
Ukrainian History from a German Perspective

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Replies

Ukrainian History from a German Perspective

Andreas Kappeler replies:

“Is There a German History?” was the title of the annual lecture at the German Historical Institute of London in 1987.¹ The speaker, Hagen Schulze, answered this question in the affirmative, but with the reservation that, unlike British or French history, German history has fundamental discontinuities and has neither a singular focus nor clearly defined boundaries, and that for this reason there have been two centuries of constant debate on its status. Schulze concluded his speech by calling for the denationalization of German history and its incorporation into the larger confines of European history.

In its question and answers Schulze’s lecture not only parallels the essay by Mark von Hagen but also reminds us that the problem is not only pertinent for Ukrainian history but for German history, too. The question could also be posed for Italian, Czech or Finnish histories. Throughout the history of wide regions of Europe there were discontinuities in political boundaries, elites and high cultures. Most ethnic groups were, according to Miroslav Hroch, so-called “small” or “young” peoples, even numerically big ones like the Ukrainians.² However, even for the “big” or “old” nations of Europe, the political and ethnic borders were not and still are not the same. This is true even of the classic nation-state, France, with its ethnic minorities (and considerable numbers of francophones in other countries). It is also true of Germany which, even after the unification of the Federal Republic and GDR, does not embrace all German-speaking groups. Moreover, the example of Germany shows that the revolutions of 1989 will continue to lead to new orientations toward history and to new answers to old questions.

Despite the parallels between German and Ukrainian history, the question of a Ukrainian history is the existential of the two because since the nineteenth century the history of Europe has been perceived and written mainly as a history of nation states. With the exception of the short-lived Ukrainian People’s Republic (1917–1920), a Ukrainian state has not existed in European history; it therefore follows that there could be no Ukrainian history. Only since the founding of the sover-

1. Hagen Schulze, *Is There a German History?* (London: German Historical Institute, 1987); *Gibt es überhaupt eine deutsche Geschichte?* (Berlin, 1989).

2. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); my “Ein kleines Volk von 25 Millionen: Die Ukrainer um 1900,” *Kleine Völker in der Geschichte Osteuropas. Festschrift für Günther Stökl zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. M. Alexander, Frank Kämpfer and Andreas Kappeler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991), 33–42; abridged trans. in *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 18, no 1–2 (Summer–Winter 1993): 85–92.

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eign Ukrainian national state have scholars and public opinion begun to acknowledge the existence of a separate Ukrainian history. But the Ukrainian national state and its history still have not found “wide-spread acceptance and authority in the international scholarly and political communities.” While in Ukraine and other new nation states national histories are being constructed and historians are playing important roles in legitimizing and shaping identities, western Europeans or Americans might question both the value of reconfiguring the history of the former Soviet Union into fifteen or more national histories, and whether to do so is not a step backwards toward the nationalisms of the nineteenth century.

In both method and perspective Mark von Hagen’s essay is an integral component of the current re-orientation of research on eastern Europe. We should be grateful to him for posing questions pertinent not only for Ukraine but for the whole post-Soviet world. Those questions will be answered differently depending on the reader’s perspective; mine is not that different from his. We are both of the same generation of historians, neither of us is of Ukrainian descent, and we have long been occupied with the history of Russia and only recently with that of Ukraine. Because I live and work in Germany, I will first summarize the evolution of the German-language historiography on Ukraine; then I will briefly discuss the Polish perspective, neglected in von Hagen’s essay. Finally I will comment on the central issue, the objectives of Ukrainian history and problems related to its actualization.

Stages of the Historiography of Ukraine in Germany

As in the US, Ukraine does not exist as an independent research topic. Because Germany does not have a strong or influential Ukrainian community, Ukrainian studies are even weaker here than in North America. Since the end of the nineteenth century, east European history³ has been that stated by Günther Stökl, an “auxiliary science of foreign policy.”⁴ East European history as an academic discipline was introduced in Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century, and was primarily concerned with the Russian and later the Soviet empires; among historians there arose competition between russophiles and russophobes. Moreover, there was a concurrent school of interpretation, also politicized, which concentrated on *Deutschtum* and was later known as *Ostforschung*. According to this approach, middle eastern Europe was a province in which Germanic settlers were *Kulturträger* and *Herrenvolk*, a premise later actualized by the nazis’ *Lebensraum* pro-

3. The concept of eastern European history as a special field of historical studies in Germany includes not only middle eastern Europe and southeast Europe, but also Russia. See Klaus Zernack, *Osteuropa: Eine Einführung in seine Geschichte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1977).

4. Günther Stökl, *Osteuropa—Geschichte und Politik* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1979), 16.

grams.⁵ In this context, between the two world wars a series of works devoted to the history of German colonists in Ukraine was produced by, among others, Adolf Ehrt, Georg Leibbrandt and Karl Stumpp, all of whom later participated in the aggressive eastern policies of the Third Reich.

Middle eastern Europe—especially neighboring Poland and Bohemia—has played an important role throughout Germany's history. For this reason, its histories have not been so marginalized there, as has been the case in North America. In addition, in Germany and Austria there has been a strong tradition of scholarship in Slavic philology which has drawn attention to the cultural history of all Slavic peoples. In reaction to the instrumentalization of *Ostforschung* during the Nazi era, from the 1960s on, German historians of eastern Europe have begun to evince interest in the histories and national historiographies of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Although Russocentrism still dominates the field, of the approximately 50 professors of east European history in German-speaking countries, only about 30 focus their research on Russia and the Soviet Union.

Ukraine, on the other hand, has not been included in the German historiography of eastern Europe. During the eighteenth century there was some interest in it for a variety of reasons, among them the Cossacks and their Hetman-state, and Herder's prediction that Ukraine would enjoy an important future. In 1796 Johann Christian von Engel, a student of Schlözer, published the first *Geschichte der Ukraine und der Cossacken*.⁶ In the nineteenth century, however, interest was concentrated almost exclusively on the Russians and the Russian state. Because of a growing politicization of east European history, Ukraine was interesting to Germans only as a source of raw materials or as a pawn against Russia, or (after 1918) against Poland or the Soviet Union. By the end of the nineteenth century Ukraine again began to appear as a relevant topic in German publications. At that time the philosopher Eduard von Hartmann suggested toppling the Russian Empire and establishing a "kingdom of Kiev." Such plans for dismantling the tsar's empire were proposed often before and during World War I. Paul

5. For a history of the field of eastern European history in Germany, see Gerd Voigt, *Rußland in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung* (Berlin: Akademie, 1994); Gabriele Camphausen, *Die wissenschaftliche historische Rußlandforschung im Dritten Reich 1933–1945* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990); Klaus Zernack, "Bemerkungen zur Geschichte und gegenwärtigen Lage der Osteuropahistorie in Deutschland," *Europa Slavica—Europa Orientalis, Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Klaus Detlev Grothusen and Klaus Zernack (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1980), 542–59; Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

6. Dmytro Doroschenko, *Die Ukraine und das Reich: Neun Jahrhunderte deutsch-ukrainischer Beziehungen im Spiegel der deutschen Wissenschaft und Literatur* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1941), reprint Munich 1994; A. Zhukovsky, "Germany," *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 2: 47–56; Rudolf A. Mark: "Johann Christian von Engel (1770–1814) als Historiograph der Ukraine," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 36 (1987): 191–201.

Rohrbach and Axel Schmidt, nationalist conservative and russophobic Baltic Germans, proposed an independent Ukraine which would serve the interests of German imperialism. After the German protectorate of Hetman Skoropadsky was thwarted, Rohrbach and Schmidt founded a German-Ukrainian society to promulgate their ideas; these, however, failed to gain support in the Rapallo era, during which there was a rapprochement with Soviet Russia.⁷

Such ideas were adopted by the nazi Alfred Rosenberg in his plans for a "New Order" in eastern Europe: Ukraine would be bound to Germany yet quasi-independent, and it would counterbalance Russia and Poland. Although Rosenberg's ideas were not seen to fruition because of the resistance of Hitler and the realities of the brutal German occupation policy in Ukraine, many Ukrainian emigrants to Germany and German Ukrainophiles cooperated with Rosenberg and Leibbrandt and their ministry of the occupied eastern territories.⁸ Among the Ukrainophiles who were active in nazi Ukrainian policy, one of the most influential was the Austrian Hans Koch, who was born in Lviv, fought on the Ukrainian side against Poland and the bolsheviks, and later became an evangelical theologian and church historian in Vienna. In 1937 he became professor of east European history and director of the Institute for East European Studies at the University of Breslau, in which capacity he served as advisor to the nazi regime; after 1939 he was a military intelligence officer in the German army.⁹

Ukrainian immigrants played an important role in German-language Ukrainian historiography after 1918. Most of them, including the noted historian Dmytro Doroshenko, were monarchist supporters of Skoropadsky. Despite the fact that Ukraine was not a priority in German politics, in 1926 Skoropadsky's supporters founded a Ukrainian Research Institute in Berlin which was supported by influential Germans.¹⁰ The institute enabled immigrant Ukrainian historians to publish research in German; when the nazis came to power, however, the institute, chaired at the time by Ivan Mirchuk, became markedly more political and supportive of the goals of Hitler's regime. From 1918 to 1945 Ukrainian immigrants in Germany authored the bulk of

7. See the literature cited in notes 5 and 6, and also Peter Borowsky, "Paul Rohrbach und die Ukraine: Ein Beitrag zum Kontinuitätsproblem," *Deutschland in der Welt-politik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. Fritz Fischer zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. I. Geiss and B.J. Wendt (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1973), 437–62.

8. Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941–1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957); Diter Pol, "Fashystska okupatsiia Ukraïny v 1941–1944. rr. u pratsiakh zakhidnykh uchenykh," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 5 (1994): 127–36.

9. Günther Stökl, "Hans Koch 1894–1959," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 7 (1959): 117–29.

10. Carsten Kumke, "Das Ukrainische Wissenschaftliche Institut in Berlin: Ein Institut zwischen Politik und Wissenschaft," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 43 (1995), in print. One of the protectors of the institute was General Wilhelm Groener. In 1918 he was a leader of German Ukrainian politics; during the Weimar Republic he was minister of the interior and chief of defense.

German-language research on Ukrainian history, as is evidenced by German historical periodicals of this period and by important books, like *Geschichte der Ukraine* by Borys Krupnytsky (1939). Most Ukrainian immigrants were not influenced by National Socialist ideology but rather stressed a continuous orientation toward the west throughout Ukrainian history, thus positing Ukraine as a potential partner for Germany. Ukrainian themes were discussed by few German authors during this period. After World War II there was a continuation of both the Ukrainian historiography begun in the 1920s and of personnel. In the 1950s Hans Koch, director of the *Osteuropainstitut* in Munich and first editor of the revived journal *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, and other historians who had been active under the nazis published books and articles on Ukraine. Simultaneously, a younger generation of German and Austrian historians evidenced some interest in Ukrainian history, among them Koch's student Günther Stökl, the church historian Friedrich Heyer and Dietrich Geyer, who devoted one of his first articles to Ukraine.¹¹

During the post-war era, Ukrainian immigration to Germany was substantial. Immigrants founded many research organizations, of which the Ukrainian Free University (transferred from Prague to Munich) was the most important. Ukraine seemed poised to play an important role in the German historiography of eastern Europe; Germany also seemed ready to assume a leading position in western scholarship on Ukrainian history. The German interest in Ukrainian history, however, peaked in the 1950s, and in the 1960s and 1970s it sharply declined. One reason for this was the emigration of many Ukrainians from Germany to North America in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Although the Ukrainian Free University remained in Munich, it was reduced in size and increasingly isolated from the German intellectual community. But, again, the reasons for the decline of Ukrainian history in Germany were political. Ukraine and its history seemed to serve only as instruments of German imperialism against the Soviet Union (Russia) and Poland. Ukrainian history and Ukrainian historians were perceived as compromised and associated with such negative stereotypes as nationalism, anti-Semitism and collaboration; the younger generation of historians distanced themselves from them. Most of these younger historians believed that the age of nationalism had ended (in the Soviet Union as well as in the west); they were oriented towards a united Europe and détente with the Soviet bloc. During the 1960s and 1970s historical research in Germany focused very little on Ukraine, except for studies concerning German and Austrian politics there during World War I. Emigrants at the Free University continued to publish books and articles written in German, but this small community, in

11. Günther Stökl, *Die Entstehung des Kosakentums* (Munich: Isar, 1953); Friedrich Heyer, *Die orthodoxe Kirche in der Ukraine von 1917 bis 1945* (Cologne, 1953); Dietrich Geyer, "Die Ukraine im Jahre 1917: Russische Revolution und nationale Bewegung," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 8 (1957): 670–87.

contrast to the much larger Ukrainian community in North America, was not innovative in its research.

German interest in Ukrainian history began to increase in the 1980s with the crisis in the Soviet Union and the subsequent renaissance of nationalist movements throughout eastern Europe.¹² From 1971 to 1982, of approximately 160 German-language dissertations on east European history only one focused on Ukraine; from 1983 to 1994, of approximately 130 dissertations seven had Ukraine as a topic.¹³ Similarly, between 1971 and 1986 the *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (now edited by Günther Stökl) published only one article about Ukraine; but from 1983 to 1995, seven were published. In the beginning of the 1990s two volumes of articles and two histories of Ukraine were published in Germany. But the German focus on east European history is still largely Russian and only secondarily oriented toward Poland, the Czech Republic and southeastern Europe. All these regions and the Baltic states still attract more attention than does Ukraine. Except the Ukrainian Free University, in Germany there is currently not one professorship or one research institute that specializes in Ukrainian history.

Polish and Jewish Perspectives

The Polish aspect of Ukrainian history is given too little attention in Mark von Hagen's essay. The political constellation in eastern Europe did not just consist of Russia and Germany, but also included as important factors Poland-Lithuania (until the partitions), the Polish question (in the 19th century) and the new Polish state (after 1918). The Ukrainian question was not just a function of a bilateral relationship between Russia/USSR and Germany, but often of a triangular relationship between the two larger powers and Poland. For this reason, during World Wars I and II Germany hoped to use Ukrainians not only against Russia but against Poland as well. Until the partitions the Rzeczpospolita was a kingdom of many peoples whose imperial tradition was renewed after 1918; Poland-Lithuania therefore may be considered a secondary empire. While the existence of Poland was

12. This trend was first noticeable at the international conference on the history of German-Ukrainian relationships in Garmisch in 1986. Most of the lectures were published in *German-Ukrainian Relations in Historical Perspective*, eds. Hans-Joachim Torke and John-Paul Himka (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1994).

13. Among these dissertations are excellent works, like Carsten Kumke, *Führer und Geführte bei den Zaporoger Kosaken: Struktur und Geschichte kosakischer Verbände im polnisch-litauischen Grenzland (1550–1648)* (Berlin: Harrassowitz, 1993), *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* (hereafter FOG) 49; Ernst Lüdemann, "Zur Lösung der Nationalen Frage in der sowjetukrainischen Geschichtsschreibung," FOG 40 (1988), 229–395; Rudolf A. Mark, "Symon Petljura und die UNR: Vom Sturz des Hetmans Skoropads'kyj bis zum Exil in Polen," FOG 40 (1988), 7–228; Dietmar Neutatz, *Die "deutsche Frage" im Schwarzmeergebiet und in Wolhynien: Politik, Wirtschaft und Alltag im Spannungsfeld von Nationalismus und Modernisierung (1856–1914)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993).

jeopardized by Russia and Germany, Poland itself did not accept Ukraine as an independent nation since the majority of Ukrainians previously had been citizens of Poland-Lithuania. Thus Ukrainian national history has had to liberate itself not only from the Russian but also from the Polish perspective; neither allowed for an independent Ukrainian history.¹⁴

This is the background for the important Polish contribution made (and still being made) to Ukrainian historiography. It is also important to note that the Polish historical school is one of the most respected in Europe; even while under communist rule, it developed methodological standards which in some fields compare favorably with those of Germany. Unlike ostracized western historians, Polish historians were even able to influence Soviet-Ukrainian historiography. There was, however, an entire host of topics within Ukrainian history which until the 1980s was taboo for Polish historians. Nevertheless, the Polish are the leading non-Ukrainian historians of Ukraine and have published profusely. Their special focus is the late middle ages and the early modern era, during which the majority of what is now Ukraine belonged to Poland. In the field of modern history, authors such as Wilhelm Feldman, Elżbieta Hornowa, Stefan Kieniewicz, Jan Kozik, Janusz Radziejowski, Jerzy Tomaszewski, Ryszard Torzecki and Leon Wasilewski have written on a variety of topics related to Ukraine, with special attention to Polish-dominated west Ukraine. Western historians researching Ukraine must not overlook this perspective or these sources.¹⁵

Along with the Russian and Polish perspectives on Ukraine, one must also integrate a Jewish perspective into its history. Jews have played an important role in the social, economic and cultural history of Ukraine since the late middle ages. In some constellations, such as the civil war or World War II, the Russian-Polish-German-Ukrainian rectangle would have to be enlarged to a pentagon to include the Jews. Despite attempts at rapprochement, Jews and Ukrainians have historic prejudices: anti-Semitic Ukrainians collaborating with nazis versus communist Jews collaborating with Russians.¹⁶

Objectives for Western Research on Ukraine

Mark von Hagen argues that Ukrainian history should be integrated into east European history not as a national history but as an

14. Stephen Velychenko, *Identity in Eastern Europe and Russia: Soviet-Russian and Polish Accounts of Ukrainian History, 1914–1991* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

15. From a Polish perspective, the work of Daniel Beauvois gives new insight into the social history of Ukraine (*Le noble, le serf et le révizor: La noblesse polonaise entre le tsarisme et les masses ukrainiennes 1831–1863* (Paris: Archives contemporaines, 1985); *La bataille de la terre en Ukraine 1863–1914: Les Polonais et les conflits socioethniques* (Lille: Presses Universitaires, 1993).

16. Peter J. Potichnyj and Howard Aster, eds. *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988).

experimental field for post-national approaches. Western historians should follow his lead and criticize both the nationalist tendencies in east European historiographies and the concept of the ethnically defined nation state with its intolerance towards its minority populations. But is this the time for a post-nationalist approach to Ukrainian history? I have my doubts—especially for Germany and western Europe where Ukraine and its history are largely ignored in politics, the press and research. As usual, traditional Russocentric approaches to Ukrainian history dominate the field.

The first task of Ukrainian historiography therefore is to make information available in order to show Ukrainian historical perspectives and to counterbalance the Russian and Polish views already entrenched in the field. The Ukrainian approach should be to re-evaluate traditional historical opinions on many subjects, including but not limited to: interpretations of Kievan Rus' and its legacy, long-neglected Ukrainian areas within Poland and Lithuania, the treatment throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of Ukraine as southern and southwest Russia, and heretofore unrecognized contributions to European culture which were Ukrainian (as opposed to either Russian or Polish). Ukrainian stereotypes, especially strong in Germany and Russia, must be eradicated: that Ukrainians are eternal nationalists and anti-Semites, and that Ukrainian leaders, as the examples of Mazepa, Petlyura, Bandera and Kravchuk show, are always traitors. It is also necessary to re-evaluate Russocentric terminology: "old Russia" and "old Russian literature" are widely used for the east Slavic middle age, "*ruskii*," referring to all eastern Slavs in czarist Russia, is easily associated with "Russian." One usually hears only of the millions of "Russian" peasants relocated to Siberia, although many of these "Russians" were actually Ukrainians.¹⁷

National historiographies always have the tendency to project the modern nation back in time. Ukrainian émigré historians, accustomed to adopting a defensive posture, often have been prone to special sensitivity or to outbursts of heightened nationalism. But national myths of Ukrainian historiography cannot be accepted and spread as truth without qualification. The Kievan empire was neither Russian nor Ukrainian, just as that of Charlemagne was neither French nor German. Studies of Khmelnytsky's Hetmanate and the Ukrainian People's Republic must not exclude the persecution of Jews, studies of the OUN, or UPA collaboration with nazi Germany. There exists a real danger that Soviet historiography, written in "black and white," will continue: "class" then will be replaced by "nation," descriptions of heroic communists will be replaced by descriptions of heroic nationalists and the stereotype of the "eternal friendship of peoples" will be superseded by a stereotype of the "eternal antagonism" between Ukrainians and Russians.

17. Ihor Stebelsky, "Ukrainian Peasant Colonization East of the Urals, 1896–1914," *Soviet Geography* 25 (1984): 681–94.

The task of presenting a differentiated view of Ukrainian history is vital if its legitimate postulates are to be credible to the western scholarly community. But this is only one aspect of the objectives of western research on Ukraine. Ukrainian historians have already begun filling "black holes" with new archival work and re-evaluating Ukrainian history, indeed freeing it from dogmatic Soviet interpretations. But to overcome the provincialism traditionally associated with Ukrainian historiography it would be meaningful for western historiography to apply its new methodology to Ukrainian themes.¹⁸ There are countless Anglo-American works regarding the social, cultural and gender histories of Russian peasants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; but there are very few works about Ukrainian peasants, despite the fact that the peasant class was even more important to Ukrainian than to Russian history.¹⁹

A more difficult task suggested by Mark von Hagen is the substitution of Ukrainian national history by a supra- or subnational perspective. In this field, non-Ukrainian historians should do preparatory work that will be useful for Ukrainian historians in their post-national future. I would like to enumerate five objectives for western research. First, there is needed a polyethnic history of supra-national empires, including Ukrainians in the tsarist empire (which is still misunderstood as a Russian nation state), the Soviet Union, Poland-Lithuania, the Habsburg Empire and the second Polish Republic. Second, non-ethnic Ukrainians living on Ukrainian territory must be taken into account and allocated adequate treatment. How can one understand Ukrainian history if one only examines the majority and ignores Poles, Russians and Jews? Third, Ukrainian history should be included in comparative studies of European history²⁰; it seems logical to me to compare Ukraine's history to that of other peripheries of centralized states, such as Belarus', Lithuania, Slovakia, Catalonia or Occitan southern France.²¹ It would also be useful to compare Ukrainian Cossacks with Russian Don or Volga Cossacks, and with other frontier societies. Fi-

18. See Orest Subtelny, "Die gegenwärtige Situation der ukrainischen Historiographie: Ein Überblick," *Ukraine: Gegenwart und Geschichte eines neuen Staates*, eds. Guido Hausmann and Andreas Kappeler (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1993) 350–69.

19. Exceptions are Robert Edelman, *Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1988); Stella Hryniuk, *Peasants with Promise: Ukrainians in Southeastern Galicia, 1880–1900* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1992); Christine Worobec, "Temptress or Virgin?: The Precarious Sexual Position of Women in Post-emancipation Ukrainian Peasant Society," *Slavic Review* 49 (1990): 227–38.

20. See, as one of the few examples, Orest Subtelny, *Domination of Eastern Europe: Native Nobilities and Foreign Absolutism, 1500–1715* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986).

21. For a comparison of the Ukrainian national movement in the Russian Empire and other national movements in Europe, see Andreas Kappeler, ed., with Fikret Adanir and Alan O'Day, *The Formation of National Elites*, vol. 6, *Comparative Studies on Governments and Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups in Europe, 1850–1940* (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

nally, case studies of cities, universities and smaller regions should analyze the reality of polyethnicity and the complexities of cultural, social and political interactions in several historical periods.

It is much easier to suggest research topics than to realize them. The few topics suggested by von Hagen and myself will present a myriad of difficulties. First, there is no foundation for some studies, e.g. the current state of scholarly research on certain aspects of Ukrainian history will not yet allow a supranational study or comparison. In contrast to Polish or Russian history, much fundamental research still needs to be done. Second, there is a problem of language: an exact socio-historical study of the Ukrainian city during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can only be made if sources in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Yiddish are used—not to mention western European languages. This concerns one of the great challenges of our field. Before the end of the Soviet Union one could, although with a bad conscience, do research on the history of the Kazakhs, Tatars or Ukrainians using only Russian sources; today, for the polyethnic perspective of history, the knowledge of several languages is indispensable. Third, resources are a problem. Ukraine is only one of many new nation states to have appeared in the last few years. Each is worthy of interest and in need of a national history. All my suggestions about studies of Ukraine are also true for Belarus', Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, the Caucasus region, Transylvania or Bosnia. One presumes that, with a limited number of institutions, personnel and funds, the German research community cannot simultaneously examine all regions.

Final Remarks

“Should Ukraine have a history?” “Yes.” “Should Ukraine have *a* history?” “No.” It would be lamentable if the dogmatic, Soviet-marxist perspective were simply replaced with a one-sided, nationalist perspective. Ukrainian history can be analyzed from at least four different levels: the European, the nation-state, supranational Empires, and sub-national regions. Why, however, should we devote our time to studying Ukraine and not one of the other above named regions, which could equally serve as “laboratory for viewing several processes of state and nation building and for comparative history”? One reason is that Ukrainian history is relatively unknown and poorly researched in general. But the final motivation for the study of Ukrainian history, as in the past, remains political. Contemporary Ukraine is a sovereign state, second-largest in Europe (only Russia is larger), with great geo-strategic significance. Because we need information about this state and its past, we hopefully will be able to attract research funding.

It is important that western historians undertake studies that most of our Ukrainian colleagues currently cannot afford. Topics may be approached through methodologically innovative techniques or through the use of several languages. Comparisons may be configured with other regions or other ethnic groups in Europe. We have the

advantage of distance (both geographical and political) from Ukrainian problems, such as the delicate Ukrainian-Russian relationship or the structure and politics of polyethnic empires. It is still too early to expect Ukrainian historians to adopt a supranational perspective. Rather, Ukrainian historians, like the whole nation, are still occupied with the consolidation of their nation and their state. We should show understanding for their needs. We should not, however, feel obligated to support a one-sided nationalist perspective.

One last point: the pleading for more attention to Ukrainian history does not mean that Russian history need be neglected. In fact, because Russian and Ukrainian history are closely interwoven, new directions in the research on Ukraine will bring new insights for those who study Russia. This is especially true for the underresearched history of the Russians and their nation-building process.