

Die ukrainische Revolution und die Deutschen 1917-1918

By Marian Luschnat-Ziegler. Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2021. Pp. 283. Paperback €55.00. ISBN: 978-3879694594.

Kai Struve

Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

This study examines debates about and views of Germany during the first two years of the “Ukrainian Revolution” from early 1917 until the withdrawal of German and Austrian troops from Ukraine toward the end of 1918. It is based on a doctoral dissertation at the University of Hamburg, supervised by Frank Golczewski, and builds on Golczewski’s seminal book on German-Ukrainian relations (*Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939* [2010]). More closely than this and other earlier studies, Marian Luschnat-Ziegler examines the views of the Ukrainian side in this relationship. He uses a wide range of Ukrainian sources, including archival materials from various Ukrainian institutions, though he mostly relies on newspapers and memoirs of Ukrainian participants in the events.

The author has divided his study into three major chapters, each addressing a central aspect of the relationship. The first chapter deals with the attitude of Ukrainian political parties toward Germany. While after the beginning of the war, Russia presented the Ukrainian movement as an internal threat in the service of Germany, there existed diverse views in the Ukrainian movement about Germany. Some actually hoped that a German conquest of Ukraine would improve the situation of the Ukrainians, while most banked on reforms in the Russian Empire as a consequence of the war. The February Revolution of 1917 further strengthened the hope in a federal reorganization of the state. However, when Ukrainian demands for autonomy were not supported by Russian democratic forces during the course of that year, demands for state independence gained influence in Ukraine. This was especially true after the Bolshevik coup in November 1917 and the Red Army’s invasion of Ukraine one month later that finally provoked the founding of the Ukrainian People’s Republic by the Ukrainian Tsentral’na Rada in Kyiv.

Luschnat-Ziegler concludes that the peace treaty of February 9, 1918 between the Ukrainian People’s Republic on the one hand and Germany and Austria-Hungary on the other was not just a short-term reaction to the advance of the Red Army into Ukraine but was also based on earlier considerations about relations with Germany. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian parties had many reservations about cooperation with the German “imperialists” that were difficult to reconcile with their democratic-socialist views.

The fact that the invasion by German and Austro-Hungarian troops that followed the peace treaty quickly took on the features of an occupation put the Ukrainian national movement in a difficult situation. They opposed German interference in Ukraine’s internal affairs, but they also depended on continued German support. Even after the Germans had replaced the Ukrainian People’s Republic and its government with the former Tsarist officer and noble landlord Pavlo Skoropads’kyi as hetman of Ukraine at the end of April 1918, only the radical left of the Ukrainian movement switched to (largely ineffective) active resistance. The other Ukrainian parties saw themselves as the legal opposition. They avoided open confrontation with the Germans and saw their main adversary in Skoropads’kyi and the anti-revolutionary, conservative forces supporting him.

The second chapter turns to the peasants’ attitude toward the Germans. The author focuses on a large peasant uprising in the regions of Zvenyhorodka and Tarashcha in spring 1918, which German troops finally suppressed. Using this and other examples, Luschnat-Ziegler argues that peasant discontent was not primarily triggered by German requisitions in the villages, but by the attempts to reverse the peasants’ takeover of estate land

in 1917 and thus to abolish one of the revolution's key achievements. This began with Skoropads'kyi's assumption of power. The insurgents viewed the landlords and the hetman's troops as their main enemies, and the Germans only to the extent that they supported these troops.

Luschnat-Ziegler also rejects the earlier thesis about the use of extreme force in these conflicts both by the German troops and by the peasant insurgents. By contrast, he emphasizes German efforts not to contribute to the escalation of the uprising through excessive use of force. He also argues that peasant violence was primarily directed against landowner units or troops loyal to the hetman. Using the example of the Zvenyhorodka region, Luschnat-Ziegler shows that the insurgents let the German soldiers they captured live while often killing those who served in the landowners' or the hetman's units.

In the third chapter, the author investigates the relationship between German and Ukrainian military units. This is a subject that has not been addressed in previous research. In this field, Luschnat-Ziegler examines two issues. One is disagreements between the Germans and the UNR government and later also Skoropads'kyi about the establishment of regular Ukrainian armed forces that the Germans finally prevented since, apparently, they saw a Ukrainian army as a possible threat to their own rule. The second issue consists of the cooperation between military units of the UNR and the hetman state in joint operations against the Red Army. Here, Luschnat-Ziegler describes mostly good relations characterized by mutual respect, although many members of both sides had been enemies on the world war fronts just a few months earlier. Conflicts arose primarily over access to captured weapons or other supplies that were urgently needed by the troops.

Unfortunately, the study does not address the question of the relationship with Austria-Hungary. Though it was the less influential partner, it can be assumed that Austria-Hungary, due to its large Ukrainian population, also played an important role in the Ukrainian debates and political concepts. At least some comparative references would have been desirable.

All in all, however, Marian Luschnat-Ziegler has written a study that is particularly convincing due to the strong integration of its discussion of the German-Austrian intervention with developments in Ukrainian politics and society in 1918. It shows that the view of and the relationship with Germany, and events in Ukraine more generally, were determined largely by the often tension-filled relationship between the aim of national self-determination and the social revolution.

doi:10.1017/S0008938923000808

The Honor Dress of the Movement: A Cultural History of Hitler's Brown Shirt Uniform, 1920-1933

By Torsten Homberger. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021. Pp. 192. Paperback \$28.95. ISBN: 978-1625346056.

Mila Ganeva

Miami University

A 1929 brochure for an NSDAP rally features a cartoon with the caption "... nur beim Zeugmeister!" (23). A short fat businessman in a bowler hat and in a subservient pose offers