DISCUSSION _____

For Discussion

Does Ukraine Have a History?

Mark von Hagen

One answer to this seemingly simple question was suggested by a Ukrainian scholar when he retorted that if Ukraine has a future, then Ukraine will have a history. He thereby correctly put politics, including international politics, at the center of the discussion. A simple answer to the question is, of course, that the peoples and institutions that occupy the contemporary state of Ukraine have a history, in the sense of lived experience, *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*, the way all of us have pasts to which we can appeal.

But if we re-ask the question, "Does Ukraine have a history?" and mean this time a written record of that experienced past that commands some widespread acceptance and authority in the international scholarly and political communities, then the answer is not so simple. The title of this paper echoes an important essay by Ukrainian historian Serhii Bilokin', "Chy maemo my istorychnu nauku?"[1]—literally "do we have historical science?" perhaps more clearly translated "Do we have a tradition of historical scholarship?" Bilokin', by the way, persuasively argues that it is too early to speak of such traditions.

If we leave Ukraine and look to the political geography of history teaching, we find virtually no recognition that Ukraine has a history. In major Anglo-American, German and Japanese academic centers, Ukrainian history as a field (with a couple of important exceptions) does not exist per se; the exceptions only confirm the general rule. The Canadian government and Canadian Ukrainian emigrants subsidize Ukrainian history and culture in Canada, but here an "abnormal" situation exists in that nearly all the scholars are of Ukrainian descent. This fact has allowed "mainstream" historians to characterize Ukrainian history as "searching for roots," national advocacy or some other partisan pleading, and to deny the field the valorization it seeks as

1. *Literaturna Ukraina* (10 January, 1991). See also Orest Subtelny, "The Current State of Ukrainian Historiography," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 18, nos. 1–2 (Summer–Winter 1993): 33–54.

"objective history."[2] The domination by scholars of Ukrainian ancestry is also the case at the one US center of Ukrainian studies, at Harvard University.[3] The point of all this is that, by the indexes of the intellectual organization of professional history writing, Ukraine has not had a history.[4]

Ukraine and the History of East Central and Eastern Europe

Why is this? Above all, Ukraine's history must be seen as part of a greater dilemma of eastern and central Europe. During all their tenuous modern existence, the states of eastern and central Europe have been pawns in the international system. Before 1914 the "non-historical peoples"[5] were long subject to three central European dynastic empires: the Romanovs, the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs. After the collapse of the multi-ethnic monarchies in World War I, these nations have been most directly the pawns of either the German Reich or the Soviet Union.

These geopolitical realities were reflected in intellectual structures that have served to organize our thinking about the region. Because none of the states which exist today between Berlin and Moscow ex-

2. One of the only comparable subfields of history in the US, namely in terms of domination by "professional ethnics," has been Jewish history and, incidentally, Jewish history has gained academic respectability in ways that Ukrainian history has not. Other fields of history are also dominated by "professional ethnics," especially Afro-American, Hispanic-American and Asian-American history, but these fields too continue to have a "taint" of political advocacy and thereby are generally deemed less than academically respectable. Women's history is, arguably, in an analogous situation. By contrast, we can compare the situation in Russian history, where émigré scholars have long ago been supplanted and supplemented with generations of non-Russian American historians. Accordingly, Russian history rarely is characterized as "root-searching."

3. Recently Michael Flier, a non-Ukrainian, was appointed to the Potebnia Chair in Ukrainian Linguistics. The other two chairs, one in Ukrainian literature and one in Ukrainian history, are held by ethnic Ukrainians, George Grabowicz and Roman Szporluk, respectively. Although Professor Szporluk has supervised several excellent dissertations in the field (during his career at Michigan University), none of his students has secured a major academic position in the field in an American university.

4. For a recent discussion that treats parallel issues in the field of Slavic languages and literatures, see Oleh S. Ilnytzkyj, "Russian and Ukrainian Studies and the New World Order," and Horace G. Lunt, "Notes on Nationalist Attitudes in Slavic Studies," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* xxxiv, no. 4 (December 1992): 445–70. One might add that social scientists, by which I mean political scientists, economists, sociologists and anthropologists, have generally been quicker to recognize Ukraine as an important subject of study; the response of history and Slavic studies, by contrast, has been far more ambivalent and slow to emerge.

5. The term is attributed to Friedrich Engels; for a discussion, see Jozef Chlebowczyk, *On Small and Young Nations in Europe*, trans. Janina Dorosz (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980); Ivan Rudnytsky, "Observations on the Problem of 'Historical' and 'Non-Historical' Nations," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 1981): 358–68.

isted at the time of the rise of modern historiography in the early and mid-nineteenth century, their histories continue to carry a taint of artificiality, non-genuineness; real states are Britain, France, Spain, Russia and, with qualifications, Germany. But Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and especially Ukraine are suspect candidates in the international order and somehow undeserving of the prerogatives of genuine statehood. As one of the consequences of the failed or circumscribed statehoods of the peoples in eastern and central Europe, the peoples of the region have been denied full historiographical legitimacy.[6]

Eastern and central Europe has been—in modern memory—and largely continues today to be seen as a problem;[7] a strongly felt prejudice persists that the states of this region, perhaps with the once notable exception of former Czechoslovakia, are incapable of sustaining stable democracies and prosperous economic development, and thereby not deserving of genuine national sovereignty. Although this is a sentiment one might occasionally hear expressed by intellectuals from the region itself, most often it is inspired by the two hegemonic historiographies that have had a vested interest in the failure of east and central European states, the German and the Russian/Soviet.

The intellectual and propaganda communities of these two dominant border powers have traditionally asserted or strongly implied that the nation-state as such is unviable in this important region. For German politicians and scholars, the organizing notions of Osteuropa and Mitteleuropa[8] suggest an uninterrupted expanse of territory and peoples extending from Germany's eastern provinces to the Urals. For Soviet scholars and politicians (as well as for many of their Russian liberal and conservative predecessors), the concept of "socialist commonwealth" (in the prerevolutionary period, the notion of *vserossiiskaia imperiia* and the slogan, *velikaia nedelimaia Rus'*, great, indivisible Rus') served as a virtual mirror image of the German counterpart. To them the lands west of the Russian heartland belonged to the legitimate sphere of great Russian influence, the southern and western provinces.[9] For both German and Russian historiography, east and central

6. See the interesting reflections along these lines by Geoff Eley, "Remapping the Nation: War, Revolutionary Upheaval and State Formation in Eastern Europe, 1914–1923," in Peter J. Potichnyj and Howard Aster, eds., *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), esp. 222 ff. Eley writes that "the faculty of attained statehood is an indispensable condition of historiographical legitimacy."

7. See Hugh Seton-Watson, "Is There an East Central Europe?" in Sylvia Sinanian, Istvan Deak and Peter D. Ludz, *Eastern Europe in the 1970s* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 3–12; and Stephen Borsody, *The Tragedy of Central Europe: Nazi and Soviet Conquest and Aftermath*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1980), "Preface to the New Edition" and "From the Preface to the First Edition."

8. See H. C. Meyer, *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815–1945* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1955).

9. True, both the Russian imperial and Soviet concepts allowed for some gradation of influence. Ukraine, for example, was denied sovereignty altogether, while the

Europe existed primarily as "the borderlands" over which they competed in occasional geopolitical struggles. The multi-ethnic chaos of the region, itself one of the direct consequences of imperial policies over the centuries, typically was offered as a justification for further imperial hegemony. Moreover, both Russian/Soviet and German ideologists and political leaders traditionally maintained that even intraregional cooperation in east central and eastern Europe was not viable without German or Russian hegemony.

It is not surprising then, that as the region emerges at least provisionally from under the shadows of its two powerful neighbors, Germany and Russia, the German *Historikerstreit*[10] and the struggles over (and often against) the Soviet past[11] are resonating throughout eastern and central Europe. The assertions of national sovereignties and historical legitimacy are inextricably bound to the question of the Russian and German states' traditional relations with the peoples of eastern and central Europe. For the non-Russian nations, the legacies of Russian and Soviet imperialism have been subjected to merciless re-examination. The often vitriolic struggles over the national pasts from Germany to the far east are part of the transformation of the international order and post-Soviet social structures.

Not only the legacies of the German and Russian historical communities, but also the postwar political order have reinforced the marginalization of eastern and central Europe in North American academic politics.[12] The interwar experience of the states in the region seemed only to confirm those political and intellectual elites to their west and east that their prejudices were not groundless. The history of the region became associated with nationalism, anti-Semitism and ethnic irredentism, partly as a result of the interwar conflicts and the perceived failure of the Versailles settlement and League of Nations

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peoples still farther to the west (Poland in particular) had more symbolic and real autonomy—albeit always with considerable constraints.

10. The literature on the German *Historikerstreit* is voluminous. For helpful guides, see Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Entsorgung der deutschen Vergangenheit? Ein polemischer Essay zum 'Historikerstreit'* (Munich, C.H. Beck, 1988).

11. See the surveys in R.W. Davies, *Soviet History and the Gorbachev Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Walter Laqueur, *Stalin: The Glasnost Revelations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991); and my forthcoming article, "The Stalin Debate and the Reformulation of the Soviet Past."

12. American historical and social sciences have inherited something from both of these competing "imperial" traditions and thereby have perpetuated the marginalization of eastern and central Europe. On the one hand, Russian émigrés, mostly adherents of great Russian statehood whether liberal, socialist or conservative, shaped the attitudes and research agendas of American historians of the Russian Empire from the onset; later intellectual emigrants from Germany, including the occasional Baltic German, played an important role in American academic life before and after World War II. The result has been that in the United States, east and central European politics has been typically taught as an extension of Soviet domestic politics.

in that part of the world. By extension, the murderous legacy of na-
tional socialism and fascism, and their eastern and central European
collaborators contributed to a demonization of nationalism as such.
The victory of the Allies in World War II and the founding of the
United Nations, in contrast, were meant to have "solved" the national
question, if not once and for all, then at least for the foreseeable future.
This optimism was reflected in the ideology of the reigning cold-war-
era social science school of "modernization," which posited the even-
tual disappearance of ethnic and national difference as societies be-
came more urbanized, industrialized and literate.[13] Especially in the
US, the expectation of assimilation as the desirable and certain out-
come of ethnic processes reflected most American social scientists'
faith in their own country as a "melting pot" of ethnic elements. It is
likely that this optimism was unconsciously projected onto Soviet so-
ciety.[14]

Finally, one recent response to the "re-emergence" of ethnic con-
flict and nationalism on the European continent has been the elabo-
ration of a dichotomy of nationalisms in the world. Good or "civic"
nationalism is what the NATO countries enjoy, whereas eastern Europe
(particularly the Balkans) and the third world generally are prone to
bad or "ethnic" or "blood" nationalism.[15] Clearly Ukraine, as a part
of the eastern half of the European continent has been assigned to the
"bad" category.[16]

The Soviet Division of Academic Labor and Its Legacy

Although these factors might explain why Ukraine has not had a
history in North American and European universities, one might have

13. For a critique of modernization theory on this score, see Walker Connor,
"Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" *World Politics* 14, no. 3 (April 1972): 319–55;
and his "Ethnonationalism," in Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Un-
derstanding Political Development* (Boston: Little Brown, 1987), 196–220.

14. Hugh Seton-Watson, *The New York Times Book Review* (5 November 1967). In-
deed, the Columbia University sociologist Herbert J. Gans, in an important 1979 ar-
ticle, assured his readers that, despite renewed interest in ethnicity, "acculturation
and assimilation continue to take place." His comments on ethnicity focused on Jewish
and Italian Americans ("Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures
in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 1 [January 1979]: 1–20).

15. The most influential and recent example of this approach is Liah Greenfeld,
Nationalism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

16. Scholars have attempted various explanations for the distinction between
eastern and western Europe with less of the judgmental quality of Greenfield's ap-
proach. See Perry Anderson's different patterns of political and economic develop-
ment in his *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974); and John
Armstrong, "Toward a Framework for Considering Nationalism in East Europe," *EEPS*
(Spring 1988). For a sophisticated and suggestive approach to post-Soviet develop-
ments, see Katherine Verdery, "Nationalism and National Sentiment in Post-Socialist
Romania," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 179–203.

expected the history of Ukraine to have been kept alive in the Ukrain-
ian Soviet Socialist Republic. But Ukrainian official history there was
also hampered by factors that reflected the place of Ukraine generally
in the pseudo-federal relations that governed political life in the for-
mer Soviet Union. Moscow, and to a far lesser degree Leningrad (and
Novosibirsk), were the centers of intellectual life in the USSR. The
major all-Union research institutes were concentrated in these cities,
international conferences were organized there, and rarely anyone be-
sides Muscovites was able to develop contacts with foreign colleagues
or to travel abroad. Kiev was viewed as a provincial backwater of Soviet
Russian culture. This had very palpable consequences in that scholars
from Kiev had considerably less access to the international scholarly
community and even some of their most important source materials
were requisitioned by Moscow and Leningrad archives and libraries.[17]
Of course, only Ukrainian scholars would write Ukrainian history, so
in the Soviet Union as well a stratum of "professional ethnics" emerged,
while "establishment" scholars wrote about more "dignified" topics in
imperial and Soviet history. The provincialization of Ukrainian history
was a pattern replicated for all the "national minorities" (*natsmeny*).

During the 1920s Ukrainian historians had begun to challenge the
old Russia-centered imperial narrative of the past,[18] but in the late
1930s and 1940s the imperial vantage point was rehabilitated under
the guise of the slogan "friendship of peoples" according to which the
Russians were the older brothers for the rest of the peoples. Historians
of the national question, as it was then called, were encouraged to
emphasize the friendly historical ties between Russians and their "little
brother peoples"; conversely, any hostile relations or relations between
non-Russian peoples and co-ethnics or co-religionists outside the bor-
ders of the Soviet Union were downplayed, ignored or distorted. Any
violation of these rules brought charges of "nationalist deviations";
nationalism as such was punishable as a political crime and generally
accompanied by the epithets "bourgeois" or "counterrevolutionary."
As a consequence of this anti-national and putatively internationalist
agenda, often insignificant moments or personages in the past were
elevated to world-historical status, while less convenient episodes or
individuals were suppressed, reconfigured or relegated to non-events
and non-persons.[19]

Not only did Soviet-era scholars distort the histories of the non-
Russian nations, but the Soviet social sciences too adopted their own
mirror version of "modernization" theory, which posited the end-result

17. "Non-Russian CIS Members Seek Return of National Treasures," *RFE/RL Daily
Report*, no. 12 (20 January 1993).

18. James Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Com-
munism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), esp.
chap. VII.

19. For a provocative survey of early Soviet nationality policy, see Yuri Slezkine,
"The USSR as Communal Apartment" *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414–52.

of historical development, of course, not as the social systems and political economies of the NATO states, but as those of the "socialist commonwealth." For Soviet sociologists and ethnographers, ethnic differences were to gradually dissolve in assimilation, intermarriage, migration and other demographic patterns, and the result was to be "the steady convergence of all the nations and peoples of the Soviet Union, and the molding of a new, historical community, the Soviet people."[20]

*Should/*Will Ukraine Have a History?

Against this background of historical illegitimacy, should Ukraine have a history? Obviously, for generations of diaspora historians, this question has an unambiguously affirmative answer. And today, in the context of recently proclaimed sovereignty and independence, Ukrainian political leaders, opinion-shapers and scholars are attempting to reassert the historicity of their state with new or newly rehabilitated narratives of the past. "Establishment" academic history is being pressured by the political leadership that now occupies the most prominent positions in government.[21] Because current leaders and parties are looking to the past and, more importantly, appealing to and trying to shape popular memory as they build legitimacy for their new state apparatuses, history itself and historians have been called to crucial roles as *staatstragende Elemente*.[22] Pressures on establishment historians are also coming from long suppressed or recently rediscovered popular currents of nationalism and anti-Sovietism. Central squares in major cities and weekly book fairs provide some indicator of the popularity of, say, the integral nationalism of Dmytro Dontsov and the UPA.

Clearly, then, Ukraine *will* have a history. At least at the level of the primary and secondary school, but also in such crucial institutions as the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the post-Soviet Ukrainian elites will want to forge a civics or history curriculum that is intended to foster loyalty and identification with the major political and social institutions of the emerging state. But what sort of history should that be? And what sorts of history stand reasonably good chances of emerging triumphant in the near future?

20. For a classic statement of this ideology, see Iu. Bromlei, ed., *Present-Day Ethnic Processes in the USSR* (Moscow: Progress, 1982).

21. These include former communist party *apparatchiks* who discovered the national cause, most notably former President Leonid Kravchuk and current President Leonid Kuchma, but also members of the dissident cultural intelligentsia (Oles Honchar, Dmytro Pavlychko and Ivan Drach) and human rights activists (Viacheslav Chornovil, Ivan Dziuba, Levko Lukianenko) who formed the core of the Ukrainian popular front movement, Rukh.

22. See, for example, the proceedings of a conference at Harvard University, 12–13 May 1994, "The Military Tradition in Ukrainian History: Its Role in the Construction of Ukraine's Armed Forces."

One possibility is the enshrinement of a new integral nationalist dogma, a primarily diaspora narrative that charts the prehistory of the independent Ukrainian state as the teleological triumph of an essentialist, primordial Ukrainian nation. Elements of this nationalist rewriting are evident across central and eastern Europe; they typically posit the nations of the region as innocent victims of *other* nations in a litany of valiantly heroic but ultimately tragic (previous) struggles for national independence. These nations languished in the darkness of foreign occupation until the light of liberation restored their long suppressed dignity. A Romanian writer has coined the term "lacrimogenesis" for this genre.[23] For the failed history of Ukrainian statehood, the key moments of national defeat begin with Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii's sacking of Kiev in 1169 and include Russian and Polish invasions, and a host of failed insurrections.[24]

That this new version has a grave potential to be as dogmatic as what it replaces is illustrated by the politics of teaching in higher educational institutions. Throughout Soviet Ukraine, as had been true for the rest of the Soviet Union, all students at institutions of higher and technical education were required to take a substantial battery of courses in communist party history and "Marxist-Leninist philosophy." To teach the large numbers of students, large institutes and university departments trained specialists in these subjects and a highly politicized and tendentious "science" emerged. Once the Communist Party lost its formal monopoly on political life and Ukrainian popular front organizations began to make claims on the political consciousness of the nation, it was clear that the old requirements could not last much longer. Still, it came as a surprise to many when the change finally occurred: all departments of CPSU History were renamed departments of the History of Ukraine; the disciplines around marxism-leninism and dialectical materialism became "departments of philosophy." More importantly, however, the teaching staff remained almost entirely unchanged. Not surprisingly, the familiar dogmatic approach to marxism-leninism and dialectical materialism has found a new home in a nationalist narrative of Ukrainian history. One of the enduring legacies of marxist-leninist efforts to establish legitimacy for the Soviet regime through the teaching and writing of history (and this was more the case than has been true for west European states) is a faith in one, true history and, furthermore, one that is edifying (morally or otherwise). Some historians and other opinion shapers appear to hold onto these beliefs in one true history; as a consequence, a nationalist rewriting of

23. Katherine Verdery credits this phrase to Florin Toma in her "Nationalism in Romania," 196. On the specific role of military defeats in nationalist consciousness, see Tony Judt, "The Furies of Nationalism," *New York Review of Books* (26 May 1994).

24. Polish history offers many parallels to this type of historical narrative. See H. Wereszycki, "Polish Insurrections as a Controversial Problem in Polish Historiography," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* IX (1967): 105–21.

Ukraine's history shares much in common with the version it replaced that was putatively based in marxism-leninism.[25]

The result of this black-white reversal is likely to produce a very benign view of a mythical organic past; the view of the nation or ethnos is one that has been characterized as "essentialist" or "primordial," suggesting an eternal, unchanging, fixed collectivity of identities made more sacred by its very antiquity and stability.[26] An unfortunate consequence of this reading is the rewriting of the intellectual and political history that makes nationalists and separatists out of nearly all prominent Ukrainians. Certainly, the tradition of separatism is an important one and forcefully represented by the writings of the statist Lypyns'kyi. But the other pole of the Ukrainian political spectrum was federalist and populist. Today the confederational ideas of Drahomanov are either ignored, rejected as collaborationist or Drahomanov, in violation of his own written legacy, is transformed into a Ukrainian separatist. Federalist, regionalist and autonomist political thought in general is likely to be one of the casualties of an overly nationalist rewriting of the past that posits a sovereign, national state as the teleological outcome of history. The political history of early twentieth-century Ukraine, with its rich array of socialists, liberals, conservatives, federalists, integral nationalists, Bundists, Zionists and Russian nationalists, betrays such efforts at reductionism.

The Dilemmas of Integrating the Ukrainian Past(s)

The enthusiastic re-writers of Ukrainian history, however, will find their task a difficult one. Yes, Ukraine will have a history, but attempts to recover a serviceable past inevitably and quickly have come to confront a myriad of problems revolving around the contemporary and historical identity of Ukraine. What sorts of Ukrainian identities are emerging for the post-Soviet period? Just as with the political, social and economic structures of the post-Soviet landscape, so too with identities, many hybrid, transitional and unstable (but fascinating) forms are competing in the new markets of ideas.[27]

The major task facing historians is the integration of these com-

25. Of course, the language of instruction was changed from Russian to Ukrainian, but the teaching staff needed far more orientation in their new subject matter. Here, again, one of the ironies of the reform period became manifest: The renamed departments had to turn to their former ideological opposites, the once virtually ignored sections on the history of feudalism (also renamed to a less "vulgar Marxist" history of the Middle Ages), where the specialists on Kievan Rus' and particularly on the Cossack Hetmanate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote their low-circulation works for a narrow scholarly audience.

26. This tendency is not unique to Ukraine; rather it appears to be the pattern for all the post-Soviet successor states, including, and most especially, Russia itself. For example, in Russian history textbook competitions, authors are elevating the nineteenth century and relegating twentieth-century war and revolution to a minimal place in a narrative of "history of civilization."

27. See Verdery, op. cit.

peting pasts into a more or less coherent narrative of national history. As part of the dilemma that nearly all post-Soviet states face in reintegrating their pasts, Ukrainian historians face the question that leads back to the issue of historiographical "illegitimacy": what is Ukraine?[28] The seemingly obvious categories of ethnicity and geography are of little help. Ukrainian history is being pulled in at least two major directions that had their parallels in the discussions on Ukrainian citizenship and that have their analogues in other post-Soviet states. Should citizenship and history be reserved for ethnic Ukrainians (however they might be determined in a long-time multi-ethnic population) or open to all ethnic groups on the territory of contemporary Ukraine? Given the especially large Russian population, but the historically large Polish, Jewish and German populations, a multicultural and territorial narrative of Ukrainian history that preserves the diversity and fluidity of identities seems a more appropriate solution.[29] Similarly, the current territorial borders of Ukraine date back only to 1954 (for Crimea) and 1939 (1945) for western Ukraine. How should a historian view the Galician provinces of the Habsburg Empire, the Ukrainian populations that dominated interwar eastern Poland or the southwest provinces of the Russian Empire?[30] Today's Ukraine is a very modern creation, with little firmly established precedent in the national past.

All these obstacles to a secure notion of Ukrainian identity are tied to the legacy of the non-historical nation discussed above. This is another way of saying that Ukraine, in the modern period, has lacked continuity of its state and national traditions. The "father" of Ukrainian history, Myhailo Hrushevs'kyi, traced the origins of modern Ukraine to Kievan Rus' and to the Cossack Hetmanate.[31] The Kievan patrimony

28. Some of the most helpful reflections on these problems come from the late Ivan L. Rudnytsky. See especially his "Ukraine between East and West," *Das oestliche Mitteleuropa in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966): 163–69; and "The Role of Ukraine in Modern History," *Slavic Review* 22: 2 (June 1963): 199–216, 256–62.

29. But non-Ukrainians must beware of imposing judgments on Ukrainians that their own national histories have difficulty upholding. Multiculturalism, after all, is hardly accepted without controversy in American public education.

30. The lack of consensus on this aspect of Ukrainian "identity" is reflected in the preface to a well respected volume entitled, *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977) wherein the editor, Taras Hunczak, warns, "This volume deals primarily with the eastern Ukraine and only tangentially with developments in the western Ukrainian lands of Galicia, Bukovina, and Carpatho-Ukraine." Hunczak acknowledges that revolutions were occurring in the western lands as well and that the events were vitally intertwined; nonetheless, the title of the volume remained *The Ukraine* and not, say, *Eastern Ukraine, 1917–1921*.

31. The rehabilitation of Hrushevsk'yi has figured prominently in the rewriting of Ukrainian history. Hrushevsk'yi's works have been republished after a long Soviet-era ban; a central street in Kiev, formerly bearing the name of Sergei Kirov, has been renamed in his honor. On the beginning of the rehabilitation, see Bohdan W. Klid, "The Struggle Over Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi: Recent Soviet Polemics," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* XXXIII, no. 1 (March 1991): 32–45.

is, of course, contested by historians of Russia, who insist on the con-
tinuity of Kievan and Muscovite rule.[32] The Cossack Hetmanate lies
firmly in the pre-modern period and is at best characterized as a proto-
state, especially when compared with the absolutist national states that
were emerging in contemporary western Europe. And the hetmanate's
existence (as was the Polish Rzeczpospolita's) was terminated just at
the moment of the rise of the "modern" nation-state in the era of the
French revolution. In short, historians of modern Ukraine cannot es-
tablish firm state or institutional continuity from the pre-modern pe-
riod.[33] Historians of Ukraine have devoted much attention to the his-
tory of one other crucial set of institutions, the churches. The churches,
however, in particular, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox, the
Greek Catholic and Uniate churches, have many of the same problems
of fundamental discontinuities and assimilation/unification as do the
institutions of administration and rule.

Related to the problem of institutional discontinuity, historians
also face difficulties in tracing continuity of elites because Ukraine has
been perceived as "deficient" in what the Germans call *staatstragende
Elemente*, most notably when contrasted to the Polish gentry and nine-
teenth-century intelligentsia, who claimed the role of nation-bearers in
the absence of the Polish state during the era of partitions. After the
abolition of the hetmanate and its absorption into the Russian imperial
structures, the Ukrainian gentry assimilated to either Polish or Russian
culture.[34] Similarly, after the qualified and failed independence of the
civil war period and the experiments with *korenizatsiia* in the 1920s,
Ukrainian elites were once again assimilated, this time to the dominant
and largely Russified Soviet political and cultural norms.

As is the case for many of the eastern and central European nations
today that have "deficient" state traditions in the modern period,
Ukrainians have turned to the cultural sphere to locate a distinctive
Ukrainian identity. As a consequence of this focus on culture, Ukrain-
ian history for the nineteenth century has been written as the intellec-
tual and cultural prehistory of the independent nation-state, but not
as the history of political institutions or even social strata. This ap-
proach has met with fierce resistance within the Ukrainian diaspora.

32. Jaroslaw Pelenski, "The Contest for the 'Kievan Inheritance' in Russian-
Ukrainian Relations: The Origins and Early Ramifications," in Peter J. Potichnyi et
al., eds., *Ukraine and Russia in their Historical Encounter* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute
of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992).

33. See Frank Sysyn, "The Reemergence of the Ukrainian Nation and Cossack
Mythology," *Social Research* 58, no. 4 (Winter 1991).

34. See Zenon Kohut, "The Ukrainian Elite in the 18th Century and Its Integra-
tion into the Russian Nobility," in Ivo Banac and Paul Bushkovitch, eds., *The Nobility
in Russia and Eastern Europe*, (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area
Studies, 1983, 1985) 65–98; Kohut, "Problems in Studying the Post-Khmelnytsky
Ukrainian Elite (1650s to 1830s)," 103–19, and Frank Sysyn, "The Problem of Nobilities
in the Ukrainian Past: The Polish Period, 1569–1648," 29–102, both in I.L Rudnytsky,
ed., *Rethinking Ukrainian History* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies,
1981).

Indeed, one of the most rigorous critics of Ukrainian political thought, Viacheslav Lypyns'kyi, found these cultural and ethnic projects to lie at the base of Ukraine's "problems" in state-building.[35] In fairness to the cultural and intellectual historians of Ukraine, the Russian autocracy's cultural Russification policies in Ukraine and the ban on Ukrainian language politicized cultural issues in the waning decades of the empire. In other words, culture was very clearly politics.[36]

But even in the cultural sphere, Ukraine suffered from a considerable discontinuity. During the height of the hetmanate period, the level of education was higher in the Ukrainian lands than it was in the Russian heartland. A Ukrainian baroque tradition flourished that was distinct from both its Polish and Russian counterparts. Ukraine served as an important conduit for the transmission of European cultural and intellectual influences to Russia.[37] But after the hetmanate's abolition, Ukrainian culture declined relative to Russian and Polish, and Ukrainian intellectuals thereafter suffered acutely from a sense of cultural inferiority for most of the nineteenth century. As a result of the low levels of popular literacy, the appearance of the Ukrainian national bard, Taras Shevchenko, did not have the same impact for the evolution of Ukrainian literature as did his Russian contemporaries for Russian literature.[38] Mykhailo Drahomanov, the late nineteenth-century advocate of Ukrainian regional autonomy, appealed for Ukrainians to look toward Europe and a Europeanized Russia to help pull Ukrainian culture up to "world" levels.[39]

Discontinuity is one side of the coin; the other is the extremely permeable cultural frontiers that "bound" Ukrainian identity. The centuries of occupation by foreign powers and the attempts by those powers to destroy or suppress Ukrainian culture and supplant it with Rus-

35. For a cogent summary of Lypyns'kyi's views, see Alexander J. Motyl, "Viacheslav Lypyns'kyi and the Ideology and Politics of Ukrainian Monarchism," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (March 1985): 31–48; and Ivan Rudnytsky, "Viacheslav Lypynsky: Statesman, Historian, and Political Thinker," in Peter L. Rudnytsky, ed., *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 437–46.

36. For example, the declaration by the Imperial Academy of Science that Ukrainian was a language and not merely a dialect was marked as a major triumph of the Ukrainian movement.

37. David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture 1750–1850* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985). On the problems of a Ukrainian Baroque, see James Cracraft, "The Mask of Culture: Baroque Art in Russia and Ukraine, 1600–1750," in Potichnyi, *Ukraine and Russia, op. cit.*

38. Here the alternate pulls of Polish and Russian culture raise parallels with Lithuanian national intelligentsias. For a discussion of the problems of a Ukrainian history of literature, see the writings of George G. Grabowicz, including "Ukrainian-Russian Literary Relations in the Nineteenth Century: A Formulation of the Problem," in Potichnyj, *Ukraine and Russia*, and *Toward a History of Ukrainian Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).

39. Drahomanov, "Avtobiografiia," *Byloe*, no. 6 (June 1906): 182–213, esp. 187, 195. On Drahomanov's ideas, see Ivan Rudnytsky, "Drahomanov as a Political Theorist," *Mykhailo Drahomanov: A Symposium and Selected Writings, Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 2, no. 1 (3) (Spring 1952), 70–130.

sian, Polish, German, Magyar or Romanian language and culture have rendered the search for a "pure" or fixed Ukrainian identity something of a chimera.

Should Ukraine Have *a* History?

The fact of Ukraine's historical, cultural permeability raises a final important issue: should Ukraine have one official history? Or, alternately, what sort of history should Ukraine have? Ukraine represents a case of a national culture with extremely permeable frontiers, but a case that perhaps corresponds to postmodern political developments in which subnational, transnational and international processes need as much attention by historians, social scientists and "culturologists" as those processes that were formerly studied as national.[40] In other words, what has been perceived as the "weakness" of Ukrainian history or its "defects" when measured against the putative standards of west European states such as France and Britain, ought to be turned into "strengths" for a new historiography. Precisely the fluidity of frontiers, the permeability of cultures, the historic multi-ethnic society is what could make Ukrainian history a very "modern" field of inquiry. Ironically, the contemporary assertion of Ukraine's historiographical legitimacy coincides with an emerging consensus by historians that even those paragons of "nation-statehood" were not all they seemed to be.[41] Recent work on Germany,[42] France,[43] and Britain[44] all point to the relative modernity of the "nation" and its contested social and political character. Ukrainian historians have tried valiantly but ultimately in vain to configure Ukraine's past in line with the once conventional but increasingly outdated narrative of the formation of the nation-state.

Is all this intellectual pipe-dreaming? I would argue "no," that there are indications of the possibility of a more "modern" history of Ukraine. Several factors of Ukrainian history will act to complicate any overly simple picture. Above all, there is the cultural and political permeability of Ukrainian history that I have mentioned above. Parallel to the efforts of former Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk to reach out to Ukraine's neighbors and the rest of the international community, historians and humanists in Ukraine have sponsored con-

40. For some provocative reflections on this topic, see Michael Geyer, "Historical Fictions of Autonomy and the Europeanization of National History," *Central European History* 22 (1989): 316–43.

41. Similarly, Ukrainian and other post-Soviet elites' aspirations for national sovereignty and self-assertion coincide with contrary trends toward international integration in Europe and North America.

42. James J. Sheehan, "What Is German History? Reflections on the Role of the *Nation* in German History and Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 53 (March 1981): 1–23; and his *German History, 1770–1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

43. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

44. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

ferences to reconsider their nation's often troubled relations with Russia, Poland,[45] Jews (co-organized with Israel)[46] and the Ukrainian diaspora. Conference participants have addressed issues of colonial policies, military confrontations, religious conflicts and cultural stereotypes, but also joint efforts at resistance and revolution, and generally have attempted to find positive examples of encounters and collaboration. Also noteworthy is the fact that to date all these conferences have been undertaken primarily by the Ukrainian side, which suggests that, for example, Russia and Poland have, to a large degree, yet to be convinced of the legitimacy of a Ukrainian nation and state.[47]

Clearly, the Soviet period of Ukrainian history will present very difficult questions of integration. At the beginning of the historical revisionism associated with perestroika and Gorbachev, Ukrainian historians made several determined efforts to de-Stalinize their political history by rehabilitating Ukrainian political and cultural leaders who fell victim to Stalin's purges.[48] But, as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, so too in Ukraine the "infection" of anti-stalinism spread to a critique of the entire Soviet period, now treated characteristically as an occupation regime.[49] Sooner or later, several sets of issues will demand some resolution. The nation building (*korenizatsiia*) and Ukrainian cultural renaissance of the 1920s that has been celebrated in the re-issue and first issue of many long censored or ignored works were an unintended consequence of the period of independence during the civil war and an experiment with nationality politics in a multi-ethnic state. The current territorial boundaries of Ukraine are one of the legacies of the Soviet, and even stalinist, periods that are not likely to be repudiated. Also poorly understood but certainly crucial for postwar Ukrainian history is the impact of the unification of western and eastern Ukraine.[50]

45. "Pol'shcha-Ukraina: istorychna spadshchyna i suspil'na svidomist'," May 29–31, Kam'ianets'-Podil'skyi, sponsored by the National Association of Ukrainianists, the Institute of Social Sciences and the Institute of History of Ukraine (both attached to the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine).

46. See the Second International Festival of Jewish Art Music scheduled for October 1993 in Odessa, co-sponsored by the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Tel-Aviv University, Rubin Academy of Music.

47. This has been true in the past for similar conferences sponsored by Ukrainianists in Canada and the US: the Ukrainian side sponsored the "reconciliation" conferences and was able to attract historians of Poland or of east European Jewry only with considerable difficulty. See P. Potichnyj, ed., *Poland and Ukraine: Past and Present* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980); P. Potichnyi and H. Aster, eds., *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988); P. Potichnyj, *Ukraine and Russia, op. cit.*

48. See, for example, the collection edited by Iu. P. Shapoval, *Pro mynule—zarady maibutn'ogo* (Kiev, 1989).

49. For the dynamics of this process that focuses mainly on the Russian historical debate, see my "The Stalin Debate and the Reformulation of the Soviet Past," *The Harriman Institute Forum* (March 1992).

50. Rudnytsky, "Soviet Ukraine in Historical Perspective," in Rudnytsky, ed., *Essays.*

World War II itself, because of its previously privileged place in-Soviet patriotic education as the "Great Fatherland War," has already emerged as an intellectual battleground. In post-Soviet Ukraine the conflict over the memory of World War II reflects the political splits within the nation. Public discussions there have analogies in all the German-occupied territories of the former Soviet Union, in which at least two mutually opposed constituencies have supported different versions of the war: on one side are the veterans of the Soviet Army and their descendants, whose preferred narrative comes closer to the orthodox Soviet version of the war's history; on the other side are the adherents to the cause of the anti-Soviet (and at least temporarily Reichswehr collaborationist) partisan movements. These two versions compete for public attention in state-sponsored ceremonies and media coverage. Finally, historians will have to integrate into the record of modern Ukraine the second wave of Ukrainization of the 1960s under Petro Shelest, the emergence of a Soviet Ukrainian movement of dissent and its role in the politics of independence.

Another complicating matter for Ukrainian historians will be how to integrate two large and influential groups of Ukrainians who, for one reason or another, at one time or another, left Ukraine. Ukrainians who entered imperial service and assimilated into Russian or Soviet political cultures might be viewed by some nationalist historians as traitors or collaborators; such views are anachronistic for the nineteenth century but perhaps too simplistic even for the twentieth century. And what to do about Ukrainian peasants who were drafted into imperial military service or who formed a considerable component of the migration to Siberia and Kazakhstan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? At least in some cases, these groups maintained strong senses of Ukrainian identity but were most probably not distinguished from Russian soldiers or colonizers by the local native populations.

The other large group of Ukrainians who left Ukraine is the diaspora properly speaking, those who emigrated to North and South America, Europe and Australia. During the period of Soviet rule, these groups kept alive the idea of Ukrainian state independence, nurtured the Ukrainian cultural and intellectual legacies, and wrote alternative histories to that produced in Soviet Ukraine. The works of these diaspora historians are being translated and reissued in Ukraine and, of course, are tremendously influencing both academic history writing and popular historical consciousness.[51]

Implications for University Departments of History in North America and Europe

Just as the international political system must now make adjustments for the newly claimed sovereignties of eastern and central Euro-

51. Ironically (given the often stormy history of Ukrainian-Jewish relations), one successful model for the writing of a history of Ukraine that might accommodate the diaspora is Jewish history, which includes now the history of modern Israel.

pean nations, so too will scholars outside the region restore historical and intellectual legitimacy to their objects of investigation. Above all, the new national elites of eastern and central Europe want to re-integrate their states into Europe (even the Russians proclaim their desire to "join" Europe), by which they mean the west European nations of the European Community; for the time being, however, their fates will be tied in important ways to their eastern neighbor(s).

What all this does not mean is that we must establish chairs in Ukrainian history everywhere, just as it is unrealistic to think that Lithuanian, Estonian or Kazakh history will now be offered everywhere. But, at a minimum, it might mean that in the future departments offering positions in Russian and east European history might very well insist on knowledge of the histories of more than one people of the Russian empire, and of the intellectual and methodological problems of teaching the history of empire. At the moment there is a not inconsiderable danger of the pendulum at least temporarily swinging in the opposite direction, by which I mean an overemphasis on nationalism and ethnicity to compensate for previous underemphasis. We should proceed with caution.

I want to make a case for the study of Ukrainian history and its re-emergence as an academic discipline both within and without Ukraine as a history intrinsically interesting precisely because it challenges so many of the clichés of the nation-state paradigm. Ukrainian history is a veritable laboratory for viewing several processes of state and nation building and for comparative history generally. In the last few years we have heard about bringing the state "back in," then bringing society "back in"; now I call for some taking the nation-state "back out." This does not mean that I want to dispute the reality of either the nation-state mode of organization in the modern world or of the contemporary Ukrainian elites' desires to achieve such a nation-state. And indeed, the newly independent Ukraine will need a civic, patriotic history of its nation-state in the making. But the rest of us who study eastern Europe are no longer bound to agendas of winning statehood for Ukraine.[52] And Ukrainian history can serve as a wonderful vehicle to challenge the nation-state's conceptual hegemony and to explore some of the most contested issues of identity formation, cultural construction and maintenance, and colonial institutions and structures.

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52. This type of history is very close to what Francois Furet has called—in referring to the French revolution—"commemorative history." What Furet advocates in place of such commemorative history is a more problematic approach to the past. See his "The Revolution Is Over," in François Furet, ed., *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans. Elborg Forster (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), esp. 9ff. I thank Amanda Binder for this reference.