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# The Revolution of 1917 — the 1920s and the History of Social and Political Thought from Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky's Perspective

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## Abstract

Prominent Ukrainian historian Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky (1919–1984) repeatedly addressed the topic of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917 — the 1920s, especially considering its intellectual origins and implications in the context of the history of Ukrainian social and political thought. Analysis of his works shows the manner in which the Ukrainian revolution as an event structures the history of Ukrainian social and political thought in both senses of the term “history”: as history itself and as its historiography. Based on this analysis, the article considers changes in the meaning of the revolution for modern Ukrainians, as well as the credibility — in the context of these changes — of the classifications of the historiography of Ukrainian social and political thought, which rest on the key meaning of the revolution for modern Ukrainian history. The article also supports the conclusion that the rejection of the evolutionary model which I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky most directly addressed will help to outline a well-balanced and reliable history of Ukrainian social and political thought without excessive historicism.

**Key Words:** Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, Ukrainian Revolution, history of Ukrainian social and political thought, federalism, independence movement (*samostiinytstvo*).



## Introduction

On December 13, 1958, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky (1919–1984) delivered a report entitled “Ukrainian Revolution from a Forty-Year Perspective.” The author summarized four decades of reflections of “Ukrainskoi revoliutsii, chy pak ukrainskykh vyzvolnykh zmahan 1917–1920 rokiv” (“Ukrainian revolution, or Ukrainian liberation struggles of the 1917–1920s”)<sup>1</sup> as the central event in modern Ukrainian history, as well as offered his own approaches to understanding this phenomenon. Published the following year, the text of this report was one of the first steps in his reflections on this theme, embodied in a broader context of the reconstruction of Ukrainian intellectual

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1 Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia z perspektyvy sorokalittia [Ukrainian Revolution from a Forty-Year Perspective],” in vol. 2 of *Istorychni ese*, ed. F. Sysyn et al. (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1994), 39.

history, or “history and critique of Ukrainian social and political thought” as the author himself defined it in the subtitle to his collected articles *Mizh istoriieiu i politykoiu* (Between History and Politics, 1973). The next step in this direction was his report delivered on January 28, 1968, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Ukrainian Revolution, which he finalized for publication in a collection dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the revolution, titled “Chetvertyi Universal ta yoho ideolohichni poperednyky” (The Fourth Universal and Its Ideological Antecedents).<sup>2</sup> I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky, reflecting on the Ukrainian revolution in a historical perspective, focused primarily on the intellectual origins and principles of the liberation struggles that were the subject of his attention, beginning with the article “Intelektualni pochatky novoi Ukrainy” (The Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine, 1958), which he was working on at the beginning of the 1950s, and finalized with the “Napriamy ukrainskoi politychnoi dumky” (Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought), which was published posthumously in a 1987 collection.<sup>3</sup>

The reference to the scholarly heritage of I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky today, when we look at the Ukrainian revolution from the perspective of its 100th anniversary, is, in my opinion, an important and productive practice, since his works offer an interesting methodology for analyzing the Ukrainian revolution in the context of Ukrainian national consciousness and the history of social and political thought. This methodology is rare for the Ukrainian intellectual field, since I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky was one of the few Ukrainian scholars of the twentieth century who, on the one hand, being in exile, worked in the conditions of sufficient freedom of thought, without being engaged in party interests, and on the other hand, worked in the genre of the history of ideas,<sup>4</sup> combining a purely positivist empathy for historical empiricism with a purely philosophical understanding of history.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, his works undoubtedly belong to those “academically and at the same time practically oriented research of Ukrainian diaspora intellectuals” which, according to Vasyl

2 “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak. Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), 186–219.

3 Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, ed. Peter L. Rudnytsky (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1987), 91–122.

4 In the early 1950s I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky declares: “As for the scientific approach, I would have interpreted my topic in the style of the history of ideas (*Ideengeschichte*). In other words, changes in political history and social and economic upheavals would be considered only to the extent needed for the understanding of the process of the idea development: crystallization of the national consciousness in the Ukrainian ethnic group” (Letter to Volodymyr Kubiiovych from July 17, 1951, qtd. in the notes to the article *Intelektualni pochatky novoi Ukrainy* [*The Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine*]: Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Intelektualni pochatky novoi Ukrainy [The Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine],” in vol. 1 of *Istorychni ese*, ed. F. Sysyn et al. (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1994), 506–07).

5 In a short preface to *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, Petro Lysiak-Rudnytsky notes that his father “...had a healthy respect for the realm of the concrete, and he did not hesitate to decide an argument with an appeal to ‘empirical historical reality.’ At the same time, perhaps the deepest influence on his thought was the philosophy of Hegel, as evidenced by his belief that ‘the historical process has a logic of its own which transcends the plans and wishes of the actors’...” (Peter L. Rudnytsky, “Preface,” in

Lisovyi, should be addressed to “kozhnomu, khto namahaietsia rozviazaty hostri politychni problemy suchasnoi Ukrainy” (“[to] everyone who is trying to solve the acute political problems of contemporary Ukraine”).<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of the analysis of I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky's works, in this article I will attempt to show the manner in which the Ukrainian revolution as an event structures the history of Ukrainian social and political thought in both senses of the term “history”: as history itself and as its historiography. Such an analysis, in my opinion, will make it possible to understand how the meaning of the revolution of 1917 — the 1920s as a “starting point for all modern Ukrainians” has now changed,<sup>7</sup> and to evaluate whether the classifications of the historiography of Ukrainian social and political thought are still cogent, being based on the key meaning of the revolution for modern Ukrainian history.

### The Revolution and Ukrainian National Consciousness

In the first of the mentioned works I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky defines the Ukrainian revolution as “vazhlyvyi kompleks u suchasni ukrainskii natsionalni svidomosti i politychnii dumtsi” (“an important complex in modern Ukrainian national consciousness and political thought”),<sup>8</sup> and thus, tries to resist the vast tradition of interpreting the events of the revolution in a purely subjectivist manner and in the terms of personal experience and party interests, where the defeat of the revolution was mainly explained as a result of the political, intellectual and pragmatic limitations of its main participants. He describes the mentioned “complex” using the example of the active generations of Ukrainians of those times: “the oldest generation includes the participants and co-creators of our statehood of the 1917–1920s; the middle generation is presented by those who matured in the interwar era (1920–1939); ... those who grew up in the shadow of the liberation struggle.”<sup>9</sup> And only for the “naimolodshoho pokolinnia, shcho vzhe daleko stoit vid kolyshnikh superechok” (“youngest generation which is already far from the old disputes”), as well as for some representatives of the middle generation, the author notices “bazhannia obiektyvno piznaty istoriiu ukrainskoi revoliutsii” (“the desire to objectively perceive the history of the Ukrainian revolution”).<sup>10</sup> However, numerous places in the works of I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky (who was the youngest representative of the second or the oldest representative of the third of these generations), and even entire polemical works<sup>11</sup> show that in the second half of

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*Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, ed. by Peter L. Rudnytsky. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1987), xi–xii.)

6 Vasyl S. Lisovyi, “I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky — doslidnyk ukrainskoi politychnoi dumky [I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky as a Researcher of Ukrainian Political Thought],” in *Istoria ukrainskoi filosofii: Pidruchnyk* (Kyiv: VPC Kyivskiy universytet, 2008), 446.

7 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 40.

8 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 39.

9 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 40.

10 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 40.

11 Cf.: Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “V oboroni intelektu, 1971 [In the Defense of Intellect, 1971],” in vol. 2 of *Istorychni ese*, 381–407; Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Natsionalizm i totalitaryzm (Vidpovid M. Prokopovi),

the twentieth century, the Western Ukrainian diaspora, despite being far from the controversy of the revolution, was still not completely removed from the confrontation of the political visions brought about by the revolution. This circumstance shows even more clearly the importance and originality of his approach to understanding the Ukrainian revolution, which can be comprehended when compared to the effect caused twenty years later in the intellectual life of France by François Furet's (1927–1997) book *Thinking the French Revolution* (1978).<sup>12</sup>

Seeking the answer to the question “comment peut-on penser un événement comme la Révolution française?,”<sup>13</sup> F. Furet concludes that “in the twentieth century, more than ever before, the historian of the French Revolution commemorates the event he narrates or studies. The new materials he brings to bear are no more than supplementary ornaments offered up to his tradition”<sup>14</sup> — and therefore, in order to ideate the revolution as an event, one must withdraw from the dominant tradition of “commemorative historiography” (*historiographie commémorative*). It is apparently difficult to compare the historiographies of the two revolutions because of the difference in their scope and effect, and very different political and intellectual contexts of their comprehension, but the phenomena both historians are dealing with are very similar: paraphrasing the words of F. Furet, the revolutions they considered “remained overly fundamental, overly tyrannical events for the modern political consciousness.”<sup>15</sup> Hence, they had similar strategies: distancing themselves from the political and intellectual traditions brought about by the revolution, placing the revolution within its own genesis and context, and reconstructing the course of the revolutionary events with all their unpredictability and uniqueness.

Within this strategy, I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky adheres to several important points for our consideration. First of all, he tries to place the revolution as an event into the context of the deployment of the Ukrainian national movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Defining the Ukrainian People's Republic as “a major and central phenomenon in the history of the liberation struggles” he states that “the UNR naturally grows from the tradition of the national movement in the Upper-Dnieper region (Naddnyprianshchyna) in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The straight line of development leads from the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood to the Central Rada.”<sup>16</sup> Hereby, he tries to show that the leaders of the revolution

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1982 [Nationalism and Totalitarianism (Reply to M. Prokop), 1982],” in vol. 2 of *Istorychni ese*, 489–96.

12 François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978). Mona Ozuf, F. Furet's colleague and workmate, stresses that the title of the book suggests “neither gaining knowledge” of the Revolution, nor even its “understanding” ... Neither is it about the “interpretation” of the Revolution, in favor of which the Anglo-Saxon translator made his choice. (Interpreting the French Revolution, trad. Elborg Forster, Cambridge, 1981): such a title would turn the book into one of many possible interpretations, yet Furet never succumbed to such a “Nietzsche-driven temptation” (Mona Ozouf, “François Furet, comment écrire la Révolution,” *Commentaire* 1.117 (2007): 19).

13 Furet, *Révolution française*, 9.

14 English translation of this quotation taken from François Furet and Elborg Forster, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge Univ. Press [u.a.], 1989), 9.

15 Furet, *Révolution française*, 23.

16 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 43. He will repeat this thesis in a later work and in a slightly different context: “Ukraine's revolutionary parliament, the Central Rada, was the direct

acted within the logic defined by the previous Ukrainian national movement, and thus explain the course of the revolution not only by the subjective features of its main activists, but also by the objective structure of the Ukrainian movement. And he offers fairly interesting explanations of the defeat of the Ukrainian revolution, distinguishing between the “mistakes” originating from false individual decisions, and “‘weaknesses’ that are rooted in the very structure of this society.”<sup>17</sup> Consequently, in the opinion of I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky, the Ukrainian revolution and the history of Ukrainian social and political thought are inseparably linked: the course of the revolution, on the one hand, is conditioned by the evolution of the national liberation movement that precedes it, and on the other hand, the revolution becomes a culmination and a turning point in the history of social and political thought.

### **The Revolution and the History of Ukrainian Social and Political Thought**

This author’s vision of the connection could be seen even in his work “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” where I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky attempts to outline a broad picture of the history of Ukrainian political thought using a “Fourfold Structure” based on the ideological division of the left-right and pluralist-totalitarian directions; however, the factor of the revolution makes this geometrically coherently designed scheme quite incoherent in the historical sense. In particular, both “totalitarian” directions are generated only by the events of the revolution: “Ukrainian communism is an offspring ... of the national revolution of 1917,”<sup>18</sup> and “The nationalist trend originated in the 1920s as a reaction to the defeat of the struggle for Ukrainian national independence,”<sup>19</sup> while, on the contrary, the two “pluralistic” directions are fading in the course of the revolution and its direct consequences. Thus, the final characteristic of conservatism shows that it is much more an intellectual movement than a political one: “... of the four major trends of Ukrainian political thought, conservatism, which was the weakest in physical strength and mass support, was the one that made the greatest intellectual contribution in the course of the present century,”<sup>20</sup> and “the culmination of the conservative trend in east-central Ukraine was the regime of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky in 1918.”<sup>21</sup> As for the other “pluralistic” direction, its history ends with the events of the revolution, and during the “after the revolution” period, according to I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky, it is only heading to its logical decline: “the decline of Ukrainian democracy resulted in part from the fact that it had to bear the blame for the failure of Ukrainian

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outcome of a line of development which started with the Cyrillo-Methodian Society” (Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 98)

17 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 45. At the same time, he ascribes such a rather subjective and random factor as the “youth of the leaders” to the “weaknesses of the Ukrainian social and political structure” (Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 45–46).

18 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 102.

19 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 105.

20 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 101–02; The assessment is indicative in view of the influence of the representatives of this approach on I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky.

21 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 100.

independent statehood in the years 1917–1921, and in part from the general crisis of European democratic systems and the ascendancy of left- and right-wing totalitarian regimes.”<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, although I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky refers in his text both to the “democratic-populist” course or movement and to democracy itself, the name that he has chosen for this direction in the “Fourfold Structure” is *narodnytstvo* (populism, the populist period), which clearly testifies to its historical exhaustion. At this point, it would probably be more reasonable to recognize the idea of the evolutionary model of the “Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine” where “Populism (1840s to 1880s)” concedes to the “Modernism (from the 1890s to the First World War).”<sup>23</sup> Among the main achievements of the latter, I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky considered the enlargement of the social grounds of the Ukrainian movement both in the sense of it moving beyond the boundaries of solely the intelligentsia, and also in the sense of integrating the previous elites, primarily the Cossack elders and gentry (which, in his opinion, was a great achievement of Viacheslav Lypynskyi), into the Ukrainian historical perspective. All these factors deprived *narodnytstvo* (populism) of both social and intellectual persuasiveness, so that the modern heirs of populism would have been liberal and social democracy, which did not appear in the “Fourfold Structure” of Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, in the “Intellectual Origins,” I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky states that “the growth of national consciousness” of the transformations of the Modernism (from the 1890s to the First World War) “found its natural culmination in the formulation of the idea of an independent Ukrainian state,”<sup>25</sup> but in the “Ukrainska revoliutsiia...” (The Ukrainian Revolution...) he demonstrates that the leaders of the revolution, who, by virtue of their youth were the children of this Modernist era, still kept numerous populist traditions. Thus, the revolution itself becomes a catalyst for the final transition from the Populist and Modernist era to the following stages in which the idea of state independence becomes dominant: “From the point of view of the historical evolution of Ukrainian political thought, the importance of the events in the fall and winter of 1917 lay in the tremendous shift from federalism to a program of state independence.”<sup>26</sup>

22 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 98.

23 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine,” in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, 123–42. For a more detailed analysis of the achievements and problems of this period, see also: Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Ukrainian National Movement on the Eve of the First World War,” [1977] in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, 375–88.

24 Although democracy, liberalism, and socialism are mentioned at the beginning of the text among the “dominant themes in Ukrainian social thought” (Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 91), populism, unlike the other three directions of the “Fourfold Structure,” does not appear in this list. Concerning the text, which is actually not completed by the author, it is hard to draw conclusions to substantiate the division of thought separately into “social” and “political” that we encounter in the beginning, as well as to infer why Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky inclined to accept an openly intertwined division of political thought into “pluralistic” and “totalitarian,” through which the modern left was represented only by communism, and nationalism in its entirety was reduced to integral nationalism.

25 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Intellectual Origins of Modern Ukraine,” 137.

26 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, 407.

Thus, despite all the efforts of Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky to digress, in the history of social and political thought, from the model of progressive evolution of the Hegelian style as outlined in the “Intellectual Origins,” the revolution as “an overly fundamental, overly tyrannical event of political consciousness” prevents from doing so. This can be clearly observed in the above cited work, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents” where, due to the revolution, ideological division is actually identified with the stages of political evolution: “The Third and Fourth Universals represent two successive stages in the building of a Ukrainian state. But they can also be viewed as expressions of two alternative concepts of Ukrainian statehood — federalist and separatist.”<sup>27</sup> This thesis is not only a rhetorical technique for interesting historical parallels and/or an article introduction; “separatism” or “samostiinytstvo” is considered here as an antithesis to “federalism” in a Hegelian dialectic sense; in particular, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky notes that in the context of the international situation of the 1960s-1970s, when the text was written, “the two currents of Ukrainian political thought, federalism and separatism, may no longer appear mutually exclusive; rather, they are complementary. Still, their synthesis lies in the future.”<sup>28</sup> The basis for the mentioned negation was defined by the process of the liberation struggle, as out of its context “federalism” and “separatism/samostiinytstvo” could hardly be considered as self-sufficient concepts.

In this case, the same as in the case of the classification proposed in the “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky combines, in different proportions, both a purely theoretical concept and political movements with their programs under one name. Indeed, the independence of a single state is unlikely to be the subject of a political theory and/or research studies. Substantiation of the isolation, identity of a people (nation), the analysis of the situation in terms of history, culture, geopolitics, economics, etc., can constitute such a subject, but I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky spent much effort to demonstrate that these studies and analyses were carried out mainly by those who were, in his scheme, referred to as “Federalists” — Kostomarov, Drahomanov, and many others for whom, as he underlines, “Kostomarov and Drahomanov considered federalism not as an abdication from national independence but rather as the most rational and convenient form of achieving independence... Federalism does not mean rejection of national independence, but is just the most appropriate form to achieve it.”<sup>29</sup>

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27 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 389. Today, perhaps, it should be clarified that it is not about different views on the structure of the Ukrainian state — federal or unitary — but about whether the Ukrainian nation should have its own state or build a federal state with other nations.

28 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 409. The desire to see “federalism” and “separatism” as two successive stages in the development of political thought is especially important in the previous version of the text; in particular, one of its conclusions begins with a phrase absent in the 1977 version: “We have tried to show that the transition from federalism to the separatism movement was a final step forward in the evolution of Ukrainian political thought” (Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Chetvertyi Universal na tli ukrainskoi politychnoi dumky [The Fourth Universal against the Background of Ukrainian Political Thought],” in *Mizh istorieiu i politykoiu: Statti do istorii ta krytyky ukrainskoi suspilno-politychnoi dumky* (Munich: Suchasnist, 1973), 203).

29 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 396.

An *Independence movement* (*samostiinytstvo*) can exist as a political movement which, based on attitudes about the national identity and the justification of the separateness of a certain people (nation), formulates a requirement to obtain an independent state, is set as a political organization or organizations, and seeks the opportunities to implement this requirement in a certain way. Depending on the method of struggle for independence, these organizations rely on certain ideologies, develop and promote them. Instead, the subject of a political theory or research studies may be a political regime or a political form; in the case of an *Independence movement* it apparently is a form of a national state or a sovereign state — a form that was rapidly gaining in Europe during the nineteenth century and prevailed in the interwar period. Was it not this period that became one of the reasons why “the samostiinyky did not produce a theorist who could measure up to Drahomanov in intellectual stature or in the weightiness and sheer volume of his writings.”<sup>30</sup>

Federalization (as considered by I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky, the federalization of the Russian Empire) may also be subject to a political program and political practice. However, can one reduce the activity of the “Federalists,” whom he discusses, to such a program? For most of them, the federalization strategy was an optimal realization of their political beliefs, which were far from being structured around the question “How should we rebuild Russia?”<sup>31</sup> I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky admits this himself, claiming that “the anti-federalist reaction of the inter-war period is understandable from a psychological point of view, but it implied the partial loss to Ukrainian society of a valuable intellectual heritage.”<sup>32</sup>

Taking into account that throughout his life I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky was interested in the figure of Drahomanov and made a considerable contribution to the study of his work in the twentieth century, particularly valuable in the context of the Western Ukrainian diaspora,<sup>33</sup> he includes Drahomanov in the mentioned intellectual heritage.

Thus, although Lysiak-Rudnytsky, who in his youth was influenced by Lypynskyi’s ideas, in his mature years became a supporter of liberal democratic ideas,<sup>34</sup> in the “Trends in Ukrainian

30 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 392.

31 This question is an allusion to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s work *Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*.

32 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 408.

33 Starting with the dissertation he wrote in Prague in 1943–1945 and his student work *Iz Drahomanivskykh studii* (Of Drahomanov Studies, 1948), and ending with quite a critical work on Drahomanov *Persha ukrainska politychna prohrama: “Perednie slovo” do “Hromady” Mykhaila Drahomanova* (The First Ukrainian Political Program: Mykhailo Drahomanov’s “Introduction” to Hromada, 1979); on the significance of I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky in the study of Drahomanov’s heritage see: Nadia Diuk, “Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky — doslidnyk Mykhaila Drahomanova [Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky: Researcher of Mykhailo Drahomanov],” *Suchasnist* 300.4 (1986): 74–79; I also allow myself to direct the reader to my own paper: Serhii Yosypenko, “Doslidzhennia spadshchyny Mykhaila Drahomanova u druhii polovyni XX stolittia: radianska Ukraina ta zakhidna ukrainska diaspora [Research on Mykhailo Drahomanov’s Heritage in the Second Half of the 20th Century: Soviet Ukraine and the West Ukrainian Diaspora],” *Multyversum* 116 (2012): 3–15.

34 See, for example, the text of the report prepared for delivery at the Congress of Ukrainian Free Political Thought (1976): Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Shcho robyty? [What to Do?],” in vol. 2 of *Istorychni ese*, 437–56.

Political Thought” does not mention Drahomanov’s liberalism, which was one of the leitmotifs of his works on Drahomanov. The value of Drahomanov’s heritage was to a large extent conditioned by his thinking in universal categories, his thought fit into European intellectual tradition, as emphasized by I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky: “The strength of the old federalist concept was its breadth of vision. It placed the Ukrainian problem within a wide international context, organically connecting the goal of national liberation with the cause of political liberty and social progress for Eastern Europe as a whole.”<sup>35</sup> However, in the context of the European intellectual tradition, Drahomanov develops a purely Ukrainian model of a self-sufficient society — *hromadivstvo* (communalism) whose power, in his opinion, was also in the fact that it was quite comfortable with the Ukrainian political traditions reconstructed by the populist (*narodnytska*) history.<sup>36</sup> This purely Ukrainian dimension of “federalism” as a theory for some reason remained unattended by I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky, who tried to explain “why the federalist concept predominated in pre-revolutionary Ukrainian political thought” primarily by belonging to the Russian Empire for 250 years and by the claim that this affiliation “had formed a pronounced material and psychological bond between Ukraine and Russia proper.”<sup>37</sup> Although I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky notes in another paper that “Drahomanov’s stand against independence was not a consequence of Russophilism, of which he was groundlessly accused by integral-nationalist critics of the inter-war era,”<sup>38</sup> he still does not consider a version that the principled anti-statism of the “communist” project (as well as all of Ukrainian *narodnytstvo* (populism), from M. Kostomarov to V. Antonovych and M. Hrushevskiy) could be motivated by the influence of the Russian Empire in the opposite meaning: both as a theory and as a political program, “federalism” developed in opposition to Russian imperial absolutism and statism and was inspired by the values of freedom and equality as traditional Ukrainian values.

It is this very kind of Ukrainian traditionalism,<sup>39</sup> along with European liberalism, that inspired Drahomanov to develop the minimalist concept of the state,<sup>40</sup> which citizens only address when they cannot solve their problems on their own and only for the time needed to

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35 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 409.

36 In this context, I allow myself to direct the reader to my other paper: Serhii Yosypenko, “Hromada,” in vol. 2 of *Vocabulary of European Philosophies*, Ukrainian version (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2011), 233–39.

37 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 393.

38 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The First Ukrainian Political Program: Mykhailo Drahomanov’s ‘Introduction’ to Hromada,” in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, 272.

39 Which I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky considers from an exclusively negative view: see the third “mitigating circumstance” of the “Drahomanov’s stand against independence”: Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The First Ukrainian Political Program,” 273.

40 In English, it would be worthwhile to write “government,” but the continental concept of the state is much wider than the Anglo-Saxon “state.” The “self-sustaining” political tradition has led to an even greater expansion of the notion of “state” in the Ukrainian language. For example, if the term “statism,” from the point of view of liberal culture, has a clearly negative connotation, in Ukrainian (as well as in Russian) it definitely has a positive meaning: a “statist” (a *derzhavnyk* or *gosudarstviennik*) is one who acts in regard of the interests of the whole nation in the global historical sense, roughly as a statesman is unlike a politician; accordingly, *anti-statism* acquires an overwhelmingly negative meaning of the denial of the need for having an own national state.

solve those problems. Such an anti-statist attitude of the “Federalists” clearly played a negative role in the course of the Ukrainian revolution, yet it is unlikely that for them, the federalization of the program was “an attempt to strike a balance between national and imperial interests. ... As their final goal, they envisaged the transformation of the centralistic Russian Empire into a commonwealth of free and equal peoples,”<sup>41</sup> since “a commonwealth of free and equal nations” cannot be an empire of “imperial interests.”

### Modern Parallels and Prospects

The above analysis demonstrates that, despite considerable and very productive efforts, the Ukrainian revolution remains, to Lysiak-Rudnytsky’s mind, a “tyrannical event” that inclines him to consider the history of Ukrainian social and political thought of both pre- and post-revolution periods according to the progressive evolution pattern that leads to establishing the idea of independence. Undoubtedly, and I have already stated this before, a Hegelian approach to treating history was not the only factor for his opinion; he adapted the scheme to the realities of Ukrainian intellectual history in which he lived; however, he himself experienced the impact of such realities. Is it possible to treat the history of Ukrainian social and political thought with the taking into account of the events that objectively structure it, without becoming affected by the tyrannical influence of those events and, simultaneously, avoiding the temptations of historicism, i.e. preserving the entire valuable intellectual heritage? In my opinion, the best way of preserving the intellectual heritage is using it for characterizing the current historical situation, and Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky’s approaches in this respect are truly valuable.

The event that has shaped current Ukrainian national thought was not the revolution of 1917–1920 but rather gaining independence in 1991. However, unlike the post-revolution generations that were the subject of Lysiak-Rudnytsky’s studies, Ukrainians today are living not only by this event but rather by its aftermath: after the Ukrainian “short twentieth century” if we use Eric Hobsbawm’s term which started with the Ukrainian revolution of 1917 — the 1920s, and lasted through the gaining of independence in 1991. These two events are related not only via the fact that 1991 finalized the struggle for independence started by the revolution; they are structurally similar by their unexpectedness, the unpredictability of their development, but also by their defined preceding context, as well as their revolutionary significance for the Ukrainian national consciousness. No one before World War II could predict its scope and the degree of its influence on the course of European history, the same as, no one, on the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union, could imagine the real proximity of this event. Likewise, neither the declaration of Ukraine’s independence in 1991 nor that of the Fourth Universal was much of a realization of the “separatist” program politically shaped by the Ukrainian national movement, but rather a result of the revolutionary radicalization of the “federalist” program, since in both cases, “when the spell of the Empire was broken, thousands of former ‘Little Russians’ rediscovered themselves almost

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To denote this purely Ukrainian meaning of the term *statism*, the Ukrainian word *derzhavnytstvo* (statehood) is used, and in a conventional liberal sense, the felicitous French *étatisme* is used.

41 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 395.

overnight as nationally conscious Ukrainian patriots and potential separatists.”<sup>42</sup> Similar were the Ukrainian movement’s “childhood diseases” before and during both revolutionary events, determined by the fact that in the former case, “World War I came to Ukraine some 20 years in advance. A sudden fall of the tsarist regime in 1917 made Ukraine face the task that objectively exceeded our possibilities. Ukrainians who, under the Russian empire, dreamed of education in the Ukrainian language in public schools, had to build the state,”<sup>43</sup> and in the second case, the collapse of the USSR happened too fast after the start of the democratization of political life, as well as the first steps of the legal Ukrainian movement in the UkrSSR.

All these factors, together with the already traditional construction of the history of social and political thought in the evolution of “separatists” ideas, cause unexpected effects of national consciousness. I am going to dwell on two of those. First, this creates the impression that Ukrainian social and political thought is exhausted with the verbalization of the “separatist” program and/or operates only within the political movements implementing this program. At least, this is the impression of Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky’s contemporaries and associates; for instance, Omelian Pritsak in his article in memorium states: “Since Ukrainian socio-political thought dates from the mid-nineteenth century, Ivan’s independent research covered the period from that time to the 1930s. ... after 1933 in central and eastern Ukraine, and after the Second World War in western Ukraine, official socio-political thought had ceased to develop, so there were insufficient bases for research.”<sup>44</sup> We can only add that such an understanding also structures modern Ukrainian academic discourse. But in the era of independence such *passéism* acquires a different shade. The fact and the way of gaining independence in 1991 produce a general impression that “the national idea did not work.” That is, independence was not gained in the way which — according to the views of the people who took the mandatory university course on the history of the CPSU in Soviet universities — would match the changes in the social system i.e. a revolutionary program that is the result of the historical evolution of thought, the consequent creation of a revolutionary party that seizes power, and so on.

Lysiak-Rudnytsky himself did not limit the history of social and political thought with the chronological bounds of the period between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries; he believed that “Pre-modern social thought and political ideologies diverge substantially from those of the last and the present centuries, and their study would require a different methodological approach,”<sup>45</sup> and during the second half of the twentieth century the object of his attention were the thoughts of Soviet political dissidents and the Western Ukrainian diaspora. Thus it is not really about the possibility of the existence of Ukrainian social and political thought but about the forms of its existence. In particular, in the UkrSSR of the second half of the twentieth century, it developed not only in dissent form but also in official forms, because here, the same as for the Russian Empire, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky’s observation remains valid, according to which “...the acceptance of the empire, which appeared as an overwhelming and unshakable

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42 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 394.

43 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Ukrainska revoliutsiia,” 49.

44 Omeljan Pritsak, “Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, Scholar and ‘Communicator,’” in *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, xvii–xviii.

45 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought,” 91.

reality, could, and did, co-exist in Ukrainian minds with an awareness of a distinct Ukrainian ethnic identity and an allegiance to the special political and cultural interests of the homeland.”<sup>46</sup> Paradoxical as it may seem, but this sense of ethnic separateness was reproduced even by the official Soviet humanities in their confrontation with the Western Ukrainian diaspora,<sup>47</sup> and the national idea, albeit in a quite distorted Soviet version, was definitely a factor in the events of 1991.

Changes in the form, as well as changes in the direction of social and political thought do not necessarily look as “finite steps forward,” but they ensure the thought’s continuity. The fact that gaining independence both in 1918 and 1991 took place in the context of a global delegitimization of preceding political forms, which allowed for “federalisation” strategies (of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires in the former case, and of the communist system in the latter), makes it clear that radical turns in national consciousness occurred not only due to some internal evolution but in the context of global changes in the political situation, which enabled radical changes of the national movement agenda. The inclusion of the history of Ukrainian social and political thought into a broader context (i.e. European, global, and regional — imperial Russian and Polish) only makes more obvious the Ukrainian specific component, which may remain sustainable for centuries, yet might significantly change its meaning in different contexts. Thus today we observe how “federalism,” which in the short twentieth century seemed a deeply anachronistic political idea, has become topical again with the transformation of the European Union into an independent political subject, and Ukraine’s political course to join it, while the confrontation of the “separatists” and the “federalists” is discussed throughout Europe in debates between the advocates of the unconditional sovereignty of nations and the supporters of the idea of the transformation of the EU into “the United States of Europe.” All of this is happening in the context of an acute problem for today’s Ukraine, that being the (dis)balance of power of the state, local communities, and freedoms of individuals, which was central to Drahomanov’s and other European Liberals’ political thought back in the nineteenth century. Therefore, abandonment of the evolutionary scheme, as well as leaving outside of the context of historiography “understandable from a psychological point of view reactions” about the past, in my opinion, will make it possible to outline the continuous history of Ukrainian social and political thought, in which revolutionary events would not provoke radical turns or breaks, and the valuable intellectual heritage will not only be preserved but will also acquire a new relevant meaning.

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46 Lysiak-Rudnytsky, “The Fourth Universal and its Ideological Antecedents,” 393.

47 On this occasion, I will allow myself to redirect the reader to my own article: Serhii Yosypenko, “Do problemy natsionalnoi identychnosti v istoryko-filosofskomu ukrainoznavstvi [On the Problem of National Identity in Philosophical Ukrainian Studies],” *Mandrivets* 6 (2015): 11–15.

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