

# THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF MODERN UKRAINE\*

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Dedicated to the Memory of Pavlo Hrycak

## *I. The Epoch of the Nobility (up to the 1840's)*

The beginning of the national renaissance of the Ukraine is usually dated from the publication of the travestied *Aeneid* by Kotlyarevsky in 1798. However, although the *Aeneid* was undoubtedly epoch-making in the history of Ukrainian literature, from the viewpoint of the development of national consciousness it is rather an echo of the previous Cossack epoch. The entire literary and cultural movement up to the appearance of Shevchenko and the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in the 1840's was a sort of prolonged epilogue to the Cossack era.

In the Eastern Ukraine, in the former territory of the Hetmanate (provinces of Chernihiv and Poltava) and of Slobidska Ukraine (province of Kharkov), the nobility of Cossack origin continued to be the leading class of society through the first half of the nineteenth century. Foreign travellers (such as Kohl, a German, in 1841) noted that the Ukrainian nobles were dissatisfied with the existing order and antipathetic toward the Muscovites. However this discontent found almost no expression in practical politics, except for such episodes as the secret diplomatic mission of Vasyl' Kapnist to Prussia in 1791, certain hopes raised by Napoleon's invasion in 1812, and the participation of Ukrainians in the Decembrist uprising in 1825. A counterpart to these manifestations of active opposition were the occasional attempts (during the Napoleonic War and again during the Polish revolt of 1830-1831) to win at least a partial restoration of the old Cossack autonomy through a demonstration of loyalty to the throne and the Empire.

\* Only the problems connected with the part of the Ukraine formerly under Russian rule are treated in this article.

Ukrainian consciousness was expressed much more strongly in the form of an apolitical, cultural "provincialism," i.e., an attachment to the historical and ethnic particularities of the homeland, but with a passive acceptance of the political and social *status quo*. This nostalgia for the glorious Cossack past, lost beyond recall, served as the basis for a vigorous movement of historical and antiquarian dilettantism. A practical aim was also present here: that of vindicating by historical documents the rights of the nobles which Russian law had long denied to the descendants of the lower ranks of the Cossack *Starshyna* (high-ranking officers). This last is enough to make it clear that local patriotism, so understood, was in no way contradictory to loyalty to the dynasty and the Russian Empire. It is worthy of mention that, in spite of the notorious severity of the absolutist-bureaucratic regime of Nicholas I, the Ukrainian literary movement as such was at first not persecuted, because the government regarded it as harmless, although at the same time the work of administrative leveling of characteristic Ukrainian traits was continued (abolition of Ukrainian civil law as embodied in the so-called Lithuanian Statute, suppression of the Uniate Church in the Right-Bank Ukraine, etc.

During this epoch we find the beginnings of scientific research into the various fields of Ukrainian studies, particularly in the field of historiography. The central point of interest of the historiography of the Ukrainian nobles was the military and diplomatic history of the Hetmanate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The historiography of the nobles had a much more outspoken sense of Ukrainian state loyalty than did the "Populist" historiography of the next generation. But the logic of this conception, which identified the nation with the previous political organization of the Cossack class, led to the conviction that the nation must have been extinguished as a result of the death of the state. The aristocratic authors of the first third of the nineteenth century felt themselves to be epigones, who wished to preserve from oblivion the remnants of a Ukraine which practically no longer existed. In these circles the conviction was widespread that even the Ukrainian

language was dying out. In reality this feeling of decadence was a reflection of the situation of the nobility in the Ukraine, who were weakened politically by the absolutism of Nicholas, economically by the crisis in the system of serfdom, and morally by their alienation from the people, and were ready to abdicate from the historical stage as an independent force.

The chief importance of the aristocratic period in the formation of Ukrainian consciousness lies in the fact that it preserved the continuity of development between Cossack and modern Ukraine. There were also noteworthy original achievements of the period which were not destroyed by the decadence of the nobility and which entered into the permanent Ukrainian heritage. We have just mentioned the beginnings of scholarly research into Ukrainian studies. The conception of Ukrainian history, elaborated by the aristocratic authors in the first third of the nineteenth century, had a profound influence on later generations of scholars and also on public opinion. The beginnings of a new Ukrainian literature proved to be even more fruitful. This new literature used the language of the people, unlike Ukrainian literature in previous epochs which, up to the second half of the eighteenth century (i.e., to the end of the Cossack State), preserved Old Church Slavonic as the linguistic base. This new Ukrainian literature, fertilized by the general trend of European pre-romantic and romantic poetry towards the "popular" and local color, at first made no claims to be a national literature or to compete with Russian literature, the flowering of which many native Ukrainians contributed to. The Ukrainian writers of that period were bilingual; they wrote in Ukrainian when addressing the narrower local circle of connoisseurs, and in Russian when they wanted the wider audience of the entire educated public of the Empire. Here the linguistic line of division in no way coincided with any division in political ideas. In works in Ukrainian we often find complete loyalty to the tsar and the Empire. And on the other hand, the work which expressed most radically the anti-Russian national opposition, and which had an enormous influence on the development of

national consciousness in the first half the nineteenth century—*Istoriya Rusov* (History of the *Rusy*)—was written around 1800, in Russian. Sociologically the Ukrainian literature of the aristocratic epoch was clearly a regional *Heimatkunst*. Nonetheless, the generation which began with Kotlyarevsky produced a number of worth-while artistic works. Particularly important was the achievement of legitimizing the vernacular in literature, thus forming a sort of “investment capital” which later Ukrainian national literature could draw upon.

No less important for the future were the efforts to create a synthesis between Ukrainian patriotic feelings and modern Western political ideas. The great importance of *Istoriya Rusov* lies in the fact that here, for the first time, the traditional defense of the rights and liberties of the Cossacks was fused with European liberalism of the Age of Enlightenment. A similar phenomenon in the next generation was the birth of a program of democratic, federalistic Pan-Slavism, developed by the young conspirator-officers in the Society of United Slavs—a particularly Ukrainian brand of the Decembrist movement. However, the Ukrainian Decembrists fell under the direction of Russian revolutionary “Jacobins,” men such as Pestel, and they perished without having brought any permanent gain to their homeland. That was a portent of the future. During all of the nineteenth century, the bleeding of the Ukraine by the Russification of its elite continued, not only on the “right” by service in the imperial bureaucracy, but also on the “left” by participation in the all-Russian revolutionary movements.

So far we have spoken chiefly of the Left-Bank Ukraine. However, analogous, if less clear-cut, processes were also visible on the Right Bank among the Polish or Polonized nobility. The so-called Ukrainian School in Polish literature corresponded to that of Gogol and other writers of Ukrainian origin in Russia, with exactly the same romantic enthusiasm for the beauties of the Ukrainian land and the life of its people. Here also there were beginnings of literature in the popular language. The political ideology of this circle was the ideal-

ization of the old Polish Commonwealth as an alleged fraternal union of three nations: Poland, Lithuania, and Rus'-Ukraine. But the revolutions, in 1830 and 1863, of the Polish nobility, in the name of the restoration of pre-partition Poland, ran into a wall of resistance and hostility among the Ukrainian peasantry of the Right Bank. The myth created by the Ukrainian School of Vernyhora—"a fantastic, completely artificial Ukrainian peasant, who aspires to serve aristocratic Poland"<sup>1</sup>—was in too great contradiction to the true history of Ukrainian-Polish relations to be a social reality. Nonetheless, in a subtle way difficult to identify, the Polish heritage (or more exactly, the heritage of the nobles of Polish civilization living in the western half of the Ukrainian territory) contributed to the crystallization of modern Ukrainian national consciousness, making the movement more political, and strengthening the anti-Russian position.

This can be illustrated by the following examples. At a time when, before the appearance of Shevchenko, the new vernacular Ukrainian literature, created by Left-Bank writers, was politically rather harmless, it was a Polish-Ukrainian poet, Tymko Padura, who dared to glorify Hetman Mazepa as a great champion of liberty. "Mazepism" had always been, in Russian eyes, the very embodiment of Ukrainian separatism. Another Ukrainian Pole—or should we rather say a "Polish Ukrainian"—Franciszek Duchiniński ("de Kiow," as he signed his French pamphlets) made an important contribution to the formation of modern Ukrainian political thought. Duchiniński, an advisor to Prince Adam Czartoryski, the "uncrowned king of Polish emigration," formulated the theory that the Great Russians or Muscovites, their language notwithstanding, were not real Slavs, but only superficially Slavized "Turadians." The Ukrainians, on the other hand, were genuine Slavs and hence, according to Duchiniński, closely related to the Poles. The latter thesis failed to impress Ukrainians,—but the former did. Du-

<sup>1</sup> Waclaw Lipiński, *Szlachta na Ukrainie* (The Nobility in the Ukraine), Kraków, 1909, p. 69.

chiński was not a sound scholar and by his fantastic exaggerations compromised his theory which, however, contained an element of objective truth. The differences in mental attitudes and in social and cultural traditions between Great Russians and Ukrainians are certainly more profound than the variation of the two East Slavic languages would indicate.

A look at a nineteenth century political map of Europe shows that, but for the Austrian section, all Ukrainian lands were united in the Russian Empire. But this is not the full story. On the Right Bank there was a dominant Polish class. Actually these noble families were frequently of Ukrainian descent, having become Polonized through conversion to Roman Catholicism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Polish public opinion was unanimous in claiming not only ethnically Polish territories, but also all provinces of the historical Polish State in its pre-partition frontiers. Even Russian authorities, at least before 1830, tacitly recognized the Right-Bank Ukraine (and similarly, also Byelorussia and Lithuania) as a Polish sphere of influence. After the defeat of the 1830 insurrection, the tsarist government proceeded to remove the most glaring symbols of Polish ascendancy in the area; e.g., the Lyceum of Kremyanets, the chief educational center for sons of the Polish gentry in Ukraine, was closed down. But the conservative social outlook and the devotion to serf-owning interests made it impossible for the regime of Nicholas I to attack the roots of Polish power on the Right Bank.

So for most of the nineteenth century the Ukraine remained a battlefield where Russian and Polish forces clashed. Neither side was ready to give the Ukraine a position of equality. Russians and Poles fully agreed—discounting a few exceptions—in rejecting the Ukrainian claim that the Ukraine had the right to a free national development of her own. But, as a matter of fact, the Russo-Polish struggle was a retarding factor in the process of assimilation of Ukrainians to either neighbor. It prevented the Ukrainian problem from becoming fully and exclusively an internal concern of Russia. For instance, during the Crimean War, the Polish-Ukrainian adventurer, Michał

Czajkowski (Sadyk Pasha), organized in Turkey a Cosack legion against Russia. Between the Russian hammer and the Polish anvil, Ukrainian patriots were forced to define their attitude towards both their neighbors. This helped to develop an awareness of the Ukrainian national identity. The Ukrainian answer to Russian and Polish pressure was formulated theoretically by Mykola Kostomarov, a noted historian and publicist of the ensuing "Populist" generation: he defined the Great Russians as pre-eminently despotic, the Poles as aristocratic, and the Ukrainians as democratic people. Here we see the birth of a Ukrainian "messianism."

The leaders of the Ukrainian movement in the nineteenth century did not separate the cause of their people from that of all of Eastern Europe. They believed that the Ukraine had a mission to fulfill. By liberating herself, the Ukraine would also help Russians and Poles to throw off the most objectionable traits in their inheritance, and so secure a better common future to all three peoples. This is the kernel of the federalistic idea which, up to 1917, remained the very foundation of Ukrainian political thought.

## *II. Populism (1840's to 1880's)*

Beginning with the 1840's, the leadership of the Ukrainian movement passed into the hands of a new social group, that of the intelligentsia, composed in part of declassé nobles, in part of elements risen from the lower classes. This new intelligentsia gravitated toward the universities which had recently been founded in Ukrainian territory, in Kharkiv (1805) and Kiev (1834). The first political organization of the intelligentsia, the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, was founded in 1845.

The standard-bearer of this new epoch was Shevchenko, the poetical genius who, born a serf, was an artist by profession. Shevchenko synthesized national pathos and social protest with a deeply religious (though radically undogmatic and unorthodox) yearning for the ethical regeneration of man and society.

Shevchenko's thinking was strongly influenced by the ideas of the previous epoch, such as the conception of Ukrainian history as presented in *Istoriya Rusov*. What was new with him was his revolutionary passion, his implacable condemnation of that modern Babylon, tsarist Russia. He sharply criticized the Ukrainian nobles who, he felt, had dishonored themselves by their submissiveness to the tsar and by their support of serfdom. Of course it would be wrong to look for a systematic political program from a poet. Nonetheless Shevchenko's role was not simply that of an influential literary figure; as a great spiritual leader he might better be compared with the Hebrew prophets. His steadfastness under persecution gave Shevchenko the halo of a martyr. In his person the Ukrainian national movement of the nineteenth century achieved for the first time a dimension which surpassed the limits of Little Russian regionalism.

Two consecutive stages of development may be distinguished during the Populist epoch, the "romantic" (the generation of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood) and the "positivist" (the generation of the Old *Hromada*). The first stage was characterized by the idealization of the Cossack order (not only nationally, but also socially, as a retrospective Utopia of equality and brotherhood), by religious enthusiasm slightly tinged with the spirit reform, and by a tendency toward democratic-federalist Pan-Slavism. The literary expression of this generation is depicted in the poems of the young Shevchenko and in the programmatic works of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, primarily in the *Knyhy Bytiya ukrains'koho narodu* (Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People) by Kostomarov. The positivist generation, which emerged in the 1860's and reached maturity in the 1870's, put the strongest accent on the power of critical knowledge. The Cossack epoch was no longer idealized indiscriminately; the egoism and aristocratic prejudices of the *Starshyna* (high-ranking officers) were contrasted with the interests and aims of the common people. Moreover, Slavophilism was gradually replaced by "Europeanism," i.e., by an orientation toward the democratic and radical currents of the West of that time.



It must be pointed out that fundamentally the Populist epoch placed its emphasis on the "people," equated with the peasantry. From this comes the very designation of Populism (*narodnytstvo*) which came into current usage in the 1860's. It is no accident that the favorite field of scholarly study of the time was ethnography, which also influenced the historiography of the period. The historians of the Populist school, from Kostomarov to Lazarevsky and Antonovych, interpreted the past of the Ukraine as a series of elemental popular movements for social freedom and especially for the free possession of the soil. The retrospective national consciousness of the aristocratic period, facing backward to the former Cossack statehood, had been helpless against the reality created by the incorporation of the Ukraine into the Russian Empire. Now the center of gravity was shifted to a living object of great promise: the people. The Populist intelligentsia felt the call to contribute to the emancipation of the people, who had only been freed from serfdom in 1861, and to the raising of their social and cultural status. This gave a clear direction to the constructive work of the Populist intelligentsia, and at the same time it provided a solid foundation for the Ukrainian national cause. "Giving precedence to peasant ethnographical interests rather than to political historical ones and placing emphasis on democratic Populism rather than aristocratic state consciousness of rights and privileges, were at that time the only salvation for the national idea, the only possible exit from an ideological blind alley."<sup>2</sup> In close connection with the apotheosis of the people was the cult of the popular language, "the Word," which was honored as the most important vessel of the soul of the people. The Populists were first to stress the linguistic and ethnic unity of all the areas of Ukrainian settlement. This was the prerequisite for the development of first a cultural, then political Pan-Ukrainian consciousness. The first practical step in this direction was the union of representatives from the Left-

<sup>2</sup> Borys Ol'khivsky, *Vil'nyi narid*, Warsaw, 1937, p. 72.

Bank and the Right-Bank Ukraine in the Kiev *Hromada* around 1860; those from the Left Bank had either previously been members of or were successors to the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood; those from the Right Bank were the so-called *khlopomany* (peasant-lovers), who had split away from the Polish nobility and aristocratic intelligentsia.

The failure of the 1830-31 insurrection had spurred a great deal of soul-searching among Polish patriots. Accusing voices were raised calling attention to the aristocratic character of the revolution and to the lack of popular support as the chief reasons for the catastrophe. So a new political movement was born among the Poles, one which attempted to win "the people" for the national cause by hoisting the flag of the emancipation of the peasants. The underground activities of this new Polish movement spread also to Ukrainian lands. The conspirators did not let themselves be deterred by the fact that here, in the Ukraine, the people whom they tried to approach had no use for Polish patriotism. Even Polish "red democrats," while employing Ukrainian in their proclamations and leaflets, remained devoted to the idea of the historical Polish State. But in time a new group emerged, in which there was a shift of emphasis; for them the emancipation of the peasants was no longer merely a tactical means, subordinated to Polish political interests, but an end in itself. Their attitude can be defined as a truly Populist one. These so-called *khlopomany*, in embracing the people's point of view, were obliged to reject the fetish of Polish "historical patriots"—the frontier of 1772. The final break between the *khlopomany* and the Polish society was brought on by the approach of the new Polish insurrection. Polish conspirators had but little hope for success in the Ukraine; nevertheless, they decided to rise, if only to demonstrate the claim of Poland to the historical Dnieper frontier. The *khlopomany*, on the other hand, rejected this planned Polish nationalist action on non-Polish soil as futile and senseless. As the leader of the *khlopomany*, Volodymyr Antonovych, explained to a Polish friend: "Because we are with the people, and the people are

against you, we cannot march with you.”<sup>3</sup> Cutting off their ties with Polish society, the *khlopomany* declared that the principle of solidarity with the people entailed also the return to Ukrainian nationality, which their forefathers had betrayed for the lure of the privileges attached to Polish nobility. This was the content of Antonovych’s “Confession”<sup>4</sup>—a true profession of faith in Ukrainian Populism.

The concentration on the “people” led to a certain weakness and one-sidedness in the Populist ideology. Aspects of the Ukrainian cause which did not correspond to the “popular” were neglected. For instance, the medieval Rus’ of the Princes was largely effaced from the historical horizon; in the studies of the Cossack epoch, the efforts of the Hetmans and the *Starshyna* to create a state were deprecated; while even clearly destructive whims of the masses were condoned. Culturally, Populism often led to narrow utilitarianism: it was considered less important that literature be of high quality than that it be easily understandable and have a social and educational function. One person who had a fine perception of the weakness of the Populist ideology, and who protested against cultural vulgarism and the danger of mob rule, was a former member of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, Panteleymon Kulish, historian, publicist, poet, and translator of Shakespeare. But his criticism remained fruitless, for he was unable to offer a constructive concept to oppose the Populist current.

The narrowness of the social basis of Ukrainian Populism was the cause of its weakness in practical politics. The Ukrainian movement, or “Ukrainophilism,” as it was called at that time, wished to carry its message to the masses, but in fact its influence was limited to scattered groups here and there, composed almost exclusively of representatives of the intellectual professions: teachers, students, *Zemstvo* officials, etc. The Ukrainophiles, who were a minority even among the educated classes of the Ukraine, had a very limited influence on the great

<sup>3</sup> Wacław Lasocki, *Wspomnienia z mojego życia*, I, Kraków, 1933, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> V. Antonovych, “Moya ispoved’,” *Osnova*, 1862, I. pp. 83-96.

social changes that were taking place in the Ukrainian lands at that time. The transition to capitalism did not produce a nationalist Ukrainian bourgeoisie; on the contrary, the development of railroads, industry, and commerce linked the Ukraine more closely to the Russian Empire. In this respect there was a retrogression in comparison to the previous decades, when the wealthiest and socially-leading class in the Left-Bank Ukraine—the nobility—still had a certain traditional feeling for the Ukraine. But in the second half of the nineteenth century the Russification of the Ukraine reached its apogee, particularly in the cities. And yet, it was at this very time that, in the darkness, the seeds of 1917 were being sown.

The weakness of Ukrainophilism was reflected in the modesty of its practical platform:

All the dreams of the Ukrainophiles were limited to the furthering of Little Russian literature and the publication of educational materials in the Little Russian language, in order to extend useful knowledge among the people.<sup>5</sup>

In an article by Kostomarov, published anonymously in Herzen's *Kolokol*, and therefore free from tsarist censorship, we find a brilliant apology for the independence of the Ukrainian historical process from Russia and Poland, but the political *desiderata* are limited to two points: the unhindered development of Ukrainian literature, and the use of the Ukrainian language in the elementary schools.

In spite of the modesty of these aims, it was precisely during the Populist epoch that the tsarist government began its systematic persecution of the Ukrainian movement. The first victim was the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, which was suppressed in 1847. The Polish uprising of 1863 was the occasion for further repression, even though all vocal Ukrainians had opposed Polish claims to the Right-Bank Ukraine. How-

<sup>5</sup> K. Mikhal'chuk and P. Chubynsky in *Trudy etnograficheskoi-statisticheskoi ekspeditsii v Zapadno-Russkii krai*, as quoted by M. Drahomanov in *Austro-Rus'ki Spomyny*, Lviv, 1892, p. 322.

ever, there can be no doubt that, in trying to suppress the Ukrainian movement, the Russian bureaucrats were, in their own way, showing foresightedness. Behind the actual weakness of the Ukrainian Populist movement lay a great potential force which could have been developed almost instantaneously, once the movement spread from the intelligentsia to the masses. Even during the few years between the Crimean War (1855) and the Polish uprising (1863) the symptoms of the beginning of penetration of Ukrainian ideas among the masses multiplied. For instance, educational and other literature in Ukrainian sold to the peasants many times faster than did writings in Russian. The Russian chauvinists, including some Russified Ukrainians, excited by the Polish insurrection of 1863, launched a furious campaign against the phantom of "Ukrainian separatism." These incitements led to the *Valuyev Ukaz*, 1863 (named after its author, then minister of the interior), which forbade popular educational and religious publications in Ukrainian. It aimed at creating a wall between the Ukrainophile intelligentsia and the peasants. This and similar measures, although unavailing in the long run, did delay the formation of a modern Ukrainian national consciousness for decades.

During the relatively liberal reign of Alexander II the Ukrainian movement made further progress, and during the 1870's it took on a definitely political hue. A network of conspiratorial communities (*hromady*), under the leadership of the Kievan (or Old) *Hromada*, covered all the principal cities of the Ukraine. The Ukrainian movement created a position for itself in scientific associations (The Southwestern Section of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society) and in the press (the daily *Kievskii Telegraf*, of course in Russian). The literary, and especially the scientific, production of those years was important. One might even speak of the beginnings of Ukrainian foreign policy: the regulation of relations with Galicia and the action taken in connection with the Balkan Wars. At the same time contact with the Russian opposition, both revolutionary and liberal, was intensified, and both ob-

tained considerable support in the Ukraine. Many of the members of the terrorist *Narodnaya Volya* organization, including its leader Andrey Zhelyabov, were Ukrainians by birth. The Ukrainian *Zemstvos*, particularly those of Chernihiv and Kharkiv, were tinderboxes for the Russian constitutional movement. In 1879 a secret conference took place in Kiev; the leaders of the *Hromada* offered their mediation between *Zemstvo* liberals and the terrorist "Executive Committee." The purpose was to create a common front of all forces of opposition against autocracy. The conference failed, but this event shows that in the 1870's there was already a tendency of all democratic groups of "South Russia" to unite on a platform provided by the Ukrainian national movement. This foreshadows the situation of 1917.

The many-sided and successful activities gave the Ukrainian patriots a feeling of assurance and self-confidence. Leading the effort to make the Ukrainian movement political was Mykhaylo Drahomanov, the author of its first systematic political program. Drahomanov envisaged the solution of the Ukrainian problem by the democratization and federalization of Russia and Austria-Hungary, and in an alliance of the Ukrainians with the progressive forces among all peoples of Eastern Europe, the Great Russians not excluded, but under the guarantee of an organizational independence of the Ukrainian movement.

Deeply disturbed by this development, the Russian government proceeded to an anti-Ukrainian counterattack in 1875-1876. In a series of well-planned measures, the legal forms of social and cultural activity were destroyed, the Ukrainian language banned in publications (*Ukaz* of Ems), and the leaders banished. The first Ukrainian reaction was resistance; the Russian opposition was approached more closely, and Drahomanov was sent abroad to create a political center for propaganda in the West. But *Hromada's* hope that the storm would soon blow over, and that the Russian Empire would be transformed into a constitutional regime, were not fulfilled. On the contrary, Alexander III's accession to the throne

stabilized absolutism and reaction. Under the blows of repression, the morale of the Ukrainian movement collapsed. The exuberant optimism of the 1870's was replaced by depression and passivity. As the slogan of the times, the old one of the "apolitical and purely cultural" character of the Ukrainian movement was again taken up. In the 1860's this had been suited to the immaturity of the movement, but after the great upswing of the 1870's it was unquestionably a retreat. But by this self-mutilation the Ukrainophiles at least managed to preserve the continuity of scientific work in various fields, even if these studies were written in Russian and treated problems innocent of any suspicion of immediacy (cf. the review *Kievskaya Starina*). But the national movement became isolated from society at large. For the loyalist and conservative elements, the reputation it had for political unreliability and democracy made it suspect, while its political colorlessness made it lose control of the radical youth, who fell under the influence of the Russian revolutionaries. As a publicist of the next generation expressed it, "The tactics of the Ukrainophiles were such that they alienated the entire young generation of the Ukraine, while at the same time they did not know how to win the sympathies of the old Ukraine [i.e., of the nobility]."<sup>6</sup> In the 1880's the Ukrainian movement shrank to a narrow rivulet, but it did succeed, under the cautious leadership of Volodymyr Antonovych, in preserving the kernel of the Kiev *Hromada* and an embryonic organizational network throughout the land.

From Switzerland Drahomanov continued his brilliant journalistic and propagandistic activities. His efforts gave the Western public their first authentic information about the Ukrainian movement and its persecution in Russia. But Drahomanov's sharp attacks against absolutism seemed inopportune to the Kiev *Hromada*, because they aggravated the government and contradicted the *Hromada's* policy of lying still and harmless. This led to a break between Drahomanov and his Kiev sponsors in the middle of the 1880's. The little émigré

<sup>6</sup> Mykola Mikhnovsky, *Samostiyna Ukrayina*, a new edition, 1948, *sine loco*, p. 28.

group clustered around Drahomanov was the seed of the Ukrainian socialist movement, but at that time its direct organizational influence reached only Galicia.

### *III. Modernism (from the 1890's to the First World War)*

The period of the quarter century before the First World War does not have a fixed name in Ukrainian historical literature. But there is no doubt that it marks a separate and important step in the development of Ukrainian national consciousness and political thought, clearly distinct from both the previous Populist epoch and the following one of the Great Revolution. To designate this period we shall borrow from the history of literature the term "modernism."

Two factors had an exceptional influence on the Ukrainian cause at that time. The first was the progressive weakening of tsarist absolutism and of the Russian state apparatus; the second was the economic flowering of the Russian Ukraine, its rapid industrialization, and the raising of the general standard of living of the population. The undoubted economic progress had a sinister side, however, in the proletarianization of the landless peasants on the one hand, and in the mushrooming of speculative capitalism on the other, which sharpened the social contrasts in the country.

The intelligentsia continued to be the chief channel of the Ukrainian movement. But in the 1890's a new generation appeared, one which, in comparison with its Populist fathers, was not only numerically stronger, but also, as a result of the general change in the political atmosphere, more courageous and energetic. From this generation arose a galaxy of gifted persons, who were later destined to play a leading role in the Ukrainian revolution. Probably the most representative figure of that generation was Mykhaylo Hrushevsky, the great scholar and organizer of scientific studies, the outstanding politician and journalist.

In that epoch the Dnieper (Russian) Ukraine saw the beginnings of Ukrainian party differentiations and organizations.



The first attempts to organize politically in the new way were made by the Brotherhood of the Disciples of Taras (Shevchenko) (*Braterstvo Tarasivtsiv*), in 1892. In 1899 the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party (R.U.P.) was founded in Kharkiv; it later adopted a Marxist program and the name Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party (USDRP). After 1905 the beginnings of several other parties were visible: a liberal (the Radical-Democrats), an agrarian socialist (The Socialist-Revolutionaries), and a nationalist (the Ukrainian People's Party). These were still in an embryonic state, however, and after the victory of reaction in 1907 they became disorganized and were driven underground. Nevertheless a virtual party differentiation had become a fact. No less remarkable was the debut of the Ukrainian movement in the parliamentary field. In the first and second imperial Dumas there were strong Ukrainian representations, which were, however, unable to develop any program of activity, since both times the Dumas were dissolved soon after election. After the government's arbitrary alteration of the electoral laws there was no organized Ukrainian group in the third and fourth Dumas, although there were still Ukrainian sympathizers. In any case proof had been given that, with a chance for free expression, the Ukrainian people were ready to give preference to Ukrainian parties and Ukrainian electoral platforms.

The most important achievement of the period was the breaking down of the artificial walls which tsarism had sought to impose between the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the masses. Even after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, Russian law continued to treat the peasants as a separate class without full rights. But with the spread of elementary education, with the increase in trade between the cities and the villages, and with the growth of a class of well-to-do and "capitalistically" minded peasants, the legal sequestration of the peasants became an anachronism. The Revolution of 1905 led to the repeal of at least the crudest forms of discrimination against the peasants. The villages began to awake to modern political consciousness, and found themselves in the Ukrainian nation-

al idea. Now, the fact that since the days of Shevchenko and the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood the Ukrainian movement had had a strong social orientation, one that was in conformity with the gropings of the peasantry was to bear fruit. Under the new, if very limited, measure of Russian constitutionalism after 1905, the villages and towns of the Ukraine were dotted with Folk Reading Halls (the famous *Prosvita*), cooperatives, and various other organizations, all of which served as points of support for the Ukrainian movement. The chief propagators of national awareness among the masses were the members of the special social group of "village intelligentsia," elementary school teachers, leaders of cooperatives, etc. Most of these people were the offspring of peasants; they remained close to the village communities and, enjoying their confidence, were able to influence popular opinion in a way with which not only the tsarist administration, but also the alien Russian parties, were unable to compete. The members of the village intelligentsia themselves owed their national enlightenment to the secret patriotic student groups of the universities, normal schools, and even Gymnasiums. In this way the Ukrainian national consciousness spread out from its tiny centers of origin, the *hromadas* of the second half of the nineteenth century, through the intelligentsia, and out to ever-widening circles of the people. A Russian historian has described this process pertinently:

Though everything Ukrainian was forbidden, the social development was creating an increasingly favorable soil for the national movement by the growth of a rural intelligentsia and a "semi-intelligentsia." These groups were almost entirely Ukrainian in their consciousness, and when the revolution of 1905 came the movement was in their hands... After 1907, and especially during the war, the national movement again became the object of persecution and suppression. But by that time it was irrepressible. When the pressure of tsarism was lifted it became apparent that practically all the democratic intelligentsia and "semi-intelligentsia" of southwestern Russia was conscious of itself as Ukrainian, that the peas-

ants were on the verge of becoming conscious of the same, and that the Ukraine was going to be an independent nation.”<sup>7</sup>

The national idea also reached, though more slowly, the other classes of society. Before 1914 there were already small bridgeheads of “conscious Ukrainians,” i. e., of active Ukrainian patriots, among the workers, bourgeoisie, and the landowners. Even where the feeling of Ukrainian national individuality had not yet clearly evolved, there was a strengthening of “regional consciousness.” For instance the bourgeoisie of the Ukraine, though Russified in language and culture, was profoundly dissatisfied with the economic centralism of the tsarist government, which favored the Great Russian provinces. An awareness of the conflict between the economic interests of the Ukrainian South and the Great Russian North spread. Similarly, among the workers a tendency to form regional “South Russian” unions became apparent. There is no doubt that in the course of natural development these tendencies would have, sooner or later, turned into a consciously Ukrainian ideology. But the Revolution precipitated the outcome of this drift, preventing the normal gradual growth to maturity.

In the course of the quarter century before the First World War the character of Ukrainian literature changed. With the appearance of such writers as Kotsyubynsky, Lesya Ukayinka, Vynnychenko, and others, Ukrainian literature could no longer be regarded as purely “popular”; it had begun to fulfill the sociological requirements of a national literature, i. e., one able to satisfy the many-sided spiritual interests of a diverse modern society.

In that same period, the foundations were laid for scholarly and technical terminologies in Ukrainian. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, Ukrainian literature had been, with few exceptions, limited to poetry and fiction with subjects taken from country life. Even conscious patriots wrote most of their scholarly and political works in Russian. It was only

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<sup>7</sup> D. S. Mirsky, *Russia, a Social History*, London, 1931, pp. 277-278.

now that the Ukrainian language became an instrument of scholarship, journalism, and politics.

It is no wonder that about 1905 the idea of the complete class structure of Ukrainian society was formulated. Vyacheslav Lypynsky appealed to the Polonized nobility of the Right Bank to return to the Ukrainian nation. At first glance this seems like a simple continuation of the *khlopomany* (peasant-lovers) movement of the 1860's, which had desired the return of the nobility to the people as a radical break from the interests and traditions of the class to which they belonged. But Lypynsky's position was different. Although he certainly did not dream of preserving the anachronistic class privileges of the aristocracy, he did believe that if the nobles would place their experience and their cultural and political potentialities at the service of the Ukrainian cause, they would thereby obtain the moral right to be reintegrated into the new national elite of the renascent Ukraine. The essential value of this concept transcends its immediate occasion. In seeking the national reorientation of the Polonized or Russified Ukrainian nobility, Lypynsky basically asserted that the Ukraine should be composed of all the classes and social groups which every modern nation possesses. This was a true revolution against the political philosophy of the Populists, who saw the essence of the Ukraine in its plebs.

The progress of national consciousness was reflected in the development of Ukrainian historiography and historical evaluation. With Hrushevsky and his school, a true turning point was reached in this field.

The aspect of Hrushevsky's writings which had the greatest ideological significance was his vindication of the continuity of Ukrainian national development from the Kievan Rus' through the Galician-Volhynian Kingdom, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Gossack State, to the modern Ukraine. The medieval Kievan State, which had been neglected by Ukrainian historians of the Populist school and had been annexed by Russian historiography, was once again integrated into

Ukrainian tradition. Since the period of the old Rus' had been epoch of Kiev's imperial glory and the climax of its importance in Eastern Europe, this enhanced the Ukrainian feeling of national self-esteem.

The second historian to introduce a new viewpoint was Lypynsky, whom we have already mentioned. His studies of the Khmelnytsky period completely revolutionized the habitual conceptions of the Cossack age. Lypynsky demonstrated that the Khmelnytsky Revolution was not only a peasant and Cossack uprising, but also a political movement of the upper strata of Ukrainian society. It was precisely the aristocratic elements, the nobles and *Starshyna* who had been treated with suspicion by the Populist historians, who had, according to Lypynsky, provided the leadership in the revolution and in the creation of the Cossack State, and who were responsible for the bold and constructive plans and acts of the Khmelnytsky era. Lypynsky introduced into Ukrainian historiography the problems of power, leadership and the elite.

The growth of national consciousness found its natural culmination in the formulation of the idea of an independent Ukrainian State. By the turn of the century, in 1900, a pamphlet by Mykola Mikhnovsky appeared under the self-descriptive title, *Samostiyna Ukrayina* (The Independent Ukraine). The pamphlet ended with the slogan "A one and united, free and independent Ukraine, from the Carpathians to the Caucasus." But until 1917 the idea of separatism did not find general acceptance. For one thing, the arguments adduced by Mikhnovsky in support of Ukrainian statehood were not ones to impress his contemporaries very deeply. Mikhnovsky, a lawyer by profession, utilized as his chief premise the legal argument of the inalienable political rights of the Ukraine in relation to Russia, as fixed in the Treaty of Pereyaslav, 1654; as a practical program Mikhnovsky proposed a struggle for the revalidation of the "Constitution of Pereyaslav." But too long a time had elapsed since the downfall of the Hetmanate for such a policy of legitimism to be practicable. Moreover Mikh-

novsky, unlike Drahomanov and Lypynsky, neither formulated his ideas in ponderous tomes nor gathered a group of disciples about himself. Thus his raising of the separatist banner remained, at least in the Russian Ukraine (in Galicia the situation was somewhat different), an isolated act. The general drift of the Ukrainian national movement indicated that the issue of statehood was bound to be raised sooner or later, but no one could foresee that this was to be the case in the comparatively near future. For the time being tsarist Russia, decadent though it was, appeared unchallengeably powerful in comparison with the young Ukrainian forces. For this reason the spokesmen of the Ukrainian cause contented themselves with the traditional call for an autonomous Ukraine in a decentralized and federative Russia. The paramount immediate aim, the struggle against tsarism, necessitated an alliance with the Russian democratic groups. Finally, the highly inflamed class conflicts, very perceptible in that period, delayed the crystallization of the feeling of national solidarity and of a basic community of interests of all Ukrainians, which were a necessary prerequisite for the creation of a Ukrainian State.

From the days of Shevchenko and the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, the social element had played a tremendous role in the ideology of the Ukrainian movement, in which the protest against social injustice was at least as strong a battle cry as that against national enslavement. In the era of modernism this old social tendency definitely took the shape of a socialist idea. The overwhelming majority of the younger generation was socialist. It is even possible to speak of this as an ideological fashion, which in many cases was never more than a rather superficial and passing youthful enthusiasm. But behind this fashion there were also quite serious, objective factors: the proletarianization of the landless peasants, the development of industry, and the general sharpening of social contrasts. Thus the ground was prepared for the growth of the socialist movement. But the budding Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party (USD RP) did not create an original program corresponding to Ukrain-

ian conditions and clearly differentiating Ukrainian socialism from Russian. There had been very promising beginnings of a specifically Ukrainian school of socialism in the 1870's and 1880's in the pioneer work done by Drahomanov and his friends Podolynsky and Ziber. But the émigré character of this group and the breach between Drahomanov and the Kiev *Hromada* had the result that this experiment was practically lost. When, in the 1890's, the Ukrainian movement again raised its head in Russia, its socialist wing did not continue Drahomanov's line but adopted, from Russian sources, the ready-made formulas of international socialism. One of the results of this Russian influence was an insufficient appreciation of the value of political constitutional freedom. Another negative effect was the fact that the Ukrainian socialists did not know how to integrate the social-economic and the national sides of the program. Marxism in general, and the Russian brand in particular, gave very little attention in its doctrine to problems which were of burning importance to the Ukrainians, as members of a subjugated nation. Of course this does not mean that Ukrainians who were converted to Marxism lost their patriotism. But in their thinking they developed an undigested amalgam of the formulas of a simplified Marxism and a naive, romantic patriotism. On the political scene there appeared the type of revolutionary youth with Marx's *Communist Manifesto* in one pocket and Shevchenko's collected poems, *Kobzar'*, in the other. To be sure, the talented Mykola Porsh, the spiritual leader of the USDRP, tried to adapt Marxism to local conditions, and defended the demand for autonomy from a socialist position. But in general the young generation of socialists, the most dynamic force in the Ukrainian movement, demonstrated a high degree of confusion in their thinking, combined with great emotional excitability. These traits, explicable by the immaturity of the group and their lack of a balanced education and of practical experience, were harmless enough as long as their political task was mainly negative, that of undermining the foundations of tsarism. It was to be hoped that in due course of time most of these child-

hood diseases would be outgrown. Nobody could have predicted the tremendous scope of the problems the Ukrainians were to be faced with as a result of the sudden collapse of the Empire in 1917.

The period preceding the First World War was probably the happiest one in all of modern Ukrainian history. This was the time of the rapid and well-rounded growth of the Ukrainian national cause. The obstacles in its path were high enough to serve as a stimulus, but not sufficient to stop progress. Though the destruction of the Cossack State and the Russification of the Cossack aristocracy had reduced the Ukraine to the level of a politically amorphous ethnic mass, now, from this mass, the Ukrainian nation was beginning to re-emerge. But the huge dimensions of Ukrainian territory, the great number of its population, the complexity of the internal and international questions involved, the stern repressive policy of the Russian government and the despotic character of the Empire which handicapped any free civic activity—all this made the process of rebirth longer and more difficult than was the similar process for other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. When the First World War started, the Ukrainian movement in Russia already presented a real power factor, but it was still only a "movement." It was not as yet a crystallized nation, as were the Poles, Czechs, or Finns. It was during the Revolution that the modern Ukrainian nation was created.

#### *IV. In Retrospect.*

The political, and then cultural, Russification of the former class of Cossack *Starshyna* toward the end of the eighteenth century formed a turning point in the development of Ukrainian national consciousness. In an epoch where the people were still represented by their aristocracy, it meant an interruption in the national existence of the Ukraine. With it came an alienation between the popular masses and the ruling class, who had ceased to serve the interest of their native land. This alienation of the elite from the masses condemned the former



to civic impotence, while depriving the latter of much needed cultural services. Up to 1917 the greatest problem in the realm of Ukrainian consciousness remained that of the competition of two currents within Ukrainian society: one, "Little Russianism," which saw no other path than that of the deepening and securing of the union with Russia, and the other, "conscious Ukrainianism," which clamored for the maintenance and reactivation of Ukrainian identity. Of course, this was not a free competition on both sides, reflecting the internal reactions of the Ukrainian community alone. The "Little Russian" current was supported by the power of the Empire, while the Ukrainian national current was discouraged and persecuted. In the course of the nineteenth century, between these two extreme positions there was a whole scale of nuances. Even the "Little Russians" preserved a sense of their ethnic difference from the "Muscovites" and a certain attachment to local characteristics and customs; and, on the other hand, the "conscious Ukrainians" did not postulate a radical break with Russia—which in any case seemed beyond the bounds of possibility—and sought rather a compromise between Ukrainian and Pan-Russian interests. The decisive factor was to be the attitude of the new social groups that made their appearance in the nineteenth century (intelligentsia and bourgeoisie) and that of the popular masses, who could not be kept in a state of civic tutelage forever. These new social forces were to decide whether they would confirm or reject the national capitulation of the former Cossack aristocracy.