

Historians as Public Intellectuals: The Case of Post-Soviet Ukraine

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Abstract: This article explores the participation of Ukrainian academic historians in public intellectual activity after the fall of state socialism. First, it reviews the general debate on public intellectuals and the intelligentsia that has taken place in Ukraine during last twenty years. Then it proceeds to analyze the participation of Ukrainian historians in public intellectual work, delineating different genres of and approaches to such work. I distinguish between two types of historian public intellectuals: dogmatic and non-dogmatic. My analysis demonstrates that the participation of Ukrainian historians in public intellectual activity not only reflects the dynamics of the discussion about the social relevance of history within the historical profession, but also shows an alternative tendency, “critical public history,” which moves beyond the limitations of either affirmative, deconstructionist or “history for its own sake” approaches to the practical functions of historiography. This tendency remains weak and undertheorized, but it reflects attempts, since the fall of the USSR, to transform Ukrainian academic history writing and adapt it to the new situation of a Ukrainian multi-ethnic, democratic state which exists in an increasingly globalizing world.

Introduction

During the last 30-40 years, the idea of the public intellectual has become the subject of a heated debate in Western Europe and North America. Revived interest in this relatively old phenomenon was related, on the one hand, to the realization of its peculiar importance in the age of mass liberal democracy, and on the other – to the growing conviction among a part of scholars that the public intellectual, or at least an important type of the public intellectual, had been declining. The Eastern European concern with this issue has arisen from different historical circumstances. The fall of the communist regimes in 1989-1991 brought about new political, economic and sociocultural conditions that made possible the emergence of a public sphere independent from the government. Together with this renewed public sphere, the figure of the public intellectual came back to the stage of public life in Eastern European countries. The interest of Eastern European

researchers in this phenomenon was therefore provoked, on the one hand, by this return of the public intellectual to the region, and on the other, by the simultaneous decline of another traditional historical actor – the Eastern European intelligentsia.

In this paper, I will explore one of the aspects of this Eastern European transformation. I will focus on Ukrainian historians who, after the fall of the Soviet Union, started to play the role of the public intellectual. Such a perspective gives an opportunity, on the one hand, to understand better the specificity of the general transformation of Ukrainian academic history writing after 1991, in particular the changing character of its relationships with the authorities and society, and, on the other, to take a closer look at public intellectual work as it emerged in Ukraine after gaining independence. In order to achieve this, at first I review the general debate on public intellectuals and the intelligentsia that has taken place in Ukraine during last twenty years. Then I analyze the participation of Ukrainian historians in public intellectual work, trying to delineate different genres and approaches to it.

The key concept of my study is “public intellectual.” Following Richard A. Posner, by public intellectual, I mean an intellectual who opines to an educated public in an accessible way on questions inflected by a political or ideological concern (2, 19). I will also use a slightly modified typology of genres, types and forms of public intellectual work proposed by Posner. Posner’s approach, originally developed on the basis of the U.S. case, proposes a nuanced classificatory scheme which allows us to describe and conceptualize the diverse activities of public intellectuals. Unlike typologies of public intellectuals put forth by Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman or Antonio Gramsci, which have been recently deployed by Ukrainian scholars, and which mostly reflect their authors’ desired vision of public intellectuals’ future, Posner’s classification stems from close empirical examination of public intellectual work in America, and with some modifications may be used for analysis of the Ukrainian case, including historians’ contribution to the public debate.

A distinction between dogmatic and non-dogmatic public intellectuals lies at the heart of my typology. Those whom I depict as dogmatic intellectuals are the proponents of so-called “affirmative history,” which sees the historical legitimation of the newly-established state and the affirmation of national memory and identity to be the most important aims of history writing. The dogmatic public intellectual tends to advocate certain dogma or “higher truth” that runs throughout their contribution to the public debate. In our case, this is a dogmatic version of the master narrative of Ukrainian national history.

Those whom I call non-dogmatic intellectuals, on the other hand, do not subordinate their claims to any dogmas or higher truths, but instead limit themselves to showing what is really happening or has happened in terms of concrete facts. As a rule, they are critical towards a traditional version of the national paradigm and do not reduce the practical functions of history writing to the affirmation of national memory and identity. Two main tendencies can be distinguished within this group. The first is concerned with unmasking the myths and stereotypes of the national paradigm. The desire to expose and correct errors of the traditional narrative of Ukrainian history and collective memory has been the main force driving their work. The second is not limited to strictly historical themes,

but opines on current events and processes of political or ideological significance, putting them in a wider context or showing their historical genealogy. As I will try to show, the latter tendency looks especially promising because it allows public intellectual historians to move beyond the limitations of traditional approaches to the practical functions of historiography—whether affirmative, deconstructionist or “history for its own sake”—and combine important *positive* functions in contemporary society with upholding the core principles of historical enquiry. Following British theorist of history John Tosh, I propose to conceptualize this approach as “critical public history”.

There exists no special study of this topic. The scholarly examination of the transformations of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and intellectuals after 1991 has recently begun and yielded several interesting works (Hrytsak and Rewakowicz, Narvselius). However, these do not yield a synthetic view of it; neither do they highlight specifically the role of historians. Similarly, studies of the general transformation of Ukrainian history writing after the break-up of state socialism have missed the opportunity to address this problem[2]. The single exception here is a Polish historian, Tomasz Stryjek, who touched on this topic in his monograph on the rethinking of national history in independent Ukraine (Stryjek, *Jakiej przeszłości 18-22*). In this work, as well as in his two later articles (Stryjek, “Historycy vs polityka” and “Między historiografią a polityką”), he attempts to describe the activities of some Ukrainian historians and public intellectuals (for example, Yaroslav Hrytsak and Andriy Portnov). Stryjek was also the first to use Western approaches to the classification of public intellectual work for conceptualizing the Ukrainian case.

Debating “Public Intellectuals” in Ukraine

The Ukrainian debate on the fate of the intelligentsia and intellectuals in the post-Soviet period—which was neither intense, nor did it involve many participants—nevertheless demonstrates a widespread assumption about the decline of the intelligentsia in independent Ukraine. This assumption is mostly implicit and becomes apparent in the absence of the word “intelligentsia” in most of the texts that attempt to describe and evaluate the transformations of the Ukrainian intellectual community after 1991. Instead, authors have actively used a new term for the Ukrainian intellectual landscape: “intellectual”. In this regard, the following declaration by Mychailo Minakov, philosopher and a participant in the debate in question, seems symptomatic:

Speaking of the symptomatic character of the word ‘intellectual’, I mean that the term ‘intelligentsia’ today has disappeared in the tangle of the Ukrainian landscape, has become a part of the dumb world ‘beneath us’. The representative of the intelligentsia in our situation is a figure of suppression, a sphere of avoidance in the lexicon and in thinking. This, surely, does not mean there are no representatives of the intelligentsia among us, but rather is evidence of the disappearance of the intelligentsia that used to rest on the constant doubts of its members in the foundations and constant reminder of its own existence. The representatives of the intelligentsia are alive, but the intelligentsia has died (26).

The same tendency can be discerned in other countries of the region. For instance, Serguei Oushakine speaks of the withering of the intelligentsia in Russia and Eastern Europe after the fall of state socialism (243-248). He contends that under the Soviet regime, the intelligentsia that had no real control over cultural production and circulation repositioned itself as a moral elite. In his opinion, for the Soviet intelligentsia (both opposed and loyal to the regime), what was important was not so much adherence to some concrete set of moral values, but the articulation of the importance and timelessness of an ethical stance as such. Thereby, “articulating a promise of morality in an immoral society” became the main function of the intelligentsia in late socialism (Oushakine 244-245). However, after the break-up of the Soviet regime, both the political and social situation and the patterns of cultural production have changed. As Oushakine points out,

Highly fragmented and diversified, the new educated classes in post-socialist Eastern Europe choose strategies of professional existence and forms of cultural involvement that have little in common with the two-century-long history of east European intelligentsia. In turn, increasingly differentiated post-socialist societies seem to be more concerned with the pragmatics of their social and economic restructuring rather than with the cultural or ideological homogenization that the intelligentsia traditionally offered...the disappearance of norms, values and practices cultivated and defended by the intelligentsia goes hand in hand with the disappearance of the intelligentsia as a distinctive social group (245) .

It is worth noting that not all researchers support this view of the definitive decline and disappearance of the intelligentsia.[3] However, it was the term “intellectuals” that appeared at the center of the Ukrainian public debate over the fate of the intellectual community after 1991. The participants of the debate have been using different Western approaches to the classification of public intellectual work in their attempt to describe and conceptualize the Ukrainian situation. The most popular was Foucault’s distinction between “universal” and “concrete” intellectuals, but some authors also invoked divide between “traditional” and “organic” intellectuals proposed by Antonio Gramsci, as well as between intellectuals-legislators and intellectuals-interpreters posited by Zygmunt Bauman. In this reasoning, after the decline of “traditional” or “universal” intellectuals, who were implicitly or explicitly identified with the intelligentsia, the stage should have been taken by the “concrete” or “organic” intellectuals who do not deal with universal values and meanings but who are to be the bearers of some expert knowledge. What caused the anxiety of the majority of the commentators was the fact that this scheme did not work in the Ukrainian case, or at least did not work properly. After the disappearance of the traditional intellectuals, their place was not taken by concrete ones. Or, more precisely, concrete intellectuals emerged in Ukraine in the 1990s, but there were few of them and their influence on the wider public was minimal (Fadeev, Kuczma, Minakov 27).

Historians as Public Intellectuals

In the remainder of this article, I discuss the participation of Ukrainian historians in public intellectual activity. However, I would first like to make a methodological digression. As I mentioned above, the idea of the public intellectual has been the subject

of a heated debate in the Western humanities and social sciences during the last thirty years. Dozens of books and articles on the topic have been written, and at least two competing views emerge from them. One states that after a relative flourishing during the majority of the twentieth century, public intellectuals found themselves in decline during the century's last two or three decades. The other, while agreeing that public intellectual work has recently undergone an important transformation, describes it not as decline, but as transition from a former elitist model to a new one which is more open and fluid, in which "everyone can participate on equal terms" (Cummings 2).

In the Ukraine, however, intellectual life developed on a different trajectory due to a period of Soviet domination. Therefore I do not review the advantages and drawbacks of these competing narratives. What is important for my study, rather, is the general definition of the public intellectual and the way in which one can classify different genres of and approaches to public intellectual work. I thus endorse with some modifications the approach proposed by the US scholar Richard A. Posner, author of the innovative and systematic study of American public intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century (Posner). Posner's approach, originally developed on the basis of the U.S. case, proposes a nuanced classificatory scheme which allows us to describe and conceptualize the diverse activities of public intellectuals. Unlike typologies of public intellectuals put forth by Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman or Antonio Gramsci, which have been recently deployed by Ukrainian scholars, and which mostly reflect their authors' desired vision of public intellectuals' future, Posner's classification stems from close empirical examination of public intellectual work in America, and with some modifications can be adapted for analysis of the Ukrainian case.

Posner defines the public intellectual as an intellectual who opines to an educated public in an accessible way on questions inflected by a political or ideological concern (2, 19). In his approach – and this is especially important in the Ukrainian case – the intellectual is not identified with the intelligentsia or "knowledge workers" in general. A representative of the intelligentsia, in order to be classified as an intellectual, must have an interest in ideas, and these ideas must have a general character and must be inflected by a political or ideological cast. The person who has these characteristics is an intellectual, but he becomes a public intellectual when he expresses these ideas to a general audience in an accessible way. In the case of historians or other academics, this means that in order to be classified as a public intellectual, he must consciously address not (only) specialists in his own field or discipline but a broader audience of educated people (Posner 22-25).

Posner distinguishes between nine main *genres* of public intellectuals (36): self-popularizing; own-field policy proposing; real-time commentary; prophetic commentary; general social criticism; specific social criticism; social reform; politically inflected literary criticism; and political satire.[4] He also names different *forms* of public intellectual work: an article in an intellectual magazine; a newspaper column; an op-ed piece; a book review; an appearance on a radio or television talk show; participation in a teach-in; and so on. At the same time, Posner tends to identify genres of public intellectual work with specific *types* of public intellectuals (for example, he mentions "the commentator on

current events” and “the critic of social trends”) (6). This, in my opinion, is not the best strategy. This typology of public intellectuals needs additional clarification, and I will come back to this issue later.

In this paper, I do not place the participation of Ukrainian historians in public intellectual work after the fall of state socialism in the broader context of the postcommunist transformation of Ukrainian history-writing on the one hand, and the transformation of the external environment in which it exists on the other. Instead, I concentrate my attention on one aspect of it, namely how this new development in Ukrainian historiography reflects the rethinking of the social relevance of history by academic historians.

During the Soviet era, history was treated as an important part of state ideology. Academic historians were obliged to serve the interests of the state by supplying evidence for the historical inevitability of the Soviet regime and proving the progressive character of its ideology. The historian was often seen as “a fighter on the ideological front” and as a propagandist whose mission was to defend a dogmatic truth and to convince others of its truthfulness. For those who believed in the communist ideology this role conferred a feeling of “high social mission” and of the indisputable societal importance of one’s own work. For those academics who did not believe in it, the only way to avoid at least partly performing this role was to focus on medieval or ancient history or highly technical fields like source publication, where the ideological pressure was less intense.

After the breakup of the USSR and the proclamation of an independent Ukrainian state, the situation rapidly changed. The Soviet model of Ukrainian history was quickly and painlessly abandoned. The old Soviet orthodoxy was replaced by the so-called “national paradigm” – a master narrative that focuses on the Ukrainian nation’s struggle for its own state. The traditional or canonical version of this master narrative sees Ukrainian history as a history of the origin and development of the Ukrainian ethnic nation, explains the nation’s differentiation from its neighbors, and emphasizes the continuity of the nation’s history over the course of more than 1,000 years. This continuity comes at the cost of methodological shortcomings, including teleology, essentialism, presentism, and ethnocentrism.[5]

The national paradigm gained ascendancy relatively quickly and became the new orthodoxy. There were at least two main reasons for historians to endorse this approach. Some scholars, first of all representatives of the old Soviet academic establishment, simply reacted to the changing policy of the authorities, which now was directed toward a Ukrainian state and nation-building. Others, among them former dissidents, endorsed the national paradigm because they saw this as the return to “truthful, unfalsified history,” represented by the works of the Ukrainian historians of the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, such as Mykhailo Hrushevsky, V’iacheslav Lypyns’ky, Dmytro Bahaliy and others. The underlying assumption common to both of these groups was that academic history’s main social functions are to historically legitimate a newly-established state and educate its citizens in patriotism. The historians who worked in this vein were expected to play the role of national awakeners, which

provided them with the feeling of a “high social mission” comparable to that of the Soviet scholars. To use more theoretical language, they worked in the genre of “affirmative history.”

A conceptual critique of this approach appeared at the beginning of the 1990s. Although it took different forms, the majority of the opponents of the national paradigm rejected the aspirations of academic historians to perform an affirmative function in contemporary society, claiming instead that if history should perform any practical function at all, it should primarily take the form of deconstructing historical myths and invented traditions. This approach is close to, and sometimes overlaps with, another widely held view, which presupposes that historical research is an end in itself and that the true knowledge of past events is important and necessary regardless of the existence of practical applications in the present. This view mostly has remained unarticulated; however, during the period under study, it has continued to function as a common sense approach for a part of the historical profession. One may suppose that it is even more widespread among specialists in areas not related to the history of Ukraine.[6] As can be seen, whereas the opponents of the national paradigm do not discard the practical functions of historiography at all, but only criticize what they take to be its negative functioning, the proponents of the “history for its own sake” approach either reject any practical use of historical knowledge in the present or come up with a practical function that is too general and vague to be put into practice consistently.

The participation of Ukrainian historians in public intellectual work is of great interest in this regard, because, as I try to show, it not only reflects the above-mentioned dynamic of the public debate on the social relevance of history, but also demonstrates some alternative developments that allow historians to go beyond the reductionist understanding of the social functions of history writing promoted by the dominant approaches.

Relatively few Ukrainian historians have attempted the role of the public intellectual since 1991. According to my estimate, the number does not exceed 15 persons, which constitutes less than 1% of the Ukrainian academic historical community. The reasons for such a relatively low percentage lie, on the one hand, in the historians themselves, in their unreadiness and unwillingness to speak directly to a lay audience. After the rejection of the Soviet historiography’s master narrative at the beginning of the 1990s, the majority of historians found themselves disoriented and unready to perform the function of experts for a general audience. Meanwhile, another part of the profession simply thought the academic historian should address only his or her peer colleagues and did not consider the option of direct communication with a lay audience at all.

However, no less important was the weakness of the media market in independent Ukraine.[7] This was especially true for the 1990s, when the decline of the media market inherited from the USSR was accompanied by a severe economic crisis. This situation has been gradually improving in the 2000s, especially due to the rapid development of online media. However, compared to such neighboring countries as Poland and Russia, the Ukrainian media market still may be characterized as weak, especially the segment of intellectual magazines. Nevertheless, a positive general tendency is clear – together with

the strengthening of the Ukrainian media market in the late 1990s and 2000s, participation by Ukrainian historians in public intellectual work has demonstrated steady growth.

The historians who can be identified as public intellectuals as a rule address historical topics that are the subjects of their scholarly interest. However, in the period under study these topics, such as Great Famine of 1932-1933, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army of the WWII period, or the Holocaust, have been not only scholarly problems, but also important identity issues frequently employed in political struggles. Using the classification of genres of public intellectual work proposed by Posner, one might say that “self-popularizing” and “own-field policy proposing” were the most widespread genres in which Ukrainian historian-public intellectuals worked. Stanislav Kulchytsky’s inarticles on the Great Famine for the newspaper *Day*, Volodymyr Viatrovych’s blogs about the OUN-UPA for the websites “Zahid.net” and “Українська правда,” and John-Paul Himka’s articles on the OUN-UPA and the Holocaust in different newspapers and magazines serve as examples of this tendency. These two genres often overlap with “real-time commentary,” in which an author comments on an ongoing debate over a certain historical event—for instance, attempts to commemorate it or changes in the historical policy of the authorities concerning it. “Self-popularizing” and “own-field policy proposing” might also overlap with “specific social criticism,” however, in the Ukrainian case, there were few examples of such a combination. The work of John-Paul Himka, which I will discuss in more detail later, is the most notable one.

Compared to “self-popularizing” and “own-field policy proposing,” the Ukrainian historians much more rarely chose other genres, such as “real-time commentary,” “general or specific social criticism,” or “social reform” to opine on topics related to current rather than historical events or processes. My observations indicate that only six academic historians (Yaroslav Dashkevych, Yaroslav Hrytsak, Vasyl Rasevych, Oleksii Sokyrko, Andriy Portnov and Oleksandr Zaitsev) dared to address such issues, and for only four of them (Yaroslav Dashkevych, Yaroslav Hrytsak, Vasyl Rasevych, Oleksii Sokyrko) did the texts written in this vein constitute an important part of their contribution to the public debate.

Dogmatic and Non-Dogmatic Public Intellectuals

Despite its usefulness, the classification based on genres is rather formal and remains insufficient at best if we want to discern the link between historians’ participation in public intellectual work and the rethinking of the social relevance of history in post-Soviet Ukraine. Thereby, the typology of genres of public-intellectual work needs to be complemented by an additional typology that takes into account both the motivation of the author and the substantive character of his or her contribution. The typology that I propose in this paper is built upon the empirical examination of the Ukrainian case. It distinguishes between two general types of public intellectuals: dogmatic and non-dogmatic[8]. The dogmatic public intellectual tends to advocate a certain dogma that runs throughout their contribution to the public debate. In our case this is most often a dogmatic version of the master narrative of Ukrainian national history, but it might also

be a Marxist dogma, a version of Russian imperial ideology, or any other “higher truth.” It is worth mentioning here that when I propose to identify someone as the dogmatic public intellectual, that does not mean that all texts written by this person fall into this category. It only points to a dominant tendency in their contribution to the public debate. On the other hand, those whom I call non-dogmatic intellectuals do not subordinate their claims to any dogmas or higher truths, but instead limit themselves to showing what is really happening or has happened in terms of concrete facts. In terms of the distinction between truth and truthfulness put forth by the philosopher Bernard Williams, dogmatic intellectuals are committed to the former, while non-dogmatic intellectuals are committed to the latter (Williams).[9]

Ukrainian historians who can be identified as dogmatic public intellectuals, such as Yaroslav Dashkevych, Volodymyr Viatrovych or Yury Shapoval, were preoccupied with the promotion and protection of a certain dogmatic version of Ukrainian national history. In other words, they are proponents of affirmative history in the sense described above. Yaroslav Dashkevych (1926-2010) is probably one of the most characteristic examples of public intellectuals of this type. In the 1990s and 2000s, Dashkevych was one of the most authoritative Ukrainian historians and ran the Lviv branch of the Institute of Archeography and Source Studies at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. During the majority of Soviet rule, he was a specialist in the history of the Armenian community in Galicia in the Early Modern period. Because his parents were treated by the Soviet authorities as nationalist “enemies of the people” and because of his own dissident views, he was not allowed to work in academic institutions and spent six years in prison camps. After the fall of the USSR he wrote on different aspects of Ukrainian history, including the peculiarities of Ukrainian nation-building, numerous biographical studies, investigations in source criticism and other auxiliary historical disciplines and so on. At the beginning of the 1990s Dashkevych began to opine on ongoing ideological or political controversies for the Lviv newspaper *Pamyua* as well as other newspapers and magazines. These articles were mostly related to controversies over historical events or processes, such as the role of the USSR in Ukrainian history, the OUN-UPA, and Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Jewish relations. However, he also commented on ongoing political events and put forth proposals for government policy in areas as distant from his main scholarly interests as, for instance, inter-ethnic relations in contemporary Ukraine or the political status of Crimea.

The word “truth” was central for Dashkevych’s contribution to the public debate. He often repeated that the historians’ main task is to tell the truth regardless of any difficulties and obstacles. He famously wrote, “I think that the greatest patriotism is to write and to tell one’s own people the truth” (467) and “I was a bad historian because I tried to write and speak truth – the truth about Ukraine and the Ukrainian nation – not only to foreigners, but also to my own people” (295).

After reading these claims, it is logical to ask what Dashkevych understood by the word “truth.” I contend that the Lviv historian by this meant a certain higher truth, and the analysis of Dashkevych’s contribution to the public debate proves this interpretation:

Regardless of different attempts at philosophizing, historical truth is one and single, and scholarly research methods exist in order to learn it. This is why haggling with different 'alternative' truths has nothing in common with historical science. Therefore Ukraine's history textbooks must be based on historical truth. The main idea of the textbooks – the statehood of Ukraine and the Ukrainian nation, which was achieved due to the people's long-term struggle for independence (366-367).

Elsewhere he writes:

In spite of all this, I believe that the true history of Ukraine, the history of the struggle of the Ukrainian nation against occupiers and collaborators of all hues for the construction of a truly independent Ukrainian state, will be written and will become the reference book for every honest politician, every honest statesman, every Ukrainian (297).

As can be seen from these quotations, the truth of which Dashkevych speaks is a narrative of Ukrainian history that refers to the struggle of the Ukrainian nation for its own state against occupiers and collaborators. This was Dashkevych's higher truth, and most of his texts written in the role of public intellectual aimed at promoting or defending it. From this perspective, it comes as no surprise that in the Lviv historian's articles together with the key word "truth" one often encounters mentions of "falsifications," "stereotypes," and "myths" – the promotion of truth was closely interrelated with its protection from errors or distortions.

On the one hand, one might say that there were many good reasons for such position. In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, historians had to struggle with numerous Soviet and then Russian imperial historical myths that tended to reject the very existence of Ukrainian history or proposed distorted pictures of historical events. The problem lies, however, in the fact that despite his frequent mentions of "true evidence," Dashkevych most often opposed one dogma with another. This, in turn, led to a proliferation of foes in his writing: the Soviet and Russian historical myths were soon supplemented by the Polish historical narrative, liberal democracy, postmodernism, and globalization, each of which were viewed as threatening "true" Ukrainian history and the "correct" development of the Ukraine in the present.

This tension between the truth and truthfulness, or between "higher" truths and concrete evidence is probably best seen in the Lviv historian's treatment of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict during WWII and, in particular, of the mass murders committed by the OUN-UPA on the Polish civilian population of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia in the years 1943-1944. The mass murders, which were organized by Bandera's faction of the OUN and led to the death of up to 100,000 Poles, are characterized by many scholars as ethnic cleansings and even as genocide. This issue became an important factor of Polish-Ukrainian bilateral relations in the 1990s and 2000s. On the eve of the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of these tragic events in 2003, a group of Ukrainian scholars and intellectuals addressed the Polish people with an open letter in which they condemned mass murders and called for reconciliation based on the formula "we forgive and ask for forgiveness." Dashkevych was very critical of this initiative. In his article "Volhynia' Action. The Volhynian Pocket and its Creators" (231-249), written on the occasion of that

event, he refuses to acknowledge any Ukrainian responsibility. According to him, it was Poles who caused the tragedy through their short-sighted politics of conquering Ukrainian lands. Moreover, the Ukrainians were in very difficult circumstances, trying to free their land from occupiers. It was an uprising of enslaved Ukrainians against the Poles who were dominant in the region. And this is why, according to the Lviv historian, such a rebellion was well-justified from a moral as well as political point of view (231-243).

In this essay, Dashkevych disregards numerous evidences, already known at the time, concerning the number of victims on both sides as well as the organizers and character of the mass murders. But the most important thing is that his adherence to the dogma of the higher truth does not allow him to acknowledge some concrete “small truths”: that dozens of thousands of civilians (both Poles and people from mixed Polish-Ukrainian families) were killed, sometimes in very cruel ways; that these ethnic cleansings were not the only way for the Ukrainian state to arise; and that there were factions in the Ukrainian national movement (such as Bulba-Borovets’ UPA) that rejected and condemned this strategy already in 1943. Instead, Dashkevych treated these “small truths” in a very specific way, turning crimes and unjustified violence into the heroic struggle for national liberation:

It was not just a conflict in the western Ukrainian territories...but the uprising against three occupiers united by the anti-Ukrainian ideology...The uprising was a part of the national-liberation struggle for the creation of the Ukrainian state, renewed in 1941. The war was the war for the national liberation during which – as during every war (in particular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) – a lot of civilians are killed. The war, which in the circumstances of Volhynia took also the character of uncontrolled peasant war, very cruel one...However, one should remember that it is the enemy who dictates the methods of struggle. In any case, the Ukrainian uprising against three occupiers has little analogies in the world history and, beyond all doubts, was the evidence of unlimited heroism and self-sacrifice of the Ukrainian people (236).

Two additional quotations exemplify of the way that higher truths justify the mass murders for Dashkevych:

The troops of self-defence emerges in different places due to unstable situation in Volhynia...Because it is a duty of the people to struggle with aggressors and occupiers-oppressors (233).

Ukraine and Ukrainians have all rights to present and constantly announce verdict of ‘guilty’ for their oppressors. For all crimes committed by them that so easily fall under the definition of genocide, ethnocide, linguocide. People, the nation, its language, culture, way of life had been annihilating. Love for freedom is the hatred for enemy. The centuries-old experience proves that Ukrainians have not only the right, but also the duty to hate their enemies. And bring the accusation for their crimes. The criminals fearing the just requital invented the ideology of forgiveness to all giving it in the allegedly Christian form and spreading the ideas reconciliation and harmony (with whom? With the perpetrators) (348).

As it can be seen, Dashkevych's higher truths here are the duties of the Ukrainian nation to struggle with the aggressors and oppressors and to hate its enemies. From this perspective, reconciliation is, in fact, impossible and unnecessary, and if anyone should ask for forgiveness at all, it is Poles (241-243).

The case of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict during WWII clearly demonstrates the dogmatic character of Dashkevych's contribution to the public debate and the ascendancy of truth over truthfulness in it. Like other dogmatic historian public intellectuals Dashkevych had affirmed Ukrainian national identity and patriotism, but in a very narrow and exclusive form. However, in my view his greatest failure is his inability to contribute to the understanding of the historical genealogies of many of the current problems and challenges that Ukrainian society is facing. Such an understanding requires in the first place attention to the numerous small truths and revising or even giving up the higher ones. Some Ukrainian historians-public intellectuals have followed this path.

Those historians who can be identified as non-dogmatic public intellectuals have shown different strategies of and motivations for their participation in the public-intellectual work. In a similar way, the quality of their contributions is very different. The only common denominator for all of them is that as a rule they do not subordinate their claims to any dogmas or higher truths. However, two main tendencies can be distinguished: One group of public intellectuals, who deal primarily with historical topics, is concerned with unmasking the myths and stereotypes of the national paradigm. The desire to expose and correct errors of the traditional narrative of Ukrainian history and collective memory was often the main force driving their work. John-Paul Himka, a Canadian-Ukrainian historian, is probably the most characteristic representative of this tendency. His case is also especially interesting due to the self-reflexivity, unusual for Ukrainian historians, that accompany his contribution to the public debate[10]. Himka, who is currently a professor of history at the University of Alberta, initially specialized in the history of the Ukrainian national movement and the Greek-Catholic Church in nineteenth century Eastern Galicia. In the second half of the 1990s, he began to examine the participation of Ukrainians, and in particular the OUN-UPA, in the Holocaust. Since 2008, this topic has shifted to the center of his scholarly interests. His work with the evidences opened up for him a great gap between what the sources had spoken and the traditional narrative, which refutes the participation of the OUN in the mass murder of Jews. This, in turn, led him to unmasking the myth of the heroic struggle of the OUN-UPA for Ukrainian independence, which became a central element of the Ukrainian national identity in North America and in the western and central regions of Ukraine. However, it was moral reasoning that prompted him to assume the role of the public intellectual and to address a general public. As Himka formulates this point:

My research and thinking also awakened a moral sense about this topic, something that was not so prominent in my earlier studies...What crystallized my moral thinking was my reading early in 2008 of Eva Hoffman's *After Such Knowledge*. It clarified my thinking enough that I could formulate my position with precision: The crimes committed by Ukrainian nationalists against Jews and Poles during the Second World War were

horrible. They cannot be undone, and all that later Ukrainians can do about them is to admit that they happened and to regret them. It is not enough, but it is all that is possible. Certainly they cannot glorify the people who committed them (218-219).

Himka points out that traditional scholarly forms, such as the monograph or article in a scholarly journal, are, on the one hand, very slow and, on the other, have a small readership (221). This prompted him, not abandoning scholarly examination of the problem in question, to enter the public debate using other formats: opinion pieces, letters to the editor and open letters. Similar to Dashkevych, the word “truth” occupied the central position in Himka’s contribution to the public debate. However, unlike the Lviv historian, Himka has understood by the “truth” not higher truths or dogmas, but in the first place truthfulness in Bernard Williams’ sense:

As I worked, I released bits of my research, and became the object of criticism and even vilification. Upset, I kept returning in my mind to the same basic idea: that the truth is a value in and of itself. No matter what we would like to believe about something, we are obliged to uncover the truth. I could formulate this point in other ways. Perhaps following Pierre Nora and Tony Judt, I could write about how history is an important antidote to memory. But I will stick to the idea of getting at the truth. It has never ceased to astound me in the course of all the debates in which I have engaged, that so few people seem to be interested in that. My arguments are rejected out of hand, without a serious and honest confrontation with them or with the sources on which they rest. My opponents in debate seem to be interested in defending a certain position, not in figuring out what happened, as historians are supposed to do (216) .

At the same time, it worth mentioning that Himka’s contribution to the public debate was not limited to correcting the factual errors of the national paradigm, but also contained elements of such genres as “specific social criticism” and “own field policy proposing”. He has been interested in changing the historical policy of Ukraine during the presidencies of Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych. In particular, he opposed Yushchenko’s politics of glorification of the OUN’s leaders and criticized his campaigning for the recognition of the Great Famine of 1932-1933 as a genocide on the ground that such a campaign (which shows that Ukrainians suffered more than Jews) was also an indirect attempt to justify the violence of the OUN-UPA during the Second World War. However, on a more general level he has tried to promote a version of Ukrainian national identity that does not rest on the heritage of the OUN-UPA. And, as Himka acknowledges himself, here his self-identification as a Ukrainian was particularly important:

...identity location makes some difference in the kind of demythologizing in which I am engaging: challenging core myths from the inside. By example I demonstrate that one need not identify with OUN-UPA to identify, and be identified, as a Ukrainian (226) .

However, this positive strand in Himka’s contribution was much weaker than the negative (critical) one, and this allows him to be identified as a non-dogmatic public intellectual. Like many other non-dogmatic public intellectuals in Ukraine and abroad, Himka has

been interested first and foremost in criticizing and unmasking dogmas and myths on the basis of “small truths”, and he is much clearer about what he is against than what he is for.

Another group of Ukrainian non-dogmatic public intellectuals did not limit their contribution to the public debate to strictly historical themes, like the Great Famine, the OUN-UPA, communist repressions and so on. They also attempted to opine on current events or processes of political or ideological significance, putting them in a wider context or showing their historical genealogy. Most often, they worked in such genres as “real time commentary”, “specific and general social criticism” or “social reform”. Such historians as Vasyl Rasevych, Oleksij Sokyrko, Andrij Portnov can be included into this group, but it is Yaroslav Hrytsak who could be called the most consistent and interesting representative of this tendency.

Hrytsak is currently a professor of history at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. Initially he had been a specialist in the social history of nineteenth century Eastern Galicia. He became widely known in Ukraine due to his innovative synthesis of modern Ukrainian history (Hrytsak, *Narys istorii Ukrainy*) and numerous studies in the intellectual history of Ukraine, in particular a thorough and brilliant biography of Ivan Franko (Hrytsak, *Prorok u svoii vitchyzni*), a leading Ukrainian intellectual of the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Hrytsak began to address a broader audience in the late 1990s with contributions to the intellectual magazine *Kpumuka*. After the Orange Revolution he opened a blog on the popular website *Zaxid.net* and wrote columns and articles for the newspapers *Газета по українськи* and *Експрес*. Polemical or popularizing texts devoted to such historical topics as the OUN-UPA, the Holocaust, the Great Famine of 1932-1933, Ukrainian national memory and so on constituted a considerable part of his contribution to the public debate. At the same time, he has quite often commented on current events or processes of political or ideological significance such as the Orange Revolution, manifestations of anti-Semitism in Ukrainian society, current changes in the Ukrainian political scene and so on. In these texts, Hrytsak sometimes combined “real-time commentary” with “general social criticism” and/or “social reform”, putting current events in a broader comparative context and showing their historical genealogy, trying to expand the horizon of the debate and to show another, more productive way of discussing the problem.

A characteristic example of this approach is Hrytsak’s contribution to the public debate on the reasons for the failures of political, social, and economic transformations in independent Ukraine. In the series of articles written for the website *Zaxid.net* and then republished in his book *Life, Death, and other Troubles*, the Lviv historian concludes that the traditional approach of explaining Ukrainian problems by means of the varying national identities of different regions doesn’t work because the majority of the population in southern and eastern Ukraine doesn’t think in national categories. In his view, the critical concept for understanding the specificities of the Ukrainian situation is not identities but rather values (Hrytsak, *Strasti za natsionalizmo* 321-340). On the basis of existing sociological surveys on values in Ukraine and other countries, Hrytsak shows that both western and eastern Ukraine are dominated by the values of a closed society.

This fact constitutes one of the obstacles to a successful transformation. The author then uses the classic historian's toolkit to explain how the specific historical development of Ukraine led to this situation, and at the same time, assesses the opportunities for change in Ukraine that his analysis reveals (Hrytsak, *Zyttia , smert* ' 24-35).

One more example of this kind of historical study is Hrytsak's article "What Remains After the Orange Revolution?" published in his book *Passions Around Nationalism: Old History in a New Manner (Strasti za natsionalizmom . Stara istoria na novyj lad)* , in which he attempts to tally up the achievements and failures of the Orange Revolution after Viktor Yanukovych ' s return to power in 2010. He believes that the most adequate way of answering this question is to go beyond the boundaries of current political quarrels and to view the problem in light of the European revolutions of 1968 and 1989. From this point of view, the Orange Revolution is " one of the color revolutions which have taken place in countries that experience d neither 1968 nor 1989, and thus it can be seen as a belated attempt to repeat and continue them" (304). Therefore the Orange Revolution ought to be understood in the context of the struggle for the values of liberal democracy and the free market . This and other texts written in this vein not just help the lay audience to understand better the historical context of current events and processes, but also have a therapeutic function – namely, to show that many of today's problems are inherited from the past and like all chronic diseases they cannot be resolved immediately, but require systematic and protracted treatment (Hrytsak, *Zyttia , smert* ' 7). In this perspective, the main task of historians is not to make correct predictions about future developments or to find ready-made solutions for current problems, but to formulate new, correct questions that enable them to expand their horizons and to point to other, possibly more productive, ways of discussing problems (Hrytsak, "What Awaits for the Ukraine?" 77).

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that neither Hrytsak nor other Ukrainian non-dogmatic public intellectuals have yet provided a full-fledged theoretical argument for this approach, it seems clear that here one can see a potential interesting alternative both to affirmative and critical (deconstructionist) histories and to the history for its own sake approach to the past. The historian who works in this new vein performs important *positive* functions in contemporary society and upholds the core principles of historical enquiry at the same time. Another important feature of this approach that it does not foresee a practical program for all subfields of historical studies. On the contrary, it is based on the careful separation between academic historiography and historical writing for a general audience. The main task of the former is to understand events and processes of the past in the terms and categories of the past itself, whereas the latter concerned in the first place with providing historical and comparative contexts for the acute problems of contemporary society. The goal in this case is to use the results of already-existing research in the historiography and related humanities and social sciences to better understand urgent social and political questions.

A theoretical basis for this approach can be found in the recent works of those western European and American historians who are concerned with the diminishing of the social relevance of academic history-writing in contemporary Western societies. The concepts of “critical applied” or “critical public” history by British theorist of history John Tosh is of particular interest in this regard. Tosh speaks about critical importance of “critical public history” for the normal functioning of liberal democracy, and this point seems especially true in the case of the countries that have been experiencing transition from the state socialism to full-fledged democracy. For historians themselves, this approach provides an opportunity to find their place in a new globalized world in which the traditional nation-state has lost its former importance, without betraying the core principles of historical inquiry[11]. The recent victory of the Euromaidan revolution may very well strengthen an independent public sphere and academic freedoms in Ukraine. In this way, it might facilitate the consolidation and further development of “critical public history” as well as other currents of public intellectual activity among Ukrainian historians.

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2. See for example a collective monograph edited by Leonid Zashkilniak which summarizes the development of Ukrainian historiography after the fall of the state socialism (Zashkilniak).

3. For example Eleonora Narvselius, the author of an interesting anthropological study of post-Soviet Lviv's intelligentsia, shows that both the ideals and practices as well as the identity of the intelligentsia remain quite widespread at least among the older generation of Lviv's educated classes (Narvselius).

4. Posner also mentions such genres as "jeremiad" and "expert testimony," but in fact "jeremiad" is a pessimistic prophetic commentary and can be seen as a subgenre. In turn, expert testimony in a legal process can be classified as both a genre and a form of public intellectual work.

5. Serhy Ekelchuk provides an excellent account of this transformation (Ekelchuk).

6. As a rare known to me example of the public articulation of this view, I can mention the opinion expressed by the historian of the older generation, one of the biggest authorities in the ancient history and history of Byzantium in Ukraine, at the methodological seminar which was held at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University in October 2010. After a participant of the seminar doubted that academic history is able to maintain its former social relevance in today's world, this historian replied that we should not worry about this, because history is indispensable for any society as it plays the role of connecting link that enables for a man orientation in the present and proceeding to the future. I am not going to discuss this view here in length, however it worth mentioning that people who make such points in Ukraine and abroad usually confuse history as the scholarly *knowledge of the past* with *knowledge from the past* which can come from different sources: personal and collective memory, media and art and so on. It is difficult to disagree with the point that orientation in the present is impossible without references to the past, however it does not necessarily mean that ordinary people will choose precisely the results of academic historical enquiry as the basis for their actions. To the contrary, they more likely to draw from other then scholarly sources that often disregard the context out of which the knowledge is extracted. Allan Megill provides insightful argumentation for this point (Megill).

7. As Richard A. Posner puts it, "being an academic public intellectual is a career, albeit a part-time and loosely structured one, and like other careers it can be analyzed in terms of markets" (41).

8. It worth noting that Posner also mentions that intellectuals can be dogmatic and non-dogmatic. However he considers this divide as a minor one, and does not pay much attention to it (Posner 18), whereas in my analysis of the Ukrainian case it becomes the central classificatory tool.

9. Tony Judt was the first who applied Williams' distinction to the classification of public intellectuals (Judt and Snyder 287). By truth or higher truth Williams means general claims like "history of Ukraine is a history the struggle of the Ukrainian nation with occupiers and collaborators for the one's own state", or "the collective purpose trumps individual interests", or "love for freedom is hatred for enemy". Whereas, by truthfulness or small truth he means concrete facts that shows what happened in a certain situation.

10. Surely, this self-reflexivity might be at least partly explained by the fact that Himka has made his career in the North-American academia. Nonetheless, I include him into my analysis due to his Ukrainian background and engagement into the life of Ukrainian community in Canada and Ukrainian society in Ukraine.

11. I review Tosch's conception in length in another article (Sklokin 64-66).

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