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MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„The Limits of Rural Mobilization: A Historiographical
Evaluation of the Peasant Insurgent Movement in Ukraine,
1917-1922“

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2023/ Vienna 2023

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on the
student record sheet:

A 992 940

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme as it appears on the
student record sheet:

Internationale Studien / International Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Thomas Row



diplomatische
akademie **wien**
Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Abstract

This thesis evaluates how historians have conceptualized and interpreted the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine, an important yet often neglected topic in Ukrainian history that occurred roughly between 1918 and 1922. Specifically, it answers the research question: how have historians assessed the relative impact that the socioeconomic and political interests of the peasants played in fomenting the insurgency and to what extent did the issue of national consciousness exert an influence on their activities? In answer to this question, this thesis argues that while historians have continued to attribute the insurgency to the socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasantry, namely, their demands for radical agrarian reform and political autonomy, they have not adequately assessed the role that national consciousness might have played in this event, thus leaving an important gap in the historiography. This thesis adopts an interdisciplinary approach based on a combination of both historical and theoretical methodologies. First it provides a historical background on the specific socioeconomic, political, and national factors that contributed to the emergence of the insurgency in 1918 by analyzing their development over the *long durée*. In particular, it looks at the impact that the russification policies of the Russian Empire and the processes of industrialization had on the development of the Ukrainian national movement between 1863 and 1917, arguing that both led to the movement's estrangement from its core constituency, the peasantry. Second, the study then analyzes the main historical developments of the insurgency between 1918 and 1922. After this, the thesis evaluates the English language historiography of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine, arguing that most historians continue to evaluate the insurgency from the perspective of the peasants' socioeconomic and political interests, while neglecting the possible role that their national consciousness might have played. Building off this point, this thesis then analyzes aspects of the insurgency from the modernization theory of nationalism, specifically the ideas of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and John Breuilly, in order to highlight the specific conceptual and historical problems that modernization theory poses to the study of the insurgents' national consciousness, the main finding being that the peasant insurgent movement existed outside the main currents of modernization (e.g., mass-literacy, industrialization, etc.), which adversely affected its national consciousness.

Key Words:

Peasant insurgent movement, Ukraine, Ukrainian Revolution, Historiography

Abstrakt

In dieser Arbeit wird untersucht, wie Historiker die bäuerliche Aufstandsbewegung in der Ukraine konzeptualisiert und interpretiert haben, ein wichtiges, aber oft vernachlässigtes Thema in der ukrainischen Geschichte, das etwa zwischen 1918 und 1922 stattfand. Konkret beantwortet sie die Forschungsfrage: Wie haben Historiker die relativen Auswirkungen dieser Bewegung eingeschätzt? Welche sozioökonomischen und politischen Interessen der Bauern spielten bei der Auslösung des Aufstands eine Rolle, und inwieweit hatte die Frage des Nationalbewusstseins einen Einfluss auf ihre Aktivitäten? Als Antwort auf diese Frage wird in dieser These argumentiert, dass Historiker den Aufstand zwar weiterhin den sozioökonomischen und politischen Anliegen der Bauernschaft zugeschrieben haben, nämlich ihren Forderungen nach einer radikalen Agrarreform und politischer Autonomie, die Rolle des Nationalbewusstseins jedoch nicht angemessen eingeschätzt haben könnte bei diesem Ereignis eine Rolle gespielt haben und so eine wichtige Lücke in der Geschichtsschreibung hinterlassen haben. Diese Arbeit verfolgt einen interdisziplinären Ansatz, der auf einer Kombination sowohl historischer als auch theoretischer Methoden basiert. Zunächst bietet es einen historischen Hintergrund zu den spezifischen sozioökonomischen, politischen und nationalen Faktoren, die zur Entstehung des Aufstands im Jahr 1918 beitrugen, indem deren Entwicklung über einen langen Zeitraum hinweg analysiert wird. Insbesondere geht es um die Auswirkungen, die die Russifizierungspolitik des Russischen Reiches und die Industrialisierungsprozesse auf die Entwicklung der ukrainischen Nationalbewegung zwischen 1863 und 1917 hatten, und argumentiert, dass beides zur Entfremdung der Bewegung von ihrer Kerngruppe, der Bauernschaft, führte. Zweitens analysiert die Studie dann die wichtigsten historischen Entwicklungen des Aufstands zwischen 1918 und 1922. Anschließend bewertet die Arbeit die englischsprachige Geschichtsschreibung der bäuerlichen Aufstandsbewegung in der Ukraine und argumentiert, dass die meisten Historiker den Aufstand weiterhin aus der Perspektive der Aufständischen bewerten. Die sozioökonomischen und politischen Interessen der Bauern wurden berücksichtigt, während die mögliche Rolle, die ihr Nationalbewusstsein gespielt haben könnte, außer Acht gelassen wurde. Aufbauend auf diesem Punkt analysiert diese Arbeit dann Aspekte des Aufstands aus der Modernisierungstheorie des Nationalismus, insbesondere die Ideen von Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson und John Breuilly, um die spezifischen konzeptionellen und historischen Probleme hervorzuheben, die die Modernisierungstheorie für den Aufstand mit sich bringt. Untersuchung des nationalen Bewusstseins der Aufständischen. Das Hauptergebnis war, dass die aufständische Bauernbewegung außerhalb der Hauptströmungen der Modernisierung (z. B. Massenkompentenz, Industrialisierung usw.) existierte, was sich negativ auf ihr nationales Bewusstsein auswirkte.

Schlagwörter:

Aufständische Bauernbewegung, Ukraine, Ukrainische Revolution, Historiographie

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Introduction

The peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine, which occurred roughly between 1918 and 1922 during the height of the Ukrainian Revolution and Russian Civil War, was one of the most consequential events in contemporary Ukrainian history. Despite ending over a century ago, the legacy of the insurgency continues to raise fundamental historical questions about the development of Ukrainian national consciousness and the factors leading to the demise of the Ukrainian People's Republic during this time period. Moreover, given the fact that most of the fighting in the current Russo-Ukrainian War overlaps almost completely the geographical scope of the peasant insurgent movement, underscores the importance of understanding the deep history of Ukrainian armed resistance and how this might impact its current attempts to defend its independence and territorial integrity against Russian aggression. As a historiographical study, this thesis will answer the following research question focusing on the English language historiography of the insurgency: *how have historians conceptualized and evaluated the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine and how have they assessed the relative impact that socioeconomic, political, national factors had on the development and demise of the insurgency?* In response to this question, this thesis will argue that while historians have continued to attribute the insurgency to the socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasantry, namely, their demands for radical agrarian reform and political autonomy, they have not adequately assessed the role that national consciousness might have played in this event, thus leaving an important gap in the historiography. In pursuit of this objective, this thesis adopts an interdisciplinary approach based on a combination of both historical and theoretical methodologies. The first chapter provides a historical background on the specific socioeconomic, political, and national factors that contributed to the emergence of the insurgency in 1918 by analyzing their development over the *long durée*. In particular, this section looks at the impact that the russification policies of the Russian Empire and the processes of industrialization had on the development of the Ukrainian national movement between 1863 and 1917, arguing that both led to the movement's estrangement from its core constituency, the peasantry. Secondly, the study then analyzes the main historical developments of the insurgency between 1918 and 1922. In the second chapter, attention is given to analyzing the English language

historiography of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine, In the third chapter, this study then seeks to expand on this finding by analyzing the insurgency from the modernization theory of nationalism, specifically based on the works of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and John Breuilly. In particular, it seeks to highlight the specific conceptual and historical problems that modernization theory poses to the study of the insurgents' national consciousness—issues that might hopefully guide future historical research on this question.

Chapter 1: History of the Peasant Insurgent Movement in Ukraine (1917-1922)

Section 1.1: Introduction-The Periodization of the Peasant Insurgent Movement

While some historians prefer to date the emergence of the peasant insurgent movement between April and June 1918, that is, to the period immediately following the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Central Powers, when the occupying forces of the latter succeeded in consolidating their military control over Ukraine's main population and industrial centers, others tend to situate its origins during the first phases of the Ukrainian Revolution in March 1917.¹ The difference between these dating schemes is essentially one of emphasis, not substance; and an argument can be made that both are crucial to understanding the main developments and trajectories of the insurgency. For example, while it is true that the armed insurgency against the Austro-German occupation forces began only in spring 1918, it did not emerge *ex nihilo*, but rather out of the revolutionary milieu that arose between founding of the Central Rada in March 1917 and the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in early 1918. Thus, it would be difficult to analyze the early organizational activities and developments of the insurgency without accounting for the period between 1917 and early 1918, when the complete breakdown in governmental authority in the countryside, combined with the influx of arms and soldiers returning from the Eastern Front (also geographically situated in Ukraine), led to the creation of armed formations amongst the peasants. As will be discussed further below, the emergence of these bands would not only prove consequential in establishing and maintaining the political autonomy of the countryside vis-à-vis the main revolutionary centers of Kyiv, Petrograd, and Moscow throughout the subsequent period of the Russian Civil War (1918-1921), but also to the various foreign interventions that occurred during this time, including the French expedition in Odesa. Therefore, any attempt to analyze the peasant insurgent movement must account for this earlier formative period between 1917 and 1918.

Historians also tend to offer contrasting interpretations regarding the end date of the movement—a period which they situate roughly between 1920 and 1922.²

¹ For an illustration of these differences, see Palij 1976 and Adams 1977.

² Palij 1976; Adams 1977; Musial 2015.

These differences mainly hinge on the relative importance that they assign to the four major events which contributed to the insurgency's disintegration. The first of these relates to the collapse of the Volunteer Army under General Wrangel in 1920. The consequences that this unleashed on the tenuous military "alliance" between the Bolsheviks and the peasant insurgents, especially the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine under Nestor Makhno, were strategically profound. No longer threatened by the advance of the White Movement in Southern Russia and Ukraine in 1920, the Bolsheviks were finally given a free hand to dispense with their erstwhile alliance with Makhno and his allied peasant factions, which they subsequently labelled as counterrevolutionary "bandits."³ This abrupt change redirected the focus of the insurgency against the Bolsheviks, whose merciless food and material acquisition activities under "War Communism" posed a serious threat to their existence. In order to combat the peasant insurgency and consolidate their political and military control over Ukraine, the Bolsheviks established a special taskforce in late December 1920, named the Commission for the Liquidation of Banditry in Ukraine, which was composed of units drawn from the Cheka, Red Army, and internal security forces.⁴ Between 1921 and 1922, this taskforce engaged in a ruthless counterinsurgency campaign against the remaining Ukrainian peasant partisans, which included acts like hostage-taking, summary executions, and the destruction of villages.⁵ Ultimately, these measures contributed to the degradation of the insurgency, which ceased to exist in any significant capacity by 1922. The second factor which historians attribute to the demise of the peasant insurgent movement was the outbreak of the famine between 1921 and 1922.⁶ As part of the broader famine that engulfed other rural areas of Russia, such as the middle Volga region and the Urals, this widespread starvation played a critical role in undermining the remaining peasant resistance in the Ukrainian countryside by denying them the necessary sustenance to carry on their struggle.⁷ Although somewhat indirect and related more to the international situation of Ukraine, the third factor that scholars

³ Bogdan Musial, "The Ukrainian Policy of Bolshevik Russia, 1917-1922," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1921*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 339-340.

⁴ Ibid., 340.

⁵ Ibid., 341.

⁶ Ibid., 343.

⁷ Jonathan D. Smiele, *The "Russian" Civil Wars 1916-1926: Ten Years That Shook the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 214-215.

attribute to the defeat of the peasant insurgent in Ukraine was the signing of the Treaty of Riga in 1921 between the Second Polish Republic and Soviet Ukraine and Russia. The treaty arose out of the negotiations to end the Soviet-Polish War in 1920 that threatened to spread the Bolshevik Revolution to Central Europe. The signing of the treaty led to serious diplomatic repercussions for the international status of Ukraine, at that time still nominally represented by the Ukrainian People's Republic under Symon Petliura, the leader of the Directory. The main consequence was that it formally rescinded Poland's recognition of the Ukrainian People's Republic, which the latter had secured under the Treaty of Warsaw in 1920. This treaty not only laid the basis for diplomatic relations between the two countries, but it also established the foundations of a military alliance that the Ukrainian People's Republic needed to oust the Bolsheviks from Ukraine.⁸ However, after the failure of the joint Polish-Ukrainian Offensive in spring 1920 (the allies succeeded in capturing Kyiv, but were unable to maintain control over the city and its surroundings) and the subsequent Bolshevik defeat in Warsaw (the so-called "Miracle on Wisła"), the Poles did not have the diplomatic will or capacity to maintain their relations with the Ukrainian People's Republic and instead extended their recognition to Soviet Ukraine, itself an official signatory to the treaty along with Soviet Russia.⁹ In relation to the peasant insurgent movement, the signing of the treaty transformed what was essentially a contested international issue into a purely internal matter for the Bolsheviks. This shift consequently left the peasant insurgents with little external recourse to continue their resistance between the remainder of 1921 and 1922. The fourth and final factor that historians attribute to demise of the peasant insurgent movement was the implementation of the New Economic Policy in 1921 and the absorption of Soviet Ukraine into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in December 1922. As will be discussed further below, the combination of these events rescinded the much-hated food and material acquisitions of "War Communism," while depriving the peasants of any possible political alternative to Soviet Rule, either in the form of the Ukrainian People's Republic or the anarchist federation envisaged by Nestor Makhno and his Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine.

⁸ Michael Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919-1921* (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press), 70-75.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

These contrasting interpretations have traditionally prevented scholars from developing an exact periodization of the insurgent movement. The most unfortunate example of this is Arthur E. Adams, who fails to provide any formulation beyond a basic timeline (e.g. from 1918 to 1920).¹⁰ The most coherent effort to provide a precise periodization remains that of historian Michael Palij, who divides the insurgency into three consecutive phases: the first lasting until the summer of 1918 to early 1919; the second extending from 1919 to the end of 1920; and the third concluding after 1920.¹¹ While this temporal framework succeeds in capturing the main stages of the movement, its lack of specificity partially undermines its utility. Not only does it fail to provide an exact start date, but it also fails to account for the significant inflection points in the insurgency's development, such as the struggle against the Austro-German occupation forces and the Hetmanate (March to December 1918) and its resistance against the Volunteer Army and Bolsheviks (December 1918 to 1920). As will be argued in more detail below, the period between 1918 and 1920 marked a critical transitional and transformational phase for the insurgency, which went from being a native resistance movement against the occupying forces of Austria-Hungary and Germany to a de facto belligerent actor in the civil war between the White Movement and Red Army. Similarly, the last phase of the movement (1920 to 1922) noted an even more dramatic and, some might argue, tragic dimension in its evolution, which fatefully pitted the insurgency against the overwhelming forces of the Bolsheviks. Given the importance of these major transitional and transformational phases, any attempt to provide an exact periodization of the conflict must therefore take these into account.

Taking the above points into consideration, the current study will adhere to the following periodization of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine. The first phase will encompass the insurgency's activities and evolution from March to December 1918, when it directed its resistance against the Austro-German occupying forces and the Hetmanate. The rationale behind this formulation is that provides a certain degree of historical continuity between the insurgency's main activities against the Central Powers and its assistance to the Directory's insurrection against

¹⁰ Arthur E. Adams, "The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 247.

¹¹ Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno, 1918-1921: A Study in Revolution* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press), 42.

the Hetmanate in late autumn 1918. The second phase will then focus on the insurgency's development during the Civil War between late 1918 to 1920. Specific attention in this phase will be given to its activities against the White Movement, Red Army, and the French expedition in the south of Ukraine, as well as the development of the *Makhnovshchina*. The third and final phase under consideration will be the period between 1920 and 1922, which resulted in the defeat of the insurgency by the Bolsheviks and the outbreak of the famine in the countryside.

While the above periodization will act as the main temporal framework of this study, other time periods will be considered in order to provide additional historical context. The first of these will focus on the period between 1863 and 1917, highlighting the main historical events and developments that shaped the Ukrainian peasantry at the turn of the century. Following this, the second phase will focus on the first period of the Ukrainian Revolution from March 1917 to the Skoropadsky coup d'état in April 1918.

Section 1.2.1: Political, Cultural, and Socioeconomic Background (1863-1917)

Before delving straight into the history of the peasant insurgent movement, this section will first analyze the political, cultural, and socioeconomic developments that affected the Ukrainian peasantry between 1863 and 1917. The purpose of this is to identify the main conditions that led to the emergence of the insurgency in spring 1918, including Tsarist "russification" policy in the western borderlands, the Ukrainian national movement, the effects of industrialization, and the "national" consciousness of the Ukrainian peasants.

Section 1.2.2: "Russification" and its Discontents (1863-1917)

The peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine did not emerge spontaneously out of a vacuum in early 1918 but rather reflected the distinct socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions that developed over the *long durée* in the western borderland regions of the Russian Empire. During the 19th century, the western borderlands encompassed a vast territory that included most of modern-day Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine. While a more comprehensive evaluation would ideally begin with the final incorporation of these lands in the 18th century, that is, following the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in

1772, 1793, and 1795, and the annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783, a better start date would be the year 1863. The reason for this is relatively straightforward. The year 1863 marked a critical juncture in the history of the western borderlands due to the outbreak of the January Uprising and the beginning of the Tsarist Empire's policy of "russification." As will be argued further below, both these events would have an enormous impact on the Ukrainian peasantry.

Throughout most of the 19th century, the Russian Empire experienced major administrative and policy difficulties in controlling the various groups that inhabited the regions of the western borderlands due to their immense ethno-national, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity. Indeed, as historian Theodore R. Weeks writes in his study on the policy of "russification" between 1863 and 1914, the imperial bureaucracy was often unable to control the various consequences that its policies unleashed:

To complicate matters, St. Petersburg could not deal with one nationality at a time; restrictive measures aimed at one nationality necessarily had effects—some foreseen, indeed planned; others unexpected and undesired—on the other national groups living in the same area. Thus, for example, by forbidding the Poles to acquire landed property in the Western Provinces in the aftermath of the uprising of 1863, the imperial government unwittingly encouraged German colonists to settle in this area. Similarly, the anti-Jewish "temporary laws" in the interior of the empire had the effect of encouraging Jews to move to the Kingdom of Poland, where Jews had enjoyed quasi-equal rights since 1862. It was inevitable that Jews would be attracted from the restrictive, economically backward Pale to the Kingdom of Poland, where they enjoyed in a large measure civil equality and where economic opportunities existed.¹²

Out of all the national groups located in these regions, the Poles represented the greatest threat to the integrity of the Russian Empire. At this point in the mid-19th century, the term "Pole" referred mostly to the members of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility and did not necessarily extend to the vast Polish-speaking peasantry in the countryside—a constituency which was often more favorably disposed to the Russian government. Due to the diverse backgrounds of the nobility (prominent members like Adam Czartoryski, Józef Piłsudski, Tadeusz Kościuszko, and Adam Mickiewicz possessed a mixture of Polish, Lithuanian, and Ruthenian ancestry), the term "Pole" had more of a political connotation than an ethno-national one, which, according to some Tsarist officials, implied "a sort of inbred opposition to the

¹² Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 70-71.

Russian government.”¹³ This national identity, which would subsequently become more socially and politically inclusive of the Polish-speaking peasantry throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, made the Tsarist government skeptical of the Poles and their loyalty to the Russian Empire. The immense turmoil unleashed by the November and January Uprisings between 1830 and 1863 obviously did much to vindicate this suspicion. In addition to these sentiments, the Tsarist government also harbored concerns regarding the Poles’ political and cultural influence on the East Slavic peasantry. From the ideological standpoint of the Saint Petersburg, the East Slavs were divided into three constituent groups based on their spoken dialects. These main groups included the Great Russians (modern-day Russians), Little Russians (modern-day Ukrainians), and White Russians (modern-day Belarusians). Both in principle and practice, however, the Tsarist government often officially ignored the differences between these groups, opting instead to view them as part of a triune “Russian” nation. The predominance of the Great Russians in this conceptualization permitted the imperial authorities to relegate the latter two groups to a subordinate status. In the case of the Little Russians, the Tsarist authorities feared that their distinctiveness, which some Little Russians themselves attributed to their own unique “Ukrainian” national identity, would lead to the creation of a secessionist movement that could undermine the territorial integrity of the imperial state. Due to the perceived severity of this threat, many within the Russian government sought to denigrate the separate status of this Little Russian/Ukrainian identity. Indeed, as Reeks notes:

Russians often claimed that Ukrainian (for them, always “Little Russian”) was a dialect of the “all-Russian” tongue, and Ukrainians were a branch of the Russian people. According to this scheme, Ukrainian activists (usually referred to as Ukrainophiles) were depicted as political intriguers, much more interested in pressing forward their own political programs than in any actual benefit for the Little Russian people. Such Russian writers usually claimed that the Ukrainian language was an artificial creation and that peasants of, say, Poltava Province understood Russian far more easily than the Ukrainian language cooked up by intellectuals in Lvov.¹⁴

Given the influence that many Polish nobles had over their Ukrainian peasants, the Russian government was seriously alarmed that an analogously hostile national consciousness could emerge among them. A similar concern was shared for the numerous White Russian (Belarusian) peasants under the control of Polish

¹³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴ Ibid., 123-124.

landowners, albeit in a slightly different manner. While the imperial authorities were not worried about the growth of a separate Belarusian national identity, they were concerned that the inordinately high number of Uniates and Catholics among the peasantry could make them favorably disposed to Polish assimilation.¹⁵ This underscored the weakness of this triune identity, which, although permitting a certain degree of flexibility with regards to dialect, did not offer the same for religious affiliation. This consequently made the possibility of a Catholic Russian or Belarusian not just something that was ideologically odious but also conceptually impossible.

In response to the January Uprising of 1863, the Tsarist government began to pursue a concerted policy of “russification” in the western borderlands—a process which lasted in various strides until the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1905, before returning between 1914 and 1917 during World War I. While historians generally agree on the main aspects of this policy, some disagreement remains regarding its official terminology and objectives. Indeed, as Weeks recounts in his study, the term “russification” (*obrusenie*) was often seldom used in the period immediately following the insurrection, with Tsarist officials instead showing a preference for the words *sblizhenie* and *sliianie*, which respectively mean “bringing near/drawing together” and “merging.”¹⁶ According to Weeks, the use of these alternatives possibly reflected “a deep desire to emphasize unity and order over any kind of activist cultural offensive.”¹⁷ Although members of the government began to use the term “russification” more frequently in the second half of the 19th century, they never elaborated on its official definition.¹⁸ Thus, the meaning of the term could vary based on the context, with possible interpretations ranging from “the establishment of order, a spreading of Russian as a second language, or even the instilling state patriotism and dynastic loyalty.”¹⁹

In the case of the Poles, the policy of “russification” mainly implied the denial of certain political, linguistic, and cultural rights, such as the removal of Congress Poland’s distinctive administrative status (the region was hereby referred to

¹⁵ Ibid., 126.

¹⁶ Theodore R. Weeks, “Russification: Word and Practice 1863-1914,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 148, no. 4 (December 2004): 479.

¹⁷ Ibid., 479.

¹⁸ Ibid., 488.

¹⁹ Ibid., 489.

as the Vistula Land), the banning of Polish landowners from purchasing property in the Western Provinces, the confiscation of property belonging to the Catholic Church, and the elimination of the Polish language in official documents, store signs, and public use.²⁰ The rationale behind these restrictive measures was not necessarily to “russify” the Poles out of existence, an objective that most Tsarist officials considered impossible even if desirable. This view was even shared among some of the more reactionary Russian officials, including Mikhail Muraviev-Vilensky, who took the leading role in the repression following the uprising, thus earning him the appellation, “The Hangman of Wilno.” The primary objective was mainly to curtail the influence of institutions like the Catholic Church and the nobility, which Tsarist officials held responsible for inciting the uprising.²¹ By implementing these restrictions, the government hoped to prevent the outbreak of future insurrections, an outcome that they successfully maintained until the 1905 Revolution. The effects of this “russification” policy on the Poles was profound. Reeling from the shock and horror of their defeat, many Polish leaders and intellectuals began to advocate for an abandonment of armed confrontation with the Tsarist regime and to focus instead on more non-violent forms of political and national development.²² The two movements that arose out of this decision were positivism and *ugoda*.²³ The former advocated a policy of economic growth, non-confrontational cultural development, and gradual political change, whereas the latter encouraged the Poles to become faithful subjects of the Russian Empire in order to maintain their cultural, linguistic, and political rights.²⁴ Both of these movements lasted in various forms until the 1905 Revolution, which saw a dramatic return to the revolutionary tradition that characterized the period between 1795 and 1863. One of the most significant consequences of this “russification” policy was that it diminished the cultural and political attractiveness of the Polish nationality to the surrounding Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian peasants. In other words, by placing the above restrictions on the Poles, the Russian government inadvertently provided the possibility for these groups to pursue their own national projects independent of Polish influence, even though they were also

²⁰ Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 98-99.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

²² *Ibid.*, 112.

²³ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

subjected to this policy of “russification.” By 1917, it was clear that this unintended cultural opening had a profound impact on all three of these national groups, whose political leaders vehemently rejected Polish attempts to take control of their movements and to deprive them of the territories that they intended for their own independent Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian states.

In contrast to the policy described above, which did not aspire completely to eradicate the national identity of the Poles (an outcome which most Tsarist officials considered infeasible even if desirable), it was the intention of the Russian government between 1863 and 1905 to “russify” the vast amount Ukrainian and Belarusian peasants inhabiting the western borderlands. Since the Russian government did not acknowledge the Little Russians and White Russians as separate national groups, but rather as constituent entities forming an integral, triune “Russian” nation, it viewed any attempts on the part of the latter to assert their national distinctiveness as tantamount to secessionism and treason. Indeed, given the successful development of Ukrainian national identity in Austrian Galicia, an area which would subsequently transform into a kind-of Ukrainian “Piedmont” due to its role as a refuge for Ukrainian intellectuals from Tsarist Russia and as potential nucleus for a Ukrainian national state, the Russian government was convinced that any expressions of “Ukrainian” identity, as opposed to the state-sanctioned, assimilationist “Little Russian” one, were simply the byproducts of either foreign or domestic intrigue.²⁵ After the outbreak of the January Uprising in 1863, Tsarist officials sought to prohibit activities that might lead to the development of a separatist “Ukrainian” national consciousness. Issued in July 1863 during the height of the uprising, the first of these measures, the so-called Valuyev Circular (named after the Russian minister of internal affairs Pyotr Valuyev), explicitly forbade the publication of any secular or religious books in the Little Russian/Ukrainian language.²⁶ In this document, Valuyev categorically dismissed the existence of a separate Ukrainian Language, which he attributed to the insidious influence of the Poles, and outlined the danger that the development of such a language could pose for the territorial integrity of Russian Empire:

²⁵ Alexei Miller, “Russia’s Ukraine Policy Before 1917,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 301.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 300.

A separate Little Russian language has never existed, does not exist and cannot exist, and that their dialect, used by commoners, is just the Russian Language, only corrupted by the influence of Poland; that the common Russian language is as intelligible to the Little Russians as to the Great Russians, and even more intelligible than the one created for them by some Little Russians and especially by Poles, the so-called Ukrainian language. Persons of this circle, who are trying to prove the contrary, are reproached by the majority of Little Russians themselves for separatist plots, hostile to Russia and disastrous for Little Russia.²⁷

Despite the successful implementation of this directive, the Ukrainian movement inside the Russian Empire continued to grow between the years 1863 and 1875, so much so that a special commission was eventually created in 1875 to investigate the movement and to develop new measures to curtail its development.²⁸ These efforts culminated in the publication of the so-called Ukase of Ems, which extended many of the restrictions found in the Valuyev Circular to include the banning of theatrical performances in the Ukrainian language.²⁹

In response to this process of “russification,” many Ukrainian intellectuals and activists immigrated to Austrian Galicia, where they established a number of influential journals and organizations like the Shevchenko Society of L’viv.³⁰ Perhaps the most significant personification of this new cultural exchange was that of historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, who immigrated to L’viv in 1894 in order to become the director of the Ukrainian history department at L’viv University.³¹ The politically and culturally permissive atmosphere of Austrian Galicia allowed Hrushevsky to write his multivolume history of Ukraine, the *History of Ukraine-Rus*.³² While this immigration led to a fruitful collaboration between the Galician and Eastern Ukrainians, it is arguable that the effects of the Valuyev Circular and Ukase of Ems had a more lasting impact on the most important demographic of this national project, the Ukrainian peasantry. Being unable to access even a primary-level education or to pursue basic intellectual or religious activities in their native language, the bulk of the Ukrainian peasantry remained either ignorant or

²⁷ Pyotr Valuyev, “Valuyev Circular (July 18, 1863),” *Wikisource*, last accessed April 20, 2023 https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Translation:Valuyev_Circular.

²⁸ Alexei Miller, “Russia’s Ukraine Policy Before 1917,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 300.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 300.

³⁰ Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “The Ukrainians in Galicia Under Austrian Rule,” in *Nation-Building and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, eds. Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 50-51.

³¹ Serhii Plokhyy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2021), 195.

³² *Ibid.*, 195.

unreceptive to the ideas being propagated by these Ukrainian activists. Even after these restrictions were lifted during the Revolution of 1905, many new Ukrainian organizations and publications experienced difficulties in sustaining members and readers outside of major areas like the Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Poltava oblasts, thus preventing their outreach to more rural areas.³³ Despite the major political changes that arose between 1905 and 1914, this disparity between the Ukrainian intelligentsia and peasantry remained fundamentally unchanged.

The period of World War I from 1914 to 1917 witnessed not only a dramatic return and intensification of these “russification” efforts by the Tsarist government, but also an extension of these measures into territories that fell under their direct military control.³⁴ After the fall of East Galicia in August 1914, the Tsarist occupation authorities began almost immediately to ban Ukrainian-language publications and to arrest and deport individuals associated with the Greek Catholic Church and other Ukrainian cultural and political organizations.³⁵ The rationale behind these measures was ideologically indistinguishable from the “russification” policy that was pursued throughout the latter of the 19th century, although perhaps there was more emphasis on Austria-Hungary’s malign influence.³⁶ While Russian officials could count on the support and cooperation of some Russophile elements of the East Galician population (these groups, of course, were mainly connected with the so-called Old Ruthenian movement, which openly called for an abandonment of Ukrainian national identity and the full assimilation of the Ukrainian population under the Russian Empire³⁷), most Ukrainians resisted their attempts to implement these policies. Due to its inability to maintain control over East Galicia (after regaining partial control over the territory during the Brusilov Offensive in 1916, it was forced again to retreat), the Russian Empire was unable to maintain the export of this “russification,” thus causing it to refocus on the purely domestic aspects of this

³³ Alexei Miller, “Russia’s Ukraine Policy Before 1917,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 306.

³⁴ Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2007), 23.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁷ Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “The Ukrainians in Galicia Under Austrian Rule,” in *Nation-Building and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, eds. Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 43-46.

policy. This continued shortly until the sudden outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917, which culminated in the collapse of Tsarist autocracy.

In summary, while it is fair to say that these “russification” measures did little to inhibit the growth of the Ukrainian national movement between 1863 and 1917 (in fact, a legitimate historical argument could be made that these measures even inadvertently contributed to the growth of the movement by forcing Ukrainian activists to move to Austrian Galicia, thereby allowing like-minded intellectuals from both the Russian and Habsburg Empires to develop an All-Ukrainian national project—an objective that they would somewhat successfully accomplish in early 1919 with the unification of the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic), or, for that matter, between 1914 to 1917, they did partially succeed in estranging this movement from its main constituency, the Ukrainian peasantry. As explained above, many Ukrainian peasants remained largely unaware or indifferent to this national activism due to the politically restrictive environment of the late Tsarist Empire and their relatively high levels of illiteracy. While this situation would change slightly during the Ukrainian Revolution in 1917 (many peasants would play an active role in the emerging political parties and revolutionary groups in Kyiv, especially the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party), many would remain indifferent to the nationalist project of the Ukrainian Central Rada. Indeed, given the myriad social issues that the peasantry faced, a significant number would instead become drawn to the radical left-wing ideologies of communism and anarcho-communism, which offered more immediate solutions to their plight. To understand this dimension more, the next section will elaborate on the main economic and demographic conditions that developed in Ukraine between 1863 and 1917.

Section 1.2.3: Economic and Demographic Developments (1863-1917)

Between the outbreak of the January Uprising in 1863 and the beginning of the Ukrainian Revolution in 1917, the territory of Ukraine witnessed relatively significant changes in its rate of industrialization. Thanks to significant investments of French and Belgian capital, the southeastern portions of Left-Bank Ukraine experienced a dramatic increase in metallurgy and mining, which would

subsequently establish these regions as the main industrial hubs of the country.³⁸ By the turn of the century, these regions would also become well known for their production of iron and coal—even surpassing the quantities produced in more industrialized areas like Poland and Central Russia.³⁹ However, in comparison with the other major industrial areas of the Russian Empire like the Urals, Saint Petersburg, or Moscow, these developments remained quite modest and did not fundamentally alter Ukraine’s status as a vital agricultural region.⁴⁰

Although the effects of this industrialization did not lead to a radical economic transformation in Ukraine, it did result in a rather dramatic change in the country’s demographic composition, especially among its industrial working class and bourgeoisie.⁴¹ Unlike the predominantly Ukrainian peasantry in the countryside, both these classes were composed of individuals from Russia or from russified segments of the cities’ Jewish and Ukrainian populations.⁴² While aspects of this phenomenon can be mostly explained by the Russian government’s policy of “russification” (indeed, given the numerous restrictions that the Ukrainian movement faced, it would be historically inaccurate to suggest that anything even remotely resembling a Ukrainian working-class or bourgeois identity existed at this time), it is arguable that the process of industrialization played a significant role in the “russification” of these classes since Russian was the primary language of these professions.⁴³ In a large, multinational autocracy like the Russian Empire, this situation did not present any immediate political problems since citizenship was not officially determined by nationality or class, but rather by one’s loyalty to the Romanov dynasty, embodied in the figure of the Tsar. However, in the age of mass politics and nationalism, this situation had the potential to become quite destabilizing if the Russian-speaking cities and the Ukrainian countryside suddenly were to find themselves on opposite ends of a revolutionary divide—a scenario, of course, that eventually occurred between 1917 and 1921. It also presented a unique dilemma for many Ukrainian national activists who wished to cultivate a Ukrainian-speaking proletariat and bourgeoisie like in contemporary Austrian Galicia. This desire would

³⁸ Jurij Borys, *The Sovietization of Ukraine 1917-1923: The Communist Doctrine and Practice of National Self-Determination* (Edmonton, CA: The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980), 57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 53-55.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 67.

not only have to contend with the ongoing restrictions introduced by the Valuyev Circular and Ukaze of Ems, which effectively prohibited most cultural and political publications in Ukrainian, but also with the dynamic processes of industrialization, which actively precluded any replacement of Russian as the dominant language of industry and enterprise.

Section 1.2.4: Discussion

The obstacles discussed above pose an interesting counterfactual question for historians of Ukraine: had the Russian government decided to rescind its policy of “russification” prior to 1905 and permitted the free development of a Ukrainian national identity, would the members of the peasantry, working class, and bourgeoisie have been receptive to this Ukrainization? While it is impossible to know how such a national program could have developed under a more permissive political environment, it is possible to look at the historically analogous period of *korenizatsiia* in the 1920s, when the Soviet Union pursued linguistic and cultural Ukrainianization as a matter of state policy. In pursuit of this program, the Bolsheviks attempted to create a common Soviet culture that would tie the Ukrainian-speaking countryside to the Russian-speaking urban industrial centers, primarily by making members of the latter become proficient in Ukrainian. This ideally would have accomplished two objectives: on the one hand, it would have facilitated the migration of Ukrainian peasants to the burgeoning industrial centers of Ukraine, an outcome that was sorely needed if the Soviet Union wanted to experience rapid industrialization; on the other hand, it would have also potentially neutralized any remaining nationalist or village opposition by creating an official Ukrainian national identity that was subject to close Soviet control. Despite the Soviets’ overwhelming monopoly on power, they were largely unsuccessful in accomplishing the main objectives of *korenizatsiia*, as most factory workers and managers resisted linguistic Ukrainization.⁴⁴ Moreover, they also underestimated the subtle assimilationist pressures that many recent Ukrainian peasants experienced upon arriving to these factories, or even their willingness to assimilate voluntarily by

⁴⁴ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 105.

speaking Russian.⁴⁵ As historian Terry Martin reveals in his study of *korenizatsiia*, this policy led to other unexpected outcomes that frustrated this vision, such as the creation of a bilingual environment among the Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking workers and the emergence of a “territorial Ukrainian identity” that was essentially non-national in orientation.⁴⁶ Based on this historical analogy, it is likely that the Ukrainian national movement between 1863 and 1917, even if legally permitted by the Tsarist authorities, would have indisputably encountered the indifference if not outright resistance from members of the industrial working-class, bourgeoisie, and perhaps even from some segments of the peasantry. Furthermore, since this activism would have unlikely been able to capture the major institutions needed to develop an all-encompassing national consciousness (e.g., schools, universities, newspapers, and governmental bureaucracy), it would have needed to rely on the voluntary association of individuals and groups to assume this identity—an issue that was indeed quite problematic given the fact that its main constituency, the peasantry, did not possess the requisite literacy, education, or means of communication to become “Ukrainians” on their own initiative, and also due to the fact that it did not have the support of the main urban classes and nationalities, which were more or less satisfied with their respective degrees of cultural and linguistic russification. From this historical comparison, it is possible to conclude that the daunting challenges that the Ukrainian national movement confronted between 1863 and 1917 went beyond the legal persecutions of the Russian government and extended also to the resistance of key national and class groups—a problem that would have unlikely been resolved even if the political environment between 1863 and 1917 had been more permissive.

Section 1.2.5: Section Conclusion

As the above historical analysis makes clear, the period between 1863 and 1917 was extremely consequential in the development of the Ukrainian national movement. Due to the draconian restrictions placed on the Poles in the aftermath of the January Uprising in 1863, the Russian government unwittingly created the necessary cultural space for the development of new national movements in the

⁴⁵ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 105.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

western borderlands, the most significant centering on the emerging Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian national identities. The development of the latter was especially worrisome for Tsarist officials, as they viewed the existence of a separate “Ukrainian” national identity as a direct threat to the triune conception of “Russian” nationhood. This conceptualization divided the “Russian” nationality into three constituent groups based on dialectal differences. These, of course, included the Little Russians (Ukrainians), White Russians (Belarusians), and Great Russians (Russians). Given the integral nature of this triune identity, the Russian government considered any alternatives like the Ukrainian national movement to pose an existential threat to the territorial integrity of the Russian Empire. The passage of the Valuyev Circular and the Ukaze of Ems between 1863 and 1875, therefore, aimed to restrict the development of the Ukrainian national movement inside the Russian Empire by prohibiting the publication of religious, political, and cultural publications in the Ukrainian language. While the consequences of these restrictions were significant, it is arguable that they inadvertently contributed to the development of an All-Ukrainian national identity by forcing individuals from the Russian Empire to find refuge in Austrian Galicia—the most prominent destination being L’viv. It was in these areas of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that they were able to carry out their important national and cultural activities. One of the most significant was Mikhailo Khrushchovsky, who began work on his multivolume history of Ukraine while chairing the department of Ukrainian History at L’viv University. Notwithstanding these positive developments, the restrictions imposed by the Russian government did succeed in alienating the most important constituency of the movement, that is, the Ukrainian peasantry. Due to their inability to access cultural, religious, and political works in their native language, most Ukrainian peasants remained unaware or indifferent to the activities of the Ukrainian national movement. Given their precarious socioeconomic circumstances (the most pressing issue concerned the question of land redistribution), many of them often were more receptive to ideologies that prioritized class consciousness over national identity. The movement was unable to compensate for this lack of support by appealing to the working-class and bourgeoisie, as these urban classes were often mostly non-Ukrainian in origin. Indeed, an argument could be made that the processes of industrialization and capitalism, although nominally separate from the state, exerted an even more

devastating impact on the Ukrainian national movement than the official “russification” policy of the Russian government. This was mainly due to the way in which these processes facilitated the diffusion of Russian among the urban masses, thus separating them linguistically and culturally from the Ukrainian-speaking countryside. To underscore just how formidable these challenges were to the Ukrainian national movement by the early 20th century, and how unlikely it was to flourish even in a hypothetically more politically permissive environment, the above section briefly touched upon the period of *korenizatsiia* during the 1920s, when the Soviet Union pursued cultural and linguistic Ukrainianization as a matter of state policy. The goal of this program was to create a Soviet-controlled Ukrainian identity that would tie the Ukrainian-speaking countryside with the Russian-speaking cities. However, even with the resources and backing of the Soviet state, the authorities failed to persuade significant segments of the Russian-speaking urban populations to consent to this policy. In the end, this resulted in outcomes that the Soviet government neither anticipated nor officially desired, namely the creation of a de facto bilingual environment and the development of a territorial “Ukrainian” identity.⁴⁷

Although the outbreak of the Ukrainian Revolution in 1917 presented the Ukrainian national movement with an unprecedented opportunity, it nonetheless continued to face many daunting challenges to its long-term development. The most significant issue, of course, was related to the ambiguous outlook of the peasantry. While partially sympathetic to the national program of the Central Rada and later the Ukrainian People’s Republic, most peasants conditioned their support on the ability of these entities to conduct major socioeconomic reforms—the most pressing being the policy of land redistribution. Although the Ukrainian People’s Republic later implemented this reform, it was unable to commit fully to its execution due to the subsequent Austro-German occupation. This resulted in an armed backlash in the countryside, which eventually transformed into a four-year long insurgency. To delve further into the history of this insurgency and its fractious relationship with the Ukrainian national movement, the below sections will first analyze the origins of the insurgency during the first period of the Ukrainian Revolution, that is, between

⁴⁷ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 105.

March 1917 and April 1918; following this, attention will then be paid to growth of the insurgency during the Austro-German occupation and Hetmanate; finally, the last sections will explore the final years of the insurgency, when it fought against the forces of the White movement and Bolsheviks.

Section 1.3: Between Revolution and Insurgency (1917-1922)

While many historians formally date the outbreak of the peasant insurgent movement to May/June 1918, its official origins can be traced back to the early stages of the Ukrainian Revolution in March 1917. As a result of the February Revolution in Petrograd, many of the traditional administrative and political hierarchies that existed under the Tsarist Empire quickly crumbled away only to be replaced by numerous and, in some cases, overlapping revolutionary bodies in the major urban areas and countryside. A fitting metaphor to describe these bodies and their relationship to one another would be that of a Russian nesting-doll—one in which a veritable hierarchy continued to exist (the largest one, in this case, being the Provisional Government in Petrograd), but that ultimately belied the existence of multiple smaller entities which were de facto autonomous. This not only describes the essence of the Provisional Government's relationship to the Ukrainian Central Rada in Kyiv, but it also describes the Rada's relationship with the myriad village councils and militia groups that arose spontaneously in the countryside during this time. This division of power was so profound that it led to the de facto autonomy of these rural bodies, in a process that historian Georgiy Kasianov has labelled "horizontal fragmentation."⁴⁸

During this initial period, many of the peasants were eager to exploit this "horizontal fragmentation" to their advantage. Having resented their persistent land hunger during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many were quick to seize lands from wealthy landowners and the clergy in order to increase their individual land holdings. As long as none of the other revolutionary bodies was strong enough to reverse these "black repartitions" (which is what these illegal seizures are sometimes

⁴⁸ Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 84.

referred to in the historiography),⁴⁹ the peasants could maintain this revolutionary status quo indefinitely.

The first shock to this equilibrium came with the first Bolshevik invasion of Ukraine between late 1917 and early 1918.⁵⁰ Quickly occupying major regions of Eastern and Northeastern Ukraine including Kharkiv and Kyiv, the Bolsheviks engaged in mass terror against members of the Central Rada and the peasantry.⁵¹ The latter was especially vulnerable since the Bolsheviks sought to violently requisition needed agricultural and industrial supplies that were needed in Petrograd and Moscow.

The second shock to the peasants came between February and March 1918, with the arrival of the Austro-German occupation forces.⁵² Having appealed to the Central Powers for military aid against the Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian People's Republic subsequently signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 9 February 1918.⁵³ In exchange for military assistance, the Ukrainian People's Republic agreed to supply the Central Powers with much needed grain supplies.⁵⁴ Shortly after the signing of the treaty on 19 February 1918, the Central Powers invaded Ukraine and eventually succeed in ousting the Bolsheviks completely from the territory by 8 May 1918.⁵⁵ However, almost as soon as the Central Powers completed their campaign against the Bolsheviks, the peasants of Ukraine began an insurgency of their own. The immediate causes for the uprising are now well known. After the Austro-German coup d'état that deposed the Ukrainian People's Republic and installed General Pavlo Skoropadsky as Hetman over Ukraine, the latter began to implement policies that reinstituted the property rights that many of the rich landowners had lost under

⁴⁹ Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 88.

⁵⁰ Yaroslav Bilinsky, "The Communist Take-Over of the Ukraine," in *The Ukraine, 1917-192: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 112.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵² Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 96.

⁵³ Oleh S. Fedyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 78.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁵ Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 95.

the Ukrainian People's Republic.⁵⁶ This effectively threatened to reverse the illegal land seizures that the peasants had undertaken during the initial stages of the Ukrainian Revolution. To enforce this measure, Austro-German soldiers were often deployed to help landowners reacquire their lands by force.⁵⁷ In addition to this re-appropriation activities, many of these same occupation soldiers were also engaged in various grain acquisition or weapons confiscation activities among the peasants in order to compel the Ukrainian authorities under the hetmanate to fulfill its requirements under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. These activities, of course, led to the outbreak of widespread insurgency against the occupation forces of the Central Powers and the hetmanate. The insurgency lasted until autumn 1918, when it was finally pacified by the Austro-German occupation forces.⁵⁸ Some historians like Georgiy Kasianov speculate that the insurgency at its height in summer 1918 resulted in around 20,000 deaths for the Austro-German occupation forces and included the participation of up to 80,000 peasant insurgents, although there are valid reasons to be skeptical of these figures.

A few months after the initial phase of the insurgency was quelled, the Directory, which was a small group of former officials of the Ukrainian People's Republic, announced a general uprising against the forces of the hetmanate. Seeking a chance to take back the lands the lost during the Austro-German occupation, many peasants answered the mobilization call of the Directory and joined their march on Kyiv. However, once the hetmanate was overthrown, many of the peasants and their leaders, known as the *otamany*, simply went back to their villages.⁵⁹ The disintegration of the Directory's army left it extremely vulnerable to attack from the Bolsheviks, and in early 1919, they launched a renewed attack on the Directory, which was then forced to flee Kyiv.

The subsequent period between 1919-1922 was a tumultuous period in Ukraine, which might be adequately described as *bellum omnium contra omnes*, or a war of all against all. Independent peasant insurgent bands found themselves at various times against the forces of the Bolsheviks, the Volunteer Army, the French

⁵⁶ Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 102.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 113.

expedition in Odesa, and even, oddly, the Directory. During this time, individual insurgent leaders like Makhno, Zelenyi, and Hryhoriiv, began to build and sustain sizeable peasant armies that would ally on and off with the Directory and Bolsheviks depending on the particular military and political circumstances.⁶⁰ Two of these leaders, Makhno and Hryhoriiv, would play considerable roles in thwarting Denikin's advance on Moscow and expelling the French expedition forces from Odesa.

After the Bolsheviks succeeded in defeating the remnants of the Volunteer Army in 1920, they directed their forces against the peasant insurgents, which some of whom, like Makhno, were their erstwhile allies. Between 1920 and 1922, Bolsheviks pursued a ruthless counterinsurgency campaign against the remaining peasant insurgent bands, with methods including mass summary executions, hostage taking, and arson.⁶¹ Combined with the outbreak of the famine in 1921, these tactics eventually resulted in the capitulation of the peasant insurgency, which eventually paved the way for the creation of the U.S.S.R. in 1922.

⁶⁰ Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 112.

⁶¹ Bogdan Musial, "The Ukrainian Policy of Bolshevik Russia, 1917-1922," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 341-343.

Chapter 2: Historiographical Analysis of the Peasant Insurgent Movement

Section 2.1: Introduction

This chapter will focus on the two main historiographical issues introduced at the outset of this study. These relate to how historians have traditionally conceptualized and interpreted the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine and how these perspectives have changed over time. While a historiographical evaluation of this scope would ideally include a comprehensive survey of the secondary literature in Ukrainian and Russian (historical studies in these two languages account for most of the research on the peasant insurgent movement), the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War has made access to these sources extremely difficult. Given this obstacle, the current author has decided to concentrate exclusively on the English language historiography of this topic. There are certain advantages to this decision. The first and most obvious concerns the benefits of adopting a more restricted research focus. For instance, by evaluating only the English language historiography, it is possible to uncover specific nuances, trends, and changes that might be lost in a more comparative or synthetic analytical approach. In other words, a much more limited focus would allow the current researcher to gain insights that might otherwise be obscured in a broader analysis. Secondly, given the paucity of available secondary literature in Ukrainian and Russian, a more restricted approach would allow the researcher to avoid unintentional mistakes, such as making false generalizations or comparisons. Errors like these are often unavoidable when dealing with only a small body of sources. The third and final benefit to this decision is that it would permit the researcher to provide a comprehensive analysis of the English historiography, which in turn could serve either as a reference point for other studies or perhaps as a building block for a more extensive historiographical survey.

Studies on the peasant insurgent movement have traditionally occupied only a small place in the broader historiography on the Ukrainian Revolution and the Russian Civil War. Detailed monographs (both article- and book-length accounts) are rare to the point of almost being non-existent, and the few that do exist were mainly written before the collapse of the Soviet Union and do not reflect the insights of currently available archival sources. While there have been some excellent historical studies on the Russian peasantry (a more detailed discussion of this will follow in the paragraphs below), they tend to be too general in scope to offer specific insights on

the insurgent movement in Ukraine. To date, only one aspect of the peasant insurgency has received consistent scholarly attention in English, and that is the *Makhnovshchina*. The reasons for this are relatively straightforward. Makhno's association with the anarchist movement in Russia (as the above chapter pointed out, the *Makhnovshchina*'s ideological and political alliance with the Russian anarchist Nabat movement made it distinct from the other peasant insurgent factions) and the fact that his forces constituted the largest and most organized armed faction have made him a subject of intense historical study. This focus has done much to improve historians' understanding of Makhno, but it has done little to shed light on the broader processes and figures of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine. For instance, while the nuances surrounding the *Makhnovshchina*'s ambivalent relationship with the Ukrainian People's Republic are now well understood (as described above, the movement's hostility toward the Ukrainian People's Republic was deeply influenced by Makhno's anarchist convictions and his weak national consciousness), it is less clear to what extent this ideological tension influenced other aspects of the insurgent movement, if it all. The fact that many *otamany* continued to align their armed factions with the Directory between 1919 and 1921 indicates that the *Makhnovshchina* formed only a part of this broader phenomenon, even if it was the largest. In other words, it would be erroneous to try to understand the history of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine solely from the perspective of the *Makhnovshchina*, which was organizationally and ideologically distinct. This issue of perspective has also extended to some recent historical studies on the Ukrainian Revolution and the Austro-German Occupation, which, despite dealing with the early period of the peasant insurgency, has only partially focused on their activities during this time.

The range of these various historiographical issues presents a unique opportunity to reevaluate how historians have both conceptualized and interpreted the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine. To accomplish this objective, the below paragraphs will analyze the existing English language historiography on the peasant insurgent movement by dividing it into two chronological periods. The first will focus on historical works from 1950 until 1991, while the second will focus on those written between 1991 until 2023. As explained above, the number of works on the peasant insurgent movement is quite small and covers a wide time period. Indeed,

since most of the historical works that will be addressed below do not exclusively concern the history of the insurgency but rather the history of the Ukrainian Revolution, the Austro-German Occupation, and the *Makhnovshchina*, it is necessary to adopt a more extensive chronological focus. Therefore, breaking these intervals into smaller time periods would limit the researcher's ability to analyze and compare historical works that might have been written several decades apart but are nonetheless close in historiographical terms. The year 1991 will be used as the primary dividing line in order to distinguish studies written before and after the fall of the Soviet Union.

As argued in the introduction, the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine continues to remain a neglected topic in most English language historiography, with many studies either relegating the activities of the insurgency to the background of the main revolutionary events inside Kyiv or choosing to omit them entirely from their narratives. Indeed, it is arguable that this neglect has led to serious deficiencies in the way historians have understood this crucial episode in Ukrainian history, not least in their inability to account for the insurgency's impact on the development of Ukrainian nationalism between 1917 and 1922 as well as the various nationality policies pursued by the Bolsheviks and White Movement.

Section 2.2.1: 1950 to 1991 – From Obscurity to Recognition

Until the 1970s, most historical works did not deal with the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine separately from the Russian Revolution and Civil War. One logical explanation for this perhaps relates to the significance that Ukraine occupied during this time as one of the main areas of conflict between the Bolsheviks, Central Powers, Poland, and the White Movement between late 1917 and 1921, thus making it difficult for historians to view the insurgency outside the lens of these larger events. To a certain extent, it is also obvious that the chaotic obscurity of both the peasant insurgent movement and the earlier revolutionary activities of the peasants between 1917 and 1918 presented certain conceptual difficulties for these earlier historians, including their ability to identify the main ideological motivations of the peasantry. A good example is historian Richard Pipes's evaluation of the insurgency, which he discusses in his seminal work on the foundation of the Soviet Union from

1954.⁶² Although devoting considerable attention to the early mobilization of the peasants during the Ukrainian Revolution as well as the subsequent period of the insurgency, his views ultimately suffer from significant misinterpretations, especially with regard to the national and ideological outlook of the peasants.⁶³ These misinterpretations can be seen most vividly in the following two passages taken from his work. In the first excerpt, Pipes already begins with a somewhat questionable appraisal of the “nationalist sentiments” of the Ukrainian peasantry during the initial stages of the Ukrainian Revolution, which he ties specifically to the questions of land redistribution and political autonomy:

The Ukrainian peasantry also displayed nationalist sentiments. The soil in the Ukrainian provinces was better but less plentiful than in the central regions of Russia. The peasantry of these provinces had everything to gain if empowered to dispose of the local land according to its own wishes, and much to lose if compelled to abide by any likely future all-Russian solution of the land question. The Ukrainian village feared most of all having to share the property, which it looked forward to acquiring from the state, church, and large private owners, with the landless peasantry of the north. This desire to apportion the rich Ukrainian black earth independently of Russia, for the sole benefit of the local population, became a powerful factor in the development of nationalist sentiments among the Ukrainian rural masses...As a result of the intimate connection between peasant economic aspirations and the slogan of autonomy, the rural restlessness and impatience which in one way or another affected the villages throughout the entire empire, assumed in the Ukraine nationalistic forms. The more eagerly the peasants demanded land, the more ardently they espoused the slogan of “autonomy now.”⁶⁴

Later in his work, Pipes then contrasts these early “nationalist sentiments” with the anarchic activities of the peasant insurgents, who, he asserts, did not possess any discernable “socio-economic and political program” of their own, and who did not attempt to erect any state structures on the territories that they controlled:

Peasant uprisings, which had already made themselves felt in the summer of 1918 as protests against German food and land policies, grew in intensity in the fall and winter of that year. Throughout the Ukraine there appeared bands of peasant partisans who attacked estates, robbed and killed the Jewish inhabitants, and from time to time launched bold forays on large cities. The whole country was for the larger part of 1919 completely at their mercy. Like peasant rebellions in general, this one too lacked a clearly formulated socio-economic and political program; the peasants definitely did not want the return of the landowners and the reinstitution of tsarist agrarian legislation, which they identified with the German occupants, the Hetman, and the White armies, but they had no idea what they did want. Lacking a common organization and imbued with a strong spirit of neo-Cossack anarchism, the peasant partisans were utterly incapable of providing the country with anything resembling a firm government, despite the fact that some of their leaders or *bat'ki* attained temporary control over considerable areas.⁶⁵

⁶² Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 137.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

The problems with these interpretations are numerous. Firstly, Pipes does not provide sufficient evidence to support his claim that the Ukrainian peasantry's demand for land redistribution derived from certain "nationalist sentiments" and a desire for political autonomy. If this were the case, then why did so many peasants join the Bolsheviks in opposition to the Central Rada or Directory? When the former offered to engage in radical agrarian reforms for the benefit of the peasantry (it must be clarified here that these promises were often disingenuous), they did not do so with the promise of political autonomy. This is not meant to suggest that the peasants were not motivated at all by certain "nationalist sentiments" or even a distinct Ukrainian national consciousness, no matter how limited or provincial. The counterargument is that he does not at all consider the possibility that this socioeconomic issue may not have been tied to the nationalist or autonomist sentiments of the peasantry, but rather that it may have simply constituted an objective on its own. If Pipes were to have adopted a more nuanced approach to this issue, it is possible that he could have drawn more explicit connections between the peasants' nationalist sentiments and their desire for radical agrarian reform. Instead, his inability to consider the socioeconomic dimensions of the problem leads him inaccurately to conclude that they did not possess any "formulated socio-economic and political program," or, as he concludes rather glibly, that "they had no idea what they did want."⁶⁶ Secondly, by criticizing the peasants for their inability to create stable governing structures on the territories that they controlled, Pipes also overestimates the degree to which this goal was at all desirable or attainable. The political and social chaos that engulfed Eastern Europe between 1917 and 1922 did little to facilitate the creation of stable state institutions, which, in reality, often did not extend beyond the existence of armed military formations. Thus, given the behavior of the peasant insurgents during this time, it is possible that many of them fought simply to resist the encroachments of any quasi-state entities and militias, since doing so would allow them to preserve their revolutionary gains, the most significant being the lands that they appropriated during the so-called "black

⁶⁶ Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 137.

repartition”.⁶⁷ Conversely, for those who fought for a specific revolutionary faction (as discussed above, many peasants joined the ranks of the UNR and Bolsheviks at various times, although it was not uncommon for them to switch sides abruptly), many often experienced difficulties in establishing even a semblance of political order in the areas that they maintained. Therefore, Pipes’ contention that it was somehow possible for certain armed peasant factions to construct stable governmental structures underestimates the extreme challenges that they faced at this time.

An argument can be made that Pipes’ conceptual and historical misinterpretations regarding the peasant insurgent movement fit into a broader pattern of errors that were common in most English language historiography between the 1950s and 1970s. The most significant was the tendency of historians to overemphasize the events, figures, and activities occurring in the main revolutionary centers of the Ukrainian Revolution to the exclusion of those arising in the countryside, that is, among the Ukrainian peasants. Perhaps the most notable example of this is historian John Reshetar’s study on the Ukrainian Revolution, which, despite being written in 1952, hitherto remains the only book-length account in English on this topic.⁶⁸ While Reshetar’s account is fairly comprehensive in its analysis of the Ukrainian Revolution (notable examples include his early chapters on the development of the Ukrainian national movement as well as the political relations between the Ukrainian Central Rada and the Provisional Government in 1917), his treatment of the peasant insurgent movement is somewhat uneven. For instance, in his analysis of the Ukrainian Revolution between February and December 1917, almost no mention is made of the peasant activities in the countryside or the influence that the “agrarian” question had on the decision-making of the Central Rada.⁶⁹ Another case in point is his evaluation of the Third Universal, which the Central Rada pronounced at the end of 1917.⁷⁰ However, before embarking on a critique of Reshetar’s position, it would be useful to elaborate first on the details of the Third Universal, specifically its impact on the peasantry.

⁶⁷ Georgiy Kasianov, “Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 88.

⁶⁸ John S. Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 47-85.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 89-91.

Unlike the former Universals issued in the summer of 1917, the Third Universal marked a critical turning point in the Rada's relations with the Bolsheviks as well as the industrial and rural masses of Ukraine. Firstly, it officially proclaimed the creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic.⁷¹ While this did not amount to a full declaration of independence (the text of the Universal explicitly reaffirmed the Rada's desire to remain part of a broader democratic federation with Russia—one that preferably did not include the Bolsheviks), it did signify a transformation in the Rada's political status and served as a possible *fait accompli* to a future non-Bolshevik Russian government, which would have no choice but to acquiesce to the Rada's demands for cultural and political autonomy instead of offering resistance like the former Provisional Government. More significant, however, was the Universal's radical turn on the agrarian and social questions. In the case of the latter, the Universal officially established an eight-hour workday in all enterprises and nationalized all manufactories on Ukrainian territory.⁷² This was meant to appeal to the industrial proletariat, which, as discussed in the chapter above, was more inclined to identify politically with the Bolsheviks than with the Central Rada. Regarding the former, the Universal also took formal steps to abolish the property rights of the nobility and clergy, thus confiscating their agricultural lands without compensation.⁷³ This policy envisaged the creation of special land committees that would then redistribute land to the peasants, thus solidifying their political loyalty to the Ukrainian People's Republic.⁷⁴ By settling the agrarian and social questions once and for all, the Rada hoped that both the industrial proletariat and peasant masses would be less supportive of the Bolsheviks, who had not only also promised similar radical solutions but were quickly advancing on Kyiv to establish control over Ukraine. While it is indisputable that the Third Universal resulted in a radical shift in the Rada's political orientation, it would be a mistake to conclude that it led to a considerable change in practical terms. Indeed, as some recent historical studies on the Ukrainian Revolution have pointed out, the question of land redistribution was largely a moot point by the time the Third Universal was issued in late 1917, since many peasants had already engaged in illegal confiscations of agricultural lands

⁷¹ Central Rada, "Third Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada," in *The Ukraine: 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 388.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 389.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 389.

belonging to the nobility and church, an event known officially in the historiography as the “black repartition.”⁷⁵ Therefore, regarding the specific issue of the Ukrainian peasantry, it would be more accurate to view the Third Universal less as an attempt to nationalize Ukraine’s agricultural lands for the purpose of redistribution than as a way to retroactively sanction the “black repartition” of the peasants in the hope that they would support the Ukrainian People’s Republic in its struggle against the Bolsheviks.

While Reshetar’s analysis of the Third Universal identifies the influence that certain “social and economic” conditions had on the Rada’s decision-making, it ultimately fails to determine the specific roles that the peasantry and industrial proletariat played in this calculus.⁷⁶ Given that his earlier evaluations of the Ukrainian Revolution neglect almost any mention of the peasant activities in the countryside, it should perhaps not come as a surprise that his analysis fails to address these underlying agrarian causes, dating back, as they do, to this earlier tumultuous period in Ukraine. The reasons for this neglect are difficult to discern, but they likely reflect the biases that many historians had at this time, specifically in the way that they prioritized events that occurred in the main urban centers of the Ukrainian and Russian Revolutions, like Kyiv and Petrograd. This bias is quite apparent in the case of Reshetar, since he devotes more attention to analyzing the similarities and differences between the Rada’s agrarian and social policies and those of the Bolsheviks, as opposed to the underlying conditions in Ukraine that shaped these policies.⁷⁷ As will be discussed more in depth in the following paragraph, Reshetar’s repeated neglect of the peasant factor during this critical transitional period from the early stages of the Ukrainian Revolution to the Austro-German occupation of 1918 makes his analysis ill-equipped to deal with the question of the peasant insurgent movement, which he covers only superficially.⁷⁸

Indeed, the only mention that Reshetar makes of the peasant insurgency is in his discussion of the Hetmanate government, which, as might be recalled from the

⁷⁵ Georgiy Kasianov, “Ukraine Between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 87-88.

⁷⁶ John S. Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952), 89-90.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 173-177.

chapter above, lasted from April to December 1918.⁷⁹ While it would be more historically accurate to trace the origins of the insurgency back to the overlapping occupation regimes of the Bolsheviks and Central Powers (a critical but often overlooked aspect is that both of these entities pursued remarkably similar activities during their brief military occupations of Ukraine, including on matters related to food and raw material acquisitions; these of course were both related to the ruthless “War Communism” policy of Bolsheviks and the draconian quotas stipulated in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty by the Central Powers), Reshetar incorrectly asserts that the uprisings began in response to the Hetman’s edict on April 30th, which abruptly reinstituted the property rights that were previously rescinded without compensation.⁸⁰ This edict led to a veritable social counterrevolution in the countryside, with many disenfranchised landowners calling upon the Austro-German occupation forces to help them reacquire their former lands through force.⁸¹ Although this edict undoubtedly exacerbated tensions between the peasants, Hetmanate, and Central Powers, it would be a mistake to suggest that the insurgency began as a result of this policy, or that it centered entirely around this issue. Other factors, including the presence of the Austro-German occupation forces and the quotas required by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, also played a significant role in mobilizing the peasants against the forces of the Hetmanate, yet for some reason they are barely discussed in Reshetar’s narrative.

Indeed, an argument could be made that outside this cursory description, which takes up little more than a few pages, Reshetar strikingly refrains from offering his own conceptualization of the peasant insurgency. As quickly as the peasants appear as a serious factor of resistance in his narrative, the sooner they dissolve into the background, as he shifts his attention to the main figures within the Directory. Unlike Pipes, who, although inaccurately, at least attempts to attribute the motivations of the peasant insurgents to a certain innate “neo-Cossack anarchism,” Reshetar offers no such conceptualization.⁸² What, then, could possibly account for this? As already suggested above, it is possible that the fault lies not so much with Reshetar himself, but rather with the research priorities that guided his generation of

⁷⁹ Ibid., 173-177.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 173-174.

⁸¹ Ibid., 174.

⁸² Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 137.

historians, who focused primarily on political history rather than social history. Had this not been case, it is feasible that Reshetar could have devoted more space to analyzing the development of the peasant insurgency between 1918 and 1922, while assessing its overall impact on the Ukrainian Revolution. Moreover, more attention could have been given to other historical questions, such as those related to the national and social consciousness of the peasants—topics that would not be dealt with by historians until the 1970s.

Having analyzed both Reshetar's and Pipes' evaluations of the peasant insurgent movement, it is possible to summarize a few points regarding their place in the historiography. Since neither historian deals with the subject of the insurgency independently of their main areas of focus, it is difficult to disentangle their perspectives on the insurgency from these larger events. In fact, it is only when one compares these works with other historical studies written between the 1970s and 2020s that their overall neglect of the peasant question becomes truly obvious. For instance, while both outline some of the socioeconomic reasons of why the peasants rebelled, neither offers any speculation on what role their national consciousness, or lack thereof, could have contributed to this resistance. One exception is Pipes, whose views on the "national sentiments" of the peasants, however, are unfortunately quite dubious.⁸³ Just like the above discussion on Reshetar, it is not clear to what extent this can be attributed to the historians themselves or to the research preoccupations that guided most English language historiography during this time. These idiosyncrasies, based as they often were on the primacy of political history, have often led to serious distortions in the way people have conceptualized these events. Fortunately, some of these subjects have been able to overcome these distortions, the most successful being the historiography of the Russian Civil War (to give just a brief illustration of how profound this historical revisionism has been, some historians like Jonatan Smele have even argued for a radical re-periodization of the conflict to incorporate the uprisings in Central Asia that marked the beginning and end of civil unrest between 1916 and 1926).⁸⁴ Prior to this dramatic shift, it might have been possible to conclude that it was only the ideological rivalry between the

⁸³ Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 57.

⁸⁴ Jonathan D. Smele, *The "Russian" Civil Wars 1916-1926: Ten Years That Shook The World* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8.

Bolsheviks and White Movement that had the most significant influence on the Soviet Union's early development. After all, the Entente powers invested a lot of military support in assisting the Whites in Southern Russia, Siberia, and the Baltic region, which greatly contributed to the Bolsheviks' approach to international relations and their fear of capitalist encirclement. While this conflict was undoubtedly important, recent historical studies have shown that it was by no means the longest or even the most impactful. Indeed, as historian Andrea Graziozi has persuasively shown, it was precisely the social-agrarian conflict between the Soviet authorities and the peasants that proved to be most enduring and influential on the early Soviet state, his argument being that the period between 1918 and 1933 historically constituted a "Great Soviet-Peasant War," which brutally settled the peasant question once and for all in favor of Stalinist collectivization.⁸⁵ Returning to the above discussion on Reshetar and Pipes, it might be said that this short historiographical digression illustrates two fundamental points, namely, how some historical works can distort important phenomena by either downplaying, mischaracterizing, or even outright omitting certain facts from their narratives, but also how future historians can use these same works to develop new historical insights. In the case of Reshetar and Pipes, neither truly provides adequate attention to the question of the peasantry during the Ukrainian Revolution, much less to the peasant insurgent movement that engulfed much of the countryside in Ukraine between 1918 and 1922. Moreover, neither seriously evaluates the impact that national consciousness had as a potential motivating factor in their activities, either in their relations with the Central Rada or in their insurgency against the Central Powers, Bolsheviks, and Volunteer Army. While these omissions do not detract from the overall value of their analyses (in fact, both accounts remain some of the best political histories on the Ukrainian Revolution and the foundation of the Soviet Union), they do unfortunately distort the importance of certain actors and events to the detriment of the peasantry. Notwithstanding these issues, these works remain important contributions in the historiography, not so much for their treatments of the peasantry but rather in the way they have inspired and guided subsequent historians in their research on this issue.

⁸⁵ Andrea Graziozi, "The Great Soviet-Peasant War: Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1918-1933," in *Stalinism, Collectivization, and The Great Famine* (Cambridge, MA: The Ukrainian Studies Fund, 2009), 5.

The historiography on the peasant insurgent movement experienced a small yet ultimately consequential achievement in the publication of two works in the late 1970s: Michael Palij's monograph on the *Makhnovshchina*⁸⁶ and Arthur E. Adam's essay on the insurgency.⁸⁷ These works represented a significant departure from most historical studies at the time, as they were the first to deal with the issue of the peasant insurgency outside the main events of the Ukrainian Revolution and to assess the national and ideological dimensions of the movement. Since both studies were published within a year of one another (Palij's was published in 1976, while Adams' was published in 1977), they also make ideal works for the purpose of comparison. Therefore, the below paragraphs will first elaborate on the details of each study and then provide a more comprehensive comparative analysis.

Written originally in 1976, Palij's book on the *Makhnovshchina* remains the most comprehensive academic study of Nestor Makhno and, indeed, one of the only historical accounts to deal directly with the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine. Unlike most works on the *Makhnovshchina*, which tend to be polemical or ideological in nature, Palij's study provides an objective and nuanced portrait of the movement, focusing not only on its development between 1918 and 1921 but also its fraught relations with the Ukrainian People's Republic, Bolsheviks, and the Volunteer Army.⁸⁸ In addition to these primary topics, Palij devotes considerable attention to the question of Makhno's national consciousness, which he argues underwent a significant development during his lifetime from almost complete indifference (as a Ukrainian peasant with limited formal education and sense of national identity, he was initially drawn to the milieu of revolutionary anarchism, an attraction that contributed to his russification) to a gradual national awareness.⁸⁹ Palij is careful not to extrapolate Makhno's case onto the rest of the peasant insurgents (as he discusses in his book, the contingencies of Makhno's unique biography, from his time in prison in Moscow, which contributed to his political radicalization and russification, to his marriage to Halyna Kuzmenko, who played an influential role in the development of his Ukrainian consciousness, make him a rather atypical example

⁸⁶ Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno, 1918-1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution*. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1976).

⁸⁷ Arthur E. Adams, "The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 247-270.

⁸⁸ Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno, 1918-1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution*. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1976).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 75-80.

of a Ukrainian peasant during this time), however, it is obvious from his description of the insurgency that many of them did in fact share the same type of background, lacking “both adequate education and national or ideological consciousness.”⁹⁰ In his final assessment of the *Makhnovshchina*, Palij faults Makhno’s weak national consciousness and anarchist convictions for contributing to the failure of the Ukrainian Revolution.⁹¹ Specifically, he points to the strategic and tactical inconsistency exhibited by the movement, which, on the one hand, tenaciously resisted many of the same enemies as the Directory, including the Bolsheviks and Volunteer Army, but on the other hand, categorically dismissed any potential military alliance with either the forces of the Ukrainian People’s Republic or other partisan groups, which would have likely secured Ukraine’s independence.⁹² On this point, Palij is quite emphatic, concluding that:

Only the united effort of all national forces under unified leadership and with a single goal could have established and maintained an independent Ukrainian state. Thus, the Makhno movement was not a constructive factor in the Ukrainian National Revolution; important as its role was in the final outcome, it reflected all too well the lack of unity, the disparate aims within Ukrainian national development.⁹³

Although Palij focuses primarily on the history of the *Makhnovshchina* in his book, his work is also notable for its analysis of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine.⁹⁴ In particular, he evaluates the various socioeconomic, political, and ideological factors that contributed most to the development and collapse of the movement between 1918 and 1921, highlighting the importance that the agrarian question and the political volatility unleashed first by the Austro-German occupation in 1918 and then by the multiple invasion attempts of the Bolsheviks and the Volunteer Army between 1918 and 1921 had in fomenting armed resistance among the peasants.⁹⁵ As mentioned already in the previous chapter, Palij’s discussion constitutes one of the only attempts in the historiography to provide a coherent periodization of the peasant insurgency, which divides into three distinct periods: the first extending from 1917 until the summer of 1918; the second from 1918 until the final months of 1920; and the third from 1920 until the final Bolshevik takeover of

⁹⁰ Ibid., 42.

⁹¹ Ibid., 252-253.

⁹² Ibid., 252.

⁹³ Ibid., 253.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 41-45.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 41-45.

Ukraine between 1921-1922.⁹⁶ The weaknesses of this periodization, addressed already in the above chapter, will not be recounted here; suffice it to say that, while it provides an adequate timeline, it does not accurately account for the major changes in the nature of the insurgency, which began first as a rural uprising against the occupation forces of the Central Powers and then later transformed into one of the major armed factions in the Russian Civil War. A revised emphasis on these events in the timeline could perhaps provide greater clarity on how the insurgency expanded, while determining which ideological, socioeconomic, or national factors contributed most to its evolution during these different phases.

While Palij's analysis of the peasant insurgent movement remains fairly comprehensive (it must be said that the chapters he devotes to the insurgency primarily serve as a means to explain the socioeconomic, national, and ideological milieu that resulted in the *Makhnovshchina* in Southeastern Ukraine), it is by no means completely unproblematic. Perhaps the biggest fault lies in his appraisal of the agrarian issue, which constituted one of the main drivers of the insurgency throughout its various stages between 1918 and 1921. Although Palij is correct for emphasizing the primacy of this socioeconomic issue, his assessment does little to evaluate the relative impact of other important factors, such as the influence of national consciousness. In other words, his analysis runs the risk of possibly overstating the significance of this socioeconomic problem by ignoring the influence that more subtle and, quite frankly, ambiguous factors like national consciousness could have had on the peasants' insurgent activities and relations vis-à-vis the Directory, Bolsheviks, and Volunteer Army. The below excerpt from his study serves as a good illustration of this problem:

The Central Rada and the Directory failed to solve the agricultural problem; the hetman government did worse. It was constantly a step behind the revolutionary spirit of the peasants. Its policy was to carry out land reform legally for approval by a future Constituent Assembly. For this reason, it was not able to compete with the Bolsheviks, who were promising the land to the peasants immediately, or even with Makhno, who was giving the land to the peasants as soon as it was captured. For the peasants, the land was a primary question and those forces that would not interfere in the division of land would get their support.⁹⁷

While it is undoubtedly possible that this issue provided the main animus behind the peasants' insurgent activities (as will be discussed further below, most

⁹⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 54-55.

contemporary historians continue to point to the socioeconomic demands of the peasantry to explain their behavior—factors, which obviously included their calls for radical agrarian reform), Palij's analysis does little to tease out the implications of this conclusion. For instance, did the salience of this socioeconomic issue imply that other factors like national consciousness played a less significant role in the mindsets of the peasantry? Or is it possible, as in Pipes view,⁹⁸ that this socioeconomic issue belied a certain nationalist or proto-nationalist sentiment on the part of the peasants, who conflated the possession of land with a certain kind of Ukrainian national identity? What was the exact relationship between this socioeconomic issue with the peasants' national consciousness? Did one exist at all, or were the peasants primarily influenced by this agrarian issue? Since Palij mentions individual partisan leaders like Zeleny, Hryhor'iv, Anhel, and Sokolovsk'kyi, who, at various times, allied their insurgent groups with the forces of the Directory, one would assume that he would have more to say on how the nationalist sentiments of the peasants may have contributed to at least part of the insurgency.⁹⁹ However, this is not the case. That Palij primarily views the insurgent movement from this lens can be seen in the way he analyzes the *long durée* of Ukraine's socioeconomic and national development, specifically in the southeastern portions of the country. For instance, while he provides an excellent summary of the challenges and persecutions that adversely affected Ukraine's national, political, and socioeconomic development between the 18th and early 20th centuries (notable examples include his discussions on the negative influence of Catherine II, whose role in the annexation of Crimea, the partitions of Poland-Lithuania, and the destruction Zaporizhian Sich in the late 18th century set in motion the various persecutions that Ukrainians experienced throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially with regard to the policies of cultural and linguistic russification and the subordination of the Orthodox church in Ukraine to Moscow), he does not directly speculate on the influence that these issues may have had on the peasant insurgent movement.¹⁰⁰ Instead, he almost exclusively focuses on how Ukraine's rather unpropitious socioeconomic environment, especially in relation to the agrarian question, contributed to the outbreak and

⁹⁸ Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 57-58.

⁹⁹ Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno, 1918-1921: An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution*. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1976), 43.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

development of the insurgency in early 1918.¹⁰¹ Therefore, while not quite as problematic as Pipes' assessment, Palij's analysis nonetheless does not do enough to elucidate the non-socioeconomic factors that might have affected the growth and expansion of the insurgency or at least to speculate on why these other factors may not have had such a significant influence. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that his assessment suffers from a certain one-sidedness—one which, of course, can be forgiven based on the depth and significance of its historical insights.

Following Palij's monograph on the *Makhnovshchina* in 1976, the next work to deal substantively with the subject of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine was historian Arthur E. Adams' short historical study, entitled "The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie."¹⁰² Published in 1977 as part of a collected volume of essays on the Ukrainian Revolution, Adams' work remains one of the only studies in English to focus exclusively on the issue of the peasant insurgency. In his essay, Adams argues that the events of the Ukrainian Revolution must be viewed from the perspective of the agrarian social revolution led by the Ukrainian peasantry, which he characterizes as a kind-of peasant jacquerie, similar to those experienced in previous centuries.¹⁰³ Specifically, he contends that the success of the various revolutionary parties that arose to prominence during this time in Kyiv was primarily based on their ability "to engraft themselves somehow upon the torrential agrarian social upheaval" that was then occurring in the countryside and not, as is often argued, on processes happening within the main urban centers of Ukraine.¹⁰⁴ In other words, he directly disputes the view shared by most historians at the time, namely, that the Ukrainian Revolution was shaped primarily by the respective ideologies, conflicts, and activities of the main revolutionary parties, arguing instead that it was mainly the social revolutionary activities of the peasants, which would eventually culminate in the outbreak of a yearslong insurgency, that dictated the course of the revolution and ultimately contributed to its downfall.¹⁰⁵

While Adams' analysis provides a distinct timeline for the jacquerie, which, from his perspective, lasted from 1918 to 1920, his ability to distinguish specific

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 38-56.

¹⁰² Arthur E. Adams, "The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 247-270.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 247.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 247.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 249-255.

subperiods within this timeline are somewhat limited and ambiguous.¹⁰⁶ For instance, although he makes an accurate distinction between the first and second phases of the insurgency, the former being distinguished by the peasants' struggle against the forces of the Hetmanate and Central Powers, the latter by their sporadic activities both for and against the forces of the Directory and Bolsheviks, he does little to encapsulate these distinct subperiods into a formal periodization.¹⁰⁷ This lack of precision not only makes it difficult discern these rather distinct subperiods in his narrative, but it also negatively affects the accuracy of his overall timeframe, not least of which is the end date that he proposes of 1920. The choice of this date is rather peculiar, especially given the fact that the insurgency lasted well into 1921 and 1922. Indeed, as more contemporary historians have noted, the threat of the peasant insurgency was still a serious matter of concern for the Bolsheviks by late 1920, so much so that they felt obliged to establish a special military task force to deal specifically with the issue of eradicating the remaining peasant resistance in Ukraine.¹⁰⁸ This task force, officially known as the Commission for the Liquidation of Banditry in Ukraine, was composed of various members of the Cheka, Bolshevik internal forces, and field troops of the Red Army, and was headed Mikhail Frunze, Feliks Dzerzhinsky, Sergei Kamenev, and Khristian Rakovsky.¹⁰⁹ This special commission engaged in a ruthless counterinsurgency campaign against the peasantry, which did not formally end until the outbreak of the famine in 1921.¹¹⁰ While Adams might be forgiven for not referencing this task force in his account (the study referenced above was written well after the fall of the Soviet Union and was based on archival materials that were not available to historians in the 1970s), both the famine and the history of the *Makhnovshchina* were well known to historians and thus should have been reflected in his work. Therefore, by failing to incorporate this latter time period into his timeline, he is unable to account for the later stages of the peasant insurgency, an issue which unfortunately affects the integrity of his narrative.

In his analysis of the two main phases of the insurgency, the first beginning in 1918, when the peasants fought against the military forces of the Hetmanate and the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 247.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 254, 261-262.

¹⁰⁸ Bogdan Musial, "The Ukrainian Policy of Bolshevik Russia, 1917-1922," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 340.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 340.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 341-344.

Central Powers, the second extending from late 1918 to 1920, when the insurgents periodically supported and fought against the forces of the Directory and Bolsheviks, Adams argues that the actions of the peasants were guided by distinct socioeconomic and political concerns, even though he concedes that these objectives “were more elemental and deeply felt than those embedded in party programs.”¹¹¹ In the first phase, Adams argues that the insurgents fought for four discernable objectives, namely, the right to keep the land that they acquired illegally during the early stages of the Ukrainian Revolution, to bring an end to both the military occupation of the Central Powers and the reactionary food acquisition and agrarian policies of the Hetmanate government, and lastly the “freedom to run their own affairs.”¹¹² Noticeably absent from his assessment is any discussion on the influence that the peasants’ national or proto-national consciousness could have exerted on the insurgency. This omission could imply one of two things: either that Adams does not believe that this consciousness had any motivating influence, or that he simply does not account for this in his analysis. In a similar vein, he also does not mention the question of national consciousness in his subsequent discussion on the latter stages of the insurgency, namely the phase between 1918 and 1921.¹¹³ In this section, he summarizes the characteristics of this phase in the insurgency, specifically its political “disillusionment with the Directory,” its “primitive, egalitarian economic and political ideals,” and finally its pronounced “*haidamak*-Cossack anarchism.”¹¹⁴ Since each of these points could potentially deal with the question of national consciousness, it is worth exploring these more in detail to understand why Adams perhaps does not consider this perspective and what is potentially missed out of his narrative as a result.

On the first point, i.e., that the insurgent movement during this time period was distinguished by its political disillusionment with the Directory, which, according to Adams, came to be associated with “censorship, military suppression, and rule by a conservative middle class” in the eyes of many peasants in the insurgency, what does this indicate about the state of the peasants’ national consciousness, given the fact that the Directory fought to establish an independent

¹¹¹ Arthur E. Adams, “The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 254, 261-263.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 254.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 261-262.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 262.

Ukrainian state? Does it imply that the national consciousness of the peasantry was somehow deficient or, perhaps, even non-existent—the counterfactual being that they would have otherwise continued to support of the Directory after it succeeded in ousting the Hetmanate in December 1918 and began to consolidate its political control over Ukraine? Or does it rather point to a more narrowly defined national or even proto-national consciousness focused more on preserving the land seizures and political autonomy of the insurgents at the village level, as opposed to an all-Ukrainian national consciousness, which, by January 1919, would have also extended to the areas of Eastern Galicia and Bukovina under the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic (ZUNR)?¹¹⁵ While Adams does not provide an explicit view on either of these points, the combined absence of this perspective with his discussion on the Bolsheviks’ appeals to the peasantry (in his words, these included vague promises to establish a kind of “agrarian utopia” based on a certain degree of political autonomy—promises that were obviously disingenuous on the part of the Bolsheviks) might indicate that his view on the peasantry might have more closely approximated the second point than the first. In other words, it is possible that this national or proto-national consciousness, which was not only tied to the lands and villages that the peasantry inhabited, but also to the various myths and pseudo-identities inherited from the Cossack-era in Ukraine, ironically played a negative role in contributing to the peasants’ disillusionment with the Directory and their brief identification with the Bolsheviks, since they no longer believed that the former would uphold the promises that were made at the outset of the uprising against the hetmanate. However, since Adams does not use the term national consciousness to describe the peasants’ actions, it is unclear if he means to draw this connection. In fact, the explicit absence of the term could indicate that his view on the peasantry is more closely tied to the first point, i.e., that the peasants were not motivated by any feelings of national consciousness in their abandonment of the Directory, but rather by their more parochial socioeconomic and political concerns, which did not extend beyond the confines of their villages.

The evidence for this perspective can be seen in the second point that Adams makes, namely, that the insurgency during this period was characterized by its

¹¹⁵ Vasyl Rasevych, “The Western Ukrainian Peoples’ Republic of 1918 -1919,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 153.

“primitive, egalitarian economic and political ideals.”¹¹⁶ Adams provides little information on this view apart from ascribing a certain reflexive and essentialist political intuition to the peasants “that the lands of the wealthy should be seized and divided in some just fashion among farmers.”¹¹⁷ That the peasants were motivated by these rather elemental political and socioeconomic concerns is beyond any reasonable doubt. However, what is less clear from Adams’ analysis is to what extent these primitive and essentialist socioeconomic and political characteristics interacted with other ideological conceptions such as the tentative national consciousness of the peasantry, or, in the case of chaotic and fractious political milieu that existed in Ukraine, the ideologically novel ideas of Ukrainian nationalism, as represented by the Directory and the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic, the communist internationalism of the Bolsheviks, and, beginning in 1919, the all-Russian nationalism of the Volunteer Army. The fact that Adams does not address these nuances at all in his narrative suggests that the extent to which the peasants grappled with these broader ideological conceptions at all, they did so primarily from the starting point of their own immediate and, some might argue, provincial socioeconomic and political interests. However, just like with the above analysis, it is difficult to determine this point definitively.

While Adams’ views on the relationships between these abstract conceptions remain quite ambiguous (to reiterate, it is not clear from his essay if he even wishes to draw these connections at all: a simple reading of his text would suggest that he is primarily content with this socioeconomic and political perspective, which de facto excludes any role for national consciousness), his perspectives on the relations between these primitive socioeconomic and political predispositions and the issue of state power are better understood. Indeed, combined with the third point he makes, i.e., that the peasant insurgents during this time were characterized by “strong currents of *haidamak*-Cossack anarchism,” which ranged from an innate “lust for plunder and killing” to “the desire to steal from the rich, to drink one’s fill of vodka, [and] to savor the wild pleasures of rape and murder,” this socioeconomic and political dimension indicates that the peasants were not only opposed to state interference on these issues, but also to any forms of state power, which could

¹¹⁶ Arthur E. Adams, “The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 262.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 262.

prevent them from exercising this particularly violent form of “social anarchism” in their immediate surroundings.¹¹⁸ While this view might overall be plausible (indeed, one could argue that the only consistent interpretation that could be made thus far on the peasant insurgency is that it was defined by their near categorical rejection of state authority, either in terms of the hetmanate, Austro-German occupation forces, Directory, Bolsheviks, or Volunteer Army, as well as the primacy of their rather parochial socioeconomic and political interests), the notion that this alleged “*haidamak*-Cossack anarchism” was somehow ingrained into the intuitions of the peasants and their views on state power is likely exaggerated. A more likely explanation is that the political anarchy that was unleashed by this period of extreme violence and state collapse provided its own destructive logic and incentives to the peasants, who, between 1917 and 1922, were surrounded by a pervasive sense of social and societal insecurity. Or to rephrase this issue in the form of a question: was it more likely that the peasants engaged in violent acts of pillaging, appropriation, rape, and pogroms as a result of their distinct sociological background, which, according to Adams, can be traced back over the *long durée* to the Cossack era, or was it likely due to the political chaos that existed at this time, when certain state military formations (e.g., the Austro-German occupation forces, Directory, Bolsheviks, and Volunteer Army) were also responsible for violent acts against civilians? Indeed, as contemporary historians like Jochen Böehler have recently noted, some of these entities, such as the early Polish army, were often little more than paramilitary groups themselves and were thus not averse to engaging in egregious acts of violence, especially against the local Jewish population.¹¹⁹ In some contemporary historical accounts, there has been a shift to prioritize this more systemic interpretation—a good example being historian William G. Rosenberg’s analysis on the paramilitary violence during the Russian Civil War:

At the same time, comparable forms of violence were also occurring everywhere in areas not formally under Red or White control in this period, or otherwise associated with more or less conventional military forces and formal political claims. These, too, reflect the centrality of scarcity, dysfunctional government, and both material and emotional deprivation in structuring its extent and nature. Here the brutalization of social relations wrought by the revolution itself seems to have played a determinant role, since the most pervasive form was the reciprocal and localized

¹¹⁸ Arthur E. Adams, “The Great Ukrainian Jacquerie,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 262.

¹¹⁹ Jochen Böehler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9-11.

brutalities in which ordinary people engaged, whether or not it was done in the name of any higher purpose.¹²⁰

In summary, therefore, while it is likely that Adams' views on the relations between the peasants' socioeconomic and political interests and their near categorical rejection of state power stand on relatively firm ground, there is less evidence to suggest that these interests stemmed from an inherent "haidamak-Cossack anarchism," which made them necessarily predisposed to acts of violence. However, just as with Palij's assessment, the lack of any discussion on the question of the peasants' national consciousness significantly complicates the legacy of his work in the historiography. On this point, it would be worth comparing Adams' and Palij's works in more depth to determine their place in the historiography.

As discussed already in the paragraphs above, both Palij and Adams mainly attribute the outbreak of the insurgency in Ukraine to the socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasantry, namely, their demands for radical agrarian reform and political autonomy. Since most of their insurgent activities did, in fact, revolve around these specific issues (to the extent that they almost exclusively based their military support on how the various proto-governments in Kyiv dealt with these issues), it would be erroneous to criticize Palij's and Adams assessment too harshly, especially given that their works are some of the only studies in English to deal directly with the history of this movement in the historiography. Yet from the perspective of understanding the national consciousness of the peasant insurgents or the degree to which these national sentiments at all played a role in their activities, both Palij and Adams are silent. One possible explanation for this silence is that both Palij and Adams truly believe that the national consciousness of the peasants was not a significant factor in the insurgency or at least played only a negligible role compared to these more parochial socioeconomic and political concerns. In other words, the insurgents' support for the Directory in late 1918 and 1919 had less to do with the appeal of the Ukrainian national project than with the attendant radical agrarian policies of the Directory, which would have only retroactively sanctioned the land seizures and political autonomy that the insurgents had already de facto acquired during the initial stages of the Ukrainian Revolution and the political chaos

¹²⁰ William G. Rosenberg, "Paramilitary Violence in Russia's Civil Wars, 1918-1920" in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, eds. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 35.

created by the Austro-German occupation and hetmanate. An alternative explanation would be that this omission is not, in fact, deliberate but should rather be seen as an unfortunate consequence of the state of the historiography at this time. For instance, if both Palij and Adams had written their works in 1992 or 1993, that is, after the fall of the Soviet Union, it is possible that they would have considered the possible influence that the national sentiments of the peasantry could have had during this time period. Regardless of the ultimate reasoning behind this omission, both works remain valuable contributions to the historiography, not least for the way they are able to reincorporate the peasant insurgency into the main events of the Ukrainian Revolution, thus highlighting the importance of this often-neglected event.

Unlike historical works in the 1950s, the historiography of the 1970s and 1980s experienced a relatively positive development in the study of the Ukrainian Revolution, especially on the question of the peasantry and their national consciousness. While not focusing directly on the time period of the insurgency, one of these works by historian Ihor Kamenetsky provides a detailed account of the events leading up to the Austro-German occupation in early 1918, including the Central Rada's declaration of the Third Universal.¹²¹ As discussed above, the Third Universal marked a considerable turning point in the relations between the Central Rada and the peasantry, which sought to resolve the agrarian issue in the favor of the latter. The provisions of the Third Universal specifically envisaged the confiscation of all noble and clerical properties in Ukraine without compensation, with the intention of distributing these lands to the peasantry once the Constituent Assembly was convened.¹²² In other words, while the Central Rada desired to settle this question in favor of the peasants, it did not, at least officially, seek retroactively to sanction the illegal land seizures that they undertook during the early stages of the Ukrainian Revolution, but rather to make these lands the property of the state. However, since the Central Rada was not in a position to re-confiscate these lands from the peasants, the Third Universal had the effect of de facto sanctioning these illegal seizures. The rationale behind the Central Rada's decision to issue the Third Universal had much to do with its precarious external relations as it did it with its

¹²¹ Ihor Kamenetsky "Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 33-60.

¹²² Central Rada, "Third Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada," in *The Ukraine: 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 389.

domestic politics. Indeed, as Kamenetsky notes in his essay, the Bolshevik coup d'état in Petrograd presented a serious threat to the political stability of the Central Rada by intending to implement their own radical agrarian policy ostensibly in favor of the peasants.¹²³ This development put the Central Rada into a compromising position. Indeed, as Kamenetsky notes in his study:

The Rada faced two alternatives. One was to pursue a policy of gradual, peaceful, and rational implementation of land reform, which would require the resolution and violent suppression of all illegal land acquisitions in the Ukraine. Ironically, the success of this alternative could turn a considerable section of the Ukrainian peasants against the Rada, at least temporarily. The second choice was to give the appearance of legality to large-scale property seizures, hoping to regain control over the land situation, while at the same time safe-guarding against a loss of popularity.¹²⁴

Since the peasants constituted the largest support base of the Central Rada, many of its members felt that they had no other choice but to commit entirely to this radical agrarian reform. If the Central Rada failed to secure the support of the peasantry, they could have faced a potentially destabilizing internal situation. For instance, if the peasants had transferred their political loyalty away from the Central Rada, the Bolsheviks could have established a united front among the main social classes in Ukraine, namely, between the industrial proletariat, who were already in favor of Bolshevik rule, and the peasants. However, as Kamenetsky discusses in his essay, it would be a mistake to assume that either the Central Rada or the Bolsheviks had much to gain long-term from the peasantry as a result of implementing this radical agrarian policy:

The new radical agrarian reform did not turn the peasants *en masse* into active supporters of the Rada; however, the reason for their hesitation did not lie in the fact that Ukrainian peasants were more impressed by the Bolshevik land programs than by those of the Rada. Evidence shows that the peasants were largely neutral in the political struggle. Undoubtedly, the fact that both the Rada government in Kiev and the Soviet Ukrainian government in Kharkiv offered Ukrainian statehood and the free distribution of land made it difficult for some of the peasants to realize just what was at stake. But, in most cases, the major reason was the parochial outlook of the average Ukrainian peasant and his undeveloped sense of responsibility for nationwide issues. Thus, as it frequently happened during the war, Ukrainian villages rose up against the Soviet authorities, particularly when they were burdened and outraged by forced food requisitions. When successful, they would drive Soviet officials from their own land, even from some of the neighboring villages, but they hardly considered it their duty to exert themselves on behalf of more distant villages or larger cities, which they frequently considered either foreign or hostile.¹²⁵

¹²³ Ihor Kamenetsky "Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 40-41.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 41.

There are several points in Kamenetsky's analysis that are worth highlighting. Firstly, while he does not explicitly use the term national consciousness (he settles instead for a more slightly awkward phrasing, "sense of responsibility for nationwide issues"), it is clear that he is directly referring to the impact that the peasants' lack of national consciousness had on their alleged "neutrality" in the struggle between the Central Rada and the Bolsheviks, specifically with regard to the issue of agrarian reform.¹²⁶ This is significant because it represents one of the first attempts in the historiography to conceptualize the peasants' behavior from the perspective of their national consciousness and not solely based on their socioeconomic and political concerns. Secondly, he draws a connection between this lack of national consciousness and the subsequent activities of the peasants during the insurgency, specifically between 1919 and 1921, when most of their attention was focused against the Bolsheviks.¹²⁷ This too is significant, because it suggests that this lack of national consciousness had a negative influence on individual villages, which were just as likely to view each other with animosity during the insurgency as they did the Bolsheviks.¹²⁸

Although this study represents an important step forward in the historiography to integrate the issue of national consciousness, there is still much in this account that is problematic. Firstly, the assertion that the peasants occupied only a neutral position between the Central Rada and Bolsheviks because they were unable to distinguish between their respective agrarian policies and that both governments offered a form of Ukrainian statehood is historically inaccurate. The peasants played a politically active role from the very beginning of the Ukrainian Revolution, with many not only expressing their political consciousness within the various revolutionary congresses that were held in Kyiv between 1917 and early 1918, but also through their illegal land seizures and the establishment of village councils in the countryside. Indeed, the extent of this political engagement is underscored in historian Jurij Borys' study of the political parties in Ukraine, specifically the attraction that many peasants felt towards the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (SR's) and their radical policies regarding the agrarian

¹²⁶ Ibid., 41.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 41.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 41.

question (one of these proposed reforms was the establishment of a so-called Ukrainian Land Foundation, “which was to carry out the distribution of land to the peasants”).¹²⁹ Therefore, this perceived neutrality on the part of the peasantry should not be interpreted as a failure to understand “what was at stake” in the political struggle between the Central Rada and Bolsheviks, but rather it should be viewed as a form of indifference, or even a kind of pragmatic hedging, that was born out of their narrow socioeconomic and political concerns, focused, as they were exclusively on the issue of land redistribution and political autonomy. On these issues as well, it is important to remember that the peasants were not waiting for an official sanction from the Central Rada or the Bolsheviks. By the beginning of 1918, many of the peasants had already established de facto control over their native villages and reappropriated many of the lands that belonged to the nobility and clergy as part of the “black repartition.”¹³⁰ Therefore, it would be more accurate to argue that they looked to see which political entity, either the Bolsheviks or the Central Rada, would legally and retroactively sanction the land seizures and political autonomy that had already existed since the beginning of the Ukrainian Revolution.

Secondly, while one might fault Kamenetsky for not attempting to elaborate on why the peasants’ “responsibility for nation-wide issues,” i.e. their national consciousness as Ukrainians, was “undeveloped” (was it the fault of the peasants that they had such a limited national consciousness, or was it merely due to the distinct historical, socioeconomic, and political processes described in the previous chapter that produced this result?), a more substantive critique would focus more on the main ontological supposition of this assertion, namely, that such a “responsibility for nation-wide issues,” obviously existed and that it was “undeveloped.”¹³¹ Whereas Palij and Adams do not mention the role of national consciousness at all in their analyses (to reiterate briefly, they believe that the peasants were primarily motivated by their immediate socioeconomic and political concerns), Kamenetsky argues in favor for the opposite view that it was primarily this “undeveloped” national

¹²⁹ Jurij Borys, “Political Parties in the Ukraine,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 137.

¹³⁰ Georgiy Kasianov, “Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 88.

¹³¹ Ihor Kamenetsky “Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

consciousness that contributed the most to their insurgent activities and whose organized violence could very well have easily been directed at neighboring villages as much as the Bolsheviks.¹³² But did this national consciousness really exist? Was it even possible for the peasantry to develop an all-Ukrainian national consciousness which, by some categorical necessity, also identified with the national building project of the Ukrainian People's Republic? What exactly was the "nation" at the center of this alleged responsibility, and what would a possibly "developed" national consciousness have looked like? That Kamenetsky combines two different time periods into his relatively short paragraph on the peasants' national consciousness (although he begins with a discussion on the events of late 1917 and early 1918, that is, when the Central Rada was forced to retreat from Kyiv as a result of the Bolshevik invasion, he ends with a vague description of the events between 1918 and 1921, when the peasants directed most of their insurgent activities against the Bolsheviks) reveals a certain lack of historical precision in his analysis of this question. For instance, the Ukrainian "nation" he refers to implicitly at the start his paragraph, that is, at the end of 1917, was not the same one that he concludes with at the end of the paragraph, which extended presumably from the period of late 1918 to 1921. During this time, not only did the borders of these separate and, in some cases, competing "Ukrainian" political projects expand and contract dramatically over this relatively short timeframe (for instance, the lands claimed by the first and second Ukrainian People's Republics between 1918 and 1921 expanded dramatically, at least on paper, to include areas of Southeastern Ukraine as well as the lands claimed by the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, including Eastern Galicia and Bukovina), but they also included very different ideological conceptions of what this "Ukraine" was, ranging on the spectrum from the left-wing nationalist visions of the Central Rada and Directory (the entities responsible for both iterations of the Ukrainian People's Republic), the Moscow-leaning communist projects based in Kharkiv and Kryvyi Rih, the anarchist federation of the *Makhnovshchina* in Southeastern Ukraine, and finally the right-wing, reactionary visions espoused by the hetmanate and the Volunteer Army under Denikin and Wrangel. Given these nuances, there is a legitimate historical question if it was even possible for a Ukrainian peasant to possess a relatively stable and consistent national consciousness

¹³² Ibid., 41.

during this tumultuous period. As discussed in the above chapter, the preceding 19th century was already ill-conducive to the development of a coherent and durable Ukrainian national consciousness among the peasantry due to the range of political and socioeconomic obstacles that inhibited its growth during this time. As such, it is hard to see how such a national consciousness could have developed spontaneously among the peasantry during the chaotic early 20th century, and how, in practical terms, they could have exercised this identity productively in the service of one of these national and ideological projects for “Ukraine,” when all proved essentially to be ephemeral. To go back to the purely ontological aspects of this question, the point being argued here is not that a certain national consciousness did not exist among the peasants; what is being disputed is that this alleged national consciousness necessarily had the capability to develop into something that could have, in Kamenetsky’s words, encompassed a “sense of responsibility for nationwide issues.”¹³³ The more likely historical scenario is that the ensuing political and social chaos that was unleashed between 1917 and 1922 prevented the consolidation of an all-Ukrainian national consciousness among many peasants, as there was simply no state with which to align this identity. As such, it is probable that this national consciousness, to the extent that it was even widespread among the peasantry, was unable to help them transcend their rural and parochial milieu centered, as it was, on the village.

While historical analogies are usually fraught with numerous conceptual and empirical problems, not least of which is the risk of potentially making false or superficial comparisons, the on-going Russo-Ukrainian War offers several interesting details that might provide insight on why the peasant insurgents failed to develop a common national consciousness, or, as Kamenetsky referred to it, a “sense of responsibility for nationwide issues,” during the period between 1918 and 1922. Notwithstanding the similarities shared by both historical groups of Ukrainians (as noted in the introduction, it was quite possible during the early stages of the current Russo-Ukrainian war that the Ukrainian state could have been forced to retreat from Kyiv and wage an insurgent campaign against the Russian occupying forces, a possible development that would have forced them, intentionally or not, to adopt

¹³³ Ihor Kamenetsky “Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

many of the same operational tactics and strategies that guided their peasant insurgent ancestors, albeit now with the support of major powers like the United States and focused just as much on major urban centers as villages and other rural areas;¹³⁴ other than this, the other uncanny similarity relates to how the main areas of combat in the current Russo-Ukrainian War almost perfectly overlap geographically with those of the peasant insurgency in Southeastern Ukraine) there are several differences that distinguish them from one another. Beyond the obvious fact that both are separated historically by over a hundred years, the primary substantive differences mainly relate to the ways in which each group mobilized and how these separate mobilizations influenced each group's respective national consciousness. As discussed already in the previous chapter, the peasant insurgent movement was almost an entirely decentralized phenomenon that mobilized around limited and, some might argue, parochial socioeconomic and political interests. Moreover, the extent to which national consciousness at all played a role in this mobilization is still somewhat debatable, with some historians not acknowledging its presence at all. The intense social turmoil that was unleashed collectively by the events of World War I, the Russian and Ukrainian Revolutions, and the Russian Civil War, did little to galvanize peasant support around a single "Ukrainian" political project, and between 1918 and 1921, many armed peasant factions often switched sides between the forces of the Directory, the anarchist Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine under Nestor Makhno, and the Bolsheviks, depending on the shifting dynamics of the conflict and the immediate socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasants. When the insurgency redirected its activities against the Bolsheviks between 1921 and 1922, this change did little to consolidate a common identity or resistance movement among the peasants, who, as Kamenetsky notes, "hardly considered it their duty to exert themselves on behalf of more distant villages or larger cities, which they frequently considered either foreign or hostile."¹³⁵ Although there might be legitimate historical reasons to doubt this interpretation (instead of placing fault directly on the peasantry, the above analysis in chapter 1 outlines the

¹³⁴ Shane Harris, Michael Birnbaum, John Hudson, Dan Lamothe, and David L. Stern, "U.S. and allies quietly prepare for a Ukrainian government-in-exile and a long insurgency," *The Washington Post*, last modified March 5, 2022, accessed June 8, 2023 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/03/05/russia-ukraine-insurgency/>.

¹³⁵ Ihor Kamenetsky "Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

various systematic pressures and obstacles between the 19th and early 20th centuries, which actively precluded the consolidation of a “Ukrainian” national consciousness among the peasants), the outcome was essentially the same: the conflicts unleashed between 1917 and 1922 resulted in an almost complete atomization of the peasantry, whose insurgency was subsequently crushed by the Bolsheviks between 1921 and 1922.

Given the historical precedent of this atomization, and the pessimistic expectations that many countries had at the time regarding an inevitable Russian victory, why was it that the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 produced a radically different result among contemporary Ukrainians? In other words, why did the invasion not result in the atomization of the Ukrainian population, as it had between 1917 and 1922, but rather in a response that mobilized them to take up arms and to reaffirm their national consciousness as Ukrainians? What do today’s Ukrainians have that their peasant ancestors did not? As Serhii Plokhy writes in his recent book on the Russo-Ukrainian War, this overwhelming reconfirmation of Ukrainian national consciousness is so profound that it might even potentially lead to major ideological changes in Russian national identity:

There are clear indications that the Ukrainian nation will emerge from this war more united and certain of its identity than at any other point in its modern history. Moreover, Ukraine’s successful resistance to Russian aggression is destined to promote Russia’s own nation-building project. Russia and its elites now have little choice but to reimagine their country’s identity by parting ways not only with the imperialism of the tsarist past but also with the anachronistic model of a Russian nation consisting of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. By paying an enormous price in wealth and the blood of its citizens, Ukraine is terminating the era of Russian dominance in a good part of eastern Europe and challenging Moscow’s claim to primacy in the rest of post-Soviet space.¹³⁶

Although it is still difficult at this time to identify all the factors that could have led to this sea-change in Ukrainian national consciousness, and to ascertain why it was that something similar did not arise among the Ukrainian peasantry between 1917 and 1922, there are a few factors that can be discerned. The first and most important relates to the impact that larger structural influences like socioeconomics, politics, culture, technology, and government policy exerted on the formation of national consciousness over the *long durée*. When Kamenetsky attempts to explain the peasantry’s lack of support for the Central Rada, he immediately points to their “parochial outlook” and their “undeveloped sense of responsibility for nationwide

¹³⁶ Serhii Plokhy, *The Russo-Ukrainian War* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2023), 294.

issues” as the main sources, implying that this disposition was somehow inherent to their class.¹³⁷ However, he does not bother to consider the various systemic factors that most likely contributed to the formation of this provincial worldview over the long-term—the most important being the policy of russification and the process of industrialization. If one considers the immense impact of these factors, it should come as no surprise that the peasantry did not have a robust understanding of their national consciousness, which, in all practical terms, most likely could not have realistically extended behind the confines of their village or region. The second relevant factor is the connection between the state and national consciousness. In this relatively novel era of nation-states, it is perhaps taken for granted that primary education is compulsory and that the language taught in schools and universities is the same language that is spoken at home, broadcasted in the news media, and is the official language used in most governmental activities. However, all these assumptions presuppose a certain idea of the nation-state, which is interested in cultivating the national consciousness of its citizens through education, media, and the government—a situation that was not always the case historically. Indeed, in the case of the Russian Empire, non-Russian ethnic groups like the Ukrainians and Belarusians did not have the opportunity to study, read, or interact in their native languages outside of their villages. In other words, if they desired to move to a major urban center, attend university, or occupy a position in the Tsarist bureaucracy, they had to do so in a language that was not their native tongue. This had the effect of either completely russifying them (not necessarily in the sense of having them identify as Russians, but by having them identify either with the Tsarist empire or with the various all-Russian revolutionary movements, which included other national groups like Jews, Tatars, Georgians, etc.), or, as in the case of many peasants, contributed to their cultural and national alienation. Therefore, in focusing on this alleged “sense of responsibility,” Kamenetsky does not adequately account for the negative influence that the Tsarist state had on the Ukrainian peasantry’s lack of national consciousness, or how the conditions of statelessness between 1917 and 1922 did little to foster this identity. In comparing the current Russo-Ukrainian War with the period of 1917-1922, it is evident that these two factors are significant.

¹³⁷ Ihor Kamenetsky “Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

Unlike their peasant ancestors, modern-day Ukrainians can collectively draw upon the various socioeconomic, historical, political, and technological processes that have proved conducive to the development of a separate national identity from the Russians—processes that include the Ukrainianization of the education system, the series of revolutions between 2004 and 2014, which reaffirmed Ukraine’s commitment to the pursuit of liberal democratic values and governance, and lastly the role of information technology and social media, which continues to play an indispensable role in organizing Ukrainian civil society and transmitting this national consciousness. Besides this factor, contemporary Ukrainians can also look to the support of the state, which not only provides the necessary educational, political, social, and economic infrastructure for this Ukrainian national consciousness to sustain itself and grow, but also the lethal means with which to defend itself militarily from external aggression.

In summary, while Kamenetsky’s analysis on the national consciousness of the peasantry remains a much welcome development in the historiography, it ultimately does not provide a satisfactory or historically accurate interpretation of how this consciousness affected the development of the insurgency. As already discussed at length in the above, Kamenetsky does little to identify the long-term systemic factors that contributed most to the peasants’ “parochial outlook” and “undeveloped sense of responsibility for nationwide issues,” which he is mainly content to attribute to the peasants themselves, perhaps as a reflection of their class.¹³⁸ Aside from this error, he also misinterprets the political balancing act that the peasants had to perform between late 1917 and early 1918 as a kind of “neutrality,” or, even more malignly, as a kind of apathetic ignorance of “what was at stake” in this struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Central Rada.¹³⁹ As was already discussed in the paragraphs above, the notion that the peasants were waiting for the Bolsheviks or the Central Rada to implement their agrarian reforms is historically accurate. Most peasants had already engaged in illegal land seizures during the outbreak of the Ukrainian Revolution, and in wanting to keep these gains, they therefore sought to hedge their chances by balancing between the Bolsheviks

¹³⁸ Ihor Kamenetsky “Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

and Central Rada—an activity that demonstrated that their understanding of the “stakes” of this conflict lied not so much in the political struggle between these two identities, but rather with the agrarian question itself. In the end, although Kamenetsky does much to reintroduce the peasants back into the historical narrative of the Ukrainian Revolution and peasant insurgent movement, this effort ultimately does not provide a satisfactory explanation of how national consciousness affected the peasants and their insurgency.

Section 2.2.2: 1950 to 1991 – Section Conclusion

Broadly speaking, the English language historiography from 1950 to 1991 witnessed a gradual transformation in the way historians conceptualized and analyzed the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine. Whereas earlier historians like Pipes and Reshetar hardly address the issue of the insurgency at all in their works (as might be recalled from the above, only Pipes deals with the issue of the peasantry in any detail, and even his account suffers from serious historical errors and misinterpretations), later historians in the 1970s cover the topic more extensively. For instance, both Palij and Adams view the development of the insurgency between 1918 and 1922 mainly from the perspective of the peasants’ socioeconomic and political interests, specifically the agrarian issue and the question of political autonomy. Having established *de facto* political control over their villages and illegally seized the lands of the nobility and clergy during the early stages of the Ukrainian Revolution (an event known in the historiography as the “black repartition”), the peasants were adamant about preserving these gains against the threats posed first by the hetmanate and Central Powers in 1918 and then by the Bolsheviks and Volunteer Army from 1918 to 1922. While both historians provide sufficient evidence to support their interpretations, neither attempts to analyze the extent to which other factors, namely, national consciousness, could have played as an influence. This collective silence on their part could simply imply that national consciousness did not act as a significant motivating factor in the peasant insurgency, or it could reveal that it was simply overlooked as an aspect for consideration. While also addressing the socioeconomic and political dimensions of the peasant insurgency, Kamenetsky does at least attempt to consider this issue of national consciousness in his analysis. However, as described above in a rather lengthy yet

ultimately insightful comparison with the current Russo-Ukrainian War, he fails to account for the various long-term systemic factors that likely influenced the peasants' "undeveloped" national consciousness during this time, preferring to attribute this "parochial outlook" to something more innate to the peasants as a class.¹⁴⁰ In summary, therefore, although it could be argued that the historiography on the peasant insurgent movement experienced numerous positive developments between 1950 and 1991, especially regarding its socioeconomic and political dimensions, it did not reveal any insightful breakthroughs on the question of the peasants' national consciousness.

Section 2.3.1: 1991-2023 – Wither National Consciousness?

Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, historians specializing in the history of the Ukrainian Revolution and, by extension, the peasant insurgent movement, have continued to make numerous contributions that have profoundly influenced the way these events are fundamentally perceived in the historiography. The most consequential contribution is how the historiography has fully reincorporated the peasant insurgency into the main historical narrative of the Ukrainian Revolution, thereby complicating traditional perspectives on this event. Thanks to the opening of the state archives in Ukraine and the availability of new secondary studies in both Russian and Ukrainian that are no longer tainted by the Marxist-Leninist biases that were once prevalent in Soviet historiography, historians now have a better understanding of just how salient the peasant factor was in the development of the Ukrainian Revolution and how decisive and destabilizing the peasant insurgency was on subsequent events between 1918 and 1922.

A good representative study of this new historiography is historian Georgiy Kasianov's recent historical account on the Ukrainian Revolution.¹⁴¹ In his work, he reveals how the situation in Ukraine in 1917 was not so much characterized by a gradual dynamic between the authorities in Kyiv, embodied at this time by the members of the Central Rada and the General Secretariat, and those of the

¹⁴⁰ Ihor Kamenetsky "Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions," in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

¹⁴¹ Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 76-131.

Provisional Government in Petrograd, but rather by an almost complete breakdown in the administrative authority between the major urban centers and the village—a process that he refers to as “horizontal fragmentation.”

The horizontal fragmentation of power was expressed by the fact that orders from the central authorities were ignored, sabotaged, or even disobeyed and by the increasing de facto independence of local authorities. In the case of cities, this might be the city дума, the district commissar, or the local soviet; in the countryside, it might be the village assembly or the leader of the local self-defense units.¹⁴²

By drawing attention to these centrifugal forces in the countryside and cities, Kasianov not only calls into question where the true revolutionary centers were during the early phases of the Ukrainian Revolution, but also how the anarchic political situation in the countryside, which was often under the exclusive sway of the local self-defense forces and the village assemblies, created the necessary conditions for the subsequent “black repartition” and the outbreak of the insurgency against the occupying forces of the Central Powers in early 1918.¹⁴³ Indeed, it is specifically on this latter point that the true value of his historical research is most apparent. Tracing the start of the insurgency back to May 1918, Kasianov argues that were several causes that contributed to its outbreak. These included the initial defense measures that the peasants undertook against certain landowners, who now had the formal military backing of the Austro-German occupation forces and the hetmanate; the reaction against the hetmanate’s act of restitution, which legally reinstated the property rights of landowners who were previously disenfranchised by the Ukrainian People’s Republic, and which required the peasantry to offer compensation for the lands that they seized illegally; the attempts by the occupation authorities to re-confiscate weapons and appropriated lands from the peasantry; and finally the hetmanate’s instruction on the distribution of the harvest, which required one-third of an illegally sown harvest to be given over to the legal owner of the land.¹⁴⁴ In addition to these details, Kasianov draws upon various primary and secondary sources in Ukrainian to reveal how the size of the insurgency during this first phase swelled at its height to include approximately 80,000 people and how the occupying forces of the Central Powers and hetmanate were able to eventually subdue most of the insurgents by autumn 1918, only a few months before the

¹⁴² Ibid., 84.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 84, 88, 102-103.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 102-103.

Directory announced the start of its own uprising against the hetmanate, which recruited many of the same insurgents that were active between spring and autumn 1918.¹⁴⁵

In reading Kasianov's analysis of this first stage of the insurgency, it is obvious how much of it was driven by the basic socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasantry, and how little influence the question of national consciousness played a role in these early events—at least in his reading. For instance, by tracing the outbreak of the insurgency not to the overthrow of the Central Rada in April 1918, but rather to the events described above, which date back to May 1918, it is difficult to see how national consciousness could have played any ostensible role at all. If the overthrow of the Central Rada in April 1918 did not elicit the same type of armed resistance that more parochial concerns like weapon and grain confiscations could, to what extent is it truly possible to speak of the influence of national consciousness, which, for all intents and purposes, was not at all apparent? While it may be tempting to make this argument based on the Kasianov's analysis, the events surrounding the Directory's uprising greatly complicate this view. Indeed, if national consciousness did not play any role at all among the peasantry, then why did so many peasants answer the Directory's mobilization call against the hetmanate in early winter 1918? A counterargument to this could be that, since the Directory wished to reinstate the same radical agrarian policies as the previous Ukrainian People's Republic, which were highly in favor of the peasantry, the willingness of the peasantry to join the uprising was mainly due to these same parochial socioeconomic and political interests, which had fundamentally remained unchanged since the beginning of this "horizontal fragmentation" at the start of the Ukrainian Revolution. Several factors that further complicate this narrative are how individual partisan leaders, that is, the so-called *otamany* loyal to the Directory, oriented themselves around these abstract ideas of national and ideological consciousness, whether there were considerable national and ideological differences between themselves and the peasant insurgents that they led, and to what extent these differences were also salient in their relations with the leaders of the Directory. Once an extremely neglected topic in the historiography, Kasianov courageously tries to provide a coherent analysis on the various national and

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 103.

ideological beliefs of these *otamany*, which were driven as much by political contingency and caprice as they were by any deeper abstract convictions:

Hundreds of these insurgent units and peasant “armies” had leaders whose political orientation was unclear and changed according to the situation and the leaders’ interest. Some of the insurgents. Were influenced by the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, and many supported the Bolsheviks or went over to their troops as they approached. One of the largest insurgent armies, that of the anarchist Nestor Makhno, controlled a large part of the Katerynoslav gubernia and was fundamentally opposed to rule of any kind (although it used Bolshevik slogans and allied itself with them for certain period). The leaders of the smaller units were mainly interested in the defense of their own villages or local areas under their control. Otamans in the provinces sometimes proclaimed their own republics or declared their personal rule over a certain territory. There were about 120 different “peasant republics” during the Ukrainian Revolution. These otamans frequently fought not only against the Directory, the Bolsheviks, the Whites, and the intervening foreign troops, but also against one another. The leadership of the Directory was unable to deal with this elemental form of violence. Having to fight a war on many fronts, it failed not only to establish a stable leadership over the insurgents but also to maintain stable lines of communication and information.¹⁴⁶

This assessment reveals several fundamental things. Firstly, it demonstrates just how little the Directory possessed in terms of an ideological monopoly over national consciousness. The fact that so many of these *otamany* displayed such heterogeneous national and ideological beliefs reveals the limitations to which this all-Ukrainian national consciousness that was propagated by the Directory was truly internalized by these actors. Secondly, notwithstanding the above restraints, it would be a mistake to conclude that these *otamany* did not possess any discernable national consciousness at all. If this were the case, then why did so many of them rally to the cause of the Directory? A good counterargument to this would be that since many of these *otamany* were more intent on establishing control over their home villages and regions than they were in following the instructions of the Directory, it could be argued their affinity towards the Directory was based more, perhaps, on an enhanced regional or village consciousness than it was on an all-encompassing Ukrainian national consciousness. In other words, it is possible that many of these *otamany* joined the ranks of the Directory not because of their belief in an independent Ukrainian state (although this may have partially been the case), but rather because such a cause benefited their respective regions, and perhaps enhanced their personal chances of ruling over them. This would at least partially explain why so many of these “peasant republics” proliferated in the immediate months following the

¹⁴⁶ Georgiy Kasianov, “Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 113.

Directory's victory over the hetmanate. Lastly, this analysis reveals how certain issues, such as the question of agrarian reform and political autonomy, were primarily uniform throughout these various stages of the peasant insurgency (indeed, nothing galvanized peasant armed opposition more than the threat of forced grain acquisitions, whether by the forces of the Central Powers or by Bolsheviks), while more abstract ideas like national consciousness, that is, to extent that it was even felt by a large portion of the peasant population, appears more contingent, limited, and ambiguous, so much so that certain fundamental aspects of its existence could be called into question.

Section 2.3.2: 1991-2023 – Section Conclusion

While the above section only analyzed Kasianov's historical study, his work provides a good micro-representation of how the historiography has involved on these rather complex historical questions related to the peasant insurgent movement. Instead of offering rather simplistic narratives that solely focus on the main revolutionary centers of Kyiv and Petrograd, Kasianov's instead seeks to complicate this simplicity by broadening the aperture to include the events of the countryside. In doing this, he succeeds in revealing just how limited the various political entities that took power in Kyiv were, and how the only continuous centers of power between 1917 and 1922 were the rural areas of Ukraine, secured by the formidable presence of the peasant insurgents. While Kasianov's account does much to vindicate the findings of past historians on the underlying socioeconomic and political causes of the insurgency, it also produces new tantalizing questions that no previous study has even remotely touched—questions, of course, related to the issue of the peasants' national consciousness. Rather than providing answers to these questions, however, accounts like Kasianov's reveal new examples of complicating factors, which can only be addressed if they are dealt with directly and, perhaps, in an interdisciplinary way that addresses aspects that historians might overlook.

Section 2.4 – Chapter Conclusion

The above analysis has shown how the English language historiography on the peasant insurgent movement has changed significantly from 1950 to 2023, especially on the question of the peasants' national consciousness. Whereas earlier

historical works barely even mention the role of the peasants at all in their main narratives, thus providing little room for commentary on this issue, later studies have almost entirely succeeded in reintegrating the peasant insurgent movement into the main events of the Ukrainian Revolution. In the first section, this study focused on the works of Richard Pipes and John Reshetar, whose approach to the peasant insurgent movement is mainly through the perspective of their main topics of interest, the foundation of the Soviet Union in the case of Pipes, and the Ukrainian Revolution, in the case of Reshetar. While Pipes provides some attention to the peasant insurgent movement, his analysis is quite superficial and is unfortunately marred by certain historical inaccuracies, the most problematic being the notion that the peasants' desire for land reform and political autonomy necessarily derived from some deep-seated "nationalist sentiment," the more likely explanation being that these desires constituted their own narrow objectives.¹⁴⁷ In contrast to Pipes, who at least attempts to deal partially with the question of the peasant insurgent movement, Reshetar devotes little attention to this issue at all despite the fact that his book deals exclusively with the topic of the Ukrainian Revolution. Therefore, during this initial era, not much was known about the details of the peasant insurgent movement, and even less was known regarding the national consciousness of the peasants. This changed significantly in the 1970s with the publication of two works, Michael Palij's book on the *Makhnovshchina* and Arthur A. Adams' essay on the peasant insurgency. Both works represented the first attempt to view the peasant insurgent movement from its own perspective, with each highlighting the importance that the socioeconomic and political interests of the peasants played in fomenting the insurgency. However, just as with the previous works, very little attention was paid to the question of the peasants' national consciousness and how this may or may not have contributed to the insurgency. The other work that was reviewed from this time period was Kamenetsky's essay on the Ukrainian Revolution. Unlike the previous works that were analyzed, Kamenetsky's study attempts to introduce the question of national consciousness into his historical analysis—a factor which he seems to attribute individually to their "undeveloped sense of responsibility for nationwide

¹⁴⁷ Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 57.

issues.”¹⁴⁸ Through both a traditional and comparative analysis, this study showed how Kamenetsky’s approach to this question was conceptually problematic, since it prioritized individual factors over long-term systemic trends like history, socioeconomics, technology, culture, and the state, which, in the view of the current author, are more realistic determinants of national consciousness than the rather vague “sense of responsibility” that he proposes.¹⁴⁹ In the last section, this analysis then evaluated historian Georgiy Kasianov’s historical study, which represents a major milestone in the historiography in the way that it completely reintegrates the peasant insurgent movement into the main narrative of the Ukrainian Revolution. Through this reincorporation, he not only complicates the traditional narrative of the revolution by revealing how events in the countryside undermined the main administrative hierarchies that existed between the urban centers and villages—a process that he adroitly refers to as “horizontal fragmentation,” but he also problematizes the manner in which these abstract ideas like national and ideological consciousness interacted with the more mundane socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasantry, especially in the personalities of the *otamany*.¹⁵⁰ By showing just how contingent, capricious, and ambiguous these more abstract ideas were in the minds of these insurgent leaders, Kasianov underscores to what extent the study of this national consciousness remains a problematic gap in the historiography. In order to elucidate how future historians might better approach this question, the below chapter will discuss how the modernization theory of nationalism, as proposed in the works of Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and John Breuilly, might provide a useful interdisciplinary lens.

¹⁴⁸ Ihor Kamenetsky “Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵⁰ Georgiy Kasianov, “Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Dominance,” in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, ed. Wolfram Dornik (Edmonton, CA: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 84, 113.

Chapter 3: The Modernization Theory of Nationalism and Future Research

3.1: Introduction

In contrast to national primordialism, a theory which asserts that nations have existed since time immemorial and are “inherent in the human condition,”¹⁵¹ the modernization theory of nationalism posits that nations are relatively new social phenomena, which are the byproduct of certain historical stages of development as well as the conscious attempts by individuals and states to establish national identities through “artefact, invention and social engineering,”¹⁵² usually as an attempt to create and gain control over potential national states.¹⁵³ To put this in simpler terms, modernist theorists of nationalism contend that nations are artificially constructed from pre-existing ethnic groups in order to form nationally conscious political communities, primarily with the goal of creating new national states. As socially constructed identities, the process by which someone or a collectivity comes to assume a national identity can change depending on historical or political circumstances. In some instances, these processes can be long drawn out, in others they can be the byproduct of specific nationalist policies that can occur over relatively short periods of time.¹⁵⁴ Regarding the former, Benedict Anderson points to the role that “print-capitalism” (a catch-all term that refers collectively to the printing industry, book market, and journalism) played in creating new reading publics who shared a commonly accessible “print-language” based either on their vernacular (e.g., English, Italian, French, etc.) or on some universal or sacred language (e.g., Latin).¹⁵⁵ This “imagined community” of common readers, who are able to conceptualize a broader community beyond themselves with whom they share the same language, ideas, and religious values, thus laid the critical foundation for the infusion of nationalist ideas, which were based on relatively similar principles.¹⁵⁶ Ernest Gellner offers a compelling and entirely complementary view to Anderson’s,

¹⁵¹ Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 8.

¹⁵² Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.

¹⁵³ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁵⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 11.

¹⁵⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, NY: Verso, 1983), 37-46.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

which situates the emergence of nationalism and national consciousness in the disruptive transition from agrarian to industrial societies.¹⁵⁷ Specifically, his argument is that, as agrarian societies, which are defined by strict vertical cleavages between a homogenous ruling elite and a linguistically, culturally, religiously, and ethnically heterogenous peasant population, begin to transition to an industrial society, more people begin to move to the cities in order to work in manufactories—a process that places inordinate strain on governments to create a new homogenous national culture through mass education, training, and other organizational services that facilitate social mobilization.¹⁵⁸ A third view, proposed by John Breuilly, proposes that nationalism should not be viewed as a kind of psychological or sociological consciousness at all, but rather as a form of politics:

To focus upon culture, ideology, identity, class or modernization is to neglect the fundamental point that nationalism is, above and beyond all else, about politics and that politics is about power. Power, in the modern world, is principally about control of the state. The central task is to relate nationalism to the objectives of obtaining and using state power.¹⁵⁹

In pursuit of this focus, Breuilly develops a typology that attempts to provide an exhaustive framework for all the possible orientations that nationalism can take regarding its relations to the state, which he distinguishes between nation- and non-nation states.¹⁶⁰ These include separation nationalism, based on the political ideology that a particular national group should seek to separate itself from a larger state (examples include the Magyar, Greek, and Nigerian nationalisms that were directed at many of the large non-nation states of the 19th and 20th centuries like the Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Empire, and British Empire); reform nationalism, which is a political ideology pursued by those already to reform the state in a nationalist fashion (the most prominent examples include the Turkish and Japanese nationalisms of the 19th century); and lastly unification nationalism, which is a political ideology pursued by groups looking to unify their states with territories occupied by their national cohorts (the best examples of this include the German and Italian nationalisms of the 19th century).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1983), 39.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹⁵⁹ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

Section 3.2: Modernization Theory and the Peasant Insurgent Movement

In returning to the issue of the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine, how do the theories elaborated in the paragraph above help to better understand the national and ideological idiosyncrasies surrounding this movement, which, based on the existing historical consensus, possessed either a very weak form of national consciousness or did not possess one at all? Moreover, how could these theories help historians, who are seeking to understand the peasant insurgency from this perspective, conceptualize this issue in more theoretical terms?

Perhaps the most significant point regarding these issues relates to the relatively anomalous status of the peasant insurgency within this modernization framework. The same could also be said for the Ukrainian national movement as well. As described extensively in the first chapter of this study, the Ukrainian national movement was severely disadvantaged since its main constituency, the peasantry, was largely illiterate, and the fact that it was prohibited to publish reading materials in Ukrainian throughout the latter half of the 19th century in the Russian Empire. Therefore, the type of gradual, print-capitalist form of proto-nationalism described by Anderson was largely unavailable to the peasants in their native language. Both in Right and Left Bank Ukraine, literate peasants were almost always literate in a language that was not their own (the two most prominent languages at this time were Polish and Russian), therefore, to the extent that they experienced these “imagined communities” at all in these accessible print languages, it was likely with those with whom they shared no Ukrainian national consciousness. Similarly, in the case of Gellner, since the process of industrialization favored the use and proliferation of Russian over Ukrainian (for more on this, please refer to details in chapter one), it cannot be said that this process led to the strengthening of the Ukrainian national movement. In fact, it might even be argued that this process of industrialization was perhaps even more threatening than the formal russification policies of the Russian Empire, since it possessed its own insidious, assimilationist logic that incentivized previously Ukrainophone peasants to be Russophone members of the urban industrial proletariat. Lastly, in the case of Breuilly, while it is possible to situate the Ukrainian nationalist ideologies of the Central Rada, Directory, and Western Ukrainian People’s Republic within both the separation and unification typologies (all three were separationist in the sense that, from 1918 to 1920, they

fought to separate themselves from the unifying military actions of the Bolsheviks, Poles, and the Volunteer Army; and unificationist in the sense that they sought unify both Eastern and Western Ukraine into a common state, an objective that they achieved in early 1919), the same cannot be said of the peasant insurgent movement, which did not orient its activities around any discernable nationalist ideology. Indeed, the degree to which the insurgency even interacted at all with the state, it was mainly in an effort to separate itself from it—the only legitimate powers that it recognized being the local village assembly and the peasant militia. Despite the implications that these facts might raise, it would be a mistake to conclude that these movements were essentially unmodern. In fact, both were incredibly progressive and modern in their social outlook, since unlike other national or social movements at the time, they did not have to cater to an entrenched bourgeoisie or nobility (they did not have to because they did not exist). Therefore, it was not these movements were unmodern, but rather through some historical contingency, it was that they found themselves outside these modernization processes that they sought to control. For instance, if the Russian Empire had counterfactually permitted or even encouraged the media, education, or the government to conduct their affairs in Ukrainian, it is possible that more of an “imagined community” might have flourished among the peasantry or that the processes of industrialization would have led instead to the adoption of Ukrainian over Russian. However, because of the policies of the Russian Empire, this of course did not happen. In analyzing the two movements together from the perspective of modernization theory, it is evident that the peasant insurgency was the logical consequence of the Ukrainian national movement’s isolation outside these broader modernization processes. In other words, it was not that peasants had some innate ignorance “of their responsibility to nation-wide issues,” as Kamenetsky contends, but rather that the larger systemic forces of modernization prevented a national consciousness, at least in this scope and stature, from being formed in the first place.¹⁶² This is why many peasants and *otamany* were more intent to fight for their respective villages and regions and not for a larger Ukrainian state. Having not been sufficiently inculcated in this “imagined community,” the various chaotic Ukrainian governments forming in Kyiv and

¹⁶² Ihor Kamenetsky “Hrushevskyi and the Central Rada: Internal Politics and Foreign Interventions,” in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 41.

Kharkiv under different ideological banners, perhaps presented themselves to these groups as a kind of “unimagined community” that was radically different from the regions they came from and instilling a kind of national myopia that only their grandchildren and great grandchildren would be able to overcome in the late 20th and early 21st centuries as citizens of an independent Ukraine.

In response to the second question posed above, the greatest value that these theories present to historians is not their ability to use the Ukrainian national movement and peasant insurgency as valid case studies, but rather as anti-case studies of national and social movements, which although outside the parameters of modernization, undoubtedly still aspire to it. This would allow historians to perhaps reevaluate the history of these movements by focusing more on the regional aspects of their manifestations, as opposed to highlighting their failures as broad social and national movements. In turn, this shift in focus could help historians understand how regional Ukrainian identities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries struggled to coalesce into an all-Ukrainian identity and identify which systemic and individual factors were most likely the cause of this outcome.

Conclusion

In the above chapters, this thesis has revealed how historians have conceptualized and evaluated the events surrounding the peasant insurgent movement in Ukraine. Specifically, it has shown that while historians have continued to view the insurgency from the perspective of the socioeconomic and political concerns of the peasantry, namely, their demands for radical agrarian reform and political autonomy, they have not adequately assessed the role that national consciousness might have played in this event, thus leaving an important gap in the historiography. To help redress this gap, this thesis also looked to the modernization theory of nationalism, specifically the ideas of Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, and John Breuilly, in order to understand the specific conceptual and historical problems that theory poses to the study of the insurgents' national consciousness. This additional analysis revealed that the national consciousness of the peasant insurgent movement was adversely affected by its isolation outside of the main processes of modernization that these scholars explain (e.g., mass-literacy, industrialization, etc.). For historians interested in pursuing future research on the peasant insurgent movement, they should keep close attention to how these processes of modernization interacted with the peasantry over the *long durée* and find specific examples of how it affected their national consciousness, perhaps through an analysis of their memoirs or by other primary source accounts that can account for this question.

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Pledge

On my honor as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it. –Jason Kancylarz

Vita

Jason Kancylarz was born on 14 December 1990 in the state of New Jersey (USA). He graduated *summa cum laude* in 2016 from Rutgers Business School with B.S. in Supply Chain and Marketing Science. He is happily married and enjoys traveling. His primary research and professional interests include the history of Eastern Europe, Russia, and Eurasia.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife, Evgeniya Kancylarz, for all the love and support she has given me during these past two years at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien and without whom it would not have been possible to write this thesis. Я очень тебя люблю, Зая!

Second, I would like to thank my Ukrainian friends, Viktoriya Teliha, Viktor Kharyton, and Mariia Ovcharenko for all the love, support, and guidance they have given me. I will always cherish our friendship. Дуже дякую вам!

Third, I would like to thank Shaira Rabi, Peter Janiš, Julia Drössler, and the rest of the team at Polemics Magazine with whom I had the pleasure of working as a Co-Editor-in-Chief. I am extremely proud of the team we assembled this year.

Fourth, I would like to thank my various friends at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, including Miloš Nešić, Luka Solić, Evan Frank, Matt Moyers, Ema Odra Raščan, Jasper Newport, Bryan Denehy, Maryam Sindhi, Michael Steger, Filippo Laurini, Anna Maculewicz, György Paller, Stephanie Pais Raposo, Sofia Bečanović, Xenia Sumkina, Anubhav Banerjee, and Marion Moshhammer. Our endless conversations and experiences together have truly changed my life. Thanks again for everything.

Fifth, I would like to thank William Seas for all the help and guidance he has given to me over the years. Thanks again for everything, Bill.

Sixth, I would like to thank my family, Paul Kancylarz, Lori Seas, Alexis Kancylarz, Larry Goodman, and Peggy Goodman for all their love and support. Thank you so much.