

# Studying the Blueprint for a Nation: Canadian Historiography of Modern Ukraine

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the development of a Canadian historiography of modern Ukraine. It argues that the early focus on Ukrainian nation building determined the range of topics that interested Canadian historians, but over the following years their methodology changed significantly. The development of social history provided indispensable tools for in-depth analysis of the Ukrainian national movement. The subsequent development of a new cultural history, post-colonial studies, and the “linguistic turn” allowed for a more subtle analysis of the Ukrainian patriotic discourse and practice. New scholarship focusing on the ambiguities of imperial projects and the everyday life allowed for a re-evaluation of the traditional emphasis on the national intelligentsia’s organic work. Because of its focus on the making of a modern Ukrainian nation, beginning in the 1990s Canadian historiography was well positioned to assist in the transformation of Ukrainian historical scholarship from Soviet models to new theoretical and methodological foundations. This often meant helping Ukrainian colleagues to revise the very “national paradigm” of history writing that early Canadian historians had helped develop. In the decades after an independent Ukraine emerged in 1991, the study of Ukrainian nation building became an increasingly global and collaborative enterprise, with historians from Ukraine studying and working in Canada, and with conferences on topics related to modern Ukrainian history involving scholars from around the world.

**Keywords:** modern Ukraine, Canada, historiography, nation building, national movement.

When the Ukrainian-Canadian historian Orest Subtelny passed away in 2016, the prominent Ukrainian journalist Vitalii Portnikov wrote that Subtelny’s *Ukraine: A History* “gave us Ukraine. Not the one that had been. But the one that shall be.” Portnikov went on to explain what Subtelny had contributed: “not just the history of the people, not just the history of the regions—he wrote the history of the country.” Subtelny’s history came out in 1991, just as the new Ukraine and a new narrative of Ukrainian history were being constructed. The Canadian historian presented Ukraine as a nation struggling continuously for independence—a nation-state in the making.

One can argue that such a teleological reading simplified the complex arguments of Subtelny and other Western historians, but it is telling that Ukrainian audiences saw such a scheme as an exciting discovery of their

nation's past and future. Yet the relationship between the Canadian historiography of Ukraine and Ukrainian readers in independent Ukraine can also be seen as a complex case of mutual cross-pollination. The idealistic enthusiasm in the Ukraine of the early 1990s did not last long. The persistence of ambiguous national identities within the country and unabating Russian cultural domination called for a more detailed inquiry into the construction and deconstruction of nations in imperial and post-imperial contexts. The two popular Ukrainian revolutions of the twenty-first century and the subsequent war in the Donbas since 2014 have emphasized the political nature of identity-building processes. They have also marked the development of a civic, multicultural Ukrainian identity that defines itself in opposition to corrupt authoritarian regimes past and present, both at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Precisely because of their interest in nation building, Canadian historians of modern Ukraine were in a position to help their Ukrainian colleagues and the general public make sense of the complex processes underway in the country. The concepts and methodological approaches Canadian historians could offer were neither teleological nor partisan, but based on a comparative study of European national movements and the importance of the state and the national intelligentsia—acting either in unison or at cross-purposes—in the cultural and political processes involved in producing modern nations. The original impetus for the development in Canadian historiography of a focus on Ukrainian nation building may well have been patriotic, reflecting the interests of the influential Ukrainian-Canadian community, but already in the 1970s Ukrainian-Canadian scholars had begun to advance innovative interpretations of Ukraine's historical development. In so doing they often found themselves revising the national paradigm that had been established in the early twentieth century. Social history soon emerged as a methodological tool indispensable to the study of the Ukrainian national movement. In the next generation of Canadian historians of modern Ukraine, cultural history, post-colonial studies, and the "linguistic turn"<sup>2</sup> provided new ways of examining the discourse on the nation. The concept of a total war and the more complex understanding of imperial projects came to supplement the earlier emphasis on the national intelligentsia's organic work. Finally, in the twenty-first century, joint projects, translations, and academic mobility weakened the borders between the

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine*.

<sup>2</sup> The "linguistic turn" here refers to an influential trend in the Western historiography of the 1980s and 1990s that challenged the materialist paradigm of social history by emphasizing the role of language in the construction of identities.

Canadian and Ukrainian academic worlds, making the study of modern Ukraine an increasingly global and collaborative enterprise.

## BEGINNINGS

The mass immigration of Ukrainian peasants to Canada's Prairie provinces, which began in the 1890s, was bound, at least in the long run, to generate academic interest in Ukrainian studies in Canada. By the time the second generation of Ukrainian Canadians, more assured of its social standing and more confident in English, came of age in the 1930s, Ukraine was receiving international attention owing to repressive Polish policies in eastern Galicia and the state-engineered Holodomor (the famine of 1932-33) in Soviet Ukraine. The combination of these two factors generated interest in Ukraine on the part of influential Canadian academics such as the historian George W. Simpson and the poet and translator Watson Kirkconnell, both of whom had worked indefatigably to include Ukrainian language and literature as regular subjects at Canadian universities—an effort that began to bear fruit in the 1940s. Simpson in particular had sought to establish Ukrainian history as an academic subject. In 1935, he created an introductory course at the University of Saskatchewan on the history of the Slavic peoples (Prymak, *Gathering a Heritage* 121).

Simpson also supported Ukrainian community activists on two projects in the late 1930s that tested the waters for the establishment of a Ukrainian history course. He welcomed a proposal by the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League of Canada to invite a leading Ukrainian historian, Dmytro Doroshenko, to tour Canada with lectures on Ukrainian history and culture. The tour included a sixty-hour lecture course for school teachers (but open to students and the general public) at the Petro Mohyla Institute in Saskatoon. (The venue was later changed to the Hrushevsky Institute in Edmonton.) By all accounts, the tour was a success. Doroshenko went on a similar tour in Canada again in 1938, and only the start of World War II prevented him from repeating it in 1939 (Prymak, "Dmytro Doroshenko and Canada," 6-10). Simpson also got involved in the second project arising from the success of Doroshenko's first visit: the preparation of an abridged translation of Doroshenko's *Narys istorii Ukrainy (A Survey of Ukrainian History, 2 vols., 1932-33)*, at the time the most up-to-date history of Ukraine. Simpson edited Hanna Chikalenko-Keller's English translation and also wrote the introduction and the explanatory note on terminology. Funded by the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League, the abridged translation came out in 1939 and was reprinted in 1940—the very period when Canadian interest in the Ukrainian question in Europe, as well as the

political allegiances of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, was at its peak (Doroshenko, *History of the Ukraine*).<sup>3</sup>

Doroshenko resumed his contacts with Canada after the war, and in 1947 he moved to Winnipeg to lecture at St. Andrew's College, an educational institution run by the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada. In his one and a half years in Winnipeg the pre-eminent Ukrainian historian in the West accomplished much. Doroshenko taught courses on Ukrainian and church history, as well as the history of Ukrainian literature, but also wrote at an impressive pace. While in Winnipeg he produced several new chapters for the second edition of *Velyka istoriia Ukrainy* (*Great History of Ukraine*)—a collectively written popular survey whose first edition (Lviv, 1935) had been a bestseller—and wrote his immensely valuable memoirs about the Ukrainian national movement before World War I (Kryp'iakivych and Holubets'; Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny*). In addition, Doroshenko produced two short books on church history, which were likely based on his lectures, and prepared a brief history of Ukrainian literature, which remains unpublished. He also discovered a new research opportunity: the history of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. Doroshenko edited a volume of materials on Ukrainian Canadians for the Ukrainian National Home in Winnipeg and prepared, with the assistance of the graduate student Paul Yuzyk, a card bibliography on this subject (Prymak, "Dmytro Doroshenko: A Ukrainian Émigré Historian," 39).

If Doroshenko had continued his work in Winnipeg, he could have become the mentor of the new generation of historians. His concept of Ukrainian history, as expressed in his *History of the Ukraine*, represented a remarkable symbiosis of Mykhailo Hrushevsky's history of the Ukrainian people as an ethnolinguistic community and the Ukrainian "statist" school's emphasis on the continuity of state formations and elites, including the non-Ukrainian nobility, as in Viacheslav Lypynsky's territorial concept of Ukraine. Instead of Hrushevsky's emphasis on popular revolts, Doroshenko focused on the autonomist and separatist strivings of Ukrainian elites as the moving force of the national history, but his notion of Ukraine was ethnographic (Prymak, "Dmytro Doroshenko: A Ukrainian Émigré Historian," 39). Striking parallels between Doroshenko's vision of Ukrainian history and the one found two generations later in Subtelny's survey suggest that the elder historian may have created his school in Canada. The paradigm shift in historiography, which occurred in the United States thanks to Oleksander Ohloblyn's mentorship of young Ukrainian-American anglophone historians in the 1960s, could have happened in Canada even earlier. However, after living for many decades in major

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<sup>3</sup> On the Canadian context, see Kordan, *Canada*; and Prymak, *Maple Leaf*.

European cities, Doroshenko never quite adjusted to the harsh climate and relative isolation of the Canadian Prairies. Furthermore, financial difficulties at St. Andrew's College and a conflict between Doroshenko and the college administration resulted in his appointment first being reduced and then not renewed (Gerus, "The Reverend Semen Sawchuk"; Prymak, "Dmytro Doroshenko and Canada," 21-22). Depressed and in increasingly ill health, Doroshenko left for Europe in 1950 and died in Munich the following spring.

Paradoxically, as Doroshenko crossed the Atlantic in one direction, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and other postwar displaced persons were travelling in the opposite direction—to North America. The arrival of this new wave of immigrants, better educated and politically more assertive than the earlier émigrés, transformed the Ukrainian-Canadian community. The early period of the Cold War also contributed to renewed interest in Ukraine as a major component of the Soviet nationality problem. In these new circumstances, Canadian universities started opening up positions in Ukrainian studies, although primarily in language and literature rather than history. Yet some Canadian Slavists hired to teach Ukrainian did research that would be called interdisciplinary today. George S. N. Luckyj (aka Iurii Luts'kyi, University of Saskatchewan, 1947-49, and University of Toronto, 1952-84) was perhaps the best example of a scholar working on the porous border between literary studies and cultural history. His influential books were read by historians and literary scholars alike; together with his wife, Moira, he also translated into English a number of important Ukrainian works, both literary and historical.<sup>4</sup>

Other disciplines related to modern Ukrainian history also developed in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. Doroshenko's close friend and colleague Metropolitan Ilarion (Ivan Ohiienko) continued publishing on church history and Ukrainian culture in both early modern and modern periods after becoming the head of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada in 1951. Ilarion also reformed St. Andrew's College, which in 1962 became an affiliated college of the University of Manitoba (Tymoshyk). Paul Yuzyk, a historian and community leader, who as an MA student had helped Doroshenko to compile a bibliography of Ukrainian Canadians, obtained a teaching position at the University of Manitoba in 1951 and went on to publish influential works about Manitoba's Ukrainian community, the two main Ukrainian churches in Canada, and other aspects of Ukrainian-Canadian history. After being appointed to the Senate in 1963 as a Progressive Conservative from Manitoba, Yuzyk moved from the University

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<sup>4</sup> See Luckyj, *Literary Politics; Between Gogol' and Ševčenko; Young Ukraine*; as well as Luckyj and Lindheim. The translations of the Ukrainian historical books cited above include some by Dmytro Doroshenko, Hryhorii Kostiuk, and Ivan Majstrenko.

of Manitoba to the University of Ottawa and became an important spokesperson for what subsequently became known as the policy of multiculturalism ("Senator Paul Yuzyk"). In 1958, in another Prairie province with a significant Ukrainian population, the University of Alberta hired Manoly R. Lupul, a historian of the Canadian educational system who went on to lead the Ukrainian community's effort in creating the bilingual English-Ukrainian school system and to turn his university into a major centre of Ukrainian studies. Lupul was also a prominent advocate of multiculturalism (Lupul, *The Politics of Multiculturalism*).

All these trends—the continued importance of church history, the lasting legacy of Doroshenko and Metropolitan Ilarion, and the focus on the history of Ukrainian Canadians—can be seen in the long career of Oleh W. Gerus. Trained as a historian of imperial Russia, following his appointment at the University of Manitoba in 1969 Gerus wrote primarily on Ukrainian Canadians and the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada (after 1990: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada). Significantly, however, Gerus also undertook the updating of Doroshenko's history in English. Published in 1975 as *A Survey of Ukrainian History*, a title that was more faithful to Doroshenko's original two-volume set, it included the text of Doroshenko's 1939 abridged edition, Gerus's introduction, a select bibliography of English-language works, and six new chapters by Gerus covering the period from 1914 to the mid-1970s. Gerus's fast-paced narrative is generally in keeping with Doroshenko's overall framework. Thus he approvingly mentions Pavlo Skoropads'kyi's promotion of "territorial patriotism with the emphasis on Ukrainian citizenship rather than on Ukrainian nationality" (Doroshenko, *A Survey* 638). At the same time one can see in Gerus's chapters the influence of social history and other modern concepts. For example, in explaining the outcome of the Ukrainian Revolution, Gerus focuses first and foremost on the leadership's failure to address the peasantry's concerns. The chapter on the 1920s stresses the process of urbanization that unfolded in tandem with the policy of Ukrainization. When discussing the political dissent of the 1960s and 1970s in Soviet Ukraine, Gerus offers a subtle explanation of how Marxism could provide an ideological foundation for the majority of dissidents, the ideological descendants of the "national communists." The Famine of 1932-33, which was not yet known as the Holodomor, Gerus already deemed "a form of genocide" (Doroshenko, *A Survey* 698). The book sold well, thus proving the demand for a college-level textbook on Ukrainian history. A new printing of *Survey* was released in 1980.

## FOCUS ON THE NATION

The postwar wave of Ukrainian immigrants brought to Canada many who had participated in momentous historical events in Ukraine and were eager to tell their stories. Most of them published in Ukrainian and never held academic appointments at Canadian institutions. However, the Shevchenko Scientific Society of Canada (est. 1949) and other community organizations provided a useful platform for amateur and trained historians alike. This diverse group of authors included Semen Pidhainy, Zynovii Knysch, Roman Kolisnyk, and Wasyl Veryha, among others. Most of them published memoirs, historical works, and books between these two categories; the authors usually focused on the Ukrainian Revolution and World War II. There was now a public in Canada for such works and there were publishers, too, most notably Ivan Tyktor, who had published important historical surveys in interwar Lviv and had reissued their updated versions in postwar Winnipeg.

Yet, by the early 1970s, the changing Canadian context prepared the ground for the establishment of Ukrainian history as a legitimate academic discipline at Canadian universities. In 1971 the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau declared its official commitment to the policy of multiculturalism, an inclusive vision of Canada as a land of many equally valuable cultures. The Ukrainian-Canadian community, which had lobbied for this change, saw the new policy as opening the door to the recognition of Ukrainian immigrants' contribution to Canada, as well as to a host of cultural and educational initiatives aimed at supporting Ukrainian culture. The early to mid-1970s saw important advances in Ukrainian-Canadian schooling, cultural life, and the academic sphere. New developments at the University of Alberta made the greatest impact on the academic study of modern Ukrainian history.

In 1970 the Department of History at the University of Alberta invited Ivan Lysiak-Rudnyts'kyi (aka Ivan L. Rudnytsky) as a guest professor to teach a course on "The Beginnings of Modern Ukraine." This invitation materialized as a result of several fortuitous factors. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism had just released the last volume of its report, which endorsed what would become known as "multiculturalism." Among other practical recommendations, the report proposed the creation of university positions to study and teach the history and culture of Canada's immigrant groups. At the same time Rudnytsky, who had been teaching at the American University in Washington, D.C., was looking for a way to move to Edmonton to reunite with his spouse. Lupul and the Edmonton lawyer Peter Savaryn, who was an influential figure in the Progressive Conservative Party, mounted a campaign to hire Rudnytsky. A 1970 guest course proved a success, and Rudnytsky confirmed his

reputation as an original thinker and engaging speaker who was popular with students. Lupul and Savaryn then pushed for a permanent appointment, which materialized in 1971, after Alberta's Ministry of Education and the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko provided additional funds (Khymska 100-05).

The establishment of a position in Ukrainian history paved the way for other Ukrainian initiatives at the University of Alberta and throughout the province. Following the introduction of a bilingual English-Ukrainian school network in 1974, community leaders focused their attention on obtaining government funding for a Ukrainian research institute on the University of Alberta campus. Lupul, Savaryn, and the Edmonton lawyer and politician Laurence Decore spearheaded the effort, which the then provincial Minister of Education, Albert Hohol, endorsed. In 1976 the Alberta provincial government established the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) as a part of the University of Alberta. Lupul was appointed its first director, with Rudnytsky and Luckyj (Toronto) as its two associate directors (Lupul, "The Establishment"; Savaryn). The CIUS provided a crucial platform for research and community outreach. It also facilitated collaboration among Ukrainian specialists in various disciplines and countries by means of awarding scholarships and organizing conferences. Within Canada the CIUS fostered interregional research collaboration by appointing as associate directors the literary scholar Luckyj and, after Rudnytsky's departure from the CIUS in 1978, the political scientist Bohdan Bociurkiw (aka Botsiurkiv) of Carleton University in Ottawa. Bociurkiw's work on the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church under Soviet rule was as interesting to historians as it was to political scientists.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, at the University of Alberta's Department of History, Rudnytsky structured his courses in Ukrainian history in such a way as to provide an in-depth study conducive to research training of students and younger scholars, whom he mentored. He divided Ukrainian history into four chronological courses, which he rotated to make room for his other offerings. He also created a senior seminar in Ukrainian history. At the same time, in 1973, Lupul introduced a course on the history of Ukrainians in Canada (Khymska 106).

Rudnytsky's research profile, being rather unusual for a Ukrainian historian of his generation, influenced subsequent directions of research on modern Ukrainian history in Canada and beyond. He had arrived at the University of Alberta as an established, European-educated scholar who

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<sup>5</sup> See Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church*, one of his many publications on religion under Communism.



wrote influential essays rather than books.<sup>6</sup> Like his famous mother, Milena Rudnyts'ka, head of the Union of Ukrainian Women in Western Ukraine and a member of the Sejm in interwar Poland, he was critical of radical Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>7</sup> Rudnytsky approached the Ukrainian nation as a subject of historical research rather than as an article of faith and a primordial anthropomorphic organism, unlike many other diasporan Ukrainian patriots of his generation.

In his publications on modern Ukraine, Rudnytsky positioned himself as a historian of political and social thought. But his approach was not a classic history of ideas. A student of the German philosophy of history, he believed in the objective laws of historical development—a belief that required a researcher to take the study of society seriously. Once a given society was properly examined and classified, one could understand the nature of historical change that engendered new political concepts. Of course, one needs a taxonomy of nations in order to classify them, and Rudnytsky evoked the Hegelian distinction between “historical” and “non-historical” nations, the former being the model to which western European nation-states accord. According to Rudnytsky, before the development of its modern national movement Ukraine was a “non-historical” nation characterized by discontinuity in the history of its statehood, the loss of its native elite, and the absence of a native high culture. The loss of elites was of greater importance than the loss of a national polity:

I conclude that the decisive factor in the existence of the so-called historical nations was the preservation, [sometimes even] despite the loss of independence, of a representative upper class as the carrier of political consciousness and ‘high’ culture . . . . Conversely, the so-called non-historical nations had lost (or never possessed) a representative class, and were reduced to an inarticulate popular mass, with little if any national consciousness and with a culture of predominantly folk character. (Rudnytsky, “Observations,” 362-63).

Rudnytsky’s intention here was not to belittle the Ukrainian nation, but to establish the essential normality of the Ukrainian historical experience as typical of eastern Europe. He makes this point at the beginning of his influential article “The Role of the Ukraine in Modern History.” Rudnytsky required this determination in order to formulate the essence of Ukrainian history in the modern period: “The central problem of modern Ukrainian

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<sup>6</sup> The only book by Rudnytsky published during his lifetime was a collection of essays in Ukrainian (*Lysiak-Rudnyts'kyi*). His English-language book of selected essays came out posthumously (Rudnytsky, *Essays*).

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent treatment of Rudnytsky’s biography and political views, see Hrytsak, “Ivan Lysiak-Rudnyts'kyi.”

history is that of the emergence of the nation: the transformation of an ethno-linguistic community into a self-conscious political and social community" ("The Role," 202). Before one rushes to criticize this narrow nation-centric view of Ukrainian history, it is worth noting that in Rudnytsky's time the rejection of the primordialist view and the insistence on the contemporary Ukrainian nation being a modern project were both controversial, revisionist ideas.

Patriotic ideas served as the agent of change that completed the construction of the modern Ukrainian nation. Hence Rudnytsky's periodization of the Ukrainian national movement was determined not by social factors but by ideological change, although in the end he came very close to Miroslav Hroch's scheme of national movements among the "small" (another way of rendering "non-historical") eastern European nations passing through academic, cultural, and mass-mobilization stages (Hroch, *Die Vorkämpfer*; Hroch, *Social Preconditions*). Rudnytsky brought up his periodization in several essays, but he provided its fullest explanation in "The Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine." He distinguished between "the Epoch of the Nobility (to the 1840s)," "Populism (1840s to 1880s)," and "Modernism (from the 1890s to World War I)." The ideological transition progressed from a local patriotism that could coexist with imperial loyalty, to an emphasis on the "people" as constituting the nation, to the growth of national consciousness and the idea of independence. Rudnytsky matched the first two stages with the social groups that constituted the leading force—the nobility and the intelligentsia, respectively. The modernist stage was defined as much by new ideas as by the "breaking down of the artificial walls which tsarism had sought to impose between the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the masses" (Rudnytsky, "The Intellectual Origins," 135).

Thus Rudnytsky's analysis of the Ukrainian national movement merged ideological and social criteria to produce a rich and insightful picture. Still, his main emphasis was on the political elites and ideological change. When he writes that "the making of the nation was basically completed during the revolutionary years 1917-20," one needs to read another of his essays to put these words in their proper context (Rudnytsky, "The Role," 202). It was during the Ukrainian Revolution that "the idea of *samostiinist'* . . . had become a common possession of Ukrainian patriots of all political persuasions" (Rudnytsky, "The Fourth Universal," 408). This did not necessarily imply that this idea was endorsed by the masses, especially in the Ukrainian lands of the Russian Empire, but that it had become firmly established in the realm of national politics. This political space could then shrink to the narrow confines of émigré politics or expand again, as it did with the Soviet collapse. But independence remained its defining feature.

Always an original thinker, Rudnytsky did not idealize the nation-state, even though for him the idea of independence marked the highest stage of the national movement. He remained fascinated by the socialist and federalist thought of Mykhailo Drahomanov, the subject of his PhD dissertation. In explaining Drahomanov's preference for a federated Europe, Rudnytsky once wrote that "the existence of a national state does not of itself guarantee either civic freedom or social justice"—a prophetic point that the Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions made only too clear ("The First Ukrainian," 264). Likewise, Rudnytsky stood out in his generation by taking seriously the ephemeral statehood of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Even though it was accomplished by Stalin's armies, the reunification of almost all the Ukrainian lands in a single polity was "a tremendous step forward in the process of nation-building." To be sure, the Ukrainian republic's sovereignty remained a myth but one that could become a latent force, and "Stalin's map might live to be translated, after all, from the limbo of camouflage into the realm of reality" (Rudnytsky, "Soviet Ukraine," 469, 473).

Rudnytsky realized that he was revising the national paradigm of Ukrainian history that had been established in interwar eastern Galicia and among the majority of postwar Ukrainian émigrés in the West.<sup>8</sup> Moreover he organized a conference with the telling title "Rethinking Ukrainian History" and edited the conference proceedings (Rudnytsky, *Rethinking*). This volume, which included contributions from North American scholars of different generations, revealed an important new trend. In answering familiar research questions about the Ukrainian nation, the profession was increasingly applying new methodological approaches. Urban studies was one such innovative aspect in the articles on modern Ukraine, but even the historians writing about the Ukrainian elites of the early modern period declared their commitment to the methods of social history. The volume also included a transcript of a round table on terminology and periodization in the teaching of Ukrainian history, which actually addressed a much wider set of methodological issues. The participants discussed the value of ethnic and territorial approaches to Ukrainian history and pondered the ways of incorporating the then new trend of social history. Very telling was John-Paul Himka's objection to Rudnytsky's proposal to describe the Ukrainian nineteenth century as "the Age of National Awakening." The younger scholar argued that doing so would dismiss the growth of industry and the working class in Ukraine as well as its wider social awakening, all of which were pan-European trends (Rudnytsky, *Rethinking* 253-54). In other words, social history could not

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<sup>8</sup> On the national paradigm, see Plokhly, *Ukraine and Russia*, chaps. 15 and 16.

only provide new instruments for studying the nation, but could also challenge nation-centric interpretive frames.

#### THE NATION IN CONTEXT

In its short existence, the CIUS had already proved its importance as a platform for academic forums and publications on the major problems of Ukrainian history. Scholars from other Canadian universities sometimes took the lead in such projects, in particular Peter J. Potichnyj, a political scientist at McMaster University. In retrospect his project of conferences and edited volumes on Ukrainians' relations with their most important historical neighbours—Jews, Poles, and Russians—can be seen as encouraging academic dialogue in what today would be called “transnational history,” a concept focusing on interrelations and mutual influences among nations, as well as on common larger historical factors.<sup>9</sup> The three resulting volumes differed somewhat in their approach and coverage, but the one on Ukrainian-Jewish relations has gone through three editions since 1988, proving the value of the original concept (Potichnyj, *Poland and Ukraine*; Potichnyj and Aster, *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations*; Potichnyj et al., *Ukraine and Russia*).<sup>10</sup>

With the establishment of the CIUS, two young specialists, Bohdan Krawchenko and (in 1977) John-Paul Himka joined it as research associates. A sociologist by training, Krawchenko eventually wrote an influential dissertation and a book that focused on the relationship between social change and national identity in Ukrainian society during the twentieth century (*Social Change*). The new focus on society fit well with the Ukrainian-Canadian community's awareness campaign that marked fifty years since the 1932-33 famine in Soviet Ukraine. Together with Roman Serbyn, a historian at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Krawchenko co-edited a collection of articles on this topic that appeared before Robert Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow* (1986) and the establishment of the U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine (*Famine*). Krawchenko went on to succeed Lupul (1986-91) as the CIUS director. Himka's PhD

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<sup>9</sup> On the potential of transnational history for Ukrainian studies, see Kasianov and Ther, *A Laboratory*.

<sup>10</sup> Potichnyj also co-edited important source collections on the Ukrainian nationalist underground during and after World War II. Yuri Boshyk, whose 1981 doctoral thesis on the Ukrainian political parties in the Russian Empire remains unpublished, also came to focus on the war and refugee experience, co-editing several collections of articles and source material on these topics that were published by the CIUS Press.

dissertation and first book (*Socialism in Galicia*) were devoted to the study of Ukrainian and Polish socialism in late nineteenth-century eastern Galicia, but one of his important conclusions was the role of Ukrainian socialists in formulating the ideas of an independent Ukraine (“Young Radicals”). In Edmonton Himka applied the methods of social history to the study of the Ukrainian national movement in eastern Galicia, producing a comprehensive work on Galician peasant society at the time of major social transformations in the nineteenth century. Himka’s second book (*Galician Villagers*) emphasized the complex social and national interactions, the significance of print culture, and the role of women in the national movement. (At the University of Manitoba, Stella Hryniuk’s contemporaneous research on the Galician peasantry featured similar methods but different conclusions [*Peasants with Promise*].) Himka initially shared his time between the CIUS and the History Department, but following Rudnytsky’s departure from the CIUS in 1979 he also focused on teaching. After Rudnytsky’s death in 1984, Himka was hired as a replacement, and provided with a full-time, tenure-track position teaching East European history. Replacing Rudnytsky with a Ukrainian specialist was not a foregone conclusion: Peter Savaryn had to apply his influence again, this time as the chancellor of the University of Alberta (Khymska 111-15).

During the same period, Ukrainian history became established as a regular course at two major universities in Ontario. In 1980 Paul Robert Magocsi was hired as the first Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto. By then he had a major monograph under his belt—a thick volume on the making of a modern national identity in Subcarpathian Rus’ (*The Shaping of a National Identity*). Although it could be read as a prehistory of Ukrainian Transcarpathia, this book already contained the suggestion that a separate East Slavic (“Rusyn”) national identity could have developed in this mountainous region had it not been incorporated into the Soviet Union—an idea Rudnytsky hastened to rebuff in a special article (“Carpatho-Ukraine”). Magocsi went on to accumulate an impressive publishing record in three areas: Rusyn history and culture, surveys and atlases of Ukrainian history, and Galicia as both the Ukrainian Piedmont and a multicultural land. In addition to writing about Rusyn identity, he became actively involved in shaping it in the present.<sup>11</sup> In his history of Ukraine and his work focusing on Galicia, Magocsi stressed the territorial approach and multicultural character of the lands that formed modern

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<sup>11</sup> There is a considerable body of research on Magocsi’s role as a modern nation builder. In English, see Hann, “Intellectuals”; Ziac, “Professors and Politics”; and Kuzio et al., “The Scholar.”

Ukraine (Magocsi, *A History*; Magocsi, *Ukraine*; Magocsi, *The Roots*; Hann and Magocsi, *Galicia*).

Given the leading role of the universities of Alberta and Toronto in the renewed institutionalization of Ukrainian studies in Canada, it made sense that their affiliated academic publishers took the lead in bringing out English language studies in Ukrainian history. The CIUS published such books from its early years, but in 1989 formally established the CIUS Press as its publishing arm, with its operations now shared between Edmonton and Toronto. The University of Toronto Press also developed a very strong list in Ukrainian studies in general and in modern Ukrainian history in particular. During 1984-93, the CIUS collaborated with the University of Toronto Press in publishing the five-volume *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, which became an important resource for readers who were not familiar with the Ukrainian language. A number of Canadian academics wrote entries on Ukrainian history for this major project, with Roman Senkus, Krawchenko, and Himka contributing the most. Himka also served as a subject co-editor for the history sections in volumes 3 through 5.

The University of Toronto Press also published the first in Canada original Ukrainian history in English. It was authored by Orest Subtelny, who had taught Ukrainian and East European history at York University since 1982. Subtelny's *Ukraine: A History* (1988) became an academic bestseller in North America and made an enormous impact on the formation of new historical concepts in independent Ukraine, where it was first published in 1991 (Subtel'nyi, *Istoriia Ukrainy*). A specialist on the Cossack period, Subtelny relied on the then fashionable concept of modernization in his treatment of Ukrainian society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because of its similarity to Soviet historical models, this concept seemed intuitively familiar to the Ukrainian historical profession, which also adopted from Subtelny the periodization of the Ukrainian national movement based on Hroch's scheme. But it was the overall framework of Subtelny's history—the story of the ethnic Ukrainians' struggle for their own state—that had the greatest impact in Ukraine. In the late Soviet dogmatic version, the essence of Ukrainian history had been portrayed as a continuous struggle of the Ukrainian *narod* to “reunite” with its Russian elder brother. The simplistic interpretation in Ukraine of Subtelny's more complex argument provided the profession there with a new dogma that fit conveniently into the old methodological mold (Yekelchyk, “Bridging the Past,” 560-62). At least, this was true of the early Ukrainian post-independence textbooks and general surveys.

In the late 1980s, the channels of academic communication opened up between Canada and Ukraine, and Ukrainian researchers working on the history of modern Ukraine discovered a new range of topics and methodological tools. The research profile of the CIUS changed somewhat

with the arrival of two authorities on the early modern period: Frank E. Sysyn (acting director, 1991-92) and Zenon E. Kohut (director, 1993-2012). Both Sysyn and Kohut wrote on Ukrainian historiography. They were joined by Serhii Plokyh, a specialist on the Cossack period, who moved from Dnipropetrovsk University to work at the CIUS. Such work was, in part, an outgrowth of the Hrushevsky Translation Project, the main project of the Petro Jacyk Centre for Ukrainian Historical Research (directed by Sysyn since its establishment at the CIUS in 1989, with Plokyh occasionally filling in as acting director). Kohut and Plokyh wrote articles on Russian-Ukrainian historiographical controversies, and Plokyh and Sysyn wrote about religion in modern and contemporary Ukraine.<sup>12</sup> In 1994 the new leadership of the CIUS co-organized a major international conference on Russian-Ukrainian relations to build on the profession's growing interest in cultural identity and representation.

Informed by the concepts of historical myth and national memory, the tools that patriotic intellectuals developed in their struggle against imperial grand narratives, the contributions of Kohut, Plokyh, and Sysyn displayed conceptual synergy with work being done by such Canadian historians as Thomas M. Prymak (*Mykhailo Hrushevsky; Mykola Kostomarov*), Stephen Velychenko (*National History; Shaping Identity*), and Johannes Remy (*Brothers or Enemies*).<sup>13</sup> Olga Andriewsky's subtle analysis of the Ukrainian national intelligentsia before the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Bohdan Klid's work on Volodymyr Antonovych also dovetailed with a focus on how the nation was imagined. In general, the "historiographic turn" of the 1990s and 2000s indicated the field's reaction to the new understanding of how modern nations develop on the basis of earlier communities, with the intelligentsia providing some crucial myth-making assistance. It also revealed the growing influence of cultural history and the impact of late Soviet and post-Soviet debates in Ukraine about what should constitute national memory.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Considerations of space preclude an exhaustive list. The following works are representative samples: Plokyh, *Unmaking Imperial Russia*; Plokyh and Sysyn, *Religion and Nation*; Sysyn, "Introduction"; and Kohut, *Making Ukraine*.

<sup>13</sup> In the twenty-first century Velychenko went on to write a well-researched work of institutional and social history—a study of continuity in the Ukrainian government bureaucracy, *State Building in Revolutionary Ukraine*; and an imaginative work restating the thesis of the Ukrainian Social Democrats of the revolutionary period that saw Russian colonialism in Bolshevik garb, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red*.

<sup>14</sup> Prymak was the first PhD graduate in Ukrainian history at the University of Toronto (1984) and Bohdan Klid was the first such graduate at the University of Alberta (1992). Both wrote dissertations on great Ukrainian historians and nation

From a very different starting point, one can see a similar evolution in the distinguished research career of David R. Marples, one of Rudnytsky's MA students, who went on to obtain a PhD (1985) from the University of Sheffield with a specialization in Soviet social and economic history. While a CIUS associate in the late 1980s, Marples established himself as a leading authority on the social and environmental impact of the Chornobyl nuclear accident. After Marples accepted a tenure-track appointment (as a Soviet specialist) in the Department of History at the University of Alberta in 1991, he continued his collaboration with the CIUS until 2014, serving as director of the institute's Stasiuk Program for the Study of Contemporary Ukraine. Marples also wrote widely on the Soviet Union, Russia, and Belarus, but his books on Ukraine show an evolution from his interests in the workers', the ecological, and the national movements of the late 1980s to the controversies about national memory in the first two decades of Ukrainian independence and to the analysis of Ukraine's popular revolutions, where he focuses on their political symbols.<sup>15</sup>

Himka was moving in a similar direction. In the process of transitioning from his earlier work on the social history of Galicia to a book project on the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the same region, which was somewhat similar in methodology but more engaged with the cultural sphere, he wrote an influential article on the identity choices opened to nineteenth-century Ruthenian patriots. An example of a mature and well-contextualized "constructivist" approach to national identity, Himka's paper gave careful attention to the possibility of either a regional Galician or a wide Ruthenian (Ukrainian and Belarusian) identity developing into a modern nation (*Religion and Nationality*; "The Construction of Nationality").<sup>16</sup> In the previous generation, Rudnytsky would be the first to criticize Himka's approach, but now an academic from Ukraine, Yaroslav Hrytsak, wrote a most interesting, English-language critique of Himka's argument ("Icarian Flights"). Then Himka moved decisively into new conceptual terrain in his studies of two very different chronological

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builders—Hrushevsky and Volodymyr Antonovych, respectively. The mandate of the CIUS's newest program, the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium (est. 2013) is also closely related to issues of national memory. Led by Sysyn, the research staff of this program includes trained historians—Klid, Andriy Makuch, and, in Ukraine, Liudmyla Hrynevych.

<sup>15</sup> Marples's books on Ukrainian subjects include *Chernobyl*; *Ukraine Under Perestroika*; *Stalinism in Ukraine*; *Heroes and Villains*; *Holodomor*; *Ukraine in Conflict*; and co-edited with Frederick V. Mills, *Ukraine's Euromaidan*.

<sup>16</sup> Himka also continued Potichnyj's project by co-organizing a conference with Hans-Joachim Torke and co-editing with him the resulting volume of conference papers (*German-Ukrainian Relations*).



periods. On the one hand, he became involved in the debates about historical memory, focusing in particular on the controversial World War II record of Ukrainian radical nationalists. On the other, he wrote a fascinating study of continuity and change in Last Judgment icons in the Carpathian Mountain region (*Last Judgment Iconography*), in which he questioned not just modern concepts of this region and its culture but even the research optics of the modern historian. National history became the first victim of this imaginative, postmodernist foray into the cultural past of what is now part of Ukraine.<sup>17</sup>

Just as in the previous generation, there was notable conceptual cross-pollination and joint work on various projects among historians of modern Ukraine and Canadian literary scholars and anthropologists, whose work was closely related to the new methodology of cultural history. In varying degrees this is true of the Canadian scholars Danylo Husar Struk, Oleh S. Ilnytzkij, Natalie Kononenko, Andriy Nahachewsky, Natalia Pylypiuk, Myroslav Shkandrij, and Maxim Tarnawsky, among others. Canadian research on modern Ukrainian history also benefitted from close contacts with specialists on Ukrainians in Canada Jars Balan, Radomir Bilash, Serge Cipko, Robert Klymasz, Lubomyr Luciuk, Frances Swyripa, and Roman Yereniuk; sociologists Wsevolod W. Isajiw and W. Roman Petryshyn; political scientists Dominique Arel, Marta Dyczok, Bohdan Harasymiw, John Jaworsky, Bohdan Kordan, and Taras Kuzio; geographer Ihor Stebelsky; anthropologist Tanya Richardson; and others. Finally, education specialists such as Orest Cap, Denis Hlynka, and Valentina Kuryliw have helped shape the delivery of knowledge in the field of Ukrainian history.

As interest in new cultural history and the “linguistic turn” was increasing in the profession during the 1990s and 2000s, another notable trend emerged: an increased interconnection between Canadian and Ukrainian academic worlds. In addition to exchanges of visits and joint conferences, graduate students from Ukraine soon came to constitute a significant share of those accepted into Canadian doctoral programs in history. The Department of History and Classics at the University of Alberta emerged as the national leader in this respect, especially after the appointment to the Canada Research Chair in Imperial Russian History of Heather J. Coleman, a specialist on religious and cultural history of the Russian Empire, and its Ukrainian lands in particular, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (*Russian Baptists; Sacred Stories*). Together with Marples and Himka (until the latter’s retirement in 2014), Coleman became actively involved in mentoring graduate students, including a growing number of those from Ukraine, in contemporary

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<sup>17</sup> See also Berezhnaya and Himka, *The World to Come*.

Western historical methodologies.<sup>18</sup> In 2013 Coleman took over the CIUS Research Program on Religion and Culture that Plokhly and then Himka had directed previously.

In the 2000s, graduate students from Ukraine with Canadian PhDs, including historians Serhy Yekelchyk and Andriy Zayarnyuk, began obtaining academic appointments in Canada. They inherited the full spectrum of interests that characterized the development of the field—from the foundational interest in the nation to the notion that such interest should be grounded in social history to the understanding that language and representations shape both the subject and the instruments of the research. In studying the blueprints of the Ukrainian nation developed in the imperial context, the new academics looked for the ubiquitous presence of power in everyday life, the significance of vocabularies, and the persistence of informal networks sometimes only noticeable in microhistorical studies.<sup>19</sup> Serhiy Bilenky used innovative cultural-history approaches in his study of the Romantic imagination as the fertile ground from which new concepts of the Ukrainian nation grew (*Romantic Nationalism*).<sup>20</sup> Canadian professors in related disciplines, many of them Ukrainians who graduated from universities in North America—in particular Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Taras Koznarsky, Svitlana Krysa, Olga Pressitch, Maryna Romanets, and Irene Sywenky—have enriched research on Ukrainian culture and society.

Since 1999 the Kowalsky Program for the Study of Eastern Ukraine established at the CIUS under Kohut's directorship has closely collaborated with Ukrainian historians in this important region close to the Russian border. Based at Kharkiv National University, the Kowalsky Program—a Western-style research centre—was headed, from 2000 to 2012, by Volodymyr Kravchenko, a specialist on urban and borderland history, whose work has shown an excellent command of Western theoretical approaches.<sup>21</sup> Like Plokhly's earlier move to Harvard as the Mykhailo S. Hrushevs'kyi Professor of Ukrainian History, Kravchenko's move to Edmonton as director of the CIUS after Kohut's retirement in 2012

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<sup>18</sup> The University of Toronto saw a similar increase of graduate students in modern Ukrainian history. Since the 1990s, Henry Abramson, Karel Berkhoff, Serhiy Bilenky, Svitlana Frunchak, and Oleksandr Melnyk have written PhD dissertations under the supervision of Paul Robert Magocsi, Lynne Viola, or Piotr Wróbel.

<sup>19</sup> See Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*; *Stalin's Citizens*; Zaiarniuk, *Idiomy emansypatsii*; Zayarnyuk, *Framing the Ukrainian Peasantry*; and Himka and Zayarnyuk, *Letters from Heaven*.

<sup>20</sup> He also edited a related collection of sources, *Fashioning Modern Ukraine*.

<sup>21</sup> Kravchenko's early work is on Ukrainian historiography. For a representative selection, see his *Narysny; Khar'kov/Kharkiv*; and *Ukraina*.

confirmed that Ukrainian and Canadian historians of the twenty-first century inhabit a common global academic world. Further proof of that trend came in 2008, when the CIUS established a new program based in Ukraine, this time in its western region and led by the prominent Ukrainian historian Hrytsak. The Jacyk family's continued generous support enabled the CIUS to follow up on a long-standing collaboration with Lviv National University's Institute of Historical Research and its journal *Ukraina moderna (Modern Ukraine)*, both of which were founded on Hrytsak's initiative, by establishing at Lviv's new leading research institution—the Ukrainian Catholic University—the Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Modern Ukrainian History, also directed by Hrytsak, who moved *Ukraina moderna* to that venue.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define the “Canadian” part in the notion of Canadian scholarship on modern Ukrainian history. Yet it was the contribution of Canadian based academics during previous decades that played a major role in making Ukrainian history a legitimate academic subject in the West. Their efforts to educate the rising generation of historians in Ukraine helped the latter to join this increasingly global field.

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