CHAPTER 11

The Ukrainian Moment of World War I*

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World War I brought the Ukrainian question to international prominence for the first time. In fact, a short-lived Ukrainian state appeared at the end of the war, a development that Europeans would have found unthinkable just four years before, when Ukraine lacked all political agency. Indeed the term "Ukraine" was generally unknown in Europe at the time of the July Crisis. The Ukrainian population lived for the most part in the south-western territories of Imperial Russia and the north-eastern territories of the Cisleithanian half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, namely in East Galicia and Bukovina. The Ukrainians were generally described as "Little Russians" in Russia and as "Ruthenians" in the Habsburg Monarchy. The term "Ukraine", which had gained currency in the nineteenth century, was largely unfamiliar to the Ukrainians themselves. The Bosnian crisis and Serbia constituted the main points of conflict between Austria-Hungary (and Germany) and Czarist Russia. Despite the fact that the Panslavic movement claimed the Ukrainians of both empires, considering the Ruthenians of Austria-Hungary as "Galician Russians", the question of East Galicia and the irredentist movement of the Ukrainians in the Habsburg Monarchy and its weaker variant in Russia were secondary concerns.[1] Yet the region of Ukrainian settlement became one of the central theatres of war on the eastern front once the Central Powers declared war on Russia in early August 1914. As has often been the case, peripheral regions became a site where the violent conflicts of Great Powers were played out. The picture had changed completely by 1917–1918. Ukrainian nation-building had accelerated considerably over the war years. Increasingly seeing themselves as a national movement, the Ukrainians sought recognition as a political nation and even aspired to a Ukrainian state. This became possible, however, only because the war had created a power vacuum.

Historians have advanced our understanding of the civilian experiences of violence and political repression, especially in East Galicia in the first year of the

* Translated from the original German by Róisín Healy.

1 So Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (New York, 1980), 5. Generally, I limited the bibliographical reference to the essentials. The following new Ukrainian work could not be taken into consideration: Oleksandr Reént, ed. *Velyka vijna 1914–1918 rr. I Ukrajina*, vol. 1–2 (Kiev, 2014).

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war. This is true for both the repressive actions of both the Austro-Hungarian occupiers, which ranged from harassment to executions and deportations of Russophile activists and other civilian population groups like Galician Jews, and the invading Russian troops in mid-August 1914, who established the General Governorate of Galicia under Count Georgij Bobrinskij. Martial law decrees led to the suppression of the public activities of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, specifically its newspapers and associations, although the Russification of the administration and education did not proceed as swiftly as the Russophiles wished. Indeed the Greek Catholic Church continued to function.[2] At the same time, repressive measures against the Ukrainian nationalist movement increased in Russian Ukraine, especially as martial law came into operation in districts close to the front.

The main focus of interest in recent German and western historical research on Ukraine is not the July Crisis, the outbreak of the war or the course of the war, but the outcome of the war and its political consequences. Important new German-language surveys treat the war as a background and concentrate instead on its political fallout.[3] Recent research on Ukraine depicts the failed attempt at state formation from 1917 to 1921 as a Ukrainian civil war or Ukrainian revolution, separate from, but shaped by the Russian Civil War of 1918–1920/21, and as an important political process, characterized by a high degree of complexity and dynamism, in its own right.

By focusing on relations between the Great Powers, recently published general histories of World War I emphasize the marginal significance of the Ukrainian question in 1914, despite the fact that the conquest of East Galicia at least was a Russian war aim.[4] While Serbia understandably attracts interest as a second-rank European power, this cannot be said for the Ukrainian nationalist movement and the areas of Ukrainian settlement. Ukraine is inevitably of marginal interest, as long as "the functioning of the international power

2 Anna Veronika Wendland, *Die Russophilen in Galizien. Ukrainische Konservative zwischen Österreich und Rußland, 1848–1915* (Vienna, 2001), 540–566. Aleksandra Ju. Bachturina, *Politika Rossijskoj imperii v vostočnoj Galicii v gody pervoj mirovoj vojny* (Moscow, 2000). The latest Russian monograph on military history is Sergej Nelipovič, *Krovavyj oktjabr' 1914 goda* (Moscow, 2013). A more traditional account is Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914–1917* (New York, 1975).

3 Kerstin S. Jobst, *Geschichte der Ukraine* (Stuttgart, 2010); Andreas Kappeler, *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine*, 3rd edition (Munich, 2009); Rudolf A. Mark, "Die ukrainischen Gebiete 1914–1922: Krieg, Revolution, gescheiterte Staatsbildung," in *Ukraine*, eds. Peter Jordan et al (Vienna, 2000), 279–292 [= Österreichische Osthefte, 3–4/2000].

4 Horst-Günther Linke, *Das zaristische Russland und der Erste Weltkrieg. Diplomatie und Kriegsziele 1914–1917* (Munich, 1982).

system in terms of balance, primacy and future plans" in July 1914 dominates the scholarly agenda.[5] The value of a different perspective is evident in the work of American historian of eastern Europe and World War I specialist, Mark von Hagen, who raises the issue of the European periphery in the War and thus makes Ukraine into an interesting and important theme of European historiography.[6] This perspective also guides the following remarks.

Three questions are addressed here in order to reach some conclusions about World War I and Ukraine in the twentieth century: firstly, the relationship between war experiences and nationalization for soldiers and war refugees; secondly, political conceptions of nationhood during the war; thirdly, the Ukrainian question at the end of the war and the occupation of Ukraine in 1918.

War Experiences and Nationalization

Unfortunately, the war experiences of ordinary soldiers and civilians on the eastern front, including Ukrainian soldiers and the soldiers of Ukrainian territories, have received very little scholarly attention. While German soldiers' experience of violence has been recently explored, for instance by Benjamin Ziemann, the same cannot be said for eastern European soldiers.[7] A few pioneering studies work towards this, however, by combining the study of the war and the question of nation- and state-building for soldiers, prisoners of war and civilians.[8]

5 Gerd Krumeich, *Juli 1914. Eine Bilanz* (Paderborn, 2014), 14; Christopher Clark, *Die Schlafwandler. Wie Europa in den Ersten Weltkrieg zog* (Munich, 2013), 17; Herfried Münkler, *Der Große Krieg. Die Welt 1914–1918* (Berlin, 2013); Jörn Leonhard, ed., *Die Büchse der Pandora. Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Munich, 2014), especially the literary report by Jost Dülffer, entitled "Die geplante Erinnerung," 351–366.

6 Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland. Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle, 2007).

7 Benjamin Ziemann, *Gewalt im Ersten Weltkrieg. Töten, überleben, verweigern* (Essen, 2013). On the difficulties in examining war experiences, see the following study of the Orthodox military clergy, Dietrich Beyrau, "Projektionen, Imaginationen und Visionen im Ersten Weltkrieg: Die orthodoxen Militärgeistlichen im Einsatz für Glauben, Zar und Vaterland," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 3 (2004): 402–420. It would be useful to have an equivalent research of the Greek Catholic clergy. Nikolaus Katzer, "Russlands Erster Weltkrieg. Erfahrungen, Erinnerungen, Deutungen," *Nordost-Archiv. Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte* 17 (2008), 267–292, especially 289–290.

8 See especially the following study of the Polish, Lithuanian and Jewish populations of Lviv: Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914–1947*

Ukrainian, as well as Polish, soldiers, fought on different sides – in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies – and thus against one another in World War I. The scholarly consensus is that they generally fought loyally on both sides. However, the brutal war policies in East Galicia and Bukovina in 1914 and 1915 changed the attitude of some Ukrainian soldiers on both sides.[9]

In Austria-Hungary, Ukrainians served in the regular units of the Austro-Hungarian army, but as early as 1914 volunteers also formed the so-called "Ukrainian Sich Riflemen", which were channelled by the authorities into a "royal and imperial Ukrainian Legion" of 2,500 men and fought on the Austro-Hungarian side until the end of the war. This Legion contained many schoolboys and students.[10] This was, however, the only such separate national unit and it had no counterpart in Russia until 1917. A process of rapid Ukrainization within the former czarist army, which brought social and national elements closer together, took place after the February Revolution of 1917. On the one hand, the left-leaning Ukrainian nationalist movement influenced the soldiers, who had been striving for greater autonomy from the provisional government in Petrograd after the fall of the Romanov dynasty. The "democratization" of the army, introduced by order of the Petrograd Soviet, provided the movement with another push "from below", as it strengthened the rights and political freedoms of ordinary soldiers. It is noticeable that the Ukrainian soldiers, who had been swept up by the nationalization process, put pressure on the newly formed political organ of the Ukrainians in Kiev, the Central Rada, and contributed to the radicalization of their national policy in relations with Petrograd.[11] The wish of the predominantly peasant soldiers to be closer to

(Wiesbaden, 2010), 69–201; Alfred Eisfeld, Guido Hausmann, Dietmar Neutatz, eds., *Besetzt, interniert, deportiert. Der Erste Weltkrieg und die deutsche, jüdische, polnische und ukrainische Zivilbevölkerung im östlichen Europa* (Essen, 2013); Bernhard Bachinger and Wolfram Dornik, ed., *Jenseits des Schützengrabens. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung, Wahrnehmung, Kontext* (Innsbruck, 2013), above all Martin Schmitz, *Tapfer, zäh und schlecht geführt. Kriegserfahrungen österreichisch-ungarischer Offiziere mit den russischen Gegnern, 1914–17*, 45–63. Gerhard P. Groß, ed., *Die vergessene Front. Der Osten 1914/15. Ereignis, Wirkung, Nachwirkung* (Paderborn, 2006).

9 Mark von Hagen, "The Great War and the Mobilization of Ethnicity in the Russian Empire," in *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, eds. Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder (London, 1998), 34–57, especially at 48; Allan Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Arm* (Princeton, 1987).

10 Wolfram Dornik, "Die deutschen Kolonien," in *Besetzt,* eds. Eisfeld, Hausmann, Neutatz, 114.

11 Mark von Hagen, "The Russian Imperial Army and the Ukrainian National Movement in 1917," *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 3–4 (1998): 220–256, especially at 225.

home and to take part in the widely desired and expected land reform played an important role here. The nationalization process in the former czarist army was also significant in that it emphasized and promoted national divisions. This process contributed to the disintegration and transformation of the former czarist army, the formation of national military units and ultimately a national Ukrainian army. March-April 1917 marked an important phase, with the foundation of an organizational committee, a Ukrainian Military Club (which took the name of the hetman Pavlo Polubotok), the demand for a Ukrainian army, as well as the formation of the first Ukrainian regiments in the Kiev Military District. These steps were taken against the will of the provisional government and the Petrograd Soviet and the Commanding Officer on the south-western Front, General Brusilov. The Rada and Ukrainian parties and groups had strong reservations about these developments.

In May and June 1917 two Ukrainian military congresses met in Kiev and established the new Ukrainian General Military Committee, which assumed ultimate authority over all Ukrainian soldiers and military organizations. The Congresses managed to ensure that all Ukrainian recruits, including the marines, were enlisted only in Ukrainian units or units in Ukraine.[12] Despite the growing pressure, including from the Bolsheviks, from late summer 1917, a so-called self-Ukrainization of the 34th army corps under General Pavlo Skoropads'kyj (a general in the former czarist army) took place, along with the transfer of soldiers from one unit to another and a growing national radicalization. Evidently there were tensions between Ukrainian and Russian soldiers and these grew in light of the acute lack of capable Ukrainian officers and the spread of Ukrainian as a language of command, as opposed to Russian.

The Petrograd Ministry of War acknowledged the Ukrainization in progress in a statute about the Ukrainian General Military Committee, but demanded the latter's subordination to the War Ministry. The Central Rada formed a unified Ukrainian front (from the south-west and Rumanian front) after the Bolshevik takeover and the declaration of a Ukrainian People's Republic (on 7th November 1917 or 3rd in the western calendar). But the increasingly catastrophic economic situation undermined Ukrainian nationalist efforts to win over many soldiers, whom the Bolsheviks labelled as bourgeois and challenged with promises of radical economic reforms. Thus, by the autumn and winter of 1917 – a cease-fire came into effect between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers on 7 December – few soldiers were interested in an armed struggle against the Bolsheviks or Red Guards.[13]

12 Von Hagen, "The Russian Imperial Army," 239.

13 Von Hagen, "The Russian Imperial Army," 252–256.

The POW question was closely related to this process. As is well known, prisoners of war were primarily a phenomenon of the eastern front in World War I. As a result of mobile warfare about two million soldiers of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies ended up in Russian captivity; a greater number (between two and three million) and the majority of captives held by the Central Powers came from Russia or the czarist army generally – the total number of POWs on the eastern front was over five million.[14] However, it is very difficult to establish the number of Ukrainian POWs on each side. Historian Claus Remer estimates that between 300,000 and 500,00 Ukrainian soldiers of the czarist army were held captive by Germany and Austria-Hungary, some of whom were housed from the beginning of 1915 in separate "Ukrainian camps" (for instance, in Rastatt, Wetzlar and Hanoverian Münden) and subjected to a concerted national policy.[15] Ukrainian activists combined the promotion of literacy and cultural activities with political, that is nationalist, propaganda, which at times led to serious conflicts between Ukrainian and Russian POWs.[16] The success of nationalist propaganda in the camps is doubtful, however. The captor states, Germany and Austro-Hungary, were very careful not to provoke any counter-measures by Russia.

By contrast, little is known about Ukrainian soldiers from Austria-Hungary in Russia. Articles VI and VIII of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Ukraine and the Central Powers provided for the release and repatriation of POWs of both sides.[17] In reality, however, the process, like everything on the eastern front, seems to have taken years. POWs were needed for labour and states such as Russia and Ukraine did not push for the repatriation of POWs. Yet the advance of German and Austrian troops into Ukraine in 1918 clearly changed policy, as former POWs were used to create Ukrainian units. This policy was easier for Germany to implement than for Austria-Hungary with its various nationality conflicts, both latent and overt.

14 Statistics derive from Reinhard Nachtigal, *Kriegsgefangenschaft an der Ostfront 1914 bis 1918. Literaturbericht zu einem neuen Forschungsfeld* (Frankfurt, 2005), 13 and 15. The number of POWs was clearly above the officially given figure, see Evgenij Sergeev, "Kriegsgefangenschaft aus russischer Sicht. Russische Kriegsgefangene in Deutschland und im Habsburgerreich (1914–1918)," *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen- und Zeitgeschichte* 2 (1997): 113–134.

15 Claus Remer, *Die Ukraine im Blickfeld deutscher Interessen. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1917/18* (Frankfurt, 1997), 245–280; Nachtigal, *Kriegsgefangenschaft*, 40–42.

16 Von Hagen, *The Great War*, 39.

17 Oleh S. Fedyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1918* (New Brunswick, 1971), 273 and 279.

In 1914 and 1915 the Austro-Hungarian military leadership deported and interned thousands of Ukrainians and Jews from Galicia in a separate camp in Steiermark. These men were not in fact POWs, but had rather been captured on suspicion of disloyalty and treason. Many of them died there because of the catastrophic living conditions and disease epidemics before the camp was finally closed in 1917.[18]

While the Ukrainian soldiers and POWs clearly underwent politicization, in some cases raising their national consciousness, it is harder to prove that the civilian population became politicized as a direct result of wartime events. That said, recent work – especially that of historian Ljubov' Žvanko – demonstrates the massive social dislocation caused by the flood of refugees, including in the Ukrainian areas behind the Russian front. Russia was completely unprepared for the refugee problem at the beginning of the war.[19] There was a mass exodus from the areas on the front in several waves in the summer and autumn 1915, firstly in the context of the Russian retreat from the south-western front, when the civilian population was evacuated, sometimes forcibly, from the areas on the front, as well as the Polish Governorate, from East Galicia (up to 100,000), Volhynia, Podolia, Bukovina, Grodno, Cholm and the Baltic provinces. Rail transports brought many to the provinces of Černihiv, Poltava, Katerynoslav, Charkiv, Cherson, partly because there was industrial work in these regions. The refugees included a high proportion of women, children and the elderly.[20]

At the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917 a new wave of refugees flooded from the Romanian front into the Ukrainian hinterland, after Romania entered the war on the side of the Entente and found its territory occupied by German troops.[21] The organization of refugee assistance – transport, subsistence, accommodation – was confused and would have remained wholly inadequate but for volunteer efforts. As early as August and September 1914, the new town and provisional councils, which had been welcomed by the czar in August 1914, but viewed with increasing suspicion, and confessional and national organizations offered their services. So too did the Committee of Her Imperial

18 Georg Hoffmann, Nicole-Melanie Goll, Philipp Lesiak, *Thalerhof 1914–1936. Die Geschichte eines vergessenen Lagers und seiner Opfer* (Herne, 2010).

19 Ljubov' Žvanko, *Biženci peršoïï svitovoji vijny: ukrajins'kyj vymir* (*1914–1918 rr.*) (Kharkiv, 2012); Ljubov' Žvanko, *Biženstvo peršoji svitovoji vijny v Ukrajini. Dokumenty i materialy* (*1914–1918 rr.*) (Kharkiv, 2009). The author published numerous relevant essays, e.g. "Das Flüchtlingswesen im Ersten Weltkrieg im Russischen Reich unter rechtlichen Aspekten," in *Besetzt*, eds. Eisfeld, Hausmann, Neutatz, 333–349. For a general view, see Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking. Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, 1999).

20 Žvanko, *Biženci*, 44, 50f.

21 Žvanko, *Biženci*, 45.

Highness Grand Duchess Taj'jana Nikolaevna for the Provisional Support of War Casualties.[22] Senior Plenipotentiaries appointed by the state were supposed to work with the Senior Commanders of the armies, state authorities and aid organizations to co-ordinate and supervise the evacuation and reception of refugees. In light of the mass flight of summer 1915, the czar issued a special refugee law, the 'Law for the Satisfaction of the Needs of Refugees", which for the first time regulated state subsidies, established a special commission for the integration of refugees under the auspices of the Interior Minister and laid down guidelines for the social protection of the refugees. It did not take effect, however, until the 1915 refugees had already been evacuated. In Austria-Hungary thousands of war refugees from Galicia and Bukovina were housed in large camps, whose care has been described in Austrian scholarship as good, on the whole.[23]

Politicization of the Nation

The changeable location of the front on the Austrian-Russian border in 1914 and 1915 placed the Ukrainian population on both sides in a precarious position. Ukrainians were suspected of disloyalty and treason and thus subjected to particularly harsh repression from the authorities. The politicization and nationalization of the Ukrainians of Austria-Hungary was far more advanced than that of their counterparts in Russia. Opportunities for public political activity became available after 1914 and Ukrainian activists made good use of them. These included journalist Mykola Zaliznjak and his group, the Ukrainian Liberation Organization (ULO), founded by Ukrainians from Russia in Vienna and the Metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church, Andrej Šeptyc'kyj. They tried to show the Central Powers the significance of the Ukrainian question in the war against Russia in various ways, notably through a broad publicity campaign, in order to promote the notion of a Ukrainian nation-state. Other activists went further and formed political organizations, such as the Ukrainian Main Council established by Reichsrat Deputy Kost' Levyc'kyj in 1914, the Ukrainian National Council which sought a Ukrainian state on Russian territory in April

22 On the Tat'jana-Komitee, see Žvanko, *Bižen*ci, 60–75, on the associations of landscapes and cities, 113–139, 258, and on religious and ethnic organisations, 52, 139–157, 259 and 353–354. See also Žvanko, "Das Flüchtlingswesen," 337–339.

23 Wolfdieter Bihl, "Einige Aspekte der österreichisch-ungarischen Ruthenenpolitik 1914–1918, " *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 14 (1966): 539–550, here 545f. Dornik, "Die deutschen Kolonien," in *Besetzt*, eds. Eisfeld, Hausmann, Neutatz, 112.

1915, and the Ukrainian Parliamentary Party which came out in support of an autonomous East Galicia in the spring and summer of 1917.[24]

The orientations of these various groups of Ukrainian activists cannot be described here in detail, but the writings of geographer and ULO activist Stepan Rudnyc'kyj (1877–1937) provide a good example of their approach.[25] Rudnyc'kyj came from an east Galician family of schoolteachers, had studied with Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj among others in Lemberg, obtained a doctorate and completed a habilitation in Geography, taught at the University of Lemberg before the war and lived in Vienna during the war.[26]

In his work, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz* [*The Eastern War Theatre*] of 1915, he provided his German-speaking readers with "a geographical analysis of the large theatre of war". He also sought to furnish useful military information and, moreover, developed a detailed territorial vision of a future Ukrainian nation-state.[27] He clearly challenged German and Russian geographers, who assumed the geographical unity of European Russia and thus, he believed, implicitly legitimized the territorial status quo of the czarist state. He insisted, by contrast, on geographical differences between the "Baltic lands" (that is, the Baltic provinces), White Russia, Poland and Ukraine:

> European Geography has barely addressed the classification of eastern Europe into natural landscapes. All schoolbooks and encyclopaedias depict European Russia as an immovable unit. Not only is there no attempt to divide it into natural landscapes, but various platitudes are dragged in as arguments for unity.[28]

He is referring here to the claims of geology (techtonics), climatology, social and anthropogeography, but is principally targeting the Heidelberg

24 Dornik, "Die deutschen Kolonien," 111–114.

25 On the Association of Liberation of the Ukraine, see Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939* (Paderborn, 2010), 86–102; Oleh S. Fedyshyn, "The Germans and the Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine, 1914–1917," in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, 1977), 305–322. A more indepth study of this association is needed.

26 On Rudnyc'kyj, see Guido Hausmann, "Das Territorium der Ukraine: Stepan Rudnyc'kyjs Beitrag zur Geschichte räumlich-territorialen Denkens über die Ukraine," in *Die Ukraine. Prozesse der Nationsbildung*, ed. Andreas Kappeler (Cologne, 2011), 145–157; Steven Seegel, *Mapping Europe's Borderlands. Russian Cartography in the Age of Empire* (Chicago, 2012), 253–258.

27 Stefan Rudnyc'kyj, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz* (Jena, 1915).

28 Rudnyc'kyj, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz*, 15.

geographer, Alfred Hettner.[29] Inspired by trips to Russia in 1897 and during the revolution and war of 1905, Hettner had published a geographical account of Russia, which was reprinted twice during the war and which emphasized the geographical unity of Russia. His account had been translated into Russian. Leading Russian geographers considered Hettner a great authority in the years before the Stalinization of Soviet geography. Although less well known today than the works on Russia by Max Weber or Otto Hoetzsch, his book had the same influence on contemporaries.

While Rudnyc'kyj was challenging the hold of Hettner's geographical perspective on eastern Europe on the educated German-speaking public, he enjoyed the public support of an influential sponsor, Albrecht Penck (1858–1945), a geographer originally from Vienna but based in Berlin since 1906, with whom he had studied for several years. Penck, who is controversial among scholars for his völkisch geography in the 1920s and 1930s, was associated with political circles which promoted the development of revolution and peripheral states in Russia during World War I.[30] Penck placed Ukraine in geographical terms between Central and Eastern Europe.[31]

Thus Rudnyc'kyj adopted a political as well as an academic position: When he spoke of "our armies", he meant the armies of the Central Powers. Moreover, he pointed out that "the Ukrainian national consciousness [had] increased significantly among the ordinary population of southern Russia" and emphasized the cultural differences between Russians and Ukrainians.[32] He drew on his geographical studies to offer, firstly, concrete military suggestions as to how the areas of Ukrainian settlement that belonged to Russia might be "liberated", and secondly, the political borders (on the basis of geographical features) of a future Ukrainian state.

He stressed the importance of the Crimea and the Black Sea coast for Ukraine in light of the military successes of the armies of the Central Powers

29 Also explicitly in Stephan Rudnyckyj, "Die Länder Osteuropas (mit einer Karte)," *Kartographische und schulgeographische Zeitschrift* 2 (1918), 33–41, here 41. See for example the third edition of Alfred Hettner, *Rußland. Eine geographische Betrachtung von Volk, Staat und Kultur* (Leipzig, 1916).

30 Riccardo Bavaj, "Die deutsche Ukraine-Publizistik während des Ersten Weltkrieges," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 1 (2001), 1–24, especailly 7–9. For a critical perspective see Hans-Dietrich Schultz, "'Ein wachsendes Volk braucht Raum.' Albrecht Penck als politischer Geograph," in *1810–2010: 200 Jahre Geographie in Berlin*, eds. Bernhard Nitz et al (Berlin, 2011), 99–153.

31 Albrecht Penck, "Die Ukraina," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin* (1916), 345–361 and 458–477.

32 Rudnyc'kyj, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz*, 4 and 7.

against czarist troops in East Galicia and Bukovina, as well as the Ottoman entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers, and optimistically recommended an invasion, even in wintertime, of the Black Sea coast to the North:

> The entry of Turkey into the war has made the Pontic lowlands a war theatre of incalculable importance. If the Russian Black Sea fleet has spent its force for whatever reason, the Ukrainian coast of the Black Sea offers an extended and not unfavourable location for troop landings. One can be sure that only an attack with strong forces from the south can bring down the Russian colossus. Thus the opportunity of disembarking troops on the northern bank of the Black Sea and the operations of the allied armies in the southern Ukraine are of decisive importance for the whole war against Russia.[33]

He also found it important to assert and 'flesh out' geographically the Ukrainian idea in opposition to alternatives such as the Ruthenian idea (which the Austria-Hungary held firm until 1918) or Little Russian idea:

> Ukraine is not simply an ethnographic concept, as the official and nationalist Russian understanding of the world would claim. It is a well defined geographical concept. Ukraine is the northern hinterland of the Black Sea, extending in the west as far as the borders of Mitteleuropa, in the north to the Polissje marshes, and in the east to the Caspian steppe.[34]

The geographical borders he drew for the future Ukrainian state went far beyond those of today's Ukrainian state. From Rudnyc'kyj's perspective, parts of today's Central Russian districts of Kursk and Voronezh and the North Caucasian Kuban as well as present-day Polish districts belonged to Ukraine. Ukrainian writers made such territorial demands of Stalin into the 1920s, but in vain.[35] One year later, in 1916, Rudnyc'kyj produced a more comprehensive publication along the same lines, which has been in continuous use up to the present. The volume, *The Ukrainian Land and People: A Popular Geographical Guide* [*Ukraina. Land und Volk. Eine gemeinfassliche Landeskunde*] (Vienna, 1916), described the political and territorial claims of the Ukrainian nationalist movement. Both of Rudnyc'kyj's publications are significant. He was the most

33 Rudnyc'kyj, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz*, 42–43.

34 Rudnyc'kyj, *Der östliche Kriegsschauplatz*, 88–89.

35 Leonid Maximenkov, "Stalin's Meeting with a Delegation of Ukrainian Writers on 12 February 1929," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3–4 (1992): 361–431.

important Ukrainian geographer of his time and his writings and maps bolstered the Ukrainian politicians who wished to win international diplomatic support for a Ukrainian nation-state at the end of the war, although they did not prevail, especially over the objections of Polish diplomats.[36]

The Occupation of Ukraine in 1918

When the Bolsheviks made a truce with the Central Powers in the wake of the October Revolution in Petrograd and, virtually simultaneously, military units of Bolsheviks in the east Ukrainian industrial city of Kharkiv declared a Ukrainian soviet and marched on to Kiev and the Ukrainian People's Republic based there, the Ukrainian People's Republic proclaimed its independence from (Soviet) Russia on 12th January 1918. After a brief hesitation, the new Republic approached the Central Powers, which then recognized the independence of Ukraine in a separate peace treaty at Brest-Litovsk on 27th January 1918. Military assistance against the Bolsheviks, who had occupied Kiev in the meantime, was exchanged for the delivery of Ukrainian grain to Austria-Hungary and Germany, which was urgently needed for political reasons in response to the food crisis.

While the German-Austrian occupation of Ukraine which quickly followed and lasted until the end of 1918 has been forgotten in Germany, Ukrainians consider both the Peace Treaty with Ukraine at Brest-Litovsk and the subsequent occupation regime an important part of the European history of Ukraine.[37] The Ukrainian government, which the Central Powers restored in Kiev, lacked both the will and the capacity to fulfil the exorbitant demands for grain and was replaced as early as the end of April 1918 by the so-called hetmanate or "Ukrainian state" under the general and land magnate, Pavlo

36 On Rudnyc'kyj, see the uncritical biography, Oleg Šablij, *Akademik Stepan Rudnyc'kyj. Fundator ukrajins'koji heohrafiji* (L'viv, 1993).

37 There is as yet no detailed exposition of the occupying rule of Central Powers. The following accounts are relevant: Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer*, 65–196; Wolfram Dornik and Stefan Karner, eds., *Die Besatzung der Ukraine 1918. Historischer Kontext, Forschungsstand, wirtschaftliche und soziale Folgen* (Graz, 2008); Von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland*, 87–114; Frank Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/42* (Wiesbaden, 2005); Peter Borowsky, *Deutsche Ukrainepolitik 1918 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Wirtschaftsfragen* (Hamburg, 1970); Peter Borowsky, "General Groener und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in der Ukraine 1918," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 21 (1970), 325–340.

Skoropads'kyj (1873–1945). It was able to hold out against growing resistance in the countryside until December 1918.

The fact that the hetmanate collapsed shortly after the German evacuation causing Skoropads'kyj to flee demonstrated how dependent it had been on German protection. His conservative social and economic plans, including the return of land to estate owners, were deeply unpopular in the countryside, especially among the peasantry. He thought like a "Little Russian", who certainly recognized the cultural peculiarities of the Ukrainians, but did not support a separate political identity for Ukraine. A directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic assumed power, with the support of peasants and soldiers, in December 1918, but could not stabilize the country in the long term.

Skoropads'kyj's government also attempted to integrate all areas considered Ukrainian into the hetmanate, including the Crimea. With the assistance of the Germans and over the protests of Soviet Russia, Bolsheviks had been driven into the Crimea, where former czarist General Matvej Sulejman A. Sul'kević had established a state structure.[38] The population of Crimea, which was not a subject of negotiations between the Central Powers and the Ukrainians at Brest-Litovsk, comprised about one-third Crimean Tatars, one-third Russians, as well as 12% Ukrainians and others.

While the imperial German government articulated no political plans for the Crimea, German military leaders viewed themselves here, as elsewhere in Ukraine, as colonial lords and saw the Crimea as a possible base for acquisitions or closer economic relations with Persia and feared a Turkish conquest. General Ludendorff wished to intensify German settlement in the Crimea, turn Sevastopol' into a German naval base and establish a German colonial state in the Crimea and the entire Black Sea region. Other military leaders such as General Groener envisaged Crimea rather as part of a Ukrainian state. The hetmanate exerted increasing economic pressure on the Crimea, which extended to a trade blockade against the Crimea. The relationship between the Crimea and Ukraine remained unresolved, however, until the withdrawal of German troops from Ukraine in December 1918.[39]

Conclusion

World War I and its political consequences constitute for Ukraine the first attempt at the formation of a modern nation and nation-state. In this sense the

38 Jobst, *Geschichte der Ukraine*, 158.

39 Fedyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East*, 195–224.

creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic in January 1918 can be interpreted as a victory that resulted from the war and achieved, among other things, international political recognition by Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Yet this success was only momentary. The lasting message was that the formation of a nation-state was a precarious process, that the collapse of the state in war led to violence and chaos, as in the subsequent Ukrainian Civil War, and that neighbouring states and European Great Powers like Germany and Austria-Hungary were not interested in a Ukrainian state, merely military control and the exploitation of resources.

The realization of national weakness, alongside the interpretation of the diplomatic and international political constellations, became a fundamental part of the experiences of 1917–1920. The organization of the administration and army failed (at least in the formerly Russian areas), paramilitary formations of peasant units had become important, changing power relations had led to an escalation of violence (especially against Jews and Mennonites). It is possible to say in general terms that the Ukrainian nationalist idea became more resilient and militant as a result of the political defeat after World War I and developed no connection with democratic political culture. A good example is the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, founded in 1929 by World War I veterans in the Ukrainian regions of Poland. Moreover, the Ukrainian nationalist movement did not operate in isolation, but in contexts, including especially the German-Ukrainian relationship. It would be too much to argue, however, that the Ukrainian national defeat after World War I (and in another sense again after during World War II) had frozen political thought into national categories and made it more immutable to today than in the countries of the War's winners.