

Vasyl Kuchabsky. *Western Ukraine in Conflict with Poland and Bolshevism, 1918–1923*. Translated by Gus Fagan. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2009. xxix, 361 pp. \$34.95 paper, \$59.95 cloth.

Most English-language monographs and essay collections chronicling the Ukrainian Revolution have drawn their borders in accord with the Treaty of Riga of 1921 that divided the Ukrainian lands between Poland and Bolshevik Russia. That is, they have left out events in Western Ukraine, which was then also known as Eastern Galicia. In fact Eastern Galicia and its Ukrainian neighbour, Bukovyna, were subjects of serial Russian, Austrian, and German occupations during World War I and witnessed the rise and fall of a Ukrainian national movement with significantly different dynamics from those to their east. As we learn more about the revolution and subsequent wars in Central and Eastern Ukraine from new archival sources, we might also compare their experiences in nation building with Western Ukraine's for what they can tell us about broader East European trends of national movements and the impact of the war on the geopolitical transformation of the "borderlands" between Germany and Russia.

Vasyl Kuchabsky's book is a good introduction to the complex military and diplomatic history of the period. It comes to us via strange paths. The English text was fluently translated from the original German of the long rare 1934 edition. Kuchabsky, a Ukrainian historian and eyewitness-participant in the events he describes, died in 1971 in the German Democratic Republic. He was among the first Galician Ukrainians to heed the call to join the Sich Riflemen. He fought in that legion, then part of the Austrian army, on various fronts during World War I, was captured by the Russians, and was held in prison until December 1917. He helped defend Kyiv from the Bolsheviks in early 1918 and later entered Kyiv following the uprising against and overthrow of Pavlo Skoropadsky's conservative would-be Ukrainian monarchy. Following the defeat of the Western Ukrainian National Republic (ZUNR), Kuchabsky returned to Lviv, where he was an organizer of the clandestine Ukrainian Military Organization, which led to his spending ten months in a Polish jail. After his release he moved to Germany, where he earned a doctorate in history and Slavic philology at the University of Berlin in 1930. We know these biographical facts about the author thanks to the fascinatingly reconstructed life in the introduction by Oleksandr Pavlyuk, a Ukrainian scholar of the international relations of the period.

And so we might view this book as a scholarly history of the period framed by a memoir of a Ukrainian patriot who participated in some of the key events. (It has very helpful maps to guide readers through the battles.) Kuchabsky did not have access to archives at the time, save for a few valuable published collections of mostly diplomatic documents; he read widely the

available memoir literature in Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian, as well as the publications of Polish, German, and Ukrainian scholars. Kuchabsky reveals much of his scholarly passion in his sarcastic and ironic attacks on Polish historians, who, in his view, persist in perpetuating Polish nationalist myths about Galician Ukrainians as nationally immature and thereby in need of Polish rule. The book is overwhelmingly about the rise and fall of the Western Ukrainian nation-building project in 1918 and 1919 and Western Ukraine's conflict with Poland. It says much less about the conflict with Bolshevism and still less about Romania, which also occupied territory claimed by the Ukrainian movement. The years 1920–23 are treated very briefly in a final chapter.

Kuchabsky provides a detailed military history of the period, including frank assessments of the strength of the ZUNR's Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA) at various points and of the enemy Polish and Red armies. Not surprisingly, he highlights the contributions of the UHA to the Ukrainian National Republic's (UNR) struggle for independence. He has also reconstructed the history of UNR and ZUNR political activists and military men in their negotiations with the victorious powers at the Versailles peace negotiations. But his account is frequently interrupted by his own personal opinions about the leading players of the day. He has precious few heroes in his story, among them Symon Petliura (with qualifications) and an ethnic Russian general, Aleksandr Grekov, who ably led the UHA until he was sacked by incompetent and petty superiors.

Kuchabsky has many more villains in his stories, from the "pediocrats" of the Ukrainian Central Rada-UNR Directory socialists to the limited minds of the ZUNR dictator Yevhen Petrushevych and the "Ukrainian State's" would-be monarch, Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky. The most lengthy "opinions" concern the new leaders of the resurrected Polish state in 1918 who waged a "colonial war" against Ukraine and were consistently intent on eliminating their "Ukrainian problem" through political and eventually cultural Polonization. Still, Kuchabsky acknowledges in several passages that the Poles had many historical advantages over their Ukrainian rivals and demonstrated more will than their eastern neighbors. Behind the Poles, of course, stood France's political leaders and diplomats, who were ready to sell Woodrow Wilson's principles of national self-determination down the river. The only counterweight to the French-Polish "settlement," though even they were ineffective, were British leaders and their diplomatic representatives.

Kuchabsky brings to life the day-to-day existence of Ukrainian revolutionaries and soldiers during 1918 and 1919, especially the chaos and confusion that seemed to reign most of the time. He provides critical perspectives on the activities of several Ukrainian governments, east and west, as they tried to build and hold onto the nation they felt they represented. It is a story of the many opportunities lost by those proto-governments, mostly led by incompetent and limited men. In sum, this volume will be of interest to historians of the revolutionary period, national movements, and eastern Europe more broadly. The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies is to be commended for bringing this volume to an English-speaking audience.

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