Ukrainian-speaking; it could not be reduced to one region or another. In its search for self-identification, part of the Maidan treated the Soviet past as the Other; the main symbol of this was the dismantling of the Lenin monument. The 'Leninfall' and decommunization grew in scope in the wake of Russian aggression.

Nonetheless, even after the events of 2014, despite efforts from post-Soviet Ukraine to create symbolic distance from the Soviet experience, shifting it outside the bounds of national history, in a paradoxical way 'Sovietness' is what still unites Ukraine. After all, this was the only historical experience shared by all regions of the country over the course of the post-World War II years. Soviet approval, inclusion in the Soviet canon, remains one of the prerequisites for all of Ukraine to recognize particular historical figures (Taras Shevchenko, Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, Ivan Franko). Lines from Soviet films are still known across the entire country (to the extent that the ironic campaign against Viktor Yanukovych during the Orange Revolution was based on them), and images from the Soviet narrative of the 'Great Patriotic War' are actively used on both sides of today's front lines.[53]

While portraying itself as a victim of the Communist system (the main testament to which is the Great Famine 1932–33), official

53 It will suffice but to recall the rhetoric of the 'Great Patriotic War,' used in conjunction with the so-called 'Anti-Terrorist Operation' by both president Petro Poroshenko and "Right Sector" leader Dmytro Yarosh, as well as the commander of the Azov volunteer battalion. For more on this, see Andrii Portnov. "The 'Great Patriotic War' in the Politics of Memory in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine", in *Civic Education and Democratisation in the Eastern Partnership Countries* ed. by Dieter Segert. Bonn 2016: 179–197.

Kyiv also incorporates into its post-Soviet narrative certain positive elements of Soviet history, like pride that Ukraine was among the founding members of the United Nations in 1945. Despite these and other individual exceptions, on the whole, the problem of the Soviet as Ukrainian, the question of Soviet authorities' Ukrainianizing potential, remains poorly conceptualized. One of the reasons for this is a general fuzziness of the concept of 'Soviet.' This explains the constant presence of nostalgia for Brezhnevite prosperity and the wide use of Soviet symbols in mass culture.

At the same time, as Il'ia Kalinin has shown in the Russian case, using the old model does not replicate old content or restore Soviet ideologemes, but rather adapts particular aspects of them to the contemporary context and also facilitates the neutralization of the Soviet past as something of potential political relevance.[54]

More complicated, especially in the context of the war in the Donbas, is the problem of Ukraine's policies towards its Soviet past as it pertains to its relations with contemporary Russia. Is the condemnation of particular Soviet policies an anti-Russian assertion? If so, which ones and in what context? Is the adoption of a nationalist narrative the only possible alternative to neo-Soviet interpretations and Kremlin propaganda?

War, even the "hybrid" one, is not suitable for sophisticated debates. Both proponents and opponents of the "de-communisation" usually see it in the context of national security, social stability and memory conflicts. Quite often both sides simplify the unique post-Soviet pluralism of contemporary Ukraine, asserting, for example, that all supporters of "rehabilitating UPA" or "preserving Lenin monuments" share the ideology of integral nationalism or Marxism-Leninism, or at least have a notion of what they are.

At the same time, the Ukrainian public sphere is still acutely lacking criticism of integral nationalism and its symbolism from

54 Cf. Il'ia Kalinin. "Nostal'gicheskaia modernizatsiia: sovetskoe proshloe kak istoricheskii gorizont". *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 6 (2010): 6–16.

democratic, pluralistic viewpoints, rather than from the perspective of the "Russian world" or the "Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people." Likewise, Ukraine lacks a critique of the Communist narrative which doesn't elicit suspicion of the author's narrowly nationalist outlook. It is crucial for such criticism to refrain from totalitarian ideological connotations.

Discussing "decommunization" presents us with a truly difficult question: How should we deal with the Soviet past? As a historian, I would argue for the importance to fully understand its heterogeneity and inconsistencies, which in no way calls the criminal character of the numerous decisions by the Soviet regime into question.

The controversy over renaming of the city of Dnipropetrovsk was already mentioned above. Much less is being said about Dnipro (petrovsk) residents' almost complete ignorance of who Petrovsky was. Is it important to know about Petrovsky in order to condemn Communist crimes? How important is it to know that, by contrast, it was the Soviet authorities who erected a monument to the Ukrainian poet Ivan Franko in Lviv and popularized his works, while on the other hand they actually censored Franko and adapted him to the demands of "building Communism"? The interconnection of (not) knowing and condemning, the means and methods of disseminating knowledge, the phenomenon of aestheticizing political evil and the "forbidden fruit" – this is far from an exhaustive list of subjects that are practically absent from the current discussion in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, in the international discussion, there is much being written about whether or not history, memory, and identity are the main causes of Maidan, the annexation of Crimea, and the war in Donbas. "Identity" and "history" are brought up much more frequently than the desire for political freedoms, corruption, economic problems, group pressure, the behavior of local elites, or the makeup of subversive groups.

Are we capable of thinking about Ukraine beyond essentialized "identity," "historical memory" and the "clash of civilizations"? Maidan, among other things, became a way for society as a whole to reject constructed "divisions," which had been presented to us as

insurmountable and primordial. Maidan emphasized something that really wasn't that sensational anymore: in contemporary Ukraine, the language used for everyday communication does not automatically equal ethnic identification and political loyalty.

Nevertheless, instead of looking for adequate and dynamic methods of analyzing the realities of the Maidan and the post-Maidan era, a significant number of analysts remained loyal to the familiar, stereotypical paradigms of "two Ukraines" or even "ethnic zones." The annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas are still more frequently described using the categories of "identity" and "historical rights" than through a careful contextual analysis of the behavior of key actors (above all, the local elites, the Kyiv government and the Russian involvement).

Ukraine needs a new analytical language to define itself and to be defined. The existing schemes are too narrow for such a complex society. We also need rather to analyze "identity-talk" by various social actors than to impose the existence of "identity" as the main reason for social action. And proper contextualization as well as cross-regional and transnational perspectives could bring a multitude of important insights.

About the Authors

Gerasimov, Ilya, PhD in Historical Sciences, Candidate of Historical Sciences, executive editor of *Ab Imperio Quarterly: Studies of New Imperial History and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space*; author of a number of publications on the social history of the Russian Empire/USSR, Progressivism as a trans-Atlantic phenomenon, postcolonial theory and new imperial history.

Kappeler, Andreas, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Vienna, member of the Austrian and the Ukrainian Academies of Sciences; author of numerous books, including *Ungleiche Brüder. Russen und Ukrainer vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* [Unequal Brothers. Russians and Ukrainians from Medieval Times to the Present] (2017), and *Vom Land der Kosaken zum Land der Bauern. Die Ukraine im Horizont des Westens* [From the Land of Cossacks to Land of the Peasants. Ukraine on the Western Horizon from the 16th to the 19th Century] (2020).

Portnov, Andrii, Professor of the Entangled History of Ukraine, European University Viadrina (Frankfurt/Oder), director of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA Research Network Eastern Europe in Berlin; author of a number of publications on Ukrainian historiography, the history of Ekaterinoslav-Dnipropetrovsk-Dnipro, and memory studies in the Polish-Russian-Ukrainian triangle.

Shapoval, Yurii, Doctor of Historical Sciences, (1994), Professor of History (2000-), Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Head (1998-) of the Center for Historical Political Studies. At present he is one of the leading researchers on the Soviet period of Ukrainian history.

Snyder, Timothy, Professor of History, Yale University, Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna; author of numerous publications on the history of Central and Eastern Europe and the Holocaust, including *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010) and *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (2017).

Ther, Philipp, Professor of History, University of Vienna, founder of the Research Center for the History of Transformations (RECET), specialist in comparative social and cultural history of East-Central Europe and Germany. In 2019 he received the Wittgenstein Prize of the Austrian Research Fund; his publications have been translated into 15 languages.

Vulpius, Ricarda, Professor of Eastern and Central Eastern European History, University of Münster/Germany, author of the monograph *Die Geburt des Russländischen Imperiums. Herrschaftskonzepte und –praktiken im 18. Jahrhundert* [The Birth of the Russian Empire. Concepts and Practices of Imperial Rule in the 18th Century] (2020).

During the Euromaidan, the Russian-Ukrainian war did not only concern the fate of Ukraine or Russia, but also the future of the European continent. However, this was not the first time that the Ukrainian question played such an important role. The course of the First and Second World Wars, the 1917 October Revolution and the world communist system it generated were largely shaped by what was happening in and around Ukraine. And a few centuries earlier, the Cossack Revolution of 1648 under the leadership of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi and the entry of the Cossack state into the Moscow kingdom marked the birth of the Russian Empire as a great European state.

In other words, it is impossible to understand the transformation of Europe without considering Ukrainian events and developments, just as the current Ukrainian situation is impossible without the application of European history. This collection of articles naturally links these two perspectives. It contains materials from the first of several conferences organized by the German-Ukrainian Historical Commission, held in Berlin in May 2015.

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