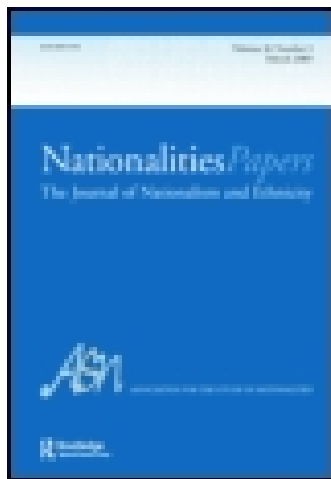


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When Stalin's Nations Sang: Writing the Soviet Ukrainian Anthem (1944–1949)¹

Serhy Yekelchuk

In February 1944, as the victorious Red Army was preparing to clear the Nazi German forces from the rest of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, a surprise official announcement stunned the population. The radio and the newspapers announced amendments to the Soviet constitution, which would enable the union republics to establish their own armies and maintain diplomatic relations with foreign states. While the Kremlin did not elaborate on the reasons for such a reform, *Radianska Ukraina*, the republic's official newspaper, proceeded to hail the announcement as "a new step in Ukrainian state building." Waxing lyrical, the paper wrote that "every son and every daughter of Ukraine" swelled with national pride upon learning of the new rights that had been granted to their republic.² In reality, the public was confused. In Ukraine's capital, Kiev, the secret police recorded details of rumors to the effect that the USA and Great Britain had forced this reform on Stalin and that Russians living in Ukraine would be forced to assimilate or to leave the republic. Even some party-appointed propagandists erred in explaining that the change was necessitated by the fact that Ukraine's "borders have widened and [it] will become an independent state."³

Later scholars argued that the most likely motivation for this short-lived policy change was Stalin's intention to claim a U.N. seat for each of the 16 union republics or at least the seven western non-Russian republics. Ultimately, he had to settle for three seats: one each for the whole Soviet Union, Ukraine, and Belarus.⁴ Recent studies by Ukrainian historians demonstrate, however, that the republican establishment originally took the constitutional amendments seriously. Within days of the announcement, the editorialists of *Radianska Ukraina* were fully anticipating the creation of a separate Ukrainian army, while the Kievan party paper, *Kyivska pravda*, predicted that the republic would soon have its diplomatic representatives abroad.⁵ While the other Soviet republics created only small foreign ministries, Ukraine alone also set up its own People's Commissariat of Defense. In the summer of 1944 Nikita Khrushchev, the republic's party leader, and Lieutenant-General V. P. Herasymenko, the commissar of defense, developed a plan for a full-fledged ministry with impressive prerogatives. Likewise, the writer Oleksandr Korniiuchuk, the first commissar of foreign affairs, began building a bona fide ministry before being

replaced in July 1944.⁶ Although the authorities quietly dissolved the Ukrainian ministry of defense soon after the war, the republic's foreign ministry and mission to the U.N. continued to exist until the collapse of the USSR. With the emergence of independent Ukraine, these institutions provided the ready foundation for the new state's foreign service.

The case of the Ukrainian foreign ministry is an extreme example of how the Kremlin's manipulative policies could unwittingly create incipient *national institutions* for its non-Russian subjects. This paper discusses another case, which also began in February 1944—the creation of the Soviet Ukrainian anthem. (The latter part of this paper will also touch on the related changes to the republic's flag and coat of arms.) The largely unknown history of the anthem's writing and editing shows that, after the initial struggle and confusion, the authorities prevailed upon patriotic intellectuals to produce a politically sound text and music devoid of Ukrainian national elements. Yet the population cared more about the fact of the anthem's sudden introduction than its words and melody. In other words, even a non-national anthem still functioned as a national institution. Rogers Brubaker has argued that the USSR *institutionalized* nationality by defining its republics and citizenry in national terms. Of course, the leadership in Moscow sought to “drain nationality of its content while legitimating it as a form,”⁷ but, as Yuri Slezkine brilliantly quipped, after Stalin's death “the national form seemed to have become the content.”⁸ In elaborating these ideas, I will argue that while Soviet ideologues were expending impressive amounts of time and effort on sanitizing the permitted trappings of non-Russian nationhood and ensuring their largely ceremonial character, it was the very existence of these institutions that preserved the republics' separate identities as nations. For even under Stalin national institutions' points of reference were the nationality's nationhood and (theoretical) right to sovereign statehood.

Moreover, if one places the February 1944 announcements in their historical context, the Ukrainian establishment's reasons for seeing them as more than a diplomatic maneuver become apparent. The constitutional amendments fit nicely with previous state measures to promote Ukrainian patriotism, such as the rehabilitation of the Cossack legacy and the creation of the Order of Bohdan Khmelnytsky.⁹ The decree also resonated well with other nation-building projects then under discussion. These included the establishment in Kiev of the Ukrainian National Museum, possibly modeled on the famous Czech national institution, and the publication of a 20-volume *Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia*.¹⁰ (The first proposal never got off the ground, while the second was adopted in late 1944. Although the authorities cut short the work in 1947, the project was revived after Stalin's death and resulted in the publication between 1959 and 1965 of a 16-volume encyclopedia.)

All these plans, furthermore, appeared to have been consistent with the “Great Retreat” from internationalist ideology that had begun in the mid-1930s. In keeping with its goal of restoring traditional social hierarchies, gender roles, and cultural

values, mature Stalinism brought about the state-sponsored rehabilitation of Russian patriotism, national pride, and tsarist heroes.¹¹ But the non-Russians joined this quest for ideological stability and continuity by promoting their own national patrimonies. In the Ukrainian SSR, the press extolled as the nation's founding fathers the seventeenth-century Cossack leader Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the nineteenth-century national bard Taras Shevchenko. During 1943–1945 several signals from the Kremlin, most notably the denunciation of the *History of the Kazakh SSR* and Alexander Dovzhenko's film script "Ukraine in Flames," in no uncertain terms warned non-Russian intellectuals that their national mythologies must remain subordinated to the cult of the great Russian people.¹² Yet the authorities could not, nor did they intend to, eliminate the republics' "national ideologies" as such.¹³ After all, it was the Soviet empire's grand project to disarm nationalism by creating territorial nations with all the components of nationhood and attributes of statehood—yet completely devoid of political sovereignty.¹⁴

The Kremlin could order the non-Russian elites to revise their national ideological creations until these were completely harmless and free of what could be interpreted as elements of nationalism. In doing so, however, both Moscow and the local ideologues treated the texts and images under consideration as *symbols* that they could imbue with meaning, rather than as national *institutions*. Thus, although the ideologues seemingly succeeded in the difficult task of eliminating all national motifs from the text and music of Soviet Ukraine's anthem, they nevertheless authorized the creation of a national institution that ultimately strengthened the legitimacy of a Soviet Ukrainian nation as distinct from a Soviet Russian one.

Stalinist Nation Builders

As the Kremlin's disenchantment with proletarian internationalism grew, in the spring of 1942 Stalin ordered a new Soviet anthem to replace the "Internationale." After a prolonged process of selection and editing, including corrections made in the dictator's own hand, in December 1943 the authorities approved the new anthem.¹⁵ Reflecting the novel, official blend of Russian and Soviet patriotism, its text began with the line "Great Rus' forever joined together the unbreakable union of free republics." The obligatory performance of the new anthem was slated for 15 March 1944, but in Ukraine, like elsewhere in the USSR, the anthem was inaugurated on New Year's Eve 1944. The new Soviet anthem soon became a familiar fixture in all official meetings and radio broadcasts. The government decreed the publication of the text in two million copies and the musical score in a print run of one million.¹⁶

Significantly, though, and probably in connection with its plans regarding the U.N., Moscow expected the non-Russian republics to produce their own anthems. Work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Latvia began in the spring of 1944, and once again Ukraine led the other republics in establishing a governmental commission on the anthem as early as 21 February 1944.¹⁷

Indicating the urgency of the matter, the commission began work almost immediately, on 23 February, under the guidance of Mykhailo Hrechukha, the chairman of the Ukrainian SSR's Supreme Soviet. Thus, the republic's nominal president, Hrechukha, opened the first meeting by reading a synopsis of the future anthem to an assemblage of leading litterateurs and musicians. Emulating the new Soviet anthem, he envisaged three stanzas with a refrain to be repeated after each of them. The first stanza would portray "our Fatherland in a fraternal union of the [Soviet] peoples." The second was to depict the "historical past of the Ukrainian people and their struggle for their honor, freedom, and sovereignty," ending with the idea that Ukrainians had found freedom and happiness under the guidance of Lenin and Stalin. The third stanza was to show Ukraine's "economic and political flourishing" within the USSR. Finally, the authorities imagined the refrain as a paean to the union of the Soviet peoples and the reunited Ukrainian state.¹⁸ (Hrechukha referred to the 1939–1945 Stalinist annexation of the Ukrainian ethno-linguistic territories from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.)

The initial reaction of writers and composers demonstrated their eagerness to produce an anthem filled with national motifs, as well as their belief that the party leadership would approve of such an approach. After Hrechukha the composer Pylyp Kozytsky took the floor to propose the following popular musical models for the future anthem: "God Save the Tsar," "Our Lady of Pochaiv," "Good People, Do Not Wonder," "The Cossack March," "Eternal Revolutionary" with the words of Ivan Franko, Mykola Lysenko's "Testament" set to the words of Shevchenko, and "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished."¹⁹ The first two songs were the old tsarist anthem and a religious song, while the last five—with the possible exception of "Eternal Revolutionary"—had long been used by Ukrainian nationalists as anthems or marching songs. "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished" had been the official anthem of the anti-Bolshevik Ukrainian state during the Revolution, as well as that of nationalist guerillas, who had been fighting the Red Army in the Western Ukrainian forests since 1943. It is significant that Hrechukha immediately discarded only the tsarist anthem and the religious hymn: he saw the use of Ukrainian songs as acceptable and even suggested another popular song, "The Cossacks Arose before Dawn." Only at the next meeting on 26 February would the president reject "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished."²⁰

Meanwhile, Ukrainian writers began discussing the list of national symbols to be mentioned in the anthem. All agreed on Shevchenko, although Oleksandr Korniiichuk also proposed mentioning Khmelnytsky and suggested referring to the Dnieper, because "all our historical events took place on its banks." The historian Mykola Petrovsky likewise argued that, together with Lenin and Stalin, the anthem should mention Shevchenko, Khmelnytsky, and the western Ukrainian poet and nation builder Ivan Franko. The poet Liubomyr Dmyterko immediately read his first draft, "We Are the Sons of the Great Forefathers," which mentioned all of the above.²¹

The commission reconvened in late April 1944 to examine the 27 texts that had

been submitted for competition. While following Hrechukha's general synopsis, the authors filled their poems with Ukrainian imagery. Predictably, Shevchenko and Khmelnytsky led the way as national symbols, having been mentioned in most cases by their first names, Taras and Bohdan. In addition to the Dnieper for Eastern Ukraine, many poets adopted the Carpathian Mountains as the historical and geographic symbol for Western Ukraine. In the first stanza and the refrain of his original submission the premier Ukrainian poet and the eventual winner of the competition, Pavlo Tychyna, also referred to all the national symbols, even if the ideological framework of his poem remained impeccably Soviet:

Soviet Ukraine grew to greatness
 In a sacred union of fraternal peoples.
 We have sun and happiness, our people are free,
 And the Dnieper with the Carpathians are ours forever.

Glory to you, the fatherland of freedom.
 Bohdan and Taras are always with you.
 In a sunny hour, you brought us
 To union with the Russian brother.²²

Mykola Bazhan, a prominent poet and deputy prime-minister in charge of culture, who three years later would co-author the winning version, in his original submission similarly traced the Ukrainian people's ancestry to the national-liberation struggles of Khmelnytsky and Shevchenko:

For centuries our people fought for freedom.
 Thus battled Bohdan, thus struggled Taras.
 Then Lenin opened the future before us
 And Stalin is guiding us on the path to happiness.²³

Tychyna and Bazhan were actually among the more conservative authors, for a number of other writers submitted bolder glorifications of Ukraine and its historical past. Two major, if less politically reliable, Ukrainian poets were among the latter group. Maksym Rylsky's variant began with the stanza

Live, O Ukraine, be the adornment of centuries,
 Victorious at sea and in the field,
 In Bohdan's saber, in Taras's words,
 In the truth and freedom of Shchors.²⁴

Volodymyr Sosiura contributed a poem containing an even more spirited statement of patriotic love for Ukraine and its patrimony:

O beloved mother, you were enslaved
 And it seemed that you would be for centuries.
 But, on Bohdan's eagle-like cry
 Rose the regiments of glorious Cossacks.²⁵

Notwithstanding the differing degrees of patriotic sentiment, the entries by Tychyna, Bazhan, Rylsky, and Sosiura all made it to the second round of the competition. (Although the submissions were anonymous, the first three poets were members of the selection committee.) In general, the committee rejected only the texts of literary dilettantes, as well as those few submissions that presented an erroneous political interpretation. The proper ideological line at the time appeared to have been somewhere in between the obligatory Soviet patriotism and the allowable elements of Ukrainian national pride. Thus, on Bazhan's proposal, the committee dismissed as "a non-party anthem" an overly patriotic submission beginning with the line, "Glory to you, O Ukraine, the mighty state." At the same time, Hrechukha opposed a submission containing the line "May the state flag of Lenin and Stalin forever fly over our Ukraine." The chairman of the Supreme Soviet fumed, "It reads as though we do not have our state, as if Russia had occupied Ukraine and hung out its flag."²⁶

The first round of the competition demonstrated two other significant trends. First, most of the professional poets imitated the meter and to varying degrees the language of the all-Union anthem. Second, many successful entries began with the words "Live, O Ukraine," either as a subconscious imitation of or a conscious poetical answer to the title and the first line of the nationalist anthem, "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished." In their revised submissions for the second round, both Tychyna and Bazhan adopted the same opening phrases for their versions.

The second round of the competition took place in mid-June 1944 and saw the elimination of poems containing references to national symbols. During the spring and summer of 1944 the Kremlin was making known its displeasure with Dovzhenko's "Ukraine in Flames." In this same period Soviet troops were encountering the fierce resistance of nationalist guerillas in Western Ukraine.²⁷ It is thus likely that the renewed ideological campaign against Ukrainian nationalism caused the new winds of change in the anthem commission. Perhaps in response to a warning by party ideologues, Tychyna and Bazhan revised their submissions to eliminate any mention of national symbols.²⁸ The disappearance of such key words as "Khmelnysky," "Shevchenko," "Dnieper," and "Carpathians" (which were still plentiful in other submissions) made their projects look more like Ukrainian translations of the all-Union anthem. But this was precisely what Hrechukha and his advisors in the Department of Ideology of the Ukrainian Central Committee now wanted. In the end, the commission selected three poems: Tychyna's, Bazhan's, and the one by the young poet Oleksa Novytsky, who already in the first round had distinguished himself by skillfully subordinating the celebration of Ukraine to the emerging cult of the Russian elder brother:

Russia is our freedom and glory.
Bohdan Khmelnysky brought us to her.
Live, O Ukraine, a mighty state,
Live, O Ukraine, till the end of time.²⁹

Whether party ideologues tipped him off or he sensed the changing political winds, in the second round Novytsky revised his refrain to read thus:

Glory to the Soviet Union, glory!
 We sing about the friendship of peoples.
 Live, O Ukraine, a Soviet state,
 Eternal glory to you!³⁰

In the end, the commission selected the “anonymous” texts, Nos 10, 13, and 16, and submitted them to the Ukrainian Central Committee as No. 1 (Novytsky), No. 2 (Bazhan), and No. 3 (Tychyna). However, the Central Committee files show that the party bureaucrats knew the names of the three authors.³¹ In November 1944 Hrechukha announced to the commission members that he “had reported [the matter] to our governmental circles and there was a decision made to approve one project, No. 3.” The cagey allusion to “governmental circles” undoubtedly meant a consultation with Stalin’s powerful viceroy in Ukraine, the republic’s premier and head of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev’s busy schedule may have been a reason for delaying the decision until the late fall. The Red Army captured the last remaining areas of the Ukrainian territory only in late October 1944, and Khrushchev had his hands full with supervising the re-establishment of Soviet administration in Western Ukraine, as well as organizing the war against the nationalist guerillas there.

Tychyna’s final version featured many borrowings from the drafts submitted by other poets, especially Novytsky. The full text now read,

Live, O Ukraine, beautiful and strong,
 In a sacred Union of fraternal peoples.
 A five-pointed star shines above you
 Ever brightly and with majesty.

Glory to brotherhood, glory to freedom!
 The Ukrainian lands are united again.
 In accord with the fraternal Russian people
 The Ukrainian people have reached happiness.

Long did we struggle for the lot of the people
 And through thunderstorms we saw a long road.
 Lenin cast light on our path to liberty
 And Stalin brought us up as his own sons.

Glory to brotherhood, *etc.*

In battles we tempered our army
 And we will cut down all the enemies.
 Under the Soviet banner we became mighty
 And through labor and victories we march to the future.

Glory to brotherhood, *etc.*³²

Work on the musical score commenced even before the authorities decided on the text, the composers' task having been facilitated by the fact that all three finalist poems had the same metric structure, which imitated the all-Union anthem. By late November 1944, 62 composers had produced 76 scores of the anthem, and the commission again began its deliberations. However, because Hrechukha and other party ideologues could devote only a limited amount of time to attending the piano and chorus recitals, it took the commission until February 1945 to select the 11 finalists.³³

At this stage, party functionaries were obliged to teach Ukrainian composers the same lesson that they had given earlier to the republic's poets. Mykola Verykivsky opened the discussion with a suggestion to eliminate music that "did not have Ukrainian elements." Later, he asked the commission to make sure that the winning score "preserves some memory of a peasant jacket, which the peasant abandons after he moves to the city."³⁴ Other invited speakers and commission members likewise expressed their preference for "national" music, that is, music based on Ukrainian folk melodies. Discussing score No. 51 (probably Pylyp Kozytsky's variant), Maksym Rylsky claimed that it was "almost the only proposal that could be characterized as Ukrainian." When score No. 68 (possibly Hryhorii Verovka's variant) came under consideration, Volodymyr Sosiura hailed it as a "Ukrainian national anthem." Verykivsky praised the music, declaring that it recalled the images of a traditional peasant wattle-fence with a sunflower, while the poet Teren Masenko visualized a sunlit steppe.³⁵

For a moment it seemed that the authorities would accept the national music for the anthem, given that its words were impeccably Soviet. But the ideologues' indecisiveness, together with infighting among the composers, prevented the commission from drawing up a shortlist of musical scores. On 14 March 1945 Khrushchev attended a meeting of the commission but did not issue any recommendations. On 17 May 1945 the committee met for the last time but failed to reach a decision.³⁶ At that point, work on the anthem of Soviet Ukraine had already lost the priority status it had enjoyed in early 1944. Moscow appeared to have forgotten about its earlier call to create anthems for every republic, and Ukraine's leadership was overwhelmed by the urgent tasks of post-war reconstruction and the struggle against nationalist guerillas.

Still, the authorities kept the project alive. In May 1945 the State Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine recorded two variants of the anthem, most likely the ones by Kozytsky and Verovka, for possible presentations before high bureaucrats in Moscow or in the Ukrainian provinces.³⁷ In the meantime, Khrushchev asked the commanders of Ukraine's two western military districts to listen to Kozytsky's and Verovka's music. Colonel-General Popov from the Lviv Military District engaged the military band and chorus of the Lviv Opera and concluded that both scores were heavy, static, and "boring." His opinion was not shared by Army General Ieromenko of the Transcarpathian Military District, who thought Verovka's music superior

because of its reliance on folk songs and its national color. Khrushchev circulated to other members of the Ukrainian Politburo Popov's suggestion that the competition for the best music be reopened.³⁸

Uneasy about approving either of the two "national" musical scores, the Ukrainian leadership elected first to check with its Moscow superiors on the acceptability of the text. In April 1946 Hrechukha forwarded Tychyna's poem to Grigorii Aleksandrov, the head of the All-Union Central Committee's Administration of Propaganda and Agitation. The reply, which arrived in late May, was generally positive in its evaluation of the text. Still, Alexandrov suggested "saying more clearly in the anthem that Ukraine is a Soviet and socialist republic," as well as making the text even closer to its all-Union model.³⁹ As the Ukrainian authorities contemplated whether to revise the text again and mulled over the problem of the unfinished music competition, in the summer of 1946 the Kremlin inaugurated the *Zhdanovshchina*. This post-war ideological freeze, associated with the name of the prominent Soviet ideologue Andrei Zhdanov, manifested itself in the purging of alleged Western influences from Soviet culture. In Ukraine, however, the *Zhdanovshchina* took the form of a renewed attack on "nationalist deviations" in scholarship and culture.⁴⁰ Moreover, early in 1947 Khrushchev briefly lost Stalin's favor, which resulted in the arrival in Ukraine of Lazar Kaganovich,⁴¹ who, as the Ukrainian Party's first secretary, attempted a further purge of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. By that time, most nation-building projects in the last years of the war were either halted or emasculated, and the situation did not favor the resumption of work on the anthem.

Singing Soviet-Style

This state of affairs changed in the fall, when Khrushchev managed to regain Stalin's trust. In December 1947 the dictator restored Khrushchev to his position as the first secretary and recalled Kaganovich to Moscow. Khrushchev immediately resumed the task of consolidating the local bureaucracy around himself. In building his power base in Ukraine, Khrushchev sought to promote the republic to the status of "second-in-command" within the Soviet Union. In the political and cultural milieu of late Stalinism, the Kremlin signaled any change within its hierarchy of nations through its reaction to festivals, celebrations of anniversaries, and new attributes of statehood. Not surprisingly, Khrushchev took the matter of the new anthem seriously. His plan was to inaugurate it during the ostentatious celebration of Soviet Ukraine's thirtieth anniversary in January 1948.⁴²

The anthem commission resumed its meetings in December 1947. This time, the authorities organized the composers into three "brigades," each presenting its variant of the score. The brigades were headed by Verykivsky, Kozytsky, and the Kharkiv composer Anton Lebedynets, and they apparently worked on their projects at least from the fall of 1947 onward. Having been frustrated by the failure of the previous search, Hrechukha sought to "measure" the reaction of professional musicians and

the public. Twice, in December 1947 and early January 1948, a chorus and a symphony orchestra performed all three versions before a mixed audience of musicians, intellectuals, bureaucrats, teachers, and Stakhanovite workers. During the first poll, out of a total of 205 people, three suggested reopening the competition, 137 favored the music by Lebedynets, 48 liked Verykivsky, and 17 voted in favor of Kozytsky. The results were similar during the second poll. Of the 356 people present, 226 voted for Lebedynets, 58 for Verykivsky, 37 for Kozytsky, and seven for Verovka's project from the previous competition.⁴³

Such an overwhelming vote in favor of Lebedynets, who in both cases enjoyed the support of some 68–69% of listeners, by no means reflected the opinion of professional musicians. Apparently, the music of the Kharkiv brigade scored a success with the loyalist public and party types because of its resemblance to the all-Union anthem and the absence of Ukrainian folk tunes, deemed by some to be inappropriate for such an elevated musical genre. Listeners' comments reveal that many saw it as "a real example of a Soviet anthem" that would be "accessible to the people."⁴⁴ Others, writing in the more sophisticated language of composers and intellectuals, dismissed the work as monotonous, "completely devoid of Ukrainian intonations," and even alien to the Slavic musical tradition because of its imitation of Protestant chorales.⁴⁵

In contrast, the establishment public rejected the compositions of Kozytsky and Verykivsky as "songs" lacking the grandiosity required of anthems.⁴⁶ "Would be good as a song," wrote an anonymous listener in Russian about Kozytsky's version. Another commentator, writing in Ukrainian, defended it as the only piece of music that preserved "the color of Ukrainian melodies and the sonority of the Ukrainian language."⁴⁷ The contradiction between the intellectuals' view of national music as one based on folk melodies and the bureaucrats' preference for pompous marches was occasionally voiced at the meetings of the anthem committee. On 9 January 1948, M. P. Kompaniiets, the chairman of the State Committee for the Arts, attempted to classify Kozytsky's and Verykivsky's versions as "songs containing elements of Ukrainian [folk] songs," to which the poet Rytsky replied that "peasant intonations are precisely what constitutes national color."⁴⁸

In the end, on 9 January the committee rejected Kozytsky's score—apparently because, although more popular with audiences than Verykivsky's, it was too "national"—and sent the recordings of the remaining two anthems to Khrushchev.⁴⁹ There was no time, however, to select a winning score and prepare its inauguration. The Ukrainian leadership decided to shelve the matter until after the celebrations of the republic's thirtieth jubilee, which were scheduled for late January 1948.

In the meantime, the authorities pressured Tychyna to accept Bazhan as his co-author and produce a text that, in keeping with Alexandrov's suggestions, would place even greater emphasis on Ukraine's status as part of the USSR. The two poets managed to squeeze into the poem even more references to the Soviet Union. They also elaborated the praise of the Russians in the second stanza, replacing Tychyna's

original text about the Ukrainians' long struggle for freedom. The final text read thus,

Live, O Ukraine, beautiful and strong!
 You found happiness in the Soviet Union.
 An equal among equals, free among the free,
 You blossomed under the sun of freedom.

Glory, glory to the Soviet Union,
 Glory to the Fatherland of fraternal peoples!
 Live, O Ukraine, the Soviet state,
 A country forever reunited.

In our battles for the people's lot
 The Russian people were always our friends and brothers.
 Lenin cast light on our path to liberty
 And Stalin leads us to the shining heights.

Glory, *etc.*

With the sacred sword of the people's wrath
 We will rebuff all enemy invasions.
 Under the Soviet banner we became mighty,
 Majestically we march towards communism.

Glory, *etc.*⁵⁰

As evidenced by Novytsky's letter accusing Tychyna and Bazhan of plagiarism, the authorities unveiled the winning text to the litterateurs in January 1948.⁵¹ At the same time, the Kiev and Kharkiv brigades of composers resumed their backroom struggle, which involved mutual accusations of borrowings from well-known German and French compositions. Yet, the feud between the two groups was simultaneously a contest between two visions of a Ukrainian musical culture. Led by Verykivsky, the Kievan brigade included such big names as the leading Ukrainian symphonists Levko Revutsky and Borys Liatoshynsky, and the premier choir director, Hryhorii Verovka. Since all of the Kievans were promoters of a Ukrainian musical style based on the creative reworking of folk melodies, they described the Kharkiv project as "lacking the elements of national music."⁵² The Kharkiv brigade was comprised of five composers affiliated with the Kharkiv Conservatory, all specializing in the so-called Soviet song. The best known among them was not Lebedynets, but Dmitrii Klebanov, a Russian composer working in Ukraine and the author of several operas on Soviet themes. The Kharkivans peddled their project as music that reflected the influence of "revolutionary songs." As well, they stressed that their score "did not allude to village songs but creatively interpreted the achievements of Ukrainian popular music and the music of the fraternal Russian people."⁵³

By June 1948, ideological bureaucrats secured the decision of three experts,

including the composer Kozytsky, that the Kharkiv version indeed reflected Ukrainian musical traditions, but from the Soviet era, in the form of “melodies of popular Soviet Ukrainian songs.”⁵⁴ The final decision seemed to have been preordained, yet the authorities did not inaugurate the musical score of the new anthem until late November 1949.⁵⁵

The projected designs of the new coat of arms and flag suffered a similar fate. Work on the new coat of arms began unexpectedly in July 1947, when First Secretary Kaganovich, at the peak of his crusade against Ukrainian nationalism, noticed that the existing coat of arms—two sheaves of wheat with a hammer and sickle in the center above the globe—did not include the red star and thus differed from its all-Union counterpart. The Ukrainian Politburo promptly decided to add a five-pointed red star “as the emblem of the USSR.” (Interestingly, the coat of arms of the Russian Federation has never been changed and right up till the collapse of the Soviet Union it did not even feature a red star.) But Ukrainian ideologues soon resolved to make other characteristic changes, such as adding the Russian inscription “Proletarians of the world, unite!” to the already existing similar caption in Ukrainian. In January 1948 Khrushchev’s aides drafted a letter from their patron to Stalin, requesting his consent to the changes, but the matter was shelved. The Kremlin approved the revised emblem only on 9 November 1949, after which it was rubber-stamped by the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet on 21 November.⁵⁶

Stalin initiated the redesign of the republics’ flags in January 1947 by requesting that they combine the traditional Soviet symbols—red color, hammer and sickle, and a five-pointed star—with the symbols “characteristic of the nationalities.”⁵⁷ (Soviet Ukraine’s existing flag differed from its all-Union model only by the small letters “U[krainian] SSR” beneath the hammer and sickle.⁵⁸) The Kremlin’s directive prompted ideologues in Kiev to begin an uneasy search for Ukrainian national colors to supplement the Soviet red. The awkwardness of the situation was caused by the fact that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia had already established blue and yellow as the national colors. During the Revolution the blue and yellow standard was the flag of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, and early Soviet propaganda labeled Ukrainian nationalists as *zhovtblakytynyky* (“yellow-and-blue men,” as opposed to the Reds). The historical record did not offer much choice, however, as the traditional colors of medieval Kievan Rus’ and the Ukrainian Cossacks at various times had been red, crimson, yellow, blue, and azure.⁵⁹

After weighing various options, historians and heraldic specialists hazarded a proposal to supplement the red with blue, since “under the command of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, under the banner of this color, the Ukrainian people fought for their freedom and independence.” The Department of Ideology of the Ukrainian Central Committee, however, changed the blue to azure and added another sentence, “Under this banner, the Ukrainian people fulfilled their enduring dream of incorporating Ukraine into Russia.” Then, the explanatory note was edited once more to modify the

statement that, in heraldry, the color azure symbolized grandeur and beauty. The final version read, “Azure symbolizes the Ukrainian people’s eternal friendship with the great Russian people and matches with red, symbolizing the great Leninist–Stalinist friendship of peoples.”⁶⁰

Extensive ideological editing notwithstanding, in 1948 the Ukrainian leadership did not send the flag proposal to Moscow. In May the paperwork was waiting for Khrushchev’s approval and his go-ahead for the submission to Moscow.⁶¹ In September 1948 the U.N. inquired whether it should fly the old flag of the Ukrainian SSR at its headquarters, but no reply was sent until January 1950.⁶² As was the case with the new coat of arms, Moscow approved the Ukrainian republic’s new flag—red with an azure lower third, with a golden hammer and sickle in the upper-right corner—on 4 November 1949.⁶³ Still, Ukraine was first among the Soviet republics to receive its new flag. The other republics followed Ukraine’s example during 1951–1953, the Russian Federation being the last (January 1954).⁶⁴

Why did Khrushchev not push for the approval of Ukraine’s new flag and coat of arms until late in 1949? One possible answer is that he was watching the Kremlin’s reaction to two important celebrations in Ukraine, which were to signal the republic’s standing in the Stalinist hierarchy of nations. Both jubilees, the thirtieth anniversary of Soviet Ukraine (January 1948) and the tenth anniversary of the reunification of the Ukrainian ethnic lands (October 1949), were a success, thereby prompting the Ukrainian leadership to finalize its work on the state symbols.

On 24–25 January 1948 the Ukrainian SSR marked its thirtieth anniversary with numerous meetings, parades, and concerts. Viacheslav Molotov, Stalin’s first lieutenant, arrived in Kiev to make an important speech during which he made the official proclamation, as Khrushchev had long wanted to do, that the Ukrainians were the second brother in the Soviet family of nations: “The Great October Socialist Revolution opened for the peoples of the world the path to communism, the path to a free and happy life. Following the Russian people, the Ukrainian people were the first to take this path. (Applause.)”⁶⁵ Senior ideologues in Kiev judged the celebration a success and began demanding that scholars and journalists elaborate on Molotov’s words.⁶⁶

October 1949 marked another ideologically sensitive celebration in the republic, which ten years earlier had acquired the Western Ukrainian lands from Poland. The festivities were grandiose, on a par with those marking the republic’s thirtieth jubilee. But while celebrating the reunification of all the Ukrainian ethnic lands in one state, the republic’s ideologues admonished the media not to forget about the decisive “help of the great Russian people.”⁶⁷ Thirteen leading Ukrainian poets composed a lengthy poem addressed to Stalin, detailing all the historic incidents of beneficent Russian influence and thanking the leader personally for having united Ukraine.⁶⁸ In spite of this rhetoric about Russia’s guidance, the festivities glorified Soviet Ukraine as a polity in which the Ukrainian nation had completed the historical process of its reunification. Yet, because Ukrainian national pride was subordinated in the official

discourse to the doctrine of Russian tutelage, the Kremlin looked favorably upon the way the second-in-command Soviet nation celebrated its achievements.

Seizing the moment, the Ukrainian leadership secured Stalin's consent to the inauguration of the new symbols of Soviet Ukrainian statehood. The Politburo issued its approval on 9 November 1949, just before Khrushchev's move to a higher position in Moscow as secretary of the all-Union Central Committee.⁶⁹ Following the formal endorsement of changes by Ukraine's Supreme Soviet on 21 November, the Ukrainian press waxed rhapsodic about the new symbols that reflected "the great historical achievements of Soviet Ukraine." At the same time, editorials stressed the unshakable friendship between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, as well as the failure of Ukrainian "bourgeois nationalists" who had sought to separate Ukraine from the Soviet Union.⁷⁰

Beginning on 1 January 1950, the performance of the anthem, live or recorded by a male choir, became obligatory during state functions, as well as at the beginning and end of radio broadcasts. On the radio, the Ukrainian anthem had to precede the all-Union anthem, while foreign diplomats were to be greeted with the republic's anthem only⁷¹—a stunning indication of how far the authorities were prepared to go in their institutionalization of the national "form." (The order of precedence on the radio remained the same until the Soviet Union's collapse, but during the late Soviet period foreign diplomats were treated to both anthems.) For use by government offices, schools, and other public places, the authorities ordered the immediate production of 231,000 flags.⁷² An army of professional and volunteer party propagandists began explaining the significance of the new state symbols to the populace.

Thanks to the propagandists' cumulative reports on questions typically asked after lectures, one can glean some indication of how Ukrainian citizens interpreted the changes. Only two typical questions dealt with the anthem, flag, and coat of arms as symbols imbued with certain meaning: why is the lower third of the flag azure, and why does the coat of arms feature wheat sheaves but no representations of Ukraine's industrial development? The majority of questions had nothing to do with the actual images, music, and texts. Instead, the public wondered what imminent changes in Ukraine's status these reforms might indicate, and whether the Ukrainian attributes of statehood would completely replace the all-Union ones in the republic. The Department of Ideology reported the following questions as typical: "Why were the anthem and flag adopted at this particular time, and why was it necessary to change the coat of arms?" "Will the other republics introduce their own anthems and flags?" "Why does the Ukrainian republic need its own flag?" "Does the creation of its own flag, coat of arms, and anthem mean that Ukraine will separate from the Soviet Union?" "In what situations will the Soviet anthem be performed and in what cases the Ukrainian one?" "Which flag will fly on government buildings?" "Which flag will the republic's merchant fleet use?" "Which flag will be displayed at the Fourth Session of the U.N. General Assembly?" and "Why does the Russian Federation not have its own flag and anthem?"⁷³

In other words, regardless of how the population interpreted (and whether it cared about) the party-approved images, colors, words, and music, it recognized the anthem, flag, and coat of arms as institutions of Ukrainian statehood. As early as 1970 the late dean of Ukrainian historians in North America, Ivan L. Rudnytsky, warned Western scholars against the easy dismissal of Soviet Ukrainian statehood. He argued that the Ukrainians “place[d] a high value on the nominal sovereignty of their republic.” Although well aware of the extent of Moscow’s centralized party control, they were proud of Ukraine’s membership in the U.N. and other trappings of statehood as signs of their separate nationhood or, as Rudnytsky has put it, “of their nation’s imprescriptible rights.”⁷⁴

All in all, Stalinist ideologues succeeded admirably in editing the text and music of the Soviet Ukrainian anthem to make them as “non-Ukrainian” as possible. Following the initial confusion, they forced the poets and composers to select the most ideologically sound words and the least Ukrainian tunes. They prescribed the times and ways in which the anthem had to be performed. Yet, the population viewed the very creation of the anthem as an indication that Ukraine’s sovereignty, no matter how nominal, was more likely to be strengthened than weakened. In this the public may have been wrong, but its interpretation was in itself significant.

Like the republic’s flag and coat of arms, the anthem of Soviet Ukraine existed as a Soviet symbol and national institution until the collapse of the USSR. Under *glasnost*, the democratic opposition made one of its priorities the restoration of the national symbols that had been established during the Revolution. After fierce public debates the blue and yellow flag, the anthem “Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished,” and the nationalist emblem of the trident were allowed in public and adopted in 1991 as the symbols of the independent Ukrainian state.⁷⁵ Although they functioned as national institutions, the republic’s Soviet anthem, flag, and emblem had been symbols of Ukraine’s nominal sovereignty within the USSR. The advent of real sovereignty dictated the need to fill the institutions of statehood with national symbolic meaning.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank David Brandenberger, John-Paul Himka, Yoshie Mitsuyoshi, Marta D. Olynyk, and Marko Pavlyshyn for their help during the preparation of this article.
2. *Radianska Ukraina*, 8 February 1944, p. 1.
3. Derzhavnyi arkhiv Kyivskoi oblasti (DAKO), fond 1, opys 3, sprava 73, ark. 2 and 8.
4. Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship*, trans. Karen Forster and Oswald Forster (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 189–190 and Yaroslav Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine after World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1964), pp. 264–282. Between 1940 and 1956 the number of Soviet union republics stood at 16. It reverted back to 15 when the Karelo-Finnish Republic was downgraded to an autonomous region within the Russian Federation.
5. *Radianska Ukraina*, 4 February 1944, p. 2; *Kyivska Pravda*, 6 February 1944, p. 1.

6. See V. A. Hrynevych, "Utvorennia Narkomatu oborony URSS u 1944 r.: z istorii odniiei politychnoi hry," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, No. 5, 1991, pp. 29–37; *idem*, "Utvorennia Narodnoho komisariatu zakordonnykh sprav Ukrainiskoi RSR: proekty i realii (1944–1945 rr.)," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, No. 3, 1995, pp. 35–46.
7. Roger Brubaker, "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Its Successor States: An Institutional Account," in *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 24.
8. Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 1994, p. 447.
9. See Serhy Yekelchuk, "Stalinist Patriotism as Imperial Discourse: Reconciling the Ukrainian and Russian 'Heroic Pasts,'" *Kritika*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002, pp. 51–80.
10. Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady i upravlinnia Ukrainy (TsDAVOV), f. 2, op. 7, spr. 1514, ark. 24 (museum); spr. 2747, ark. 29–32; spr. 3959, ark. 33–51; *Radianska Ukraina*, 15 November 1944, p. 1 (encyclopedia).
11. See Nicholas S. Trimasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: Dutton, 1946) and David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
12. See Lowell Tillet, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969) and Serguei Ekelchik (Serhy Yekelchuk), "History, Culture, and Nationhood under High Stalinism: Soviet Ukraine, 1939–1954," Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, 2000, Chapter 3.
13. I have borrowed this term from Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
14. See Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 111–112 and, more recently, Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
15. N. I. Kondakova, *Dukhovnaia zhizn Rossii i Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina 1941–1945 gg.* (Moscow: Luch, 1995), pp. 31–32; Caroline Brooke, "Changing Identities: The Russian and Soviet National Anthems" (manuscript).
16. *Radianska Ukraina*, 3 January 1994, p. 4 (inauguration); Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskykh orhanizatsii Ukrainy (TsDAHO), f. 1, op. 70, spr. 883, ark. 7 (publication).
17. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsialnoi i politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 17, op. 125, d. 300 (other republics); *Kulturne budivnytstvo v Ukrainiskii RSR* (Kiev: Derzhpolityvydav URSS, 1961), Vol. 2, p. 17.
18. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 18, ark. 1.
19. *Ibid.*, ark. 5.
20. *Ibid.*, ark. 5, 5 overleaf, 19 overleaf.
21. *Ibid.*, ark. 13 overleaf to 17.
22. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 70, spr. 262, ark. 21; TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 20, ark. 133.
23. *Ibid.*, ark. 25.
24. *Ibid.*, ark. 122. Mykola Shchors: a Soviet hero of the civil war in Ukraine.
25. *Ibid.*, ark. 128.
26. *Ibid.*, spr. 18, ark. 41 and 42.
27. Yekelchuk, "Stalinist Patriotism," 74–75 and Jeffrey Burds, *The Early Cold War in Soviet*

- West Ukraine, 1944–1948*, Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies, No. 1505 (Pittsburgh: Center for Russia and East European Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 2001).
28. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 20, ark. 260, 268, 274 overleaf, 291.
 29. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 70, spr. 262, ark. 31.
 30. *Ibid.*, op. 23, spr. 1608, ark. 9.
 31. *Ibid.*, ark. 6–9; op. 70, spr. 261, ark. 99–101.
 32. *Ibid.*, op. 23, spr. 2782, ark. 3; op. 70, spr. 261, ark. 101.
 33. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 18, ark. 104 and 122.
 34. *Ibid.*, ark. 105 and 149.
 35. *Ibid.*, ark. 195, 152 and 158.
 36. *Ibid.*, ark. 196 and 200.
 37. *Ibid.*, spr. 19, ark. 43.
 38. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, spr. 1608, ark. 1–3; TsDAVO, f. 2, op. 7, spr. 1768, ark. 32–34.
 39. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, spr. 2782, ark. 2.
 40. See Serhy Yekelchyk, “Celebrating the Soviet Present: The Zhdanovshchina Campaign in Ukrainian Literature and the Arts,” in Donald J. Raleigh, ed., *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917–1953* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), pp. 255–275.
 41. On this episode, see David Marples, “Khrushchev, Kaganovich and the 1947 Crisis,” in *Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), pp. 90–96.
 42. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 35, ark. 88.
 43. *Ibid.*, ark. 1–3.
 44. *Ibid.*, ark. 29; spr. 18, ark. 248.
 45. *Ibid.*, spr. 35, ark. 25–28, 30–30 overleaf, and 88 overleaf.
 46. *Ibid.*, ark. 18 and 23.
 47. *Ibid.*, ark. 15 and 14.
 48. *Ibid.*, spr. 18, ark. 237 and 244.
 49. *Ibid.*, ark. 230.
 50. *Radianska Ukraina*, 22 November 1949, p. 1.
 51. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 19, ark. 67–68. Since there were obvious similarities between the winning text by Tychyna and Bazhan and Novytsky’s original submission, the latter demanded to be listed as co-author. However, his demand for recognition fell on deaf ears.
 52. *Ibid.*, spr. 35, ark. 73–74.
 53. *Ibid.*, ark. 84.
 54. *Ibid.*, ark. 80.
 55. *Radianska Ukraina*, 22 November 1949, p. 1.
 56. See TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 80, ark. 8–16; V. I. Strelsky, “Herb derzhavnyi,” *Radianska entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy* (Kiev: Ukrainska radianska entsyklopediia, 1969), Vol. 1, p. 414. Soviet Ukraine’s first coat of arms (1919) featured the slogan “Proletarians of the world, unite!” in both Ukrainian and Russian. The Russian inscription was removed in the 1929 Constitution, which was adopted during the state policy of Ukrainization. See *Konstitutsiia Ukrainskoi sotsialisticheskoi sovetskoi respubliki* (Kharkiv: Tsentropechat, 1919), p. 13 and *Konstytutsiia USRR: Vydannia ofitsiine* (Kharkiv: Iurydychne vydavnytstvo NKO USRR, 1929), p. 34.
 57. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 79, ark. 10 and 20.
 58. *Konstytutsiia (osnovnyi zakon) Ukrainskoi radianskoi sotsialistychnoi respubliki* (Kiev: Partvydav, 1938), p. 30.

59. See K. Hlomoza and O. Pavlosky, *Ukrainska natsionalna symbolika: pokhodzhennia, tradytsii, dolia* (Kiev: Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 1989); V. I. Serhiichuk, *Dolia ukrainskoi natsionalnoi symboliky* (Kiev: Znannia, 1990).
60. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 79, ark. 114, 11, and 3–4.
61. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 79, ark. 20a.
62. *Ibid.*, ark. 29–33.
63. *Ibid.*, ark. 2.
64. E. I. Kamentseva and A. N. Diachkov, “Flag gosudarstvennyi,” *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia* (Moscow: BSE, 1963), Vol. 15, p. 200.
65. *Radianska Ukraina*, 25 January 1948, p. 1.
66. See, for example, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 70, spr. 1173, ark. 71–72.
67. *Ibid.*, op. 30, spr. 1820, ark. 9. On the celebrations in Ukraine, see *Vsenarodne sviato: materialy i dokumenty pro sviatkuvannia desiatyrichchia vozziednannia ukrainskoho narodu v iedynii ukrainskii radianskii derzhavi* (Kiev: Derzhpolityvydav Ukrainy, 1950).
68. *Literaturna hazeta*, 27 October 1949, p. 2 and *Vsenarodne sviato*, 141–157.
69. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 79, ark. 2; spr. 80, ark. 14.
70. *Radianska Ukraina*, 22 November 1949, pp. 1–2; 23 November, pp. 1–2.
71. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 70, spr. 1741, ark. 1–4; *Radianska Ukraina*, 23 November 1949, p. 1.
72. TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 16, spr. 79, ark. 19.
73. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 70, spr. 1741, ark. 9–10.
74. Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “Soviet Ukraine in Historical Perspective,” in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1987), p. 466. This insightful article was first presented at the University of Alberta in March 1970 as the Shevchenko Memorial Lecture.
75. See Bohdan Krawchenko, “National Memory in Ukraine: The Role of the Blue and Yellow Flag,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1990, pp. 1–22 and Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 217–229. The German historian Wilfried Jilge is currently compiling a dissertation on the history of Ukrainian national symbols of the twentieth century. See Wilfried Jilge, “Historical Memory and National Identity-Building in Ukraine since 1991,” in Attila Pók, Jörn Rüsen, and Jutta Scherrer, eds, *European History: Challenge for a Common Future* (Hamburg: Körber, 2002), pp. 109–132.