



David R. Marples

# HEROES AND VILLAINS

Creating National History  
in Contemporary Ukraine



ГЕРОЮ РАДЯНСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ  
ГЕНЕРАЛОВІ  
БАТУТІНУ

ВІД  
УКРАЇНСЬКОГО  
НАРОДУ

## HEROES AND VILLAINS

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## **Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine**

**David R. Marples**



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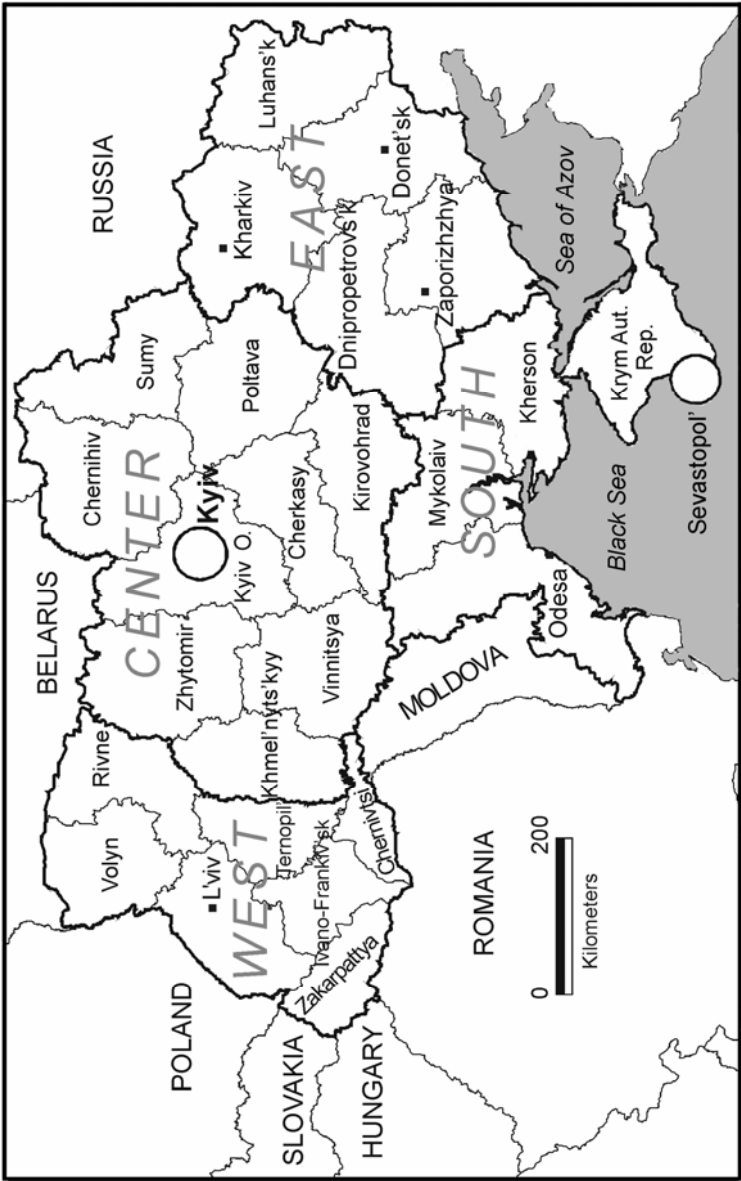
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*In memory of a good friend,*  
*David W. J. Reid (1930–2006)*

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Map of Ukraine

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## PREFACE

Independent Ukraine emerged in August, 1991, and was ratified by a national referendum in December of this same year. However, the roots of the modern state are to be found in the period of Perestroika, under Mikhail S. Gorbachev, when civil society first began to emerge. Ukraine began the process of building a new nation, accepting the existing borders as “inviolable” and eventually agreeing to be a non-nuclear state with its own currency and constitution. The latter suffered a few crises, and at the time of writing, Ukraine appears to have opted for a parliamentary system over a presidential one, though the ramifications of that change—effective in 2006—have yet to be seen. Several scholars have offered analyses of the newly independent Ukraine and the respective presidencies of Leonid Kravchuk (1991–1994) and Leonid Kuchma (1994–2004), leading up to the mass uprising in Kyiv in November–December 2004 known as the Orange Revolution.<sup>1</sup> In January 2005, when Viktor Yushchenko became the third president, he announced his intention to have Ukraine join Euro-Atlantic structures such as the European Union and NATO, which implied—to what degree is a moot point—a move away from the Russian orbit. Ukraine’s grassroots population had demonstrated its resistance to what was perceived as corruption, authoritarianism, and the restrictions on the media by the government of the day. But it has also appeared to support a fundamental change of direction from the Soviet period, some fifteen years after acquiring independence.

This book examines a question related to the concept of nation building, namely the construction of a national history. Arguably, there are several national histories and several interpretations of the past, and it may not be possible to determine which particular version is in the ascendancy. However, in Ukraine’s case, the version in place—the Soviet narrative—has clearly been superseded and is obsolete. Yet that interpretation has remained influential in certain regions, particularly those of the east and south, and continues to sway the way residents of Ukraine perceive their state. By the mid-1990s, Mykhailo



Hrushevs'kyi's magisterial *History of Ukraine* could be found in Kyiv bookstores, offering a sweeping interpretation of some ten centuries of history that refuted the Soviet version of Kyivan Rus' as the birthplace of modern Russia, to the exclusion of the other East Slavic peoples: Ukrainians and Belarusians. Instead, it provided a Ukrainian conception of Ukrainian history, ostensibly for Ukrainians. The merits of this version need not be debated here, nor even the symbolic importance of such pre-20th century heroes as Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, Ivan Mazepa, or even the "true" founder of the modern Ukrainian state, the bard Taras Shevchenko, whose statue is now almost as common as that of V. I. Lenin used to be in times past. Instead, the focus is limited to the 20th century, and what I consider to be the most formative period, the leadership of Stalin (1928–53) and its impact on what was then termed the Ukrainian SSR and independent Ukraine. This period represents the most tragic era in the history of Ukraine, and one of the most profoundly influential in the formation of contemporary thinking about the modern nation and its relationship to the past. For it is in this period that Ukraine suffered its most dramatic and tragic experiences: the Famine of 1932–33, the Purges, the impact of the Nazi-Soviet Pact that saw its western territories incorporated into the USSR; the German invasion; and the bitter fighting as a result of national insurgency in the western regions that saw conflicts between several players: the retreating Germans, the advancing Red Army, the local Polish population, and the local Ukrainians.

How are these events portrayed in contemporary Ukraine? That question forms the backbone to this monograph because the *raison d'être* of the modern state seems predicated on the way it views its past. This perspective introduces two common elements of Ukraine's association with the past: glorification and victimization. The former was also a hallmark of Soviet writing and has simply been emulated, but the objects of glorification have changed radically. In the case of the victimization, Ukraine is portrayed as a pawn of the Soviet regime, and more specifically of a Russian government based in Moscow. In turn, victimization implies an element of suffering. The argument in the modern context might run something like: because of our past suffering under a Moscow-based regime, we are now entitled to an independent state. The suffering has permitted the prevalence of a national conception of history that perceives and isolates Ukraine's past as a lengthy struggle against foreign oppressors, principally Russians and Poles, but also for a time Germans as well. It is simplistic in that the residents of the territory that currently comprises Ukraine included many groups,<sup>2</sup> and the towns in particular were noted for the virtual absence of ethnic Ukrainians, at least until the Soviet period.

One could argue, however, that the victimization theory adds both legitimacy and propriety to the modern state. Levko Luk'yanenko, Ukraine's first ambassador to Canada, recently compiled a lengthy list of foreign repressions in Ukraine in an article that claimed in essence that the leaders of the former Soviet Union were largely members of a single ethnic group, namely Jews.<sup>3</sup> His article can be considered an extreme form of this same theory of outsiders controlling Ukraine until recent times.<sup>4</sup>

Though it is postulated here that the defining moments for modern Ukraine may have occurred in the Stalin period—also the high point of persecution and suffering—there were other events which could be fitted into the general pattern. These include a general phenomenon in the USSR of the 1960s and 1970s, i.e., Dissidence, which took numerous forms including national, religious, and scientific.<sup>5</sup> Dissidence was limited, however, in that it did not seek to replace the Soviet state, but only to ensure that it abided by the Constitution. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 5, the Dissidents to some extent were the successors of the wartime generation of Ukrainians, some of whom fought a lengthy campaign against the Soviet occupants in the western areas for more than a decade after the “Great Patriotic War” ended. Also significant was the Chornobyl (Chernobyl) disaster in the Gorbachev era—an event that likewise affected Belarus. Chornobyl was also perceived as a result of the operation of outside forces, this time Moscow-based ministries and officials who ran nuclear power stations in Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> It could therefore be appended to the chronology of Ukraine as victim. Chornobyl was also a precursor of the modern Rukh movement, which like the Popular Fronts in the Baltic States was linked closely to concern over environmental issues. Though the uproar over Chornobyl and especially official secrecy about the aftermath soon died down, it should not be forgotten that the mass demonstrations that ensued and the political formations that resulted—such as the Green movement and Green Party—played an important role in undermining the Soviet regime.<sup>7</sup> Chornobyl also united several republics that suffered its consequences, most notably Belarus and the Baltic States.

Lastly, a key factor for Ukraine has been the maintenance of certain perceptions of the past outside the country by a large and politically active Diaspora that arrived in its new homes during or immediately after the Second World War and whose life experience and outlook were conditioned by their experience of the 1920s–1940s. For the most part these new arrivals emanated from the Halychyna (Galicia) region of Western Ukraine, a population with no experience of Soviet rule prior to 1939, but with very firm views on the events that had affected their compatriots in Eastern Ukraine, particularly

the Famine of 1932–33, the Purges, and the Soviet occupation of 1939–41 and post-1944. Notably, the interpretation of the Famine as genocide<sup>8</sup> was initiated in the North American Diaspora, whence it emerged in Ukraine after Perestroika opened up contacts between Ukrainians and their relatives abroad—we will explore this issue in more detail below. Similarly, journals such as *Suchasnist'* provided national interpretations of organizations such as the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army), and the émigrés who left Ukraine during or after the Second World War, though often politically divided, provided a plethora of works about the tyranny of the Stalin regime, the Famine, etc. On a more academic level, institutions like HURI and CIUS<sup>9</sup> have issued numerous publications about critical events, many of them by émigré political scientists, historians, and economists but others by scholars of non-Ukrainian background.<sup>10</sup> The result has been the elaboration of a national history (and other disciplines) outside Ukraine that could be taken up as part of the contemporary state and its official past following the collapse of the Soviet regime and its own version of history, with Russia as the benevolent elder brother and friend of Ukraine. The new histories issued in Ukraine virtually all take up these émigré themes and interpretations to a greater or lesser degree. For a time, after independence, Ukrainian schools relied completely on textbooks by Western academics such as Orest Subtelny, whose book, *Ukraine: a History*, published originally in 1988, became an international best seller. More recently, however, domestic historians have provided a broad variety of new histories of Ukraine geared to all levels of the population. The latter part of this study examines some of these histories in more detail in order to discuss their contents and omissions.

Any monograph that concentrates on discourse and narratives about events, rather than the “reality” of what actually occurred will face some criticisms. It is necessary to be selective—which discourses, and why? Are some sources more important than others? Conceivably the historian could study interpretations almost endlessly without coming to a conclusion or even approaching the end of the sources themselves. And what sort of time period should be imposed? The earliest writings on the Stalin period that attempted serious revisionism, as opposed to Khrushchev’s reinterpretation of Stalin’s crimes, occurred in the late 1980s after Gorbachev’s decision to deepen “de-Stalinization” throughout the Soviet Union by allowing discussion in the official media. In Ukraine’s case, some newspapers and journals proved very dilatory about changing long-held views, particularly the two central Kyiv newspapers: *Pravda Ukrainy* and *Radyans’ka Ukraina*. However, such obduracy was also instructive in demonstrating the influence of hard-line Soviet interpreta-

tions during a period of change. It seemed logical to begin around 1987–88, when the media in Ukraine began to open up to new debates, often pushing the limits of what could be discussed to new levels, but at a time when the Famine, for example, had just been acknowledged by the party leadership, thus signaling discernible progress in dealing with “blank spots” in Ukrainian history. Thus this book monitors the media, journals, and monographs, and offers an illustrative survey of school textbooks from 1987–88 to the present (2005–06).

In what ways was the study to be restricted in terms of content? My decision was to focus on those events that were most crucial and most controversial in terms of the construction of a new national history in the modern state. Two key issues stood out above all. The first was the Famine of 1932–33, known to one school of analysts as the *Holodomor* and an act of genocide against the Ukrainians as a nation, and to another as more a reflection of the ruthlessness of the regime but without a national component per se. While this study was being researched, on the 70th anniversary of the event several international governments recognized the Famine as genocide and issued acts or laws to say so.<sup>11</sup> Accepting the Famine as an act of genocide would also sever irrevocably the history of the Soviet state centered in Moscow from Ukraine, with its then capital of Kharkiv and, from 1934, Kyiv. Like no other event, it would portray Ukraine as a victim of a foreign nation and an outsider on Ukrainian territory. The inclusion of the Famine was thus self-evident, and the question is examined in detail in Chapter 2. The second event covers a much longer period and is more complex in its evolution, namely the development of integral nationalism in Ukraine, and its interwar and wartime formations in the shape of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, and later the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, often simplified in Soviet and post-Soviet works by the acronym OUN-UPA. OUN-UPA in general occupies the bulk of this book, and significantly it has been evoked by Viktor Yushchenko as an organization whose members merit rehabilitation and full recognition as veterans of the Second World War.

The emphasis on OUN-UPA embraces several topics and the debates surrounding them. Chapter 3 examines the OUN from its formation in 1929 to the period immediately following the 30 June 1941 Act of Independence in L'viv, covering personalities, as well as the immediate impact of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Chapter 4 looks at the various attempts to “heroize” OUN-UPA in the wartime period, and the changing portrayals of the way the UPA conducted warfare, as well as the thorny question of its alleged collaboration at various junctures with the German occupants. Chapter 5 continues chrono-

logically by focusing on OUN-UPA after 1943, its sustained and brutal conflict with Soviet security forces, as well as the formation of the SS Division “Halychyna.” This is followed in Chapter 6 with the period of “ethnic cleansing” of the Polish population in Volyn and Rivne regions, Operation Vistula, and the various academic and media debates that rose to a crescendo on the 60th anniversary of the dramatic events in Volhynia.<sup>12</sup> Chapter 7 then turns to the writing of new history textbooks in Ukraine and the attempts to rehabilitate OUN-UPA. It also provides a detailed focus on the efforts of the Yushchenko government to incorporate both the Famine and OUN-UPA into mainstream thinking as integral parts of the revised conception of Ukraine’s national history. The final chapter looks at the Report by the Working Group to analyze the OUN and UPA and the degree to which its conclusions have been accepted. An analysis is provided as to how this revisionism of historical events relates to the current political changes that have occurred in Ukraine. The Conclusion offers an analysis of the current state of historical thinking on these complex events and a personal interpretation of them. It is hoped that the Conclusion will in this way offer some opinion of the narratives, which might otherwise appear to be lacking consensus. My own perspective, it is fair to say, was added somewhat reluctantly, but constitutes a recognition that a readership requires more than the reflection of events through prevailing discourses.

Concerning the choice of sources, the intention has been to provide representative perspectives from the different regions of Ukraine, as well as to demonstrate the viewpoints in mainstream newspapers. The book has also tried to incorporate the perspectives of the different generations, with a special focus on the youth newspaper *Ukraina moloda* as well as the organs of World War II veterans’ associations, or those propagating the views of veterans, such as *Za vil’nu Ukrainu*. Journals covered include the central *Ukrains’kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, which might be perceived as the main arbiter of what is debated and acceptable in Ukraine today, but also a number of journals used for schools. In some cases the contents of the journal or newspaper were read but deemed unsuitable for this project, and the decision not to include the Purges as a key focus was also quite deliberate. It stemmed from the fact that the impact of the Purges on Ukraine, while devastating, may not provide many insights that did not apply to their effects on other regions of the former Soviet Union. The events are well known and have been studied in depth.<sup>13</sup> They also form part of a completely different debate as to whether residents of the Soviet Union in the 1930s lived in a state of terror. Finally, the Purges, after 1956, were not subjected to radical changes of interpretation,

other than perhaps the question of national content—whether some republics suffered more than others, etc. They were subjected to official government inquiries, based on at least three congresses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, namely the 20th, 22nd, and 27th. The Soviet leadership acknowledged that most of their victims were innocent and maintained that this cleansing of the party and society was unwarranted by the internal situation. Hence the Purges are no longer an event that has been in some way covered up or misinterpreted, deliberately or otherwise. They could of course be studied purely in their Ukrainian dimension, but to do so would require a separate study.

Lastly one must consider the question of context. My focus in this book is exclusively on Ukraine, but were the latter's experiences unique, either during the years covered in the narratives, or after 1991 as an independent state, attempting to comprehend the past and fit it into a national dimension through the rewriting of history? In general, what happened in Ukraine—the Famine aside—mirrors to some extent what occurred in Central Europe as a whole during the interwar period and the years of the Second World War. Like many of the national groups seeking statehood, and indeed those that already possessed it after the Paris peace treaties, many Ukrainians perceived that embracing democracy would not resolve their dilemma or improve their situation. Integral nationalism appears today an extreme political creed, but it was familiar to political activists of that era. Similarly, all the states of central Europe with the exception of Czechoslovakia could be described at the least as authoritarian. That statement is not to condone the preeminence of extreme political views but rather to understand them. This monograph may appear critical of some of the views expressed, for example, by the two wings of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, but that is not to say that they were not fairly typical of the period. Moreover, the Ukrainians were perhaps the largest group not to emerge after the First World War with their own statehood (aside from a brief period following the Russian Revolutions of 1917). Worse still, the majority of Western Ukrainians who ended up in the restored Polish state were not treated as equals. By the end of the 1920s their position was not much better than that of an internal colony of Poland. At this time there was even envy of their brethren in Soviet Ukraine, then reaching the peak of an indigenization program (though also on the verge of extensive repressions).

The Second World War was perhaps the most significant and most discussed cataclysm of the 20th century. Even in 2006 that debate has continued. As Norman Davies has demonstrated recently,<sup>14</sup> it is an event that has

been written and interpreted principally by the victors. Because of this tendency, anti-Soviet Ukrainians, among others, have emerged with a rather bad press. Despite the fact that the Cold War that followed highlighted many of the darker sides of Soviet rule, Western analysts have tended to see those who joined the insurgency against the Red Army as *ipso facto* collaborators of the Germans or, even worse, as perpetrators of some of the worst atrocities that occurred in Eastern Europe. However, to take such a position is manifestly unfair. Ukrainians after all had experienced first-hand the worst excesses of Stalin and Stalinism. In what way could they assess the relative merits and defects of being ruled by Hitler or Stalin other than by what they had experienced? Thus for many in Ukraine, the date of 22 June 1941 was perceived as the day of liberation from a tyranny. On the other hand, some of the individuals and groups described herein may be said to have gone further, to have embraced some of the same policies as the German occupants and to have taken their enthusiasm at being “freed” too far. All one can say in an introduction is that the Ukrainians in all areas of Eastern Europe in which they lived were placed in a very difficult situation—between two of the most ruthless dictatorships ever devised, and with no prospect of neutrality or non-involvement.

Likewise, turning to the contemporary period, Ukrainians faced some familiar problems once they acquired statehood following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Their views derived largely from their background and geographical location. For the more nationally conscious (Western) Ukrainians, independence was the culmination of long-term aspirations that began—at the least—in the early part of the century, and for others allegedly even earlier, perhaps back to the 17th century Hetmanate of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi. The collapse of empires in the 20th century left behind many former colonies that struggled with national identity and often lacked the prerequisites of a modern state. The fall of the Soviet Empire cannot realistically be compared to, say, that of the British Empire, not least because of its disparate nature and the fact that its territories were contiguous. Some ten years after the end of the Soviet regime, all the new states were struggling to develop economically and in terms of establishing democracies, other than the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In Central Asia, the rulers essentially had not changed from Communist times. In the Caucasus, there were severe problems between the titular nations and minorities over territory and rights to autonomy. Russia had been at war with one of its autonomous territories, Chechnya, albeit with an interruption, for twelve years.

On the other hand, perhaps Ukrainians, more than any other group, were attempting to come to terms with their recent past. In neighboring Belarus to

the north, there seemed to be a consensus that the Soviet era had been a period of progress (at least economically), and those politicians who advocated national development toward Europe and away from Russia, or demanded that Belarusian should be the only state language, were regarded as extremists and failed to attract the support of more than one-fifth of the population during any election campaign. Ukraine was divided regionally and by language, though the importance of the latter is somewhat hard to measure. The various regions perceived the past quite differently, even though these perceptions were not necessarily static. Was the Soviet Union the epitome of evil or a benevolent and paternal master that saw the advancement of Ukrainians, as well as other non-Russian nations, in an egalitarian manner? For more than seventy years, residents of Eastern and Southern Ukraine had been subjected to one very specific interpretation of the past, particularly as applied to the 20th century. The alternative view was dismissed as being propagated by “bourgeois nationalists” in Western Ukraine, Ukrainians living abroad, as well as by imperialist powers such as the United States and Britain. It seems doubtful if any other post-Soviet republic emerged from the wreckage of the Soviet state with such ambivalent and diametrically opposed attitudes. In brief, residents of Ukraine did not know who they were because they had no overriding perception of the immediate past and what it had signified. The Soviet view was no longer relevant, but for many Ukrainians there was nothing with which to replace it.

Hence although one can offer a comparative approach, and suggest that what occurred in Ukraine formed part of a general experience that could be applied to other republics of the former USSR or the former Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, that statement would not really be accurate. Ukraine’s experience was formulated by events of such magnitude as to defy comprehension. Only Belarus could lay claim to such a lengthy and brutal period of foreign occupation during the Second World War, and even this small neighbor to the north had not suffered the devastation of the Famine of 1932–1933. In addition, few republics were more diverse in territorial makeup. Ukraine’s regions included lands that had been, in recent memory, under the sway of six different governments (Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Nazi Germany), and the most Ukrainian of its cities, L’viv, had been part of the Austrian Empire and Poland in the first half of the century. Demographically, Ukrainians had not been an urban phenomenon until the 1960s and 1970s. For many years, both Soviet and non-Soviet-controlled areas had seen most Ukrainians devoted to agricultural pursuits, while other ethnic groups formed the majority in the towns. To Ukrainian



peasants, urban dwellers represented “the other” regardless of any ethnic divisions. Urban Ukrainians are a relatively recent phenomenon and for that matter a Soviet phenomenon. Soviet education and propaganda managed in the eastern regions to inculcate views held by the Soviet elite, and to some extent those opinions are still in place.

All these factors make the present book more complicated than it might at first appear. Ukraine’s past is often assessed by Western standards, just as much of present-day world politics reflects a Western dimension, from the Internet upward. That is one reason why, in my view, it is unwise to be too judgmental about some of the polarized attitudes toward the recent past or the failure to construct a viable and united state based on the sort of principles that would be acceptable in Washington, D.C. or London. On the other hand, what this monograph has tried to do is to examine the narratives from a distance, without necessarily offering critiques of views that might seem outrageous to the Western observer or for that matter to those who have condemned what is termed “the Ukrainian nationalist perspective.” It is sometimes said that Eastern Ukrainians lack national consciousness or that they have been Russified so heavily that they no longer know their own language and culture. But who defines that culture? Who is to determine whether a worldview is misguided or weaker than an alternative view that may accentuate national attributes or virtues? Is a Ukrainian, for example, who thinks that the Red Army liberated Ukraine in 1943–44 backward or of an antediluvian mindset? Conversely, must citizens of an independent Ukraine accept the view of a relatively small and fanatical liberation movement against the Moscow regime that maintained, first and foremost, the need to end Russian control over Ukraine that dated back several centuries? It was with such questions in mind that I began this study.

## *Notes*

- 1 Taras Kuzio and Paul D’Anieri, ed., *The Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002); Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine’s Orange Revolution* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2005); Bohdan Nahaylo, *The Ukrainian Resurgence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); and Marta Dyczok, *Ukraine: Movement without Change, Change without Movement* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000).
- 2 See, for example, Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: from Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

- 3 Levko Luk'yanenko, "U lystopadovi zhalobni dni," in M. V. Drodets'ka ed., *Komu buv vyhidnyi holodomor?* (Kyiv: Telesyk, 2003), pp. 3–17.
- 4 A dissenting view is offered by political scientist Mikhail A. Molchanov, who comments on Ukraine's victimization in the past as follows: "Though denied their national state, Ukrainian aristocracy actively participated in medieval Lithuanian and Polish–Lithuanian states of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and Ukrainian clergy—in the building of the Russian Empire since the 1700s. Ukrainians, as no other people, were intimately connected with the structures of power in Moscow Czarism, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union... Communists never lacked Ukrainian representation in the party's apex, not only in Ukraine proper, but also in Moscow and other parts of the Soviet Union. Ukrainians constituted the weighty proportion of the Red Army brass; a KGB career starting in Ukraine and ending in Moscow was not exceptional either." Mikhail A. Molchanov, *Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2002), p. 39.
- 5 The most famous literary example of Ukrainian dissidence was the treatise by Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification: a Study in the Soviet Nationalities Problem*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974).
- 6 The nuclear power industry in Ukraine was described by one observer as the thoughtless expansion of atomic power stations in densely populated regions. Yurii Shcherbak, *Chornobyl'* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1989), p. 221.
- 7 See, for example, D. J. Peterson, *Troubled Lands: the Legacy of Soviet Environmental Destruction* (Boulder, Colorado: The Westview Press, 1993), pp. 210–211.
- 8 The term comes up regularly in discussions of twentieth-century Ukraine. How should it be defined? According to the definition adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948, Article 2 stipulates that: "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."
- 9 HURI refers to the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University; CIUS is the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta. Both were founded through contributions from local Ukrainian communities in the 1970s.
- 10 Most notable was the book commissioned by HURI: Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). CIUS Press authors who were born in Ukraine but migrated to Europe or North America include Iwan S. Koropec'kyj, Borys Lewyts'kyj, and Peter J. Potichnyj.
- 11 On 28 November 2006, the Ukrainian Parliament passed a bill, which described the Famine of 1932–33 as genocide against the Ukrainian people. A previous draft had termed it genocide against the Ukrainian nation. The vote total, however, was 233–1, a bare majority in the 450-seat parliament (the remaining MPs abstained from voting). It has been speculated that these 200 deputies either did not wish to offend Russia or were concerned about the sentiments of their own constituents. The motion received support from President Viktor Yushchenko and some 70% of the general population. See *CBS News*, 29 November 2006.

- 12 I have used the term Volhynia throughout to refer to the north-western territories of Ukraine that today are comprised by Volyn and Rivne *oblasts* (provinces). Strictly speaking, in terms of the transliteration system applied, the correct spelling should be Volhyniya. However, the familiarity and use of “Volhynia” are such that I have applied this spelling throughout.
- 13 See, for example, Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: a Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Robert W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin’s Russia, 1934–1941* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); J. Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: the Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–1938* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); J. Arch Getty and Roberta Manning, ed., *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). On Ukraine specifically, see, for example, Yurii Ivanovich Shapoval’, Volodymyr Prystayko, and Vadym Zolotar’ov, *ChK-HPU-NKVD v Ukraini: osoby, fakty, dokumenty* (Kyiv: Abrys, 1997); and V. M. Danylenko, H. S. Kas’yanov, and S. V. Kul’chyts’kyi, *Stalinizm na Ukraini: 20-30-ti roky* (Lyiv: Lybid, 1991).
- 14 Norman Davies, *Europe at War 1939–1945: No Simple Victory* (London: Macmillan, 2006).

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David R. Marples  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
April 2007

## CHAPTER 1

# INDEPENDENT UKRAINE REVIEWS THE PAST

### *Rethinking Perspectives in Ukraine*

There are several general indications of changing perspectives in Ukraine after independence, a period when the government was preoccupied with elaborating its new relationship with Russia, with its autonomous region of Crimea, and with overcoming a serious economic crisis. Initially, there was some emphasis on taking revenge against the former Soviet regime in the form of an international tribunal. The situation was described by the president of the Kyiv branch of the Memorial association, Roman Krutsyk, who noted the disastrous consequences of Soviet rule in Ukraine. In 1989, when the contents of mass graves—victims of Stalin’s terror—had been exhumed at Dem’yaniv Laz, Memorial activists gathered party cards from Communists disillusioned with the ruling party. He commented that the materials collected by Memorial were ready to be used as testimonies against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) at a new international tribunal. His organization had also facilitated the return to Ukraine of several families deported to the east. What were Memorial’s main goals? They were to “hunt down” the perpetrators of Communist crimes, but the main task was to raise new citizens who would be aware of Ukraine’s tragic past. With this goal in mind, the association intended to create a museum that would document Communist crimes and organize a Nuremberg-type trial for Communist criminals.<sup>1</sup>

Stanislav Kul’chyts’kyi, an historian who will enter these pages frequently, is deputy director of the Institute of History with the National Academy of Sciences in Ukraine. In the spring of 1992 he wrote an insightful article about the state of the historical discipline in Ukraine, noting that in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, historians found themselves in a state of confusion. Because the writing of history in Soviet times was directed toward service to the regime, it frequently led to the falsification of the events of the 20th century. Historians often did not know the true picture, being limited to a “Communist” vision of the past. Kul’chyts’kyi himself was misled regarding past events, and writes that only in 1988 did he comprehend that there were

no secret Trotskyite circles in the country. However, from the perspective of 1992, he maintains that historians could attain a better idea of historical processes through ridding themselves of censorship and mounting an all-out attack on archival holdings. He perceives several “blank spots” in Ukrainian history, including the government of the Central Rada after the revolutions of 1917, as well as OUN-UPA.<sup>2</sup>

Kul’chyts’kyi also urges caution when dealing with archival documents, as they are not completely reliable. As an example, he cites party documents—pronouncements of party leaders at official ceremonies. These statements, he notes, did not necessarily reflect the sentiments of the speaker, and it is better for the historian to use the testimony of simple people or official reports that reflect the real state of affairs, such as police reports on the mood of the population. He appears to ignore or be ignorant of the fact that unofficial sources can be equally as slanted as official ones, reflecting the values and outlook of their originators. He thus cites as a reliable example the memoirs of simple peasants, praising the work of the US Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, led by James E. Mace, precisely for collecting such valuable testimonies, and declaring that “The subjective element disappears when hundreds of people have to answer the same question.”<sup>3</sup> The statement reflects a rather naïve view of the historical discipline, as such surveys might also be depicted as hundreds of subjective narratives rooted in past and present discourses. Kul’chyts’kyi also bemoans the fact that Ukrainian historians lacked methodology because they were completely oblivious to the ways in which Western historians carried out their discipline.<sup>4</sup> That comment is also revealing because it demonstrates an almost obsequious attitude to Western historians and the implicit need to emulate them, and that for several years at least, those working in the discipline would be over-reliant on works published in the West (see below) whose authors had much less access to archival sources than the admittedly slanted Soviet publications.

What might be considered an extreme example of how the national element could be inserted into the conception of the past was provided in a 1993 article by Petro Vol’vach. His article sets out to explain economic and social problems in contemporary Ukraine through references to the pernicious influence of the legacies of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. He writes that the wretched state of the Ukrainian economy and spiritual life should be sought in Ukraine’s “lengthy colonial enslavement.” This “enslavement,” he maintains, is responsible for the low level of national consciousness and lack of national pride, opportunism, and patronage that is especially common in the southern and eastern regions of the country. He portrays expansionism as

something that is inherent to the development of the Russian state, and draws a direct line from the 16th-century wars of Ivan the Terrible to the post-Second World War subjugation of Eastern Europe. Thus in 1492, “*Muscovia*” covered 24,000 square kilometers, but by 1914 the Russian Empire encompassed 23.8 million square kilometers. Thus Russia increased its total area by 80 square kilometers per day. Vol’vach offers the following chronology of “Ukrainian enslavement” in the modern period, which is worth citing in full as representative of an anti-Russian or Russophobic version of the Ukrainian past:<sup>5</sup>

- 1720—decree of Peter I prohibiting the printing of books in Ukrainian;
- 1729—decree of the Holy Synod concerning the confiscation from the population of elementary textbooks and church writings in Ukrainian;
- 1768—the conspiracy of Catherine II with Polish aristocrats about the subjugation of the Koliivshchyna rebellion;<sup>6</sup>
- 1768-1775—the destruction of the Ukrainian Cossacks in the Russo-Turkish war;
- 1775—the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich;
- 1771-1783—the liquidation of the Hetmanate;
- 1811—closure of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy;
- 1816-1821—military occupation of Ukraine in the form of 500,000-strong military settlements;
- 1847—destruction of the Cyrillo-Methodius Brotherhood;
- 1854-55—the Crimean War, in which Ukraine was the major supplier of “cannon fodder”;
- 1876—the Ukaz of Ems banning Ukrainian publications and resulting in the exile of several prominent Ukrainian cultural figures;
- 1877-78—Russo-Turkish war that brought huge economic and human losses to Ukraine;
- 1904-05—Russo-Japanese war that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Ukrainians;
- 1907-08—post-revolutionary reaction in Ukraine and the closing of Ukrainian-language journals and newspapers;
- 1914-1917—the First World War, with heavy Ukrainian casualties;
- 1917-1920—the Bolshevik-White Guard assault on Ukraine and civil war;
- 1921-22 [sic!]<sup>7</sup>—War Communism;
- 1928-32—collectivization and the destruction of prosperous peasants; deportations;



1932–33—the man-made famine to destroy the rebellious Ukrainian peasants;

1933—halting the process of “Ukrainization;”

1933–38—the total genocide of the Ukrainian people and the destruction of Ukrainian culture;<sup>7</sup>

1938—Stalin’s decree about the obligatory study of the Russian language;

1939—Winter war [in Finland] with human and economic losses for Ukraine;

1919–40—Soviet annexation of Western Ukraine;

1941–1945—the Second World War;

1944–45—the preparation of the Stalin-Beria plan for the deportation of all Ukrainians (22 June 1944);

1946–47—famine in Ukraine;

1947—the Soviet-Polish Operation Vistula;

1944–49—the destruction of the UPA; deportations;

1954–59—the Virgin Lands program—3 million young Ukrainians moved to Kazakhstan;

1964–83—the Communist Party reaction in Ukraine; the struggle against the Ukrainian renaissance;

1983—the decree of the CC CSU about the obligatory study of the Russian language;

1986—the nuclear disaster at Chornobyl.

Vol’vach notes with regret that the ratio of Ukrainians in the total population of Ukraine has been declining, partly as a result of the influx of people of other nationalities which, he believes, leads to the destruction of the moral foundations of society and the loss of awareness of a common historical fate and culture.

In another contribution on this same theme, Vol’vach documents the experience of “genocide” suffered by the Ukrainian-speaking population of the Kuban in 1933–39. In 1932, he writes, there existed some 240 Ukrainian schools in this region, and 20 Ukrainian-language newspapers were in circulation, along with five journals. The radio also broadcasted in Ukrainian. Early in 1933, the process of Ukrainization in the Kuban was halted, because it did not correspond to the cultural needs of the population, in the Soviet view, and provided the “class enemy” with the legal tools to organize resistance to the Soviet authorities. Within three days, Vol’vach writes, Ukrainian-language broadcasts were terminated and the entire Ukrainian-language press reverted

to Russian. Many Ukrainian writers and teachers in the Kuban were arrested. Collectivization in this region in 1933 led to a peasant rebellion that was subdued by the NKVD. Famine claimed the lives of many Cossacks. For many centuries, concludes the article, with reference to all Ukrainian territories, governments have given priority to the development of Russian culture in the national land of Ukraine. Independent Ukraine, as a member of the community of nations, is therefore entitled to demand from Russia and the international community adequate protection of the interests of Ukrainians on their own territory. Should such protection not be forthcoming (and it is unclear how it would be manifested, but presumably by preventing “foreigners” from taking up residence in Ukraine), millions of Ukrainians, who survived by a miracle throughout many centuries of genocide and warped assimilatory policies, will disappear and be dissolved into a “Russian sea” as had happened to millions in the past. Without resolving this pressing problem, the Ukrainian–Russian relationship will remain one-sided, and the current conversations of Russian “new democrats” about people’s friendship and the spirit of internationalism will be the sequel to the treacherous Communist demagoguery.<sup>8</sup>

These articles can perhaps be dismissed as representing a polarized view of Ukraine’s past and a contribution to what has been termed “the cult of competitive suffering.” However, other observers have noted first that there are some “blind spots” in the approach to the past, and second, that there are problems in “harmonizing” the national histories of Ukraine and Russia as reflected in history textbooks. Kul’chyts’kyi remarks that some Second World War veterans remain convinced that there was no famine in Ukraine in 1932–33, that the secret protocols of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact never existed, and that the Katyn massacre was a fabrication of the German occupants of the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> Another writer, Yaroslava Muzychenko, cites the chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of St. Petersburg, Tet’yana Lebedyns’ka, who decried the lack of dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian historians on the dramatic episodes of modern history. Lebedyns’ka recalled two conferences dedicated to the 1709 Battle of Poltava, one in Moscow and another in Ukraine. The Russian one cursed Ukrainians; the Ukrainian gathering cursed Russians; and there was no common ground. She suggested a Western approach through which authors present comments on historical events from a variety of political perspectives. The same article quotes a Ukrainian teacher, Viktor Rudii, who is convinced that history textbooks have to tell the truth, however unpleasant it might be. He is frustrated that students seem incapable of viewing historical events objectively: people from Western Ukraine are still referred to as “Banderites” in the eastern parts of the country, while easterners

in the west are called Communists. The problem has arisen, in Muzychenko's view, because of the lack of a state policy directed toward the reconciliation of citizens.<sup>10</sup>

Another factor behind such disparate perceptions is reportedly the "propaganda of intolerance" emanating from Russia, which together with the lack of a state policy from Kyiv and increasing poverty in Ukraine contribute to the spread of ethnic intolerance in the contemporary state. Muzychenko has little time for "gung-ho patriots" who are afraid that Ukrainians will disappear from Ukraine. This attitude, she writes, is imperialistic, as Ukraine is a multi-ethnic state. However, the greatest challenge to the Ukrainian-Russian Commission, created to examine the interpretations of history, is "ethno-centralism." Russian historians have adopted the Great Imperial conception of history, whereas simple Russians enjoy the memoirs of people like Pavel Sudoplatov, who by modern standards would be considered an international terrorist. She cites Ukrainian historian Serhii Kot, who maintains that any commission is meaningless unless Russian society is prepared to grant Ukrainians or any other nation the right to a distinct historical development. However, she is fearful that Ukrainian "gung-ho patriots" will also be unwilling to accept the conclusions of a commission. This gives rise to the danger that Ukrainian historians will be unable to prepare their own conception of the past for common textbooks.<sup>11</sup> The same topic, albeit with reference exclusively to the situation in Ukraine, is the subject of a reflective article by Kul'chyts'kyi on the state of history as a discipline in Ukraine's schools and universities. He feels that the current state of affairs (he is writing in 2003) has its origins in the year 1988. At that time, with Perestroika reaching its culmination and the liberalization in public life, there spread a movement for the reform of the educational system in Ukraine and a desire to make it national in character. This movement, in Kul'chyts'kyi's view, was a reaction to the all-out Russification of the educational system. One of its manifestations was to be seen in the teaching of the history of the USSR, which was de facto the history of Russia, with the history of Ukraine relegated to a secondary status, with about 30 hours of the academic load.<sup>12</sup>

In Kul'chyts'kyi's view, during the Perestroika period, the Communists lacked the power to stem the national-democratic wave and therefore opted to hijack the movement and take charge of it. In October 1988, at a Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CC CPU), party leader Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi announced that the teaching in the social sciences poorly reflected the needs of society, and the work for filling in gaps in history was not being carried out energetically enough. In February 1989

the CC CPU issued a resolution to formulate a republican program for the development of historical research and the improvement of how history was taught in Ukraine. It contained concrete measures, such as introducing a course on the history of the Ukrainian SSR in schools, colleges, and institutes, the training of teachers and the preparation of textbooks. However, says Kul'chyts'kyi, because of the difficulties of the transitional period in coming to terms with the recent history of the USSR no textbook could appear at that time. Ukrainians relied on the book by Canadian professor Orest Subtelny. Only by 1995–96 did the two-volume *History of Ukraine* based on archival study appear under the editorship of V. Smolii. By 1989–90, Ukrainian history had become an independent discipline and was taught parallel to the history of the USSR and general history in the upper four grades. At that point the lack of relevant materials to cover various topics was very keenly felt and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education asked the Institute of History (affiliated with the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences) to begin immediately to prepare appropriate material. Kul'chyts'kyi and Yurii Kurnosov had thus prepared a brochure on materials for studying the history of Ukraine for the ninth and tenth grades. These materials were subsequently used to replace some chapters in existing Soviet textbooks.<sup>13</sup>

Kul'chyts'kyi informs readers that in 1990–91, the Institute of History created a new program for the study of history and published a new textbook entitled *Istoriya Ukrainy*. At the same time the publishing house “Radyans'ka shkola” (Soviet school) changed its name to “Osvita” (education). When the new history appeared, however, it was hopelessly outdated because Ukraine had become independent. Therefore in the fall of 1991 the Ministry of Education radically reconfigured the structure of historical education in schools. Two independent courses were taught: world history and the history of Ukraine, with the latter being taught from grades 7 to 11. What place does history occupy in contemporary Ukraine? Kul'chyts'kyi believes that it is a critical discipline, the foundation stone that allows pupils to grasp the fundamentals of social developments, and which should take priority over other social sciences. Of all the humanities and social science subjects, only history *has* to be included on the list of comprehensive examinations at the end of high school. It should have two chronologically complete circles, Kul'chyts'kyi believes, with the first ending after the ninth grade and the second covering the tenth and twelfth grades so that for those students who decide not to go on to Grade 10, the history of Ukraine does not end in the nineteenth century. Further, Ukrainian history must be studied within the context of world history. Students must learn to develop pluralistic views in making

historical assessments and be subjected to different methods of looking at history, rather than being confined to the traditionally predominant political narratives. The author concludes with a discussion of the contested harmonization of Ukraine's history with that of its neighbors: Poland and Russia. The point is not to place heavy focus on one's national history, but to ensure that the "other side's" textbooks are not fostering the spirit of hatred.<sup>14</sup>

Other writers have addressed themes similar to those raised by Kul'chyts'kyi. Some recent problems were put into perspective by writer Kost' Bondarenko in the spring of 2002. Having noted the recognition of the rights of members of the SS Division "Halychyna" as equal to those of veterans of the Great Patriotic War by the Ivano-Frankivs'k city council, he observes that in a country in which no civil peace or consensus had been reached, local decisions such as this one would stir public opinion long after the last veteran of the Second World War rests in peace. He anticipates that the next stage will be a struggle over tombs and monuments. The key fact, he states, is that the overwhelming majority of the population "is absolutely historically illiterate." Worst of all, people are unwilling to fill in the gaps of their ignorance about the past, or even correct their misconceptions. Some are taking the side of the "exclusively correct" Soviet interpretation, recognizing the Red Army and CPSU as true heroes and condemning all those who stood on the other side of the barricade as traitors, enemies, and criminals. Others study history from textbooks published in the Diaspora and are interpreting everything linked to the Soviet Union as negative, and all that was directed against the Communist regime as positive. He cites a small group of intellectuals that has approved a recent attempt at a new evaluation of the past by L'viv historian Yaroslav Hrytsak. But they are a small minority since most of the population prefers easier reading.<sup>15</sup>

In October 2003, the newspaper *Den'* introduced in its weekly digest a discussion forum entitled "How to make the past your own. History as taught in schools: time to decide" compiled by writers from different parts of Ukraine and featuring several well-known Ukrainian historians. The premise for the debate was that the creation of a civil society in Ukraine that is founded on the basis of democracy and a market economy requires the proper education of community members in the history of their national past. This is partly in order not to repeat the same mistakes but also because members of society must recognize the significance of acquiring a free society and how much it is needed, as demonstrated "by the tragic and controversial history of their own country." The premise seems somewhat illogical from the perspective of the approach to history, in that if past history has already been pronounced

“tragic” and “controversial” then to some extent the task of the historians has already been decided for them. In fairness, however, this does not necessarily denote adherence to what might be termed the Vol’vach school of thought cited above. Several authors from this discussion merit citation, as their comments are also relevant to the current volume and the reasons that lie behind it. One of the contributors is Professor Valery Stepankov, Chair of the Department of World History at Kamyanets’-Podil’s’kyi State University. He points out that on television and radio, and in newspapers the following rhetorical question is being posed constantly: “Are our children and grandchildren taught the true history of Ukraine? Isn’t this history falsified to fit the new ideological dogmas?” Much depends, Stepankov writes, on the quality of textbooks and the competency of the teaching staff. Regarding the former, authors had to write in very restricted conditions, when all facets of instruction were under the sway of the Great Russian conception of Ukrainian history, which brought about gross distortions and the lack of any real Ukrainian version. Thus Ukrainian writers first had to determine the scholarly inheritance of Ukraine and then start writing new textbooks. Now it is necessary to go through these new books and select the best ones, while at the same time avoid the writing of any textbooks jointly with scholars from neighboring countries, as this would result in a version of history that conforms only to the views of foreigners.<sup>16</sup>

The situation, however, has been exceptionally difficult in Ukrainian schools. A history teacher from an elementary school in Uzhhorod in Western Ukraine points out that the curricula have been extremely inadequate and students “are under a senseless academic burden.” There are no teaching aids, such as maps or charts featuring the history of Ukraine, and those that do exist are prohibitively expensive. Schools lack a sufficient supply of textbooks, and no one can find information about the Ukrainian hetmans or books about “Ukrainian feats of arms” during the Second World War. The teachers themselves are part of the problem according to Taras Honcharuk, Chair of Ukrainian History at the Odesa National University. Only some 20% of graduates of his department become teachers, and as a result history is being taught by retired army officers or people well beyond pensionable age. These people have not studied Ukrainian history and know little about it, so their focus is on world history. This situation is occurring during a time when the supply of textbooks on the history of Ukraine is “excellent.” On this topic, Kul’chyts’kyi notes, “we haven’t been wasting time.” The recent textbooks are an example of how far Ukraine has come in the teaching of a national history. Today’s books are shorter than in the past, and Soviet stereotypes have been

removed. All these new books are richly illustrated and have maps. Kul'chyts'kyi comments that for the past decade he has participated in a Ukrainian-Polish commission to upgrade school history and geography textbooks, which has enabled him to compare the situation in Ukraine to that in Poland. Even though the Poles have a reputation for the quality of their books, the Ukrainians today—in his view—have caught up. Notably, in passing, Kul'chyts'kyi comments that the history of the twentieth century in Ukraine needs to be learned “in greater depth than the recent past.”<sup>17</sup> While the statement may reflect a personal bias, it adds credence to the view that the formation of a national history is based on the criterion of a tragic and “genocidal” past in the twentieth century.

The final comments came from Professor Volodymyr Panchenko, Vice-President of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy National University. He remarks on the dangers of not knowing one's own history and advances what he calls a paradoxical fact, namely that the Russification of Ukrainian history is being carried out by Ukrainians, as exemplified by the closure of Ukrainian-language schools in Donets'k and Dnipropetrovs'k. He complains about the limited use of the Ukrainian language in literature, films, and television, which he refers to as a “suicidal act.” It is essential, in his view, through the younger generation, to avoid becoming a people without a memory—but in order to reach such a situation, much will depend on teachers of history. They in turn, will be reliant on adequate textbooks and reference materials. He provides a warning about two very different tendencies that have been occurring in the Ukrainian case. The first concerns what he calls “naïve myths” with reference to Ukrainian history, and figuratively speaking can be illustrated by the efforts “to prove that Jesus Christ was Ukrainian.” On the other hand, there is the more traditional tendency to examine the history of Ukraine from a foreign, i.e., Russian point of view. This may be applied to the history of Kyivan Rus', and the fact that in a textbook about Tsar Aleksandr II, one cannot find a mention of the Ems Ukaz prohibiting the use of the Ukrainian language. Ukrainian values, he says, are not the same as Russian ones, and there is a great demand for new literature, particularly works on popular history which should be promoted, including on the pages of *Den'* and in other formats.<sup>18</sup>

Some comments can be made about new historical writings. First, the writers are to some extent stating the obvious when they reject the old traditional formats in which, essentially, Ukraine in the Soviet period did not have its own history. However, no distinction is made between Soviet and Russian writing, or between, for example, the writing of Soviet history and that of Russian history. Are they the same? Or was the history of Russia submerged too,

in which case the role of Russians in Ukraine's story might need revising? Second, Panchenko seems to make a vital point when he remarks that one does not need to prove that Jesus Christ was Ukrainian. In other words, one cannot glorify the past. One might add a third point, which is the modern tendency to regard the past unequivocally as an era of both glory and suffering: with Ukrainians as the perennial victims and Russians, Poles, or Germans as the persecutors. Most often it is the Russians who are placed in this position. Such a tendency (though not with Ukrainians as victims) is particularly marked in Soviet works and—paradoxically—writings of Ukrainians in the West. It may also take other formats. Thus in the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Detroit an entire room is taken up with an exhibit about the persecution of Ukrainians under Soviet rule, evidently with the assistance of historians from Ukraine. The same exhibit was then transferred to Ukraine and can be found today in Kharkiv and the historical museums of other cities. However, it is hardly an accurate reflection of the past because history cannot be written in this way. Why has this situation occurred, and why must Ukrainian history necessarily be written from the perspective of victims? Is it a result merely of the lack of statehood? It could be argued, and to some extent this monograph is a reflection of this tendency, that with the end of the Soviet period, Ukrainian historians lacked guidelines to construct a new history that included the main and tumultuous events of the 20th century. Until very recent times there had been no opportunity to examine many of these events. Even many occurrences during the Stalin period only came under review during the period of Gorbachev's leadership of the USSR. The result—and it is a very obvious point—was the magnification of the works of those writing Ukrainian history in the West, and particularly those historians, writers, politicians, or polemicists who were of Ukrainian background. What did the "Diaspora" think?

### *The Ukrainian Diaspora: The Example of the Famine-Genocide*

This focus on the "Diaspora"—and it is a point also raised by Bondarenko—was pertinent, and gives rise to the question of the impact of those of Ukrainian ancestry living outside Ukraine, particularly the generation that left the native land during or shortly after the Second World War. Included in the rather sweeping term Diaspora are also people who were born in DP camps in Central Europe but subsequently moved to North America, Australia, or Western Europe. By and large the productivity of scholars from this



community has been considerable and in many ways it has come to dominate popular writing on Ukraine even while the various groups, such as OUN, brought many of their political squabbles to the West with them. One objective of such writing was to offer a perspective on Ukraine that differed from that propagated by the authorities, i.e., of Ukraine as a “little brother” of Great Russia, but bound to Russia in eternal friendship. Often, such writings could be categorized as overtly anti-Soviet, such as the *ABN Correspondence*, which allegedly monitored four serious revolts in Ukraine against Soviet collectivization between August 1930 and 1931, precisely in the areas in which famine later occurred, i.e., Kherson, Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kharkiv regions.<sup>19</sup> A later example of a “Diaspora perspective” might be that provided by a Ukrainian from Australia, Mykhailo Horan, writing in the newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina* early in 2004. Horan writes that even though Ukraine has been “free” for more than twelve years, one cannot feel free. The culture of fear had developed over generations, destroying initiatives, free thought, and national pride, and turning people into meek, submissive, and complacent individuals. In order to ascertain the reasons behind such a phenomenon, he notes, it is necessary to know the history of Ukraine to answer the question why Moscow exploited Ukraine for centuries and now seems unwilling to do without her.<sup>20</sup>

Continuing in the same vein, Horan writes that the Russian Empire used Ukrainian labor to undertake various projects, from the building of Petrograd [sic!] to the development of the Siberian taiga, and many died as a result. With the creation of the Bolshevik regime, the “genocide” of Ukrainians entered a new phase. The artificial famine resulted in 8 million victims. In 1947, the authorities would not permit Ukrainians from the famine-infected eastern regions to migrate to the western areas because at that time Soviet forces were fighting Ukrainian insurgents. The terrorized and oppressed Ukrainian people were transformed into “homo sovieticus,” a new form of spiritual slavery. In order to ensure that Ukrainians did not recognize their miserable lot, the authorities resorted to scaremongering tactics to keep them divided, using phrases such as “Westerners” and “Easterners” to ensure that they never joined forces against foreign occupants. Communist propaganda meanwhile disseminated the lie that OUN leader Stepan Bandera collaborated with the Nazis when in fact the Germans had issued a secret instruction to arrest Bandera on trumped-up criminal charges. Horan comments that the Ukrainian Diaspora is baffled by the apparent inability of Ukraine’s officials to govern the country properly but appears oblivious to the fact that Ukraine is ruled, to a large extent, by people hostile to the Ukrainian state.<sup>21</sup>

The excerpt is instructive because it encapsulates what might be termed a more partisan Diaspora view of the recent past: that of the Ukrainian being duped, exploited, and oppressed by the regime based in Moscow. It also implies that if a regime does not adopt the perspective of what Horan perceives to be the Diaspora viewpoint, then it is not representing the interests of the Ukrainian people. A similar perspective can be found in the writings of American analyst Myron B. Kuropas in the New Jersey newspaper, *The Ukrainian Weekly*. Kuropas, writing in June 2005, bemoans the way Ukrainian history is taught in many US universities, noting that the Ukrainian Holodomor is not considered genocide and the OUN is seen as something initiated by the Nazis. He then goes on to write:

What does the world really know about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), that glorious group of dedicated freedom fighters who emerged during World War II to fight both the Nazis and the Soviets? Why is it that we rarely hear of their exploits outside our own community? ... The UPA story is one of unequalled heroism. These were men and women who were willing to put their lives and sacred honor on the line against brutal and merciless enemies.

Kuropas maintains that scholars have declined to examine available primary sources, such as the *Litopys UPA* collection, edited by Canadian political scientist Peter J. Potichnyj.<sup>22</sup> In fairness, what Kuropas is asking is that scholars should write a history of the UPA that corresponds to his particular viewpoint, which is not really writing history per se, but rather a polemic. Nevertheless, his article is instructive in offering a clearly delineated perspective of the UPA as heroes, one that eventually began to penetrate writing in Ukraine.

The impact of the Diaspora on changing interpretations of modern Ukrainian history can also be illustrated by a campaign, held during the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Famine-Holodomor, to demand that *The New York Times* should strip its former Moscow correspondent, Walter Duranty, of his Pulitzer Prize for his reporting from the USSR. The campaign was coordinated by the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), which declared that the year-long protest was part of a wide-ranging effort to counter “Holodomor deniers.” Hundreds of letters were solicited from the community, as well as from residents of Ukraine. The UCCA initiative evidently coincided with and worked alongside a similar campaign by the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which started a worldwide postcard campaign in April 2003 to the administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes, Sig

Gissler. Its claim was that Duranty had deliberately lied about the real situation in Ukraine by denying the existence of the famine, while at the same time collaborating closely with the Soviet authorities, even going so far as to venerate Stalin.<sup>23</sup> The late James E. Mace claimed that the campaign actually originated in Canada, when Lubomyr Luciuk, a geography professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, conceived the idea and secured backing from various Ukrainian organizations in Canada and the United States, which then deluged the Pulitzer Committee with postcards.<sup>24</sup> Evidently on Mace's initiative, the Ukrainian newspaper *Den'* (The Day) also sent a letter to *The New York Times*, which stated:

We highly appreciate the New York Times' glorious history and its unique role in the history of the American press. However, here in Ukraine, a newly independent state in the process of developing its own independent journalism, we believe that you should consider voluntarily giving up the Pulitzer Prize received by your correspondent Walter Duranty in 1932. His denying the 1932–1933 Holodomor Manmade Famine in Ukraine and acting as Stalin's apologist during the period for which he received this prize are evidence that, of the numerous prizes won by NYT journalists, this one only clouds the reputation of those honestly earning their award for the ideals championed by Joseph Pulitzer.<sup>25</sup>

This letter is somewhat unusual in that an American correspondent is writing on behalf of a Ukrainian newspaper, but it is illustrative of the way a demand for redress in North America could be transferred to Ukraine and then back again. That the *Times* limited itself to rebuking Duranty's stance without revoking the prize ultimately meant very little because the awareness of the issues generated by the postcards and the publicity around them alerted thousands to the controversy. The Diaspora campaign for the Famine to be recognized as genocide is likewise an illustration of rewriting history by publicity and pressure—the justice of the case notwithstanding.

Mace pointed out that the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine, which he headed for four years prior to moving permanently to Ukraine, had collected eyewitness accounts, and that to these had now been added thousands more from Ukraine. Their collective accounts, he noted, “cannot fail to move even the most scientific of historians.”<sup>26</sup> Evidently though, it did. An editorial in *The Ukrainian Weekly* a year earlier had commented that it “may seem incredible” but “denial of the Great Famine continues to exist.” The phrase signified not the occurrence of famine per se, but the denial of what this news-

paper saw as its certain cause: the intention of the Soviet leadership to eliminate Ukrainians. It cited a discussion on the H-Russia Internet list in which two American scholars, Mark B. Tauger and Grover Furr, disputed the view that the Famine of 1932–33 was an act of genocide perpetrated against Ukrainians by the Stalin regime. Tauger had offered the perspective that the Famine developed out of a grain shortage that encompassed the Soviet Union in these years. The editorial demanded that the Famine deniers should “cease their repulsive activity” in the face of incontrovertible evidence that the event constituted one of the “most grisly episodes of genocide” ever known to the world.<sup>27</sup> Again, the emotional outpouring is understandable, but the continuing debate at the same time suggested that the evidence presented to that point had not convinced everyone, particularly the two scholars in question. Taras Kuzio, a prominent political scientist on contemporary Ukraine, pointed out that Tauger maintained that oral testimonies were unreliable. More controversially, Kuzio added that after the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine closed, Mace had been unable to obtain academic employment because “his cards had been marked” as a “biased Ukrainian nationalist émigré.” Bohdan Krawchenko, a Canadian political scientist who moved to Ukraine after 1991, is cited in Kuzio’s article as remarking that the entire discussion about the origins of the Famine was “absurd and fundamentally immoral” and a “total abrogation of the responsibilities of intellectuals.”<sup>28</sup> Krawchenko did not elaborate on these comments, but presumably they can be taken to mean that it is no longer feasible to question how and why the Famine took place. Such discussions have also been featured frequently at academic gatherings in North America, such as panels at the annual conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, in which Tauger, the late James Mace, and Robert Conquest offered their perspectives.

The Diaspora’s contribution to the study of the Famine developed further during the 70th anniversary year. Though the debate on the Famine’s origins continued, the community in North America launched several initiatives that had an impact on perspectives in Ukraine regarding the centrality and significance of this tragedy in national history. One was for the creation of a memorial complex that included an educational and research center in Kyiv to be established on the 75th anniversary (2008), an idea of an American public relations professional living in Kyiv, Morgan Williams.<sup>29</sup> On 19 June 2003, the Canadian Senate adopted unanimously a motion from Senator Raynell Andreychuk calling for the Canadian government to recognize the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide of 1932–33. The motion called for the condemnation of any effort to deny or distort “this historical truth” as being anything less than

genocide, and requested that historians, educators, and members of parliament should include the “true facts” in Canadian records and in educational material.<sup>30</sup> Four months later, the US House of Representatives followed suit, stating in Clause 2 of the resolution that “this man-made famine was designed and implemented by the Soviet regime as a deliberate act of terror and mass murder against the Ukrainian people.” Clause 4 declared that

the official recognition of the famine [as an act of genocide] by the Government of Ukraine and the Verkhovna Rada represents a significant step in the reestablishment of Ukraine’s national identity, the elimination of the legacy of the Soviet dictatorship, and the advancement of efforts to establish a democratic and free Ukraine that is fully integrated into the Western Community of nations.<sup>31</sup>

The wording is significant in that it demonstrated the sentiments of many in the Ukrainian community that the Famine was clearly linked to the formation of national identity in Ukraine. Moreover, in Canada and the United States, the Ukrainian community successfully took the debate out of the hands of historians and declared that no further discussion should take place. But can debate be ended on historical questions in this way? And, if so, who is to make such a decision, the community at large or professional historians? And do such decisions render historical research in recently opened archives in Ukraine, Russia, and elsewhere meaningless?

However, the response from Ukraine and other countries was initially quite limited. In November 2003, Ukraine and 26 other nations signed a joint declaration of the United Nations “in connection with the 70th anniversary of the Great Famine in Ukraine of 1932–33.” The opening statements at once broadened the impact of the Famine and suggested that it was a tragedy that went beyond the borders of Ukraine: “In the former Soviet Union millions of men, women, and children fell victims to the cruel actions and policies of the totalitarian regime.” Having noted that the Famine was a “national tragedy” for the Ukrainian people, the declaration continued as follows:

Honoring the 70th anniversary of the Ukrainian tragedy, we also commemorate the memory of millions of Russians, Kazakhs, and representatives of other nationalities who died of starvation in the Volga river region, North Caucasus, Kazakhstan, and in other parts of the former Soviet Union, as a result of civil war and forced collectivization, leaving deep scars in the consciousness of future generations.<sup>32</sup>

For some in the North American community, such comments were simply unacceptable in that the UN resolution declined to focus exclusively on Ukraine, probably in order to acquire the signatures of other nations such as Russia and Kazakhstan. On the other hand, within Ukraine, as is illustrated by examples in Chapter 2, there were a number of ethnic minority communities that were directly affected by the Famine and who suffered losses on a similar scale to those of the Ukrainians, most notably the Jewish community, the Mennonites, the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Germans (the latter did receive some aid directly from Germany, a rare instance of Stalin's regime permitting aid from abroad). The question that arises therefore is whether these groups were incidental to the ostensible purpose of the government to strike at Ukrainians, or whether they were also included as part of a genocidal campaign. On the whole, however, the awareness of the international community about the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine was heightened as a result of campaigns initiated by Ukrainian communities in North America, Australia, and elsewhere. Moreover, these campaigns intensified debates within Ukraine itself, as did contacts between Westerners and Ukrainians that had opened up since the late 1980s as a result of exchanges, travel, and a large coterie of prominent community members from the West who took up residence, either for the short or long term, in Ukraine.

### *Western Scholarship*

The events dealt with in detail in the remainder of this book have all been subjected to research by scholars resident in the West. This brief survey will be limited to works that have appeared in English over the past 20 years, a period roughly equivalent to the time span of the interpretations cited in Ukraine in subsequent chapters. Throughout this monograph there are cited articles that deal with the question of nationalism and nationalist thought, and the term "nationalist" is frequently used without explanation. There is an extensive literature on nationalism and little consensus among those who perceive the nation as a "construct of imagination," those who insist that national and nationalism are a modern phenomenon, or those who stress the important role of historical continuity, and long-term attachment to culture and traditions. One of the most eloquent theorists, Anthony D. Smith, emphasizes the important role of memory, symbols, and history in the rise of nations and nationalism in offering an alternative perspective to the so-called modernists, represented by scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm.<sup>33</sup>