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HOW HISTORY WRITING BECAME 'OFFICIAL'

SOVIET UKRAINIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY RECONSIDERED

Two historians from L'viv, Iaroslav Dashkevych (1926–2010) and Iaroslav Isaievych (1936–2010), with their encyclopaedic knowledge and broad research interests, determined for decades the overall intellectual level of Ukrainian historiography.[1] Both came from 'non-proletarian' families, both started their careers in post-war L'viv and neither was allowed to go abroad until the end of the 1980s. Already in independent Ukraine Dashkevych characterized the Ukrainian historiography of the Brezhnev period as follows:

> "the study of the historiography of the so-called Soviet period should be approached in the same way as the study of the dissemination of false ideas, of the psychopathology of pseudoscientific research and of enforced slave labour".[2]

The assessment of Iaroslav Isaievych was more nuanced: he emphasized the importance of "differentiating between unscrupulous (or 'ideological') servants of the regime and those who used the legal opportunities available for saving Ukrainian culture while supporting its national consciousness". He pointed out that "it is unfair to blame all historians of the Party

[1] See their comparative intellectual biographies in Andrii Portnov, *Istoriï istorykiv: Oblychchia ĭ obrazy ukraïns'koï istoriohrafiï XX stolittia* (Kyïv: Krytyka, 2011), 201–24. See also Iuriĭ Iasinovs'kyĭ, ed., *Iaroslav Isaievych: Bibliohrafichnyĭ pokazhchyk* (L'viv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva imeni I. Kryp''iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 1999); Marharyta Kryvenko, ed., *Iaroslav Dashkevych. Biobibliohrafichnyĭ pokazhchyk* (L'viv: L'vivs'ka naukova biblioteka imeni Vasylia Stefanyka, 2006).

[2] Iaroslav Dashkevych, 'Dorohamy ukraïns'koï Klio: Pro stanovysche istorychnoï nauky v Ukraïni', *Ukraïna v mynulomy*, 8 (1996): 55.

without distinguishing between them, because among them were people of very different moral and intellectual convictions".[3]

What was Ukrainian Soviet historiography during the different stages of its development? When and how did its history begin?[4] What was the Soviet project of 'official academic scholarship' about and what were its local (Ukrainian) dimensions? What kind of intellectual product emerged from the interaction between historians and the Soviet government? How did the shared and compulsory but unwritten rules function – from citing the classics of Marxism-Leninism to structuring research for a thesis? Where and why did areas of conformism and dissidence appear?

This article offers a discussion of the questions above, which still require comparative research based both on archival work and on oral history.[5]

The Collectivization of the Academy of Sciences

One of the consequences of the 1917 Revolutions in Ukraine was the emergence of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, which opened on 27 November 1918 under the government of Hetman Pavlo Skoropads'kyĭ (1873–1945). The official Soviet foundation date of the Academy was different: 11 February 1919, the day when the Bolshevik People's Commissariat of Education issued the order under which several buildings in the centre of Kyïv were consigned to the Academy.[6] The pre-Soviet existence of the Academy was not mentioned in Soviet books and its foundation was described as an achievement of the Bolshevik government.

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[3] Iaroslav Isaievych, *Ukraïna davnia i nova*: *Narod, relihiia, kul'tura* (L'viv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva imeni Ivana Kryp''iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 1996), 301.

[4] On this issue compare Aleksandr Dmitriev, 'Demon istokov: kak (pozdne)sovetskie gumanitarii utverzhdalis' v svoëm proshlom', *Neprikosnovennyĭ zapas* 93, 1 (2014): 11–23.

[5] This article summarizes and develops my previous publications on the topic: Andrei (Andrii) Portnov, 'Sovietizatsiia istoricheskoĭ nauki po-ukrainski', *Neprikosnovennyĭ zapas* 83, 3 (2012): 245–76 (co-author Volodymyr Masliĭchuk); idem, 'Historiografia ukraińska. Doświadczenia sowietyzacji', *Pamięć i sprawiedliwość* 23, 1 (2014): 401–29 (co-author Volodymyr Masliĭchuk); idem, 'Soviétisation et désovietiésation de l'histoire en Ukraine: Aspects institutionnels et méthodologiques', *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest (RECEO)* 45, 2 (2014): 95–127.

[6] Oksana Iurkova, 'Diiachi nauky v poli zoru dyktatury (1921–1928)', in *Suspil'stvo i vlada v radians'kiĭ Ukraïni rokiv nepu (1921–1928)*, vol. 2, ed. Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyĭ (Kyïv: Instytut istoriĭ Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 2015), 7.

The Academy played an important role in the Soviet arena of nation- and state-building. Moreover, similar 'Republic' Academies emerged soon in all the Soviet republics, except Soviet Russia, where in 1925 the Russian Academy of Sciences was turned into the All-Soviet Academy of Sciences. Initially, the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (since 1921 the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, VUAN) retained an extended autonomy; but already during the 1920s the government tried consistently to centralize and regulate its work.

A letter from the People's Commissariat of Education of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, Hryhoriĭ Hryn'ko (1890–1938), on 14 November 1921 claimed openly that "the Soviet government does not see it [the Academy] as a centre of so-called 'pure research'."[7] The leadership of the Academy, however, either underestimated or did not understand the extent of the sinister threat in this passage. In the official report on its work in 1924 VUAN asserted proudly that "the Academy is an exceptionally scholarly institution".[8]

The leaders of the Academy did not just deviate from the tasks set by the Soviet government but also started playing dangerous games with the authorities, whom they had also decided to involve in their internal disagreements. The academicians Serhiĭ Iefremov (1876–1939) and Ahatanhel Kryms'kyĭ (1871–1942) allied against Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ (1866–1934), who had returned from emigration in 1924, and did their best to win over the ruling circles of the republic. Hrushevs'kyĭ also tried to get close to the Soviet government. The academicians were the losers in their games with the authorities. In 1929, three Party officials were elected as members of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences: Volodymyr Zatons'kyĭ (1888–1938), Mykola Skrypnyk (1872–1933), and Oleksandr Shlikhter (1868–1940). The historians Matviĭ Iavors'kyĭ (1885–1937), Mykhaĭlo Slabchenko (1882–1952), and Dmytro Iavornyts'kyĭ (1885–1940) were elected at the same time and offered no protest against this Party campaign.

During the same year the academician Serhiĭ Iefremov and some hundreds of other defendants from among the Ukrainian intelligentsia were arrested during the fabricated case of the fictitious Union for the Libera-

[7] Pavlo Sokhan', ed., *Istoriia Akademiĭ nauk Ukraïny 1918–1923: Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 1993), 290.

[8] Oleksiĭ Onyshchenko, ed., *Istoriia Natsional'noï akademiï nauk Ukraïny 1924–1928: Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 1998), 73.

tion of Ukraine (*Spilka vyzvolennia Ukraïny*).[9] Later, in 1930, all ten periodicals under Hrushevs'kyĭ's supervision were shut down. In 1933, the Institute of Ukrainian Culture named after Dmytro Bahaliĭ was closed. On the day before, Dmytro Bahaliĭ (1857–1932) and other prominent historians who had declared their devotion to Marxism had been denounced by their younger colleagues for "bourgeoisness", "reactionism" and "the distortion of Marxism".[10]

What these Ukrainian academicians had considered a manoeuvre or a necessary act of "reconciliation with reality"[11] was one step in an ambitious project of social engineering aimed at creating the new Soviet man. History and other ideological disciplines played a special role in this project. It is for this reason that all the compromises agreed on by the authorities during the 1920s were situational and temporary, whereby apparent retreats and concessions were only preparations for a ruthless offensive. From the very beginning academic institutions were involved, whether under constraint or voluntarily, in the process of repression. Historians bore witness against their colleagues, denounced each other in writing, and took up the vacant positions which arose in consequence. In this way the Soviet historical academy "not only suffered itself, but also caused the suffering of others".[12] The fired-up flywheel of repressions made the institutional autonomy of the humanities impossible and destroyed corporate solidarity.[13]

At the beginning of the 1930s, the collectivization of the Academy was becoming widespread. In 1930, a decision was made to shut down the Historical-Philological Department. The opponents of Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ founded the Historical-Archaeographic Institute in its place, but it only existed for less than a year. By the mid-1930s, almost all the staff of

[9] Volodymyr Prystaĭko, Iuriĭ Shapoval, 'Fars z trahichnym finalom (Do 65-richchia protsesu u spravi "Spilky vyzvolennia Ukraïny")', *Z arkhiviv VUChK-GPU-NKVD-KGB* 19, 1–2 (1995): 190–8.

[10] T. Skubitskiĭ, 'Klassovaia bor'ba v ukrainskoĭ istoricheskoĭ literature', *Istorik-marks-ist*, 17 (1930): 27–40, and others.

[11] Compare Sergeĭ Iarov, 'Intelligentsia i vlast' v Petrograde 1917–1925 godov: konformistskie strategii i iazyk sotrudnichetsva', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 78, 2 (2006): 7–31.

[12] Iuriĭ Afanasiev, 'Fenomen sovetskoĭ istoriografii', in *Sovetskaia istoriografiia*, ed. idem (Moscow: RGGU, 1996), 9.

[13] On Soviet historians as an 'academic corporation' compare Aleksandr Dmitriev, ' "Uchionyĭ sovet pri Chingizkhane" (poetika i ritorika postsovetskogo akademischeskogo memuara)', *Trudy Russkoĭ Antropologicheskoĭ Shkoly* 11 (2012): 80–100.

the Academy had lost their jobs. At the beginning of 1936, the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was founded on the basis of the Institute of History of the Communist Academy and a couple of other institutions. Following the example set by Moscow, in 1936 the Soviet authorities created the Institute of the History of Ukraine (after 1953 renamed the Institute of History) with new personnel to replace the demolished institutions of the more self-sustaining VUAN. This was one part of an all-Union policy governing the reform of academic structures.

The Institute of the History of Ukraine

The Institute consisted of three departments: the Department of the History of Feudalism, the Department of the History of Capitalism, and the Department of the History of the Soviet Period. Initially there were sixteen employees and none of them had an academic degree. The core of the Institute was comprised not of former scholars of the Academy but of staff from the ideological Institute of History of the All-Ukrainian Association of Marxism-Leninism Institutes, established in the late 1920s. The first director was a philosopher, Artashes Saradzhev (1889–1937), who had graduated from Moscow's Institute of Red Professors and who had previously been Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Sverdlov Communist University. Already in December 1936 Saradzhev was arrested and shortly thereafter executed as the member of a "counterrevolutionary organization".[14] A similar destiny awaited most of the other pioneering employees of the Institute. First, they helped to denounce their senior colleagues and a couple of years afterwards the authorities "denounced" them.[15] In January 1937, a historian from an older generation, Mykola Petrovs'kyĭ (1894–1951), became the Director of the Institute and chose the path of full collaboration with the authorities.[16]

[14] Biographical data on Saradzhev is collected in Oksana Iurkova, 'Artashes Khorenovich Saradzhev', in *Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny: 1936–2006*, ed. Valeriĭ Smoliĭ (Kyïv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny, 2006), 307–18.

[15] For details see Mykhaĭlo Koval' and Oleksandr Rubliov, 'Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny: pershe dvadtsiatyrichchia (1936–1956 rr.)', *Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal* 40, 6 (1996): 50–68; Oleksiĭ Ias', *'Na choli respublikans'koï nauky...' Instytut istoriï Ukraïny (1936–1986): narysy z instytutsiĭnoï ta intelektual'noï istoriï (Do 80-richchia ustanovy)* (Kyïv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny, 2016).

[16] On Petrovs'kyĭ see O. Udod and A. Shevchenko, *Mykola Neonovych Petrovs'kyĭ (1894–1951): Zhyttia i tvorchyĭ shliakh istoryka* (Kyïv: Heneza, 2005).

At first, the main task of the Institute was the development of programmes on the history of Ukraine and the history of the USSR according to the 1934 directive on 'teaching civil history'.[17] The educational process required that all programmes, synthetic courses, and monographs be emptied as far as possible of all individual rhetoric. The same de-individuation of style and approach became the priority in later Institute projects, aimed at writing fundamental ('academic') histories of Ukraine. While the volumes of *An Outline of the History of Ukraine* were written by only one or two authors at the end of the 1930s, collective works became widespread in the 1960s, where each section was written by several people. Those writing teams were the authors of the main works published by the Institute: twenty-six volumes of *The History of Cities and Villages in the Ukrainian SSR* (1967–83), eight volumes of *The History of the Ukrainian SSR* (1979–85) and three volumes of *The History of Kyïv* (1982–87).

Apart from the Institute of History, the Institute of Material Culture came into being in 1938 (later renamed the Institute of Archaeology). In 1939, one more ideological institute was introduced: the Ukrainian branch of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute under the auspices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The émigré historian Borys Krupnyts'kyĭ (1894–1956) noted in his book *Ukrainian Historical Science Under the Soviets*, published in 1957 in Munich,

> "Nothing demonstrated the dependence of Ukrainian scholarship on Moscow more clearly than the fact that the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences did not have the right to convene a separate historical committee ... If someone wanted to publish his research, he had to send it to Russian publishing houses and to write it in Russian".[18]

As if the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine had heard this reproach, they started publishing the *Ukrainian Historical Journal* (*Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal*, *UIZh*).[19]

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[17] V. Santsevich and N. Komarenko, *Razvitie istoricheskoĭ nauki v Akademii nauk Ukrainskoĭ SSR* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 1986), 33; 'O prepodavanii grazhdanskoĭ istorii v shkolakh SSSR', *Istorik-marksist*, 37(3) (1934): 83.

[18] Borys Krupnyts'kyĭ, *Ukraïns'ka istorychna nauka pid Sovietamy (1920–1950)* (Munich: Instytut dlia vyvchennia SRSR, 1957), 43.

[19] Oleksandr Hurzhiĭ and Oleksandr Donik, ' "Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal": pivstolittia v nautsi', *Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal* 51, 6 (2007): 7–8.

Tellingly, around the same time that the *UIZh* was launched, another journal, *The History of the USSR* (*Istoriia SSSR*) was established in Moscow (notably with the same initial print run of five thousand copies). The situation with the *UIZh* was unique since in 1957 there were no separate historical journals either in Belarus[20] or in any of the other republics. In practice, the decision to publish the *UIZh*, as well as the adoption in 1954 by the Politburo of the Communist Party of the *Theses on the 300th Anniversary of the Reunification of Ukraine with Russia*, offered by Ukrainian Party ideologists and written by Ukrainian Soviet historians, meant the recognition of Ukraine as 'second among equals' of the republics of the USSR.[21]

The *Ukrainian Historical Journal* became one of the tools for the further integration of the historians of the republic and was therefore under constant observation by the Party. Even the topics for publication depended on the Party line. Following the directives of the mid-1960s on prioritizing research into 'the experience of socialist and communist construction', the journal focused mostly on Soviet history and featured wholly ideological articles, which were often approved at the level of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. In 1985, there were 11,500 historians of the Party in the USSR, and around 1,600 historians of the Party worked in Ukraine.[22]

The closeness of the Institute of History to the Party organs mentioned above allowed the Institute to develop its material and technical facilities, as well as expanding its personnel. Between 1956 and 1990, the number of members of research staff more than doubled, from 61 to 165.[23] In 1969, the Institute opened two regional offices: one of the History of European Socialist Countries in Uzhhorod and the other of History and Applied Social Research in Chernivtsi.

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[20] More on Belarusian situation see in Rainer Lindner, *Historiker und Herrschaft: Nationsbildung und Geschichtspolitik in Weißrussland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1999).

[21] Compare Serhy Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian–Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

[22] Iaroslav Kalakura, 'Noveĭshaia istoriografiia rukovodiascheĭ deiatel'nosti KPSS na etapie razvitogo sotsializma', in *Voprosy razvitiia istoriograficheskikh issledovaniĭ v svete reshenii XXVI s"ezda KPSS. Materialy vsesoiuznoĭ nauchnoĭ konferencii*, materials of the all-Union conference (Dnipropetrovs'k: Izdatel'stvo DGU, 1985), 20.

[23] *Instytut istorii Ukraïny* (see note 14), 20.

Iaroslav Dzyra (1931–2009) recalled how his boss Ivan Hurzhiĭ (1915–71), a respected scholar of Ukrainian economic and social history, would repeat,

> "as an academic research employee of the Institute your role is to implement the plans of the state at the appropriate ideological level. In return you are well paid. It was Turgenev who was able to write whatever he wanted".

Hurzhiĭ would conclude: "We pay you for what we need to have written, and not for what is stated in the documents. Do you think I do not know these documents?"[24]

The reliance of the Institute on the Party line sometimes manifested itself in different ideological slants. In 1963–72, the head of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was Petro Shelest (1908–96), who was not indifferent to Ukrainian history and liked to praise the Zaporizhian Cossacks. During the period of his leadership the Institute was involved in a series of activities which might be described as 'Soviet Ukrainian patriotism'. Preparatory work began on *The History of the Cities and Villages of the Ukrainian SSR* in twenty-six volumes, which had no equals in the other republics. Moreover, the construction of the State Historical and Cultural Reserve on the island of Velyka Khortytsia began in 1965 and the Ukrainian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments was established in 1966. In 1970, Shelest published in Ukrainian the book *Our Soviet Ukraine* (*Ukraïno nasha radians'ka*), in which he not only wrote about the "progressive role" of the Zaporizhian Sich, but also described the Cossacks as "heroic defenders of the Ukrainian people", whose story had been poorly represented in historical literature and fiction.[25]

Shelest's book was published without the approval of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and two years later it was officially denounced as "diverging from the objective of the international education of the workers". The book was later withdrawn from bookshops, having been criticized for a "lack of attention to the unification of Ukraine with Russia" and for an absence of "references to the positive influence of Russian culture on the formation and development of Ukrainian culture".[26]

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[24] Iaroslav Dzyra, 'Intelektual z natsionalnoiu vdacheiu', *Spetsial'ni istorychni dystsypliny. Pytannia teoriĭ ta metodyky*, 2 (1998): 467–8.

[25] Petro Shelest, *Ukraïno nasha radians'ka* (Kyïv: Politvydav Ukraïny, 1970), 20, 22.

[26] 'Pro serĭozni nedoliky odniieĭ knyhy', *Komunist Ukraïny*, 4 (1973): 77–82.

Shelest's dismissal in May 1972 and the designation of Valentyn Malanchuk (1928–84) as Secretary for Ideology of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine immediately affected the Institute. Programmes involving the study of 19th-century Ukrainian political thought were wound up; publication of the archive of Zaporizhian Sich was stopped; Fedir Shevchenko (1914–95) was dismissed from his position as editor-in-chief of the *UIZh*.[27] In 1973, the Ukrainian-language periodicals *The Middle Ages in Ukraine*, *Historical Sources and their Use*, and *Historiographic Research in the Ukrainian SSR* ceased publication.

The employees of the Institute who were considered unfavourable for ideological reasons were fired during humiliating departmental meetings or at Party conferences with the help of their colleagues. This is what happened to Mykhaĭlo Braĭchevs'kyĭ (1924–2001), who wrote in his essay 'Incorporation or Reunification' (1966) that the concept of "the reunification of Ukraine with Russia" takes the Russian nation beyond the pattern of historical materialism because it regards historical phenomena not from a class-specific point of view, but from the perspective of relations with Russia as an entity.[28] It is important to stress that Braĭchevs'kyĭ's critique of the 'reunification' concept was based on quotations from Lenin. The author emphasized repeatedly his dedication to Marxist principles of historical research. At the suggestion of his colleagues, the historian was on the point of publishing his work in the official *Ukrainian Historical Journal* when the change of political environment rendered it impossible. Almost immediately afterwards, the text appeared in samizdat form and was published abroad. Whereupon Braĭchevs'kyĭ was fired from the Institute of History. The dismissal of Malanchuk in 1979 immediately loosened the Party's control. Translations of Western European sources on Ukrainian history started appearing in the republic's journals. In 1980, the first All-Ukrainian Conference on Regional Historical Studies took place. Many monographs which had previously sat on the back burner were now published.[29]

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[27] See more in Hennadiĭ Boriak, ed., *'Istynu vstanovliuie sud istorii': Zbirnyk na poshanu Fedora Pavlovycha Shevchenka*, vol. 1 (Kyïv: Derzhavnyĭ komitet arkhiviv Ukraïny, 2004); Valeriĭ Smoli et. al., eds., *Fedir Shevchenko, Istorychni studiï: Zbirka vybranykh prats' i materialiv (Do 100-richchia vid dnia narodzhennia)* (Kyïv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NANU, 2014).

[28] Mykhaĭlo Braĭchevs'kyĭ *Vybrani tvory*: *Istoryko-arkheolohichni studiï, Publitsystyka* (Kyïv: KM Academia 1999), 493, 498.

[29] Vitaliĭ Iaremchuk, *Mynule Ukraïny v istorychniĭ nautsi URSR* (Ostroh: Natsional'nyĭ uniwersytet "Ostroz'ka Akademiia", 2009), 408–9.

Another Academic Tradition and Its Limitations

In the post-war Academy of Sciences there were hardly any prominent employees from the pre-war Academy. The city of L'viv, annexed to the USSR in 1939 because of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and the German–Soviet aggression against Poland, played an important role in the transmission of different academic standards. L'viv had not witnessed the most violent of the Soviet purges but went through a later process of Sovietization, which in this case was designated 'Ukrainianization the Soviet Way'.[30]

There existed a very influential Shevchenko Scientific Society in L'viv, which had functioned since the Austro-Hungarian period. It was to all intents and purposes the Ukrainian Academy which had been run by Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ at the beginning of the 20th century. In December 1939, the Shevchenko Scientific Society proposed to the Praesidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR that it join and become part of the Academy. This offer was turned down; however, on 1 January 1940, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine adopted a resolution on establishing branches of the Institutions of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR in L'viv.[31] The head of the L'viv branch of the Institute of History was a former student of Hrushevs'kyĭ, Professor Ivan Kryp''iakevych (1886–1967). Ten out of the eleven employees of the new organization were former members of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. This branch was thus re-established in 1944, but closed after two years because of claims that it had been taken over by 'notorious nationalists'. Nevertheless, at the end of the 1940s a

[30] For details see William J. Risch, *The Ukrainian West: Culture and the Fate of Empire in Soviet L'viv* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). For comparison with the Baltic republics and countries of 'people's democracy' see Aurimas Švedas, *In the Captivity of the Matrix: Soviet Lithuanian Historiography, 1944–1985* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2014); John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill: The University of North California Press, 2000); Jan Szumski, *Polityka a historia: ZSRR wobec nauki historycznej w Polsce w latach 1945–1964* (Warszawa: ASPRA-JR, 2016); Tadeusz P. Rutkowski, *Historiografia i historycy w PRL* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2019); Martin Sabrow, *Das Diktat des Konsenses: Geschichtswissenschaft in der DDR, 1949–1969* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2001); Francesco Zavatti, *Writing History in a Propaganda Institute: Political Power and Network Dynamics in Communist Romania* (Stockholm: Elanders, 2016), and others.

[31] Iaroslav Isaievych, 'Storinky istoriï Instytutu ukraïnoznavstva imeni I. Kryp''iakevycha NAN Ukraïny', *Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal* 46, 4 (2002): 6–7.

decision was taken to create a branch of the Academy of Sciences in L'viv by the Party leadership at the central Union level, rather than by the Party leadership at the level of the Republic. That decision was recorded as a permission granted by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR to the government of the Ukrainian SSR on 21 February 1951.[32] In this way, an Institute of Social Sciences appeared in L'viv and employed the majority of the former staff of the Shevchenko Scientific Society.

After the death of Stalin, Ivan Kryp''iakevych took over as Director of the Institute and stayed in this position until 1962. Kryp''iakevych was a historian, a medievalist who had been deprived of the right to teach at the university and the author of works which fell into the category of 'bourgeois nationalist' publications. In his managerial position Ivan Kryp''iakevych applied the principle of 'fifty-fifty': inevitable compromises with the prevailing ideological environment allowed him to continue with his censored but thorough research.[33]

On the one hand, largely due to the efforts of Kryp''iakevych, the traditions of Hrushevs'kyĭ were upheld in Soviet L'viv. On the other, L'viv raised particular suspicions of nationalism. The slightest deviations from the Party line, especially in the presentation of contemporary history, were monitored and punished fiercely. In particular, the historical publications of the Galician Marxist Volodymyr Levyns'kyĭ (1880–1953) caused a storm. The 1971 L'viv University Party Assembly asserted that the publication of Levyns'kyĭ's article in a special anthology represented the "propagation" of his ideology and caused "irreparable harm to the construction of the communist mindset of the Soviet nation".[34]

The same logic applied to the publication of some documents from the archives. In 1958, the Party Assembly of the Institute of Social Sciences was puzzled when a local historian published in full the Declaration of the Ukrainian National Rada of 1 November 1918. The assembly found it confusing since "the contemporary works of foreign nationalists literally repeat verbatim what was written in that Declaration". Their conclusion was simple: "this is a true nationalist leaflet and it is not appropriate to

[32] Ibid., 8.

[33] More on Kryp''iakevych see in Iaroslav Isaievych, ed., *Ukraïna: kul'turna spadshchyna, national'na svidomist', derzhavnist'*, vol. 8., *Ivan Kryp''iakevych u rodynniĭ tradytsiĭ, nautsi, suspil'stvi* (L'viv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva imeni I. Kryp''iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 2001).

[34] Tamara Halaĭchak and Oleksandr Luts'kyĭ, eds. *Kul'turne zhyttia v Ukraïni: Zakhidni zemli*, vol. 3, *1966–1971* (L'viv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva imeni I. Kryp''iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 2006), 563.

include it in academic research".[35] The authorities intruded into the publishing of various sources, and not only those connected with contemporary history. While preparing *The Documents of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyĭ* (1961) for publication, Ivan Kryp''iakevych and Ivan Butych were forced to print the letters from the Hetman to the Turkish Sultan and the Crimean Khan in the section entitled "Questionable Source Documents".[36] Five acts (*akty*) from the books of Luts'k were eliminated from the anthology *The Printing Pioneer Ivan Fedorov and his Followers in Ukraine* (1975) because they portrayed Fedorov as the leader of armed confrontations between groups of peasants, which allegedly undermined his reputation as "the pioneer of printing",[37] and so on.

It is worth mentioning that the centralized model of the Soviet Academy basically reproduced the structure of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on a smaller scale. All the important issues in the Academy were resolved by the almighty Praesidium, the analogue of the Politburo. Each Institute was subordinated to its Department, which approved all state topics for research. Every branch of the Institute received instructions from the directorate office. In this system, intellectual autonomy and personal engagement were reduced to a minimum.

The Soviet University in Ukraine

One of the features of the Soviet system was the division between the academic sphere and the university sphere, between research and teaching, and the separation of the two functions of science – the production of knowledge by means of scholarly research and the reproduction of knowledge through teaching.[38] From the moment the Bolsheviks came to power, they set themselves the goal of 'removing the reactionary profes-

[35] Ibid., 743.

[36] Iaroslav Dashkevych, 'Ivan Kryp''iakevych – istoryk Ukraïny', in *Ivan Kryp''iakevych: Istoriia Ukraïny*, eds. Fedir Shevchenko and Bohdan Iakymovych (L'viv: Svit, 1990), 14.

[37] Mykola Koval's'kyĭ, 'Dzhereloznavchi aspekty istoriĭ kul'tury Ukraïny XVI–XVIII st. u pratsiakh Iaroslava Isaievycha', in *Ukraïna: kul'turna spadschyna, national'na svidmosist', derzhavnist'*, vol. 5, *PROSFONYMA. Istorychni ta filolohichni rozvdiky, prysviacheni 60-richchiu akademika Iaroslava Isaievycha*, ed. Bohdan Iakymovych (L'viv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva imeni I. Krypiakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 1998), 324.

[38] D. Aleksandrov, 'Sovietizatsiia vysshego obrazovaniia i stanovlenie sovetskoĭ nauchno-issledovatel'skoĭ sistemy', in *'Za zheleznym zanavesom': mify i realii sovetskoĭ nauki*, eds. M. Heinemann and E. Kolchynskiĭ (Sankt-Peterburg: Dmitriĭ Bulanin, 2002), 152.

soriate from teaching' and replacing it as soon as possible with a new Soviet ('red') professoriate. At the same time, there was often more research freedom in the academic institutions responsible for pure research. On the one hand, employment at the Academy was perceived as more prestigious and more 'scholarly'. On the other, the scholars of the Academy (especially scholars of the 'old' school) were usually isolated from students.

At the beginning of the 1920s, the universities in Soviet Ukraine (in Kyïv, Odesa, and Kharkiv) were turned into Institutes of People's Education (*Instytuty Narodnoï Osvity*, INO). Further INOs were opened in Ekaterinoslav (renamed Dnipropetrovs'k in 1926) and Kamianets'-Podil's'kyĭ. On 11 February 1921 Lenin signed an order founding the Institute of Red Professors, with departments of philosophy, history, and economics, in Moscow and Petrograd. The historian Mikhail Pokrovskiĭ. (1868–1932) was the head of the Institute in Moscow. The Institute of Red Professors and the Communist University existed until 1938.[39]

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Soviet authorities returned to the problem of reforming higher education and decided to retrieve the term 'university'. They planned to extend and centralize the existing system of institutions, in effect collectivizing higher education. This was exactly the purpose of the Decree of the Central Committee of the USSR of 19 September 1932. The Ukrainian version of this decree was the Decree of the government of the Ukrainian SSR 'On Organizing State Universities', which was issued on 10 March 1933. This decree allowed for the establishment of universities in Kyïv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovs'k, and Kharkiv. More precisely, the pre-existing higher education institutions in these cities were combined into universities. History teaching became obligatory in every faculty.

With the Sovietization of L'viv University in 1940, the social background of students began to be controlled, the freedom to choose specializations or exam dates was eliminated, and attendance was checked by the class representative who then delivered this information to the faculty directorate. All of this reminded the inhabitants of L'viv of rules at primary school.[40] The monitoring of L'viv University carried out towards the end of the 1940s revealed such problems as the admission of

[39] Larisa Kozlova, 'Institut krasnoĭ professury (1921–1938 gody)', *Sotsiologicheskiy zhurnal*, 1 (1994): 96–112.

[40] Grzegorz Hryciuk, *Polacy we Lwowie 1939–1944: Życie codzienne* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 2000), 128–35.

the children of "kulaks and Banderites" and the use of old textbooks containing writing by Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ. Foreign languages were taught although this was "out of touch with reality", students placed an "unhealthy overemphasis" on foreign literature when they defended their written papers and "understated the outstanding role of the great Russian scientists".[41]

The Ukrainianization of L'viv University, which turned from the University of Jan Kazimierz (the Polish king) into the University of Ivan Franko (the Ukrainian poet), meant not only its de-Polonization but also an intensive battle against the influence of the historical concepts developed by Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ.[42] With the university under the control of the Soviet system, the Institute of Social Sciences was now reassigned to it. Iaroslav Isaievych recalls how

> "the atmosphere in the system of higher education was now much tenser, and control by censors, whether self-appointed or appointed from on high, and control by means of ideological '-isms', was total and humiliating".[43]

The main task of any professor at a Soviet university was to teach. On 26 August 1940 the All-Union Committee on Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree introducing a six-hour working day, starting from 1 January the following year. The academic workload of the teaching staff was now 720–840 hours a year.[44] The decree adopted in 'wartime' became the blueprint for estimating teaching workload not only after the end of the war, but also after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In 1990, there were twenty-one history faculties in the institutions of higher education of the Ukrainian SSR. The graduates of history faculties were often employed in Party organs and the KGB, which guaranteed the

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[41] All quotes are given in: Iuriĭ Slyvka, ed., *Kul'turne zhyttia v Ukraïni: Zakhidni zemli. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1, *1939–1953* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 1995).

[42] For details see Iaroslav Dashkevych, 'Borot'ba z Hrushevs'kym ta ĭoho shkoloiu u L'vivs'komu universyteti za radians'kykh chasiv', in *Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ i ukraïns'ka istorychna nauka*, eds. Iaroslav Hrytsak and Iaroslav Dashkevych (L'viv: Instytut istorychnykh doslidzhen' LNU, 1999), 226–66.

[43] Iaroslav Isaievych, 'Ukraïns'ka istorychna nauka: orhanizatsiĭna struktura i mizhnarodni kontakty', in *Ukraïns'ka istoriohrafiia na zlami XX i XXI stolit': zdobutky i problem*, ed. Leonid Zashkil'niak (L'viv: L'vivs'kyĭ natsional'nyĭ universytet imeni I. Franka, 2004), 9.

[44] Iuliia Chekushyna, 'Vyshchi navchal'ni zaklady Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti u 1939–1941 rr.', *Humanitarnyĭ zhurnal*, 3 (2005): 4.

prestigious status of these faculties and a high level of preparation on the part of prospective students.

Dnipropetrovs'k State University (DSU) retained a special status. Thanks to the strategic importance of its Faculty of Physics and Technology, which trained specialists in top-secret rocket engineering, the university was subordinated directly to the Ministry of Education in Moscow, rather than to the Ministry in Kyïv. This created more opportunities for ideological manoeuvres. In particular, professors at DSU could print their work at their own publishing house, as opposed to using the 'Higher School' publisher controlled by both the Kyïv Ministry for Higher and Further Vocational Education and the State Committee for Publishing.

The right to publication at this internal university press was well used by Mykola Koval's'kyĭ (1929–2006), a graduate of L'viv University and holder of the Chair of Source Studies and Historiography at DSU. This chair was established in 1972 as a counterpart to the Chair for Source Studies at Moscow State University and its first analogue in Ukraine, the Chair for Historiography and Source Studies at Kharkiv University, established in 1964. Koval's'kyĭ turned his chair into Ukraine's leading centre for source studies on the history of early modern Ukraine, which was widely known in the Soviet Union and often called the Koval's'kyĭ School.[45] The phenomenon of the Koval's'kyĭ School cannot be ascribed solely to the closed status of Dnipropetrovs'k and the direct subordination of its university to Moscow. It has a lot to do with Koval's'kyĭ's personal and professional qualities: his academic motivation and his style of teaching, his interest in working with younger colleagues, and his wide-ranging academic knowledge and contacts. As a result, Mykola Koval'-s'kyĭ managed not only to survive several regime changes and ideological 'turns', but also to become the leader of probably the only Soviet Ukrainian school of historical studies.

The Higher Attestation Commission and the Granting of Academic Degrees

The Decree of 1 October 1918 of the Council of People's Commissars entitled 'On Some Changes in the Structure and Organization of State

[45] See more in Andrii Portnov and Tetiana Portnova, 'Soviet Ukrainian Historiography in Brezhnev's Closed City: Mykola / Nikolai Kovalsky and His "School" at the Dnipropetrovsk University', *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2017): 265–91.

Academia and the Institutions of Higher Education in the Russian Republic' abolished Doctoral and Master's degrees and the academic degrees of adjunct and *privat-dozent*. It dismantled the hierarchy of pre-revolutionary titles of the professoriate. Everyone teaching in universities automatically received the title of professor, whereas all the rest acquired the status of teachers.[46]

It took a long time to decide how Soviet academic degrees should be granted. In 1922, the academic degree of 'Doctor of the History of Ukrainian Culture' was introduced in Soviet Ukraine, which was an honorific recognition of scientific achievements but did not influence employment or salary. Candidates for this degree had to send their academic writing to the Scientific Committee of the People's Commissariat for Education in Kharkiv or to its subsidiaries in Kyïv, Odesa, or Dnipropetrovs'k. The Committee would organize special panels, depending on the subject of the research. In addition, the Committee would appoint reviewers who decided whether to allow the candidate a public defence. The defence took the form of an open discussion. Based on the results of the defence, the panel would grant a doctoral degree, while the Scientific Committee issued a corresponding diploma.[47]

This arrangement involved a relatively high degree of independence on the part of the specialized panels, which is why it was not sustainable in a centralized state with an official ideology. In 1932, the decision was taken at the all-Union level to establish the Higher Attestation Commission (*Vyshaia Attestatsionnaia Komissiia*, VAK) as a state agency affiliated with the Ministry of Higher and Further Vocational Education of the USSR. At the request of university committees and academic institutions the VAK was meant to grant the degrees of *kandidat nauk* (the first degree corresponding to a PhD), *doktor nauk* (the second and highest academic degree), professor, docent, and senior research fellow, and in addition to control the proceedings of the academic committees. The VAK started work in 1934.

There were several crucial features introduced with the establishment of the VAK and the first of these was the two-level structure of academic degrees (*kandidat* and *doktor nauk*). The whole system was centralized to

[46] Larisa Kozlova, ' "Bez zaschity dissertatsii": statusnaia organizatsiia obschetvennykh nauk v SSSR, 1933–1935 gody', *Sotsiologicheskiĭ zhurnal*, 2 (2001): 145–58.

[47] For details see Oksana Iurkova, 'Naukova atestatsiia istorykiv v Ukraïni: normatyvna baza ta osoblyvosti zakhystu dysertaciĭ (druha polovyna 1920-kh–1941 rr.)', *Problemy istoriï Ukraïny: fakty, sudzhennia, poshuky* 19, 2 (2010): 126–41.

the fullest possible extent and the Praesidium of the VAK was created according to the example of the all-powerful Praesidium of the Academy of Sciences and the Politburo. Requirements for dissertations were all formalized, from the arrangement of references and citations to ideological control over conclusions and stylistics. Specialized panels for the defence of theses were now introduced, with each one attached to only one institution and including permanent members. A list of VAK-approved publishing houses was created, and the publication of work there was considered an appropriate endorsement of a piece of research. From the moment of its founding until the end of the USSR, the VAK was an all-Union structure. Attestation commissions at the level of the individual republics were not allowed.

Obtaining an academic degree was relatively hard in the post-war USSR, especially the degree of *doktor nauk*. From time to time, the authorities introduced reforms which stiffened administrative or bureaucratic regulations. In particular, the decree of the all-Union VAK of 28 May 1986 'On the Utilization of Research Findings from Scientific Theses' required that each research had some 'practical importance'. In the sphere of the humanities, this requirement meant clichéd claims by researchers about the relevance of their work to the 'building of Communism' and its value for schoolbooks or syllabuses.

It was rather uncommon, but possible, to defend a *doktor nauk* thesis several times, highlighting the exceptional nature and prestige of the degree. A future full member of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Kyïv archaeologist and historian of Ancient Rus' Petro Tolochko (born 1938), defended his thesis four times – the first one in 1975 and the last (successful) one in 1980.[48] Vitaliĭ Sarbeĭ (1928–99), a Kyïv historian specializing in 19th-century history, had to defend his thesis twice because he was careless enough to mention that the "anti-tsarist publications" of Mykhaĭlo Drahomanov "resonated to a certain degree with articles written by some of the pioneers of Marxism".[49]

Since history faculties were preparing ideological personnel, they welcomed prospective students who were recommended by Party struc-

[48] Serhiĭ Bilokin', *Na zlamakh epokhy: Spohady* (Bila Tserkva: Oleksandr Pshonkivs'kyĭ , 2005), 215.

[49] Vitaliĭ Sarbeĭ, *Osnovopolozhniki makrsizma-leninizma i dooktiabr'skaia istoriografiia Ukrainy*: *Avtoreferat dissertatsii doktora istoricheskikh nauk* (Kyïv: Institut istorii AN USSR, 1971), 24–5. The second version of *Avtoreferat* published in 1972 contains no point like that.

tures, had experience of Komsomol work or had just worked after graduating from school. After obtaining their degrees, they had first to work in their field of studies for a couple of years in schools, archives, or museums. Only after that could they start their scholarly and teaching careers. The *kandidat nauk* thesis was most commonly defended after the age of 30. The average age of *doktor nauk* candidates was normally past 55.

The Singularity of Ukraine in the Soviet Historiography of the 1960s–1980s

The experience of the collectivization of academic history during the 1920s–30s showed that one way to avoid the purges was to move to Moscow, Leningrad, or another university city in Russia. Pavlo Matviievs'kyĭ (1904–87), a graduate of Dnipropetrovsk INO, moved from Kharkiv to Orenburg, where he became a professor at a local pedagogical institute. The head of the Kyïv Central Archives of Ancient Documents (*Akty*), Viktor Romanovs'kyĭ (1890–1971), first moved to Karaganda and later to Stavropol', where he also became a professor at a local pedagogical institute. After having left Ukraine, in 1955, the researcher of Podilia, Valentyn Otamanovs'kyĭ (1893–1964), published a monograph in Saratov focusing on the cities of Right Bank Ukraine in the mid-17th and 18th centuries. This monograph served as the basis for his defence of his doctoral dissertation in 1956 at Leningrad State University.

Whereas in the 1930s one had to go to Moscow or Leningrad in order to survive, in the 1960–70s individuals moved in order to defend a *doctor nauk* dissertation which was suspected of nationalism in Ukraine or not allowed for personal reasons. In 1961, Mykhaĭlo Marchenko (1902–83) defended in Moscow a dissertation based on his book *Ukrainian Historiography from Ancient Times to the Mid-19th Century* (Kyïv, 1959). In 1963, Fedir Shevchenko defended his dissertation at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. As a starting point he used a monograph on Russian–Ukrainian relations in the 17th century which had received criticism in Kyïv. In the 1970s, two graduates of L'viv University, Mykola Koval's'kyĭ and Iaroslav Isaievych, defended their *doctor nauk* dissertations on source studies at Moscow State University.

The main feature of the Ukrainian historiography of the 1970s was its isolation from international scholarship. In Ukraine there was no professional institution dealing with world history. 'Elitist' areas of historical research (Western European medieval studies, Byzantine studies, Oriental

studies, American studies[50]) were all located in institutions in Moscow or Leningrad. Historians in the republics had to deal with the history of the republics. This deformation of topics and methods, as well as the absence of a connection with international historiography, would become especially evident in the late 1980s, when Ukrainian historical scholarship and its institutions would become independent from the Union centre.

During the Brezhnev years, many of the classics of Ukrainian historiography were transferred to special library 'funds' with limited access rights. At the same time, thousands of copies of classic works of Russian history by Nikolaĭ Karamzin, Sergeĭ Solov'ëv, and Vasiliĭ Kliuchevskiĭ were reissued. This publishing policy in fact caused the Ukrainian intelligentsia to 'return to its roots' and revisit the central works of the national historical tradition in these special reserve funds, access to which was now restricted by the 'administrative-command system'. Thus, Soviet censorship shaped in many ways the process of the 'discovery' of national history in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The singularity of the historical institutions of the republic was especially evident at the end of the 1980s when Ukrainian historians would rush to change the conclusions they drew so that they concurred with the opinions not only of their colleagues from Moscow, but also of the local party apparatus. In other words, as George Grabowicz noted: "what started as a consequence of terror and administrative pressure gradually turned for many into a pattern of thinking and behaviour".[51]

The Social Status of the Historian and the Non-Conformist Arena

The social status of the professional historian in late Soviet society was relatively high, even though somewhat diminished in comparison with the 1960s. Until the early 1970s the average salary of docents was equal to the salary of middle-ranking party officials, while the directors of academic institutions could earn more than a minister. In the 1970s, the salary of research and teaching staff was lower than incomes in construction, transport, or production.[52] One of the reasons for that was a notable

[50] More on Soviet American studies see in Sergei I. Zhuk, *Soviet Americana: The Cultural History of Russian and Ukrainian Americanists* (London, New York: Tauris, 2018).

[51] Hryhoriĭ (George) Grabowich, 'Sovietyzatsiia ukraïns'koï humanistyky', *Krytyka* 1, 2 (1997).

[52] Iaremchuk, *Mynule Ukraïny* (see note 29), 139.

increase in the number of research staff. In 1956, there were only 10 *doktors nauk* in the Ukrainian SSR, whereas in 1971 there were already 154 of them. In the same year, the number of history *kandidats* reached 1,265.[53]

A decent salary, the chance of an additional job on the side or grace-and-favour housing, the possibility of being recruited into Party structures, and, simultaneously, the notably strict degree of Party control over scholarly activities and teaching – all this created a situation where, according to Serhiĭ Bilokin', working on history was as difficult as for the biblical "camel to pass through the eye of a needle".[54]

Ukrainian historians with troublesome biographies or even slightly unconventional views were forced to defend their *kandidat nauk* theses in fields complementary to history (for example, Serhiĭ Bilokin' and Oleh Kupchyns'kyĭ wrote their dissertations in philology in Moscow and Odesa respectively) or to leave Ukraine in order to obtain their degree (like Iaroslav Dashkevych, who returned to Ukraine after a spell in Stalin's labour camps and defended his thesis *Armenian Colonies in Ukraine Based on 15–16th-Century Resources and Literature* in 1963 at the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR in Yerevan).

Even though during Brezhnev's period of stabilization there were some societal currents appearing which were conducive to the creation of an academic environment, they were insufficient to prevail over a centralized and still highly ideological system. Moreover, within this system, non-conformism as well as existence as an 'independent researcher' were in practice not possible. Soviet 'disclosed' reviews had little in common with the practice of anonymous peer review. Nevertheless, there was still some space for different compromises and games with the system and this prevented the total uniformity of research strategies.

Important aspects of writing history during the Brezhnev period included the common practices of academic trips, internships in archives or museums (including the Central Archives of the USSR), and a well-organized system of shipping books and book exchange between libraries. Each of these aspects of academic life promoted academic mobility and developed communication between different centres of research.

These trends intertwined with the political and ideological demands made on history. On the one hand, a Soviet historian had to rely on the

[53] Ibid., 153.

[54] Serhiĭ Bilokin', 'Chy maiemo my istorychnu nauku?', *Literaturna Ukraïna*, 10 January 1991.

classics of Marxism-Leninism and the formal resolutions of the most recent Party congress, or at least to make a show of having done so. He or she did not have free access to some books and archival documents. On the other hand, there were strict controls over the formal quality of research. The practice of multiple editing and manuscript review not only standardized the style of writing but also minimized factual mistakes and simple negligence.

Basic principles of intra-departmental standards and hierarchy were also forming among and between certain historians. As remembered by a Moscow researcher of French history, Pavel Uvarov, even though positivism was officially criticized, it was still considered the measure of scientific dignity, whereas "the public saw an ideological message in the very choice of Byzantine aesthetics as a subject of study".[55] Nikolaĭ Koposov called this feature of Soviet history writing "the ideology of professionalism", according to which exemplary research was characterized by a technically flawless empirical analysis. While giving credit to this standpoint, Koposov insisted that the ideology of professionalism encouraged the development of empirical studies, but also nearly paralyzed intellectual theoretical work and resulted in a compromise which protected not only the scholars from the system, but also the system from the scholars.[56] In contrast with neighbouring socialist Poland, in Soviet Ukraine neither methodological pluralism nor attempts at a critical reassessment of Stalin's version of Marxism re-emerged after the end of the cult of Stalin.[57]

Nevertheless, during the Brezhnev era if one knew the rules of the ideological games in operation, one could choose to break them. A book printed in the Nazi-occupied territories might be referenced if the author intentionally 'made a mistake' with the date of publication. The works of colleagues who had been denounced (especially translations) were published under the names of those authors who were allowed to publish. "Covert opposition to an exclusive focus on the 'Russian brother' involved researching the relations of the non-Russian peoples between

[55] Kirill Kobrin and Pavel Uvarov, ' "Svoboda u istorikov poka jest": Vo vsiakom sluchae – jest' ot chego bezhat' ', *Neprikosnovennyĭ zapas* 55, 5 (2007): 39, 44. Compare the same observation about post-Stainist Polish historiography in Rafał Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL: Ani dobra, ani mądra, ani piękna... ale skomplikowana. Studia i szkice* (Warszawa: TRIO, 2007), 193, 209.

[56] Nikolaĭ Koposov, *Khvatit ubivat' koshek! Kritika sotsial'nykh nauk* (Moscow: NLO, 2005), 168–9, 192.

[57] Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL* (see note 55), 66.

themselves".[58] These methods of survival and this Aesopian language are important topics for special research. No less important were individual instances of a more open non-conformism. Iaroslav Dzyra, sacked from the Institute of History, wrote proudly about himself: "I have not worked a single day for eleven years, and for seventeen years I have not written a single line without submitting to the KGB threats of becoming a secret informant".[59] Iaroslav Dashkevych conveyed a similar thought in a different way:

> "Even though seven of the best years of my youth were spent in prisons and special camps, they are what formed me as a citizen. Even though sixteen years were lost to unemployment, paradoxically it is this that made me a scholar."[60]

Examples of such obvious opposition are rare. Iaroslav Isaievych said of Fedir Shevchenko, dismissed from the position of Director of the Institute of Archaeology in 1972, that he "was good at making only the most necessary concessions" and "at standing up for questions of fundamental importance as much as possible".[61] One of the tools used for standing up for certain views were quotations from Lenin – another aspect of 'dialectical tightrope walking'. On 30 May 1959 Ivan Kryp''iakevych wrote to Shevchenko: "Lenin should be used sparingly and only for the most important points, not on practically every page".[62]

Even though the games historians played with the authorities had evident limitations and the majority of researchers were not involved in them, it seems important to highlight their existence and the existence of this dialogue, even if it was unequal.[63] When it comes to the Sovietization

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[58] Iaroslav Isaievych, *Ukraïns'ke knyhovydannia*, (L'viv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva imeni I. Kryp''iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 2002) 181.

[59] Iaroslav Dzyra, 'Chvert' stolittia poruch', in *Istoryk Olena Kompan: Materialy do biohrafii*, ed. Iaroslav Kompan (Kyïv: Kyievo-Mohylians'ka Akademiia, 2007), 457.

[60] Iaroslav Dashkevych, *'...Uchy nelozhnymy ustamy skazaty pravdu': Istorychna eseïstyka (1989–2008)* (Kyïv: Tempora, 2011), 295.

[61] Iaroslav Isaievych, 'Fedir Pavlovych: spohady ĭ rozdumy', in *'Istynu vstanovliuie sud istorii'* (see note 27), 177.

[62] *Ukraïna*, vol. 8., (see note 33), 525.

[63] More on subjectivity of Ukrainian Soviet intelligentsia in its dialogue with the authorities see Serhy Yekelchyk, 'How the "Iron Minister" Kaganovich Failed to Discipline Ukrainian Historians: A Stalinist Ideological Campaign Reconsidered', *Nationalities Papers* 27, 4 (1999): 579–604; Serhy Yekelchyk, 'Stalinist Patriotism as Imperial Discourse: Reconciling the Ukrainian and Russian "Heroic Pasts", 1939–45', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, 1 (2002): 51–80.

of scholarship, returning to the matter of choice poses the very important question of the responsibility of historians, both individually and collectively. This is only possible when one steps aside from the simplistic (though morally convenient) image of the authorities as holistic, alien, antagonistic forces concentrated in one place, the borders of which are fixed and not in doubt.[64] Posing the question about responsibility and choice should not detract from the obvious fact that the writing of history, just like the whole of Soviet society, fell victim to the communist system. The research problem and the moral problem lies in the fact that it became *not only* a victim.

The Challenges of Perestroika

Rapid social and political processes of the end of the 1980s created circumstances for historians which made it difficult to keep up with the changing political climate. At the same time, the freedom to express one's thoughts (if any) now arose. In 1991, a leading Soviet medievalist, Aron Gurevich (1924–2006), described the methodology of Soviet historiography as "a hybrid of poorly-understood Marxism with the positivism which preceded it".[65]

The methodology of Ukrainian Soviet historiography constituted an even more interesting mixture: elements of the 19th-century populist movement and of Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ's historical scheme, adapted in the Soviet manner and forced to conform not only to the strictures of Marxism-Leninism but also to a very particular 'Russo-centrism', by means of which the history of the Ukrainian nation was viewed through its "logical development" towards "reunification" with Russia, which was always described as "progressive".[66]

Most Ukrainian historians could not keep pace with Perestroika. Recalling those years, Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyĭ (born 1937) wrote honestly that he himself and most of his colleagues lagged behind in this rapidly evolving environment and their works were out of date before they ever

[64] Aleksandr Etkind, *Non-fiction po-russki Pravda: Kniga otzyvov* (Moscow: NLO, 2007), 243.

[65] Aron Gurevich, 'O krizise sovremennoĭ istoricheskoĭ nauki', *Voprosy istorii*, 2–3 (1991): 24.

[66] For more details see Stepan Velychenko, 'Perebudova ta mynule nerosiĭs'kykh narodiv', *Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal* 36, 4 (1992): 93.

reached the reader.[67] The first positive article about Mykhaĭlo Hrushevs'kyĭ was published not in Ukraine, but in the Moscow newspaper *Izvestiia* (12 February 1988).[68] The very fact of the Great Famine of 1932–3 was first recognized in the Moscow journal *Communist* in November 1987.[69]

Ukrainian historians would drastically change their evaluations and topics of research in the course of a few months.[70] They were unable to satisfy the enormous public interest in history. In practice they gave way to their predecessors, whose works had been prohibited during the Soviet period. A real bestseller, with more than a hundred thousand copies printed, was *Ukraine: A History* by the Canadian scholar Orest Subtelny (1941–2016), published in English in 1988. This most modern and accurate *History* by Subtelny became a basic school and university textbook for several years.

Important historical source materials were printed in the newspaper *Literary Ukraine*, published by the Writers Union of Ukraine. The famous article by Serhiĭ Bilokin' (born 1948), 'Do We Have Such a Thing as Academic History?', was first published in this newspaper.[71] The author of the work, a major bibliographer and a source study specialist, was not accepted into the graduate school of the Institute of History in the 1970s; in 1978, he defended a PhD thesis in philology in Moscow on the topic *The Subject and Objectives of Literary Source Studies*. Later, he was fired from the Central Scientific Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR.

In his programmatic article Serhiĭ Bilokin' openly and ruthlessly acknowledged the severe centralization of academic history and noted that it had turned into a part of the state machinery of repression. He did not, however, offer any integral institutional solutions. In the section of the article headed "Is there hope?", Bilokin' intuitively highlighted the critical importance of the "self-development of academic research" and its liberation from the suffocating dictates of ideology. He simultaneously under-

[67] Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyĭ , 'Istoriia i chas. Rozdumy istoryka', *Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal* 36, 4 (1992): 10.

[68] S. Tsikora, 'K chitateliu cherez polveka', *Izvestiia*, 12 February 1988.

[69] V. Danilov, 'Oktiabr' i agrarnaia politika partii', *Kommunist* 64, 16 (1987): 28–38.

[70] See more in Henadiĭ Iefimenko, 'Rol' "Ukraïns'koho istorychnoho zhurnalu" u vysvitlenni "bilykh pliam" istoriĭ Ukraïny (1988–1991 rr.)', *Ukraïns'kyĭ istorychnyĭ zhurnal* 51, 6 (2007): 93–118.

[71] Bilokin', 'Chy maiemo' (see note 54).

lined that "the sole warrant for the existence of Ukrainian academic history is a national state. Without a Ukrainian state there can be no Ukrainian history".[72]

This intellectual oppositionist made an accurate diagnosis of the disease afflicting scholarship, but he was perplexed about possible methods of treatment. He expressed hope in the self-organizing and emancipatory role of "sacred liberty", although he himself wrote that any attempt by a Ukrainian Soviet historian to rise from empiricism to generalization meant "inevitable ideologization". Most historians had "never failed the system" they faithfully served. Bilokin' did not see the risks in preserving the institutional structure of late Soviet academia and nor did he mention the VAK (the Higher Attestation Commission) or university autonomy. Neither did the Ukrainian diaspora offer a deliberate programme of institutional reform when it took over from Moscow the role of mediator between Ukrainian historians and international academia during the first years of independence. The grant programmes of foreign Ukrainian institutions (to begin with, the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies in Edmonton) were aimed at forming the new scholarly elite of Ukraine. The first grant-holders started to play key roles in Ukrainian intellectual life.

The events of 20–24 August 1991 had a decisive influence on the legal formalization of the dissolution of the USSR. On 26 August 1991 the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet decided to discontinue the work of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the territory of Ukraine. On 30 August the Communist Party was banned. Numerous historians of the Party were no longer needed and many of them quickly redirected their career paths into researching and promoting the 'Ukrainian national idea'. Within a year-and-a-half to two years, former historians of the Party blended in with the rest of the historians in Ukraine. The appeal from Orest Subtelny not to give up Marxism in too much haste[73] was not heeded by anyone.

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Ukrainian Soviet historiography was heterogeneous and dynamic despite all attempts by the authorities (especially in the era of Stalin) to collectiv-

[72] Ibid.

[73] Orest Subtelny, 'The Current State of Ukrainian Historiography', *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 18, 1–2 (1993): 42.

ize and ideologize it. On the one hand, the history of Ukraine, as well as the very words 'Ukraine' and 'Ukrainian' were finally legitimized within the Soviet system. On the other hand, this legitimization took place under strict control involving physical repression and bans on the mention of certain names and books. Despite the severity of the battle against 'Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism', the Soviet version of Ukrainian history was national history wrapped in Marxist-Leninist packaging. The history of the Ukrainian SSR was studied and taught as the history of the Ukrainian nation from prehistoric times to the present.[74]

The Soviet authorities managed to eliminate academic solidarity and to make the universities and the Academy not simply dependent on the government, but rather an organic part of the state machinery. Even though we should in no way minimize the scope and extent of state repressions, it would be unfair to turn a blind eye to the academicians' involvement in and sometimes even their initiation of certain government actions. In this context, the image of Soviet academia as a collective victim of totalitarianism must be seriously reviewed.

Having inherited centralized academic institutions divided into the two separate branches of universities and research institutes, Ukraine chose the path of filling them with new ideological content rather than implementing painful systemic institutional reforms. It was this choice which explains the readiness to change flags and which was hastily and snobbishly characterized by most historians as a change in research methodology alongside the maintenance of a deeply Soviet institutional status quo. Recent dissidents were almost painlessly reintegrated back into the system that had previously excluded them. Deprived of any mechanisms of internal control, historical studies preferred not to reflect on its complex Soviet past. The historical profession rapidly lost its social status and now faced the challenges of physical survival and interaction with an increasingly commercialized international scientific community.

[74] For comparative perspective on the same tendencies in socialist Polish, Czech, and East German historiographies see Maciej Górny, *Przede wszystkim ma być naród: Marksistowskie historiografie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej* (Warszawa: TRIO, 2007).