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The Social Structure of the Ukraine in 1917

BOHDAN KRAWCHENKO

INTRODUCTION

Study of the social structure of the Ukraine at the turn of this century fosters a better understanding of the challenges facing the leadership of the national movement. In the past, data drawn from the 1897 or 1926 general population censuses have furnished the basic information for such analysis;¹ of course, this provided only an approximation of the situation in 1917. Recent Soviet scholarship, however, has furnished new data which gives us a much sharper snap-shot of society in the Ukraine in the fateful year of 1917. This article examines and discusses those data and their implications for the course of the Ukrainian revolution.

POPULATION

The agricultural and urban censuses of 1916–1917, as well as the (incomplete) general population census of 1917, first analyzed in depth by L. S. Haponenko and V. M. Kabuzan, provide the most detailed and reliable estimate of the Ukraine's population in 1917.² Hitherto, one had to make do with estimates from the statistical yearbooks published by the Central Statistical Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The yearbooks took the 1897 general census results as a basis and revised population figures annually in the light of the natural movement of the population. These data are generally considered highly unreliable, especially as concerns the regional distribution of the population.³ In the light of new scholarship, it appears that the Ukraine (defined as consisting of nine *guberniias* or provinces) had 31,214,000 inhabitants.⁴ This represented a 33 percent increase

¹ See Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (London and New York, 1985), chapters 1 and 2.

² L. S. Haponenko (Gaponenko) and V. M. Kabuzan, "Materialy sel'skokhoziaistvennykh perepisei 1916–1917 gg. kak istochnik opredeleniya chislennosti naseleniya Rossii nakanune Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1961, no. 6, pp. 97–115.

³ A. G. Rashin, *Naselenie Rossii za 100 let (1811–1913 gg.)* (Moscow, 1956), p. 21.

⁴ Haponenko and Kabuzan, "Materialy," pp. 102–103, table 1. All figures are rounded off to the nearest 1,000.

over the 1897 population figure of 23,430,000, as compared with a 34 percent increase for the Russian Empire as a whole.⁵

The Ukraine's population increase was quite remarkable given the fact that at the turn of the century a massive migration of peasants to regions beyond the Urals had occurred. Between 1907–1913, for instance, this exodus resulted in a net loss to the Ukraine's population of almost one million people.⁶ The First World War also had devastating results, since an estimated 1.2 million inhabitants of the Ukraine died.⁷ The Ukraine managed to register sizeable population growth between 1897 and 1917 largely due to an uncommonly high rate of natural population increase—18.2 per thousand between 1906–1910, one of the highest natural growth rates in the world.⁸ Large-scale in-migration of Russians into the Ukraine also contributed towards this development.

In analyzing the regional dimension of population change between 1897 and 1917, it becomes evident that the greatest gains in the number of inhabitants was registered by the southern, steppe provinces (see table 1). The more developed steppe—with its industries, ports, and relatively prosperous agriculture—had long acted as a magnet for individuals searching to improve their lot. However, the growth of the steppe's population was also a reflection of specific developments during the First World War. During the war years, especially 1917, a large influx of people entered the cities of the urbanized south. In the case of Katerynoslav province, it is estimated that in 1917 alone, some 800,000 people, from all parts of the empire, flocked to its cities.⁹ It should also be noted that because the steppe was a major industrial center, a much lower proportion of its male population had been mobilized for service in the army, as compared to other regions of the Ukraine. Thus in 1917, whereas 52 percent of all able-bodied males (14 to 60 years of age) in Kiev province had been pressed into military service, the figure for Katerynoslav province was only 32 percent.¹⁰ The Ukraine's steppe was least affected by the national movement developing in the central Ukrainian territories. The integration of this region into the Ukraine was an enormous problem for the Central Rada during the revolution. This

⁵ *Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiiskoi imperii 1897 goda*, 89 vols. (hereafter *Perepis'* 1897) (St. Petersburg, 1897–1905), table 21 in vols. 8, 13, 16, 32, 33, 41, 46, 47, 48; S. I. Bruk and V. M. Kabuzan, "Dinamika i ètnicheskii sostav naseleniya Rossii v èpokhu imperializma (konets XXI v.–1917 g.)," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1980, no. 3, p. 89, table 5.

⁶ A. Khomenko, *Naselennia Ukrayny 1897–1927 rr.* (Kharkiv, 1927), p. 15.

⁷ S. V. Minaiev, *Naslidky vseliudnogo perepysu 1926 r. na Ukraini* (Kharkiv, 1928), p. 13.

⁸ Khomenko, *Naselennia*, p. 13.

⁹ Haponenko and Kabuzan, "Materialy," pp. 104–105.

¹⁰ Stanislas Kohn and Alexander F. Meyendorff, *The Cost of the War to Russia* (New Haven, 1932), p. 234.

was also a region with a very large pool of able-bodied males, a highly mobilized force whom the Bolshevik, Menshevik, and White movements could draw upon.

Nationality data for 1917 calculated by S. I. Bruk and Kabuzan indicate that little had changed in terms of the Ukrainians' share of the population of the nine provinces (see table 2). In 1917, as in 1897, Ukrainians predominated in the Left-Bank and Right-Bank provinces, but formed a slim majority of the population of the steppe. Before the revolution the Ukrainian peasantry had not participated in large numbers in the industrial development of the Donbas' and the south. Moreover, it was here that the assimilation of Ukrainians into a Russian national identity occurred most frequently and figured as an important factor in the diminishing size of the Ukrainian population in this strategic region.¹¹

THE URBAN SETTING

The growth of urban centers is one hallmark of modern social and economic development. In this respect the Ukraine as a whole fared somewhat better than most other regions of the tsarist empire. In 1897, the Ukraine's three million inhabitants represented 13.2 percent of its total population. This was marginally higher than the average rate of urbanization for European Russia, which was 12.9 percent. By 1917 the Ukraine's relative standing in this important measure had improved: between 1897 and 1917 the urban population had doubled, and the country and its rate of urbanization stood at 20 percent (see tables 3 and 4), as compared with 18 percent for European Russia. If towns posed such a major problem for the Ukraine's national development, this was because the country's urban growth produced both marked regional imbalances and serious distortions in their ethnic composition.

Close to half of the Ukraine's urban population was centered in the steppe provinces (45 percent in 1987, and 46 percent in 1917), where the rate of urbanization was twice that of the Right- and Left-Bank regions. In 1897 Ukrainians accounted for 30 percent of the Ukraine's urban population, with Russians 34, Jews 27, and other nationalities 9 percent.¹² We have no nationality data for 1917, but information for 1920 shows that the Ukrainian representation in the urban centers had not improved. According

¹¹ S. I. Bruk and V. M. Kabuzan, "Chislenost' i rasselenie ukrainskogo ètnosa v XVIII–nachale XX v.," *Sovetskaia ètnografija*, 1981, no. 5, p. 22; idem, "Dinamika chislenosti i rasseleniya russkogo ètnosa (1678–1917 gg.)," *Sovetskaia ètnografija*, 1982, no. 4, pp. 21–22.

¹² Krawchenko, *Social Change*, p. 10, table 1.3.

to the 1920 census, Ukrainians formed 32 percent of their country's urban population, with Russians 33, Jews 29, and others 6 percent.¹³

The social and class structure of the urban population, for which we do have data for the year 1917, provides additional evidence of the marginalization of Ukrainians in the urban environment. Towns and cities, to a very significant extent, were middle-class preserves. In 1917 the intelligentsia and white-collar staff formed 26 percent of the total urban population, and the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie another 29 percent. Thus the so-called middle layers represented some 55 percent of the urban population, followed by the proletariat, at 23 percent, and the semi-proletariat, at 21 percent.¹⁴ Ukrainians were uncommonly poorly represented in the first two groups, and formed a majority only of the latter.¹⁵

In the course of the revolution, the fate of the Ukrainian national movement was decided in the urban centers. The cities and towns concentrated society's critical functions, as well as its most politically creative and active population. During the revolution, the national movement struggled to achieve mastery over society, not with the aid of the city, but in the face of its indifference or active opposition. Results of the 1917 elections to the Constituent Assembly provide ample evidence of this fact. Ukrainian parties "were outvoted in every city by at least one group which was apathetic or antipathetic towards the Ukrainian cause."¹⁶ Elections to the city *dumy* produced an even poorer showing for Ukrainian parties.¹⁷

The cities of the Ukraine, "even our Kiev," lamented Isaak Mazepa, "gave us no help whatsoever during the revolution."¹⁸ Census data for 1917 for the city of Kiev illustrate the seriousness of the problem of Ukrainian urban implantation. As the seat of the Central Rada and the capital of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Kiev was at the center of efforts by the Ukrainian national movement to establish control over its society. Yet the human resources available to sustain this drive for self-assertion were woefully inadequate. In 1917 only 16 percent of Kiev's population could be considered Ukrainian (see table 5). This figure included those who gave either "Ukrainian" or "Little Russian" as their nationality. "Little

¹³ *Ukraina: Statystichnyi spravochnyk* (Kharkiv, 1925), p. 13, table 6.

¹⁴ I. K. Rybalka and F. H. Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klassova struktura naselennia Ukrayiny naperedodni Zhovtnevoi revoliutsii," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1981, no. 11, p. 29, table 4.

¹⁵ Krawchenko, *Social Change*, p. 44, table 1.5.

¹⁶ Steven L. Guthier, "The Popular Base of Ukrainian Nationalism in 1917," *Slavic Review* 38, no. 1 (March 1979): 43.

¹⁷ *Robitnycha hazeta* (Kiev), 21 July and 21 November 1917.

¹⁸ I. Mazepa, *Ukraina v ohni i buri revoliutsii, 1917–1921*, 3 vols. (n.p., 1951), 2: 31.

Russians" accounted for 29 percent of all those considered to be Ukrainian.¹⁹

During the revolutionary period of 1917–1919, the number of Ukrainians in Kiev increased by 78 percent. This was the result of an in-migration of Ukrainians from the countryside, as well as of the fact that "during the Hetmanate and Petliura periods" many who had considered themselves Russians in previous censuses declared themselves Ukrainians in 1919.²⁰ Nonetheless, even in 1919, Ukrainians did not account for more than a quarter of the city's population. By 1920, under the impact of Denikin's occupation and economic ruin, Kiev's population plummeted, especially its Ukrainian contingent, which that year stood at a mere 14 percent of the total.

Examining the occupational structure of Kiev's major nationalities, M. Borovs'kyi noted that "Ukrainians were the most democratic group."²¹ Indeed, almost two-thirds of Ukrainians inhabiting Kiev were classified as either workers, servants, or unemployed (see table 6). Writers of the 1920s derived some ideological solace from the fact that the social structure of Ukrainians contained such a preponderance of common people. However, this meant that Ukrainians were poorly represented in the occupations that commonly serve as the activist core of a national movement and provide the material resources necessary for such a movement to flourish. In 1917, only 15 percent of those employed in liberal professions in Kiev gave either Ukrainian or Little Russian as their nationality, and only 12 percent of those involved in trade, commerce, or banking (see table 7). What further weakened the national movement's chances in Kiev was that socially mobile Ukrainians had a weaker sense of national identity than the more plebeian elements of their nation. Thus whereas 22 percent of Ukrainian workers in 1917 called themselves "Little Russians," in the case of Ukrainians in the liberal professions the figure was 27 percent, and for those employed in religious institutions, courts, and the police, 30 percent.²²

¹⁹ I. S. Bisk, *K voprosu o sotsial'nom sostave naseleniya g. Kieva (po dannym perepisi 1917 g.)* (Kiev, 1920), p. 3.

²⁰ Mykola Borovs'kyi, "Natsional'no-sotsial'ni pererehrovannya liudnosti mista Kyiva v porevolutsiynykh chasakh (1917–1923)," in *Kyiv ta ioho okolyscia v istorii i pam'iatkakh*, ed. Mykhailo Hrushevskyi (Kiev, 1926), p. 436.

²¹ Borovs'kyi, "Natsional'no-sotsial'ni pererehrovannya," p. 447.

²² Bisk, *K voprosu*, p. 12.

Table 1
Changes in the Population of the Ukraine, 1897–1914

<i>Region</i>	<i>1897</i>	<i>1917*</i>	<i>% change 1897–1917</i>
Right Bank	9,567,000	11,731,000	16.8
Left Bank	7,568,000	9,776,000	29.2
Steppe	6,295,000	9,707,000	54.2
Ukraine	23,430,000	31,214,000	33.2

* permanent (*postoiannoe*) inhabitants

Source: *Perepis' 1897*, table 21 in vols. 8, 13, 16, 32, 33, 41, 46, 47, 48; L. S. Haponenko (Gaponenko) and V. M. Kabuzan, “Materialy sel'skokhoziaistvennykh perepisei 1916–1917 gg. kak istochnik opredeleniya chislennosti naseleniya Rossii nakanune Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii,” *Istoriia SSSR*, 1961, no. 6, pp. 102–103, table 1.

Table 2
*Ukrainians in the Population of the Ukraine
 by Province, 1897–1917 (in percent)*

<i>Province</i>	<i>1897</i>	<i>1917</i>
Kiev	79.2	76.5
Volyn'	70.1	69.7
Podillia	80.9	80.1
Chernihiv	66.4	67.4
Poltava	93.0	94.1
Kharkiv	80.6	85.7
Katerynoslav	68.9	65.8
Kherson	53.5	52.7
Tavria	42.2	47.1

Source: S. I. Bruk and V. M. Kabuzan, “Chislennost' i rasselenie ukrainskogo etnosa v XVIII–nachale XX v.,” *Sovetskaia etnografia*, 1981, no. 5, p. 24, table 4.

Table 3
*Changes in the Urban Population of the Ukraine
 by Region, 1897–1917*

<i>Region</i>	<i>1897</i>	<i>1917</i>	<i>% change 1897–1917</i>
Right Bank	915,000	1,856,000	102.8
Left Bank	851,000	1,517,000	78.2
Steppe	1,391,000	2,856,000	105.3
Ukraine	3,085,000	6,229,000	101.9

Source: L. S. Haponenko (Gaponenko) and V. M. Kabuzan, "Materialy sel'sko-khoziaistvennykh perepisei 1916–1917 gg. kak istochnik opredeleniya chislennosti naseleniya Rossii nakanune Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii," *Istoriia SSSR*, 1961, no. 6, pp. 108–109, table 2.

Table 4
*Changes in the Rate of Urbanization of the Ukraine
 by Region, 1897–1917 (in percent)*

<i>Region</i>	<i>1897</i>	<i>1917</i>
Right Bank	9.6	15.8
Left Bank	11.2	15.5
Steppe	21.0	29.4
Ukraine	13.2	20.0

Source: Tabulated from tables 1 and 3.

Table 5
*Changes in the National Composition of the City of Kiev,
 1897–1920**

Year	<i>Total</i>		<i>in</i>		<i>in</i>		<i>in</i>		<i>in</i>	
	<i>Population</i>	<i>Ukrainians</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>%</i>	
1897	245,000	55,000	22.4	135,000	55.1	32,000	13.1	23,000	9.4	
1917	468,000	77,000	16.4	231,000	49.4	87,000	18.6	73,000	15.4	
1919	544,000	137,000	25.2	232,000	42.7	115,000	28.1	60,000	11.0	
1920	366,000	52,000	14.2	172,000	47.0	117,000	32.0	25,000	6.8	

* Nationality here is defined by mother-tongue.

Source: Mykola Borovs'kyi, "Natsional'no-sotsial'ni perehrupovannia liudnosti mista Kyiva v porevolutsiynykh chasakh (1917–1923)," in *Kyiv ta ioho okolysia v istorii i pam'iatkakh*, ed. Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi (Kiev, 1926), p. 434, table 1.

Table 6
*Occupational Structure of Kiev's Major Nationalities, 1917**

	<i>Ukrainians</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Poles</i>
Workers	42.3	35.6	20.2	33.9
White-collar staff	23.3	27.0	27.5	28.8
Servants	15.1	14.1	2.1	11.4
Businessmen**	10.0	10.3	29.7	8.0
Liberal professions	5.0	8.1	12.6	9.9
Unemployed	3.6	3.7	7.0	5.0
Rentiers	0.7	1.2	0.9	3.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Economically active population only.

**Shopkeepers, owners of enterprises.

Source: Mykola Borovs'kyi, "Natsional'no-sotsial'ni perehrupovannia liudnosti mista Kyiva v porevolutsiynykh chasakh (1917–1923)," in *Kyiv ta ioho okolysia v istorii i pam'iatkakh*, ed. Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi (Kiev, 1926), p. 448, table 9.

Table 7
*Share of Major Nationalities by Selected Occupational Categories
 in Kiev's Population, 1917**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>in percent</i>			
		<i>Ukrainians</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Poles</i>
industry	57,220	15.7	43.2	20.3	9.4
transport	33,231	23.5	52.1	3.1	8.2
trade, commerce, banking	33,740	12.4	39.5	34.3	8.1
religious institutions, courts, police (of whom employed as workers:)	30,838	18.9	53.5	9.0	9.4
liberal professions (of whom employed as workers:)	4,547	25.3	44.1	1.8	9.5
21,092	14.8	47.4	18.0	10.9	
4,981	30.6	49.5	8.8	7.7	
students over 14 years of age**	3,864	11.1	49.1	24.1	10.8
building maintenance	3,706	26.3	59.0	0.5	8.5
household servants	27,322	23.3	59.9	2.9	9.6
unskilled labor (without lieu of employment indicated)	5,273	20.2	65.3	1.2	5.1
rentiers	2,747	10.5	51.2	11.4	23.7
unemployed	9,759	15.2	43.2	26.4	11.2

*Economically active population only.

**Not including those economically active or living with parents.

Source: Tabulated from I. S. Bisk, *K voprosu o sotsial'nom sostave naseleniya g. Kieva (po dannym perepisi 1917 g.)* (Kiev, 1920), p. 12, table 3.

Table 8
Class Structure of the Rural Population of the Ukraine in 1917

<i>Group</i>	<i>Number of households</i>		<i>Average size of household</i>	<i>Population Total as %</i>	
	<i>total number</i>	<i>as % of total</i>		<i>total number</i>	<i>of total</i>
Peasants of whom:	4,222,500	99.2	5.74	24,237,300	97.0
poor	2,431,100	57.1	4.9	11,912,400	49.2
middle	1,273,000	29.9	6.34	8,074,000	33.3
well-to-do	518,400	12.2	8.2	4,250,900	17.5
Landowners	35,200	0.8	7.8	274,900	1.1
White-collar staff	—	—	73,600	0.3	
Workers or servants	—	—	394,200	1.6	
TOTAL	4,257,700	100.0	24,980,000	100.0	

Source: I. K. Rybalka and F. H. Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura naselennia Ukrayny naperedodni Zhovtnevoi revoliutsii," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1981, no. 11, p. 24, table 1.

OCCUPATIONAL AND CLASS STRUCTURE

In 1917 the Ukraine remained an overwhelmingly rural society: 80 percent of the country's inhabitants lived in the villages, and 68 percent derived their livelihood from agriculture.²³ (In 1897 the figures were 87 and 74 percent, respectively.)²⁴ At first glance the countryside presented an image of an overwhelmingly homogeneous society. Of some 25 million rural inhabitants, 97 percent were peasants, who owned 65 percent of the land, whereas

²³ Haponenko and Kabuzan, "Materialy," pp. 108–109; Rybalka and Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura," p. 29, table 4.

²⁴ *Perepis' 1897*, tables 21 and 22 in vols. 3, 8, 16, 32, 33, 41, 46, 47, 48.

the landowners, forming 1.1 percent of the rural population, controlled 30 percent of the land.²⁵

Since the 1861 reforms, however, the peasantry had become increasingly differentiated, a normal development in an industrializing society. Soviet literature, from which we draw our data, customarily divides the peasantry into three groups: poor, middle, and well-to-do or kulak. This categorization is based on size of landholding, not income. Thus the poor peasantry is said to have consisted of those with up to 3 *desiatyns*, 4 in the case of the steppe provinces; the middle as holding 3 to 6 *desiatyns* in Right-Bank provinces and Polissia, 4 to 12 in the steppe provinces, and 3 to 10 elsewhere; the well-to-do or kulak group as holding over 6 *desiatyns* in Right-Bank provinces and Polissia, over 12 in the steppe provinces, and over 10 *desiatyns* elsewhere.²⁶ (One *desiatyn* equals 1.1 hectares.) Based on this criteria, in 1917 almost half the peasant population of the Ukraine could be classified as poor, one third as middle, and 17.5 percent as well-to-do (see table 8).

The average peasant farm in the Ukraine in 1917 was approximately 7.7 hectares. The landholding of the Ukrainian peasant was actually larger than that of his French, Belgian, or Danish counterpart.²⁷ But whereas the latter could earn a comfortable living on such a farm, the former could not because of a shortage of draught animals and implements, primitive agricultural techniques, and cultural backwardness. Lack of intelligent state policies promoting infrastructures in agriculture (credit facilities, grain elevators, agricultural schools, etc.) compounded the difficulties. Operating at a subsistence level (it was estimated that 5.5 hectares were needed to make ends meet),²⁸ under the Ukraine's climatic conditions, the peasant could expect to experience pangs of hunger every two or three years when the harvest was poor.²⁹

For the poor, improvement of their lot entailed employment outside the immediate peasant household. By 1917, a very high proportion of the Ukraine's peasantry pursued this option. That year some 60 percent of households had at least one member employed either as agricultural laborers or seasonal workers in industry, or engaged as traders or artisans. In

²⁵ *Sotsialistichna perebudova i rozvytok sil's'koho hospodarstva Ukrains'koi RSR*, 2 vols. (Kiev, 1967), 1, p. 14, table 2.

²⁶ M. A. Rubach, *Ocherki po istorii revoliutsionnogo preobrazovaniia agrarnykh otnoshenii na Ukraine* (Kiev, 1967), p. 20.

²⁷ M. Porsh, "Iz statystyky Ukrayiny," *Ukraina*, 1907, no. 3, p. 37.

²⁸ Iu. Ianson, *Opyt statisticheskogo issledovaniia o krest'ianskikh nadelakh i platezhakh* (St. Petersburg, 1889), p. 66.

²⁹ *Istoriia selianstva Ukrains'koi RSR*, 2 vols. (Kiev, 1967), 1: 402.

1917, this type of activity was the main source of income for 30 percent of peasant households (some 6.8 million people). Poor peasants comprised 70 percent of those seeking employment outside the peasant household, the middle peasantry accounted for 21 percent, and the well-to-do for 9 percent of the total.³⁰

The absorption of poor peasants by an expanding industrial sector is a sound strategy for resolving acute agrarian problems. This was especially true in the case of the Ukraine, where, contrary to what historians such as E. H. Carr have asserted,³¹ the countryside was much less differentiated than that of other regions of the Russian Empire. In the Ukraine poor peasants represented 58 percent of the total number of peasant households, the middle 30 percent, and the well-to-do 12 percent. The figures for the Russian Empire were 65, 20, and 15 percent, respectively (1917).³² In 1917 an instant egalitarian redistribution of land in the Ukraine amongst all peasant households would have added a mere .24 hectares of land per household. But the collapse of the economy during the revolution made pursuit of alternative employment an unobtainable goal, whereas the seizure of the upper classes' land was an immediate, albeit partial solution.

The occupational and class structure of the Ukrainian countryside posed formidable challenges for the Ukrainian national movement. The countryside was a sea of petty commodity producers, some four million independent households. Because of the lack of capitalist development, the village was to a large degree atomized, characterized by a low level of socialization of production, economic interdependence, and cooperation. As a result of tsarist policies, it even lacked the kinds of infrastructure existing in other rural societies: a network of cooperatives, schools, and the like. Moreover, the relative homogeneity of the Ukrainian village meant that there were few social groups which could serve as the organizers of a rural-based national movement. Certainly this role could not be filled by the landowners, the overwhelmingly Russian economic and social antagonists of the peasants. The leadership role fell to the "third element"—the rural intelligentsia and para-professionals, that is, zemstvo clerks, teachers, medical assistants, veterinarians. But this group, in the light of 1917 data, represented a mere 0.3 percent of the rural population. The city, with its large enterprises and web of communications, had infinitely greater organizational capacities, despite its non-Ukrainian character.

³⁰ Rybalka and Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura," pp. 26–27.

³¹ E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, 2 vols. (London, 1970), 1: 257–58.

³² Rybalka and Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura," p. 32.

In explaining the defeat of the Ukrainian national movement, many authors have drawn attention to the inadequate agrarian programs of the Central Rada and the Directory. It is true that both these governments neglected the agricultural question and hardly formulated an agrarian program.³³ But this is an inadequate explanation of the loss of peasant support by national forces. Peasants rarely read agrarian programs. Of much greater import for peasants was the establishment of a strong political center, of a forceful authority who could guarantee reform. In short, agrarian programs have an impact on peasants only when they see that there is an agency of some substance to back them up. The agrarian programs of the Rada and the Directory lacked the tools needed for implementation. With Ukrainian forces in disarray and armies invading on all sides, it is hardly surprising that the peasantry, perceiving no clear goal posited by some kind of regular centralized hierarchy of control, chose to wait out events in their villages. When threatened, these villages combined to fight their opponents by the guerilla methods of their forefathers. Having defeated their enemies, they returned to their homes. What this chaotic method of peasant struggle indicated was that Ukrainian rural society, without town and urban cadres, simply did not have the wherewithal to support any other kind of resistance. A. Adams summarized the situation very well:

the final years of the awakening of Ukraine should be viewed as a history of a peasant jacquerie that crushed all lesser forces beneath its boots, until at last, peasants and the land were so exhausted that Bolshevism's patient workers were able to slip into power almost unchallenged.³⁴

In the past, peasant revolutions in Russia did not succeed because there were no major urban classes interested in supporting the peasants' settlement of scores with feudalism. In the Russian revolution, the working class, with its own accounts to settle in the factories, provided the decisive lever. The coincidence of the two movements was responsible for the success of that revolution. In the Ukraine, by contrast, the two revolutions, the urban and the rural, had difficulty in finding common ground. While the working class movement in the Ukraine had proved its mettle in organizing to defend its class interests, it never defined its political role in terms of the Ukraine. The proletariat avoided assuming responsibility and leadership of the Ukrainian revolution. The root of the problem lay not so much in bad

³³ See Illia Vytanovych, *Agrarna polityka ukrains'kykh uriadiv rokiv revoliutsii i vyzvol'nykh zmahan'* (1917–1920) (Munich, 1968).

³⁴ Arthur E. Adams, "The Awakening of the Ukraine," in *The Development of the USSR: An Exchange of Views*, ed. Donald W. Treadgold (Seattle, 1964), p. 235.

faith or wrong ideas as in the social weight, location, and national composition of that class.

In 1917, according to the most complete studies of the working class in the Ukraine, the proletariat numbered 3.6 million. If dependents are included, the figure is 6.5 million, or 14 percent of the total population of the Ukraine. But if we examine the structure of the working class more closely, it becomes apparent that the modern, industrial work force was a decided minority in the country. Of the 3.6 million workers (without dependents), industrial workers numbered 893,000, railwaymen were 121,000, workers in small-scale artisan enterprises accounted for 230,000, those employed in rural artisan production—444,000, workers in trade and transportation—59,000, domestic servants—365,000. The largest contingent of the working class was formed by agricultural laborers—1.2 million.³⁵

A distinctive characteristic of the working class in the Ukraine was the high proportion of workers employed in a rural setting. Of the 6.5 million workers in the Ukraine (including dependents), 5.0 million (with dependents), or 77 percent of the total, were located in the countryside. In fact, some 70 percent of non-agricultural workers (those in industry, artisan production, trade and commerce, etc.) were, in 1917, also located in the villages.³⁶ This was a working class scattered among small enterprises, with one foot in a peasant household. As a group they were exceptionally difficult to organize and they played a small role in the 1917 revolution. For instance, in 1917, there were 500 strikes in the Ukraine, in which 285,000 workers participated. Workers in metallurgy, 70,000 in number and representing only 2 percent of the working class, accounted for 60 percent of all strikers.³⁷ The principal actors in the working class movement during 1917 were industrial workers in the main economic centers such as Katerynoslav, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Luhans'k, Iuzivka, and Mariupol'—cities far removed from the central and northern regions of the Ukraine, where both the national and agrarian movements were unfolding. As M. A. Rubach concluded, the location of the working class accounts for the "lack of

³⁵ M. A. Rubach, "Proletariat Ukrayny naperedodni sotsialistichnoi revoliutsii," *Ukrains'kyi istorichnyi zhurnal*, 1963, no. 5, p. 35; Rybalka and Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura," p. 29.

³⁶ Rybalka and Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura," p. 29.

³⁷ Rubach, "Proletariat Ukrayny," p. 33.

influence of the proletarian centers on the development of the socialist revolution... in Ukraine."³⁸

The stratification of the industrial working class also served to weaken its capacities as a coherent force. As Bolshevik historians admitted, in 1917 their party received "far less" support from workers in the Ukraine than they obtained in Russia.³⁹ In the Ukraine the better educated workers (especially in the large firms where, unlike in Russia, collective bargaining was practiced) supported the Menshevik wing of Russian Social Democracy. This was to be expected since these workers formed a veritable labor aristocracy with a corresponding "reformist" world view. In 1913, to give an example, industrial workers in Katerynoslav province had an annual income of 426 rubles, making them by far the best-paid workers in the Russian Empire.⁴⁰ It should also be noted that artisans, a high proportion of whom were of Jewish nationality, were also staunch Menshevik supporters.⁴¹ The younger, unskilled workers, generally of peasant stock, who had recently arrived from Russia to work in the mines, were the group that furnished the bulk of the Bolsheviks' recruits.⁴²

The national composition of the working class in the Ukraine also hampered its playing a leading role in the society. Rubach estimates that in 1917 some 40 percent of workers were Ukrainian (largely located in rural areas), Russians formed 40 percent, and Jews accounted for 10 percent, while the remaining 10 percent comprised various nationalities.⁴³

These structural divisions within the working class reduced its capacities for clear, decisive political action in the course of the Ukrainian revolution. The majority of industrial workers, especially those who participated in trade unions, backed the Mensheviks. Throughout 1917 Mensheviks formed a "loyal opposition" to the Central Rada. They did not actively support the Rada, but neither did they particularly oppose it. Bolshevik sectors of the working class, aware of their weakness in the face of Menshevik predominance, favored accommodation with the Mensheviks. Neither seriously thought about taking power.

³⁸ Rubach, "Proletariat Ukrainskii," p. 32.

³⁹ M. M. Popov, *Narys istorii Komunisticheskoi partii (bil'shevitskoy) Ukrainskii* (Kharkiv, 1929), p. 122.

⁴⁰ Iu. I. Kir'ianov, *Zhiznennyi uroven' rabochikh Rossii* (Moscow, 1979), p. 108.

⁴¹ David Lane, *The Roots of Russian Social Democracy* (Assen, The Netherlands, 1969), pp. 50–51; Isaak Mazepa, *Bolshevism i okupatsiya Ukrainskii* (Lviv and Kiev, 1922), p. 122.

⁴² Lane, *Roots*, pp. 50–51; V. Modestov, *Rabochee i professionalnoe dvizhenie v Donbasse do Velikoi oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1957), p. 21.

⁴³ Rubach, "Proletariat Ukrainskii," p. 38.

The revolution in the Ukraine was a complex affair in which everything was tried at least once. This was because no single social group could assert hegemony: not the peasantry, not the working class, and certainly not the bourgeoisie (forming 0.8 percent of the total population in 1917) or the intelligentsia and white-collar staff (accounting for 6 percent of the total).⁴⁴ Left to their own accord, in time, the diverse elements of the Ukraine's social structure would probably have worked out a social democratic solution similar to the one established in Georgia under Menshevik leadership. The Ukraine, however, was far too important to be left to its own devices.

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⁴⁴ Rybalka and Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-klasova struktura," p. 29.