In this chapter, I will try to give a short outline of the roles that historians played as agents of historical politics and the role of professional history writing in shaping and implementing it.\(^1\) I will deal mostly with generalities on the nature of historians’ involvement in the politics of history. More concrete and detailed observations of their input in the development and implementation of historical politics will be provided in the next part of the book. The specific problems of the development of professional historiography are not discussed.\(^2\)

**Communists to Nationalists**

In the late 1980s, I witnessed—and took part in—an unbelievably quick transition from the Soviet memory narrative and Soviet method of description and interpretation of the past to the national/nationalist narrative. During perestroika, the role of history and historians became one of the most burning issues. Long a purely state enterprise, history shifted into the public domain. The state (represented by the ruling party) demanded that historians give “efficient and timely responses” to the challenges shaped by the

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\(^1\) Valeriy Smoliy, ed., *Istoryk i Vlada: Kolektynna monografiya* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 2016) is a collection of articles dedicated to the issue of relations between historians and power. The quality of articles varies from naïve and bombastic discourses about Ukrainian historians who liberated themselves from the communist oppression in independent Ukraine to highly detailed discussions about the nature of the interaction between historians and the authorities.

\(^2\) A number of works have already been dedicated to this topic, including some by the present author. In his voluminous monograph, Polish historian Tomasz Stryjek provided an attentive observation from outside. See his *Jakiej przeszłości potrzebuje przyszłość? Interpretacje dziejów narodowych w historiografii i debacie publicznej na Ukrainie 1991–2004* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2007).
new situation. The politically active part of society craved “historical truth,” which in a somewhat paradoxical way mirrored the requests of the state. The demand was the same, but the goal behind it was very different. Revision, criticism, and refutation of the previous (mostly Soviet) historical experience, in fact, required that historians do the same things they always did during the Soviet times: furnish historical research for ideological demands. The only difference consisted in the fact that the number of these demands doubled. Previously the state (party) had been the sole patron, contractor, and customer of historians. Once the mono-ideological political system disintegrated, new political actors and different social groups also became customers. As both the number of actors in the field of historical politics and the demand for their services grew enormously, the supply and market of symbolic capital also started to expand.

When a sovereign Ukraine was added to the political map of the world, the new state readily commissioned ideological and educational services from historians—in the same manner as it had been doing before. But now the new ruling class saw the goal of history not as the achievement of a classless society but rather the state’s self-affirmation as a nation, not to mention the self-legitimation of Ukraine’s new rulers. To go back to the aforementioned scheme of Allan Megill, it might be stated that the demand for affirmative and didactical history writing in independent Ukraine was no less than it had been in the Ukrainian SSR. The ideological vector, for sure, changed and so did historians with regard to their orientation in space and time. In very broad terms, it was an about-face from communism to nationalism.

The most curious element of this shift was the change in outlook of those historians who had specialized in fighting “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism.” It was this cultural milieu (of course, not limited to only professional historians) that gave birth to the most radical supporters of “Ethnic Studies” (narodoznavstvo), “Scientific Nationalism,” and “Ethno-State-Building Studies” (ethnoderzhavotvorennya). The staff of “History of Ukraine” university departments established in the early 1990s consisted mostly of professors who had taught the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which had been obligatory for all students regardless of discipline.3 In 1991,

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3 These departments were established to provide compulsory one-semester courses on the history of Ukraine to students from all departments, including those in science, finance, math, biology, dentistry, etc. In fact, these courses repeated the content taught in secondary school.
they began teaching the history of Ukraine with the same educational-ideological purpose and in the same manner.

A notable example of this transition was the largest government commission of historians during the late perestroika period. The “Republic’s Program of the Development of History Studies, Improvement and Propaganda of the History of the Ukrainian SSR” was prepared by a group of historians from different research institutions of the Academy of Sciences following the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (1989). The document itself, which was presented as perestroika in the field of historical research and teaching, exemplified a curious compendium of topics and notions, mixing Soviet and national/nationalist historical stereotypes and metaphors. For instance, the theme “The OUN and the UPA during the Great Patriotic War” placed two opposing narratives under one title.

The process of preparation and approval of this program graphically illustrates the dynamics of change in the political situation and, therefore, the trajectory of the turnaround for historians. The decision to create it was made at the top of the ruling party hierarchy in February 1989, and it testified to the attempts to seize initiative away from the national democratic opposition in the battle for the past, which quickly transformed into the struggle over the very existence of the communist ancien régime. Preparations for the new program lasted until the fall of 1989, and the moment it was finished, the composition of the ruling elite and its ambitions had changed. By the end of 1989, even the central party media had begun to publish articles condemning “Stalinism.” Between the winter and summer of 1990, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine passed a series of “historical” resolutions that condemned the Stalinist purges and “ideological” resolutions of the 1940s–50s and acknowledged the famine of 1932–33. Needless to say, historians co-authored these resolutions, having received requests from the top party leadership. Traditionally and because they were duty-bound, all the institutes of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences were involved in the preparatory work and drafting of these resolutions.

The final version of the Republican Program was approved at a session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPU in July 1990, a week after the adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine by the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR on July 16, 1990. The program fits very well into the political ambitions of the new-fledged group of so-called
National Communists within the ruling party; while not opposed to the Soviet regime, they nevertheless engaged in a power struggle with the union center over greater autonomy for Ukraine. The historians who took part in the preparation of the program changed together with the party line, to quote an expression from an old Soviet joke.4

Stanislav Kulchytsky, a historian and one of the key figures in the preparation of the program, later said that the staff of the Central Committee of the CPU did not meddle in the development of the program. Moreover, “they authorized us to send it to the interested parties and state bodies without any censorship,” he wrote many years later.5 He explained this complacency on the part of the apparatchiks as the attempt of the new party leaders to maintain control of the situation by approving the program. This explanation needs one adjustment: party leaders absolutely relied on the historians who worked on their commission. These historians did not require any control; they knew perfectly what needed to be done. At that moment, they performed a dual task: to preserve the Soviet scheme of history, and to mix it with those elements of the national/nationalist narrative that would enhance the autonomist—however Soviet-loyalist—ambitions of the ruling elite.

After 1991, the affirmative-didactical history represented by official historiography concentrated its efforts on the promotion of one single narrative of the past, the national/nationalist one. A large-scale nationalization of Ukrainian history commenced (see chapter 6). Professional historians found themselves at the epicenter of this process. As before, the majority carried out their “state contract”: shaping the national narrative, disseminating this narrative through the education system, supporting the state ideology, legitimizing the new state, and satisfying the public demand for history.

In 1993, the state, embodied by President Leonid Kravchuk, explicitly requested the creation of a “history of the Ukrainian people.” Academic institutions immediately began to prepare a multi-volume publication in the image and likeness of the History of the Ukrainian SSR.6 The project was not implemented due to a lack of funds caused by the deep economic cri-

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4 The joke goes as follows:
   Question: Did you strictly follow the party line, or did you deviate?
   Answer: I deviated together with the party line.


6 This mega-project, which lasted from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s, comprised of 8 volumes, 10 books that were published in Ukrainian and Russian.
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sis. However, in the mid-1990s, scholars at the Institute of the History of Ukraine in the National Academy of Sciences published a two-volume work, *History of Ukraine: A New Vision*, and in the late 1990s, Ukraine finally obtained its new master narrative, a fifteen-volume work, *Ukraine through the Centuries* (winner of the State Prize of Ukraine). It was completed in large part by academic historians. Despite its recognizable name, the project of the Ukrainian millennium did not match the title because while some authors followed the idea of the “millennium of Ukrainian statehood,” others did not. In essence, every volume reflected a version of a certain period of Ukrainian history as understood and interpreted by the author of the volume. Consequently, it could be entitled *Ukraines through the Centuries*.

Another important mega-project completed during this period was a new generation of school textbooks on history that represented the Ukrainian master narrative in its purest and most radical form. Here too, professional historians accounted for the majority of authors (see chapter 6).

For most Ukrainian historians, the transition from communism to nationalism went quickly and smoothly. This ease was determined by many factors. One was the habit of servility to the authorities and to the political agenda cultivated in mono-ideological systems. The desire to conform to the expectations of the public was conveniently wrapped in the idea of service to the people. It also might be explained by insight triggered by learning new facts that were previously unknown or taboo. We can also count opportunism, career aspirations, and the underdevelopment of analytical historiography as among the reasons for an uncomplicated transition. Finally, elementary survival issues should not be neglected. In the early 1990s, thousands of those who taught courses on the history of the Communist Party, Scientific Communism, Scientific Atheism, and so on were threatened with unemployment. The problem was especially acute in higher education establishments that did not specialize in the humanities. In such places, the departments of the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union mutated into departments of political history. Obviously, most party historians and specialists in Scientific

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8 See, for instance, the Department of Political History at Kharkiv Polytechnical Insitute; the Department of Ukrainian History and Ethno-Politics at Dnipropetrovsk National University, and the Department of History at Poltava National Technical University.
Communism and atheism were perfectly suited to meet the needs of a newly created state through an affirmative Ukrainian history.

Those who took part in the process are sometimes quite candid about this historical-ideological shift. For instance, the establishment of the Department of History and Culture of Ukraine in the Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University explained its transformation as the result of a “social-national request conditioned by the democratic processes initiated in the country since the middle of the 1980s.”

The reversal might look striking due to the seemingly radical change of values. In the Soviet period, communist ideologues considered nationalism as probably the principal enemy, and historians fought against it tooth and nail. However, confronting the worldview or ethical foundations or representations of the past in communism and nationalism might lead to the conclusion that these two have a lot in common. Both appeal to the idea of liberation: of man (humankind) for the former, and of the nation in the latter. Both see conflict and struggle (class or national) as the driving force of history. In both cases, the view of the historical process is based on the recognition of its teleological predestination, a movement toward a preassigned goal. Both stop history when this goal is achieved and immediately open a new era. Both put the interests of the community above those of the individual and demand that the historian should serve “the people.” No less important is that both worldviews (or ideologies) have a habit of turning themselves into sacral constituents, becoming a kind of civic religion. (There are some well-known cases of the “conversion” of party members—and historians—into priests). Such similarities between the two worldviews may also, perhaps, explain their reciprocal hostility.

In this context, the passage of the majority of historians from communism to nationalism might not look excessively unnatural. The methods of understanding and interpreting the past for the sake of the present; the zeal for a single normative truth; the desire to serve a certain collective entity; the drive for ‘historical justice’; these were all very similar. The only thing that changed was the reference group—in one case, it was a social class or party, in another, the nation.

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Nevertheless, the foundations for future divergences between affirmative and didactical history on one side, and analytical historiography the other, were already set in the 1990s. These discrepancies were provoked, shaped, and enhanced through the broadening and intensification of contacts with broader global cultural and intellectual exchanges, the diversification of social functions, and the role of historians.

The roles of historians

In the 1990s, a certain division of labor arose among historians. An absolute majority of those who studied and taught the history of Ukraine turned into nativists. An affirmative-didactic history became the credo and method of their professional endeavors. A minority, usually those dedicated to the achievements, secrets, and intellectual charms of “Western” historiography, fluent in foreign languages, and involved in a larger intellectual world, found itself in conflict with the majority over many issues. Among them were the social functions of history and the extremes of the national master narrative that had already played the role of symbolic capital for a segment of the ruling class and cultural elites.

The creation of this master narrative often boiled down to the establishment of dominant canonical discourses of the national/nationalist narrative that became the conceptual framework of historical politics. In their role as discourse creators, historians became the main providers of goods on the symbolic capital market. The process consisted of several stages. First, a situational request from the state or society was formulated, often with the participation of historians themselves. Then a research discourse was created (or borrowed) to meet the request, and these discursive forms were then translated into practice (learning/acceptance/diffusion of the discourse). The most interesting stage followed, when the discourses, having taken root and having been given unreserved acceptance by the public, came back to the research community as undisputedly legitimate canons.

I will illustrate this with three examples. In the middle of the 1980s, some Ukrainian historians were involved in counter-propaganda activities to oppose “the insinuations of Western propaganda” about the famine of 1932–33. What was seen as an “insinuation” was the image of the famine as a genocidal action directed against ethnic Ukrainians of the USSR, an image that
was formed through the efforts of part of the Ukrainian diaspora in North America. The Communist Party mobilized Soviet Ukrainian historians to prove that there was no famine; they were only allowed to mention “food difficulties” sometimes.

In the second half of 1980, during the glasnost period, these same Ukrainian historians, under pressure from the political situation, public opinion, and new, previously unknown evidence, recognized the fact of a massive man-made famine. Moreover, they started, for all intents and purposes, to re-transmit the image of the famine that had been produced within the framework of a political project that painted the Soviet Union as an evil empire. Relying on the arguments of their recent opponents, usually branded as “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists,” these historians centered their explanatory and illustrative schemes on the word “genocide.”

The famine of 1932–33 as genocide fit well into the general line of negating the Soviet past that had been popular from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. It was popularized by history textbooks and translated into society. In the 1990s, it was canonized by the decrees of President Leonid Kuchma, and in 2006, it became the object of a separate law. There were even attempts to criminalize its public denial (see chapter 7). Professional historians also took part in the popularization of the genocide version of the famine. In 2019, according to surveys, about 80 percent of respondents agreed with the statement “the Holodomor was a genocide,” and this figure became instrumental in proving the validity of the statement. The canonical discourse created by the historians had finally acquired power over the historians themselves.

The second revealing example did not produce similar repercussions, but this fact does not decrease its illustrative value. The term “Ukrainian National Revolution of the Middle of the Seventeenth Century,” proposed by Valeriy Stepankov and Valeriy Smoliy, first appeared in academic use in the late 1990s. Academic discussions and critiques of the term itself (which represents shameless anachronism) and its underlying concept had no influence whatsoever on its social dissemination. It firmly established itself in course curricula and in textbooks and reached further legitimacy through state examinations. It was, however, rivaled by another historiographic archetype. In 1998 at the state level, Ukraine officially celebrated

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10 Among these, Stanislav Kulchytsky and Vasyl Marochko were the most important figures.
the anniversary of the start of the “Liberation War of the Ukrainian People in the Middle of the Seventeenth Century.”11 In 2008, it celebrated the next anniversary of the same event, this time under the name of the “National Liberation Struggle of the Ukrainian People.”12 However, despite the difference in name, both terms and concepts complement each other. The discursive forms created by historians (as in the case of the Holodomor) have been legitimated by state practice.

The third example of the importance of historians as “discourse-makers”—this time at the level of didactic history—is their role in writing textbooks. The 1990s saw the emergence of the canon discourse of Ukrainian history, the ethno-national and ethnocentric narrative consisting of a set of easily recognizable and easily repeatable stereotypical forms—a basic package of ideas about Ukrainian history. The majority of those who wrote the textbooks belonged to academic institutions and universities.13 The history in textbooks is also curious in the sense of how the historian-created discourses later influenced historians themselves. Discussions on how many textbooks should exist for one subject (in this case, the history of Ukraine) seem somewhat abstract because different authors, in fact, follow the same canon they constructed (or borrowed).14 If we speak about a standard national narrative, one generic textbook would really suffice from the point of view of content and main plotlines.

13 There are 24 titles on the list of textbooks on the history of Ukraine. The list includes 25 authors and co-authors, including eight dr. habil. and five PhDs in history, a corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences, a full member of the National Academy of Sciences, and two dr. habil. and two PhDs in pedagogy (historians by education). Three work in the National Academy of Sciences, 15 work in universities, two are employed by the Academy of Pedagogic Sciences, and three work for postgraduate pedagogic institutes. Three are schoolteachers. Calculations based on data from: “PERELIK navchalnykh prohram, pidruchnykiv ta navchalno-metodychnykh posibnykiv, rekomentovanych Ministerstvom osviti i nauki Ukrainy dlya vykorystannya v osnovniy i starshyi shkoli u zahalnoosvitynikh navchalnykh zakladakh z navchannym ukrayinskoyu movoiu v 2015/2016 navchalnomu rotsi Osnovna i starsha shkola, 2015” http://mon.gov.ua/activity/education/zagalna-serednya/perelik-navchalan-nix-program.html. Personal data of the authors obtained from open sources.
14 In fact, these textbooks conceptually reproduce the aforementioned national master narrative created in the late nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century.
Another important function of professional historians in the development and implementation of historical politics is expertise. Historians are often invited as experts by state bodies. The practice goes back to the Soviet period, when state institutions used historical research institutions for ideological purposes on a regular basis. According to calculations made by Andriy Liubarets at my request, between 2005 and 2010 (a period of acceleration in historical politics), the Institute of the History of Ukraine in the National Academy of Sciences received 572 requests, most of which came from state organs: the Secretariat of the President, the Verkhovna Rada, regional state administrations, ministries, the National Bank, Ukrposhta, and the Prosecutor General’s office. Other requests came from the mass media, deputies, civic organizations, and individuals. Between 2010–13, there were 372 such requests, and again most of them came from state institutions. The absolute majority of these requests asked for expertise that was needed to prepare laws and other legislative acts, organize commemorative events, prepare educational materials, develop state programs, establish museums and other memory spaces and expand their activities, regulate the archives, and so on.

Historians who worked at state-funded institutions performed expert functions in the framework of their routine duties. In addition to the Institute of the History of Ukraine, state historical politics were also serviced by the historians of the Institute for Political and Ethno-National Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Institute for Strategic Studies under the president of Ukraine. On the regional level, such functions were usually carried out by the local branches of the National Academy of Sciences (for instance, in Lviv) and universities (which are also very active in the development and popularization of local and regional historical studies).

The involvement of historians in special commissions that determine “historical truth” can also be seen as a legacy of the Soviet period. The commission on which historians from two academic institutes served and was created at the end of 1986 to disprove the “fabrications” about the famine of 1932–33 has already been mentioned. Another famous example of such a body in independent Ukraine was the government commission created under the Ukrainian

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15 Calculations were made on the basis of files from the Archive of the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences.
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Cabinet of Ministers in 1997. A team of historians assigned to the commission were tasked with preparing an expert report on “the problem” of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.\footnote{Oksana Myshlovsk\,a, “Establishing the ‘Irrefutable Facts’ about the OUN and UPA: The Role of the Working Group of Historians on OUN-UPA Activities in Mediating Memory-based Conflict in Ukraine,” \textit{Ab imperio} 1 (2018): 223–54.}

In the 1990s and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Russian commissions of historians were created to provide an expert assessment of history textbooks and to elaborate recommendations on “controversial issues” in the past. Historians also served on explicitly political projects. For instance, in 2009, they helped the Security Service of Ukraine during the investigation of the famine of 1932–33 which ended with a one-day show trial of perpetrators of the Holodomor in Ukraine.

At times, historians get an opportunity to directly influence historical politics as representatives of the power structure. For instance, between 1997 and 1999, Valeriy Smoliy, the director of the Institute of the History of Ukraine since 1993, was also the Deputy Prime Minister of Humanitarian Issues for the government. His friend Volodymyr Lytvyn, who began his career as a professional historian, was also serving in highest ranks of political power at the same time as Smoliy: between 1995–1999 he was the chief assistant to President Leonid Kuchma, from 1999–2002 he was the head of administration of the president, and in 2002–6 and 2008–12 he was the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada. Kuchma, it seems, heavily relied on their opinions when choosing a strategy in the sphere of historical politics. These historians largely influenced the establishment of state practices and rituals commemorating the Holodomor, the creation of a government commission on the OUN and UPA, and, finally, they managed to promote an ambivalent variant of the politics of history in the 1990s. They were also directly involved in the production of Kuchma’s 2003 book, \textit{Ukraine is Not Russia}.

Another statesman who began his career as a professional historian, Dmytro Tabachnyk, was the Deputy Prime Minister on Humanitarian Issues in the Yanukovych governments (2002–2003, 2006–2007), and minister of Education and Science in 2010–14, when his patron became president. Unlike his aforementioned colleagues, Tabachnyk used his position to publicly criticize the national/nationalist memory narrative and largely contributed to the development of the internal memory war in Ukraine.
Chapter 5

The most recent example of somebody who started as a professional historian and joined executive power circles was the director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, Volodymyr Viatrovych. He was one of the main proponents and promoters of affirmative historical politics in 2015–19, he was a lobbyist on behalf of the memorial laws of 2015 aimed at the marginalization and elimination of the Soviet nostalgic memory narrative, and he simultaneously promoted and propagated the national/nationalist narrative.

In the last decade, the role of historian as public intellectual has become more and more popular. The historian’s business requires time away from the noise and, therefore, is not very compatible with the functions of a public intellectual obliged to promptly react to the latest news and maintain a busy public agenda. Accordingly, public intellectuals are not numerous among historians. However, with the boom of electronic media, historians wishing to combine their trade with the vocation of journalist, political essayist, or opinion maker have found it easier to reach the public. The most public-oriented Ukrainian historians who chose this way of working are Yaroslav Hrytsak, Vasyl Rasevych, and Andrii Portnov. Among non-Ukrainians, Timothy Snyder, a highly respected American historian who also wrote a number of best sellers in the genre of popular history, is the most famous. For some time, public intellectuals (including historians) used as their rostrum Krytyka magazine, which borrowed its format from the New York Review of Books. However, as the sphere of electronic media has grown wider, intellectuals have begun using specialized websites and social networks to reach the public.

While the role of the public intellectual (as well as the term itself) should probably be considered a loan from another type of culture, the role of educator and “enlightener” is obviously part of an older tradition started by the narodniki and was readily adopted by the Soviets. Back during the era of perestroika, historians actively participated in the “popularization” of the historical breakthroughs of the second half of the 1980s. The state itself supported them through the Znannia (Knowledge) Society. These activities decreased in the 1990s: the collapse of popularization infrastructures

17 Official site: https://krytyka.com/ua.
18 Websites such as www.zaxid.net, www.zbuc.eu, www.historians.in.ua and www.uamoderna.com can be considered intellectual forums with an active presence of historians.
meant that enlightenment in its classical form ended. However, this role was assumed by newspapers and magazines. In the 2000s, the information/media and communication revolutions opened new possibilities for the promoters of public historical education.\(^1^9\) However, historians did not begin to utilize these opportunities until recently. The project that we mentioned above, *Likbez: The History Front*, which uses media technology to “popularize historical knowledge” is an example.

The name of this project brings us to the next embodiment of the role of a historian: “a soldier of the ideological front,” a mnemonic “warrior” of the memory wars both inside and outside national borders.\(^2^0\) This role is often combined with an educational zeal. The warriors of the “true history” often sincerely believe that the “enlightenment of the masses” is the best weapon in fighting for historical truth. The leader and founder of the *Likbez* project stated in one of his interviews that “the main weapons of a Ukrainian historian are facts and enlightenment.”\(^2^1\) The role of soldier of the ideological front is usually accentuated by external circumstances. At present, a mobilization on this front is happening as a response to the hybrid war with Russia and as a part of the controversies with Poland over the past. As a rule, historians who see themselves as soldiers in this way rarely participate in the direct production of propaganda or counterpropaganda (though it also happens, for instance, in the activities of the UINP). Their participation in the memory wars is often masked by the use of research arguments seeking to disprove unscientific, ideologically motivated fabrications by the opponents of their position.\(^2^2\)

Sometimes even foreign historians become Ukrainian soldiers on the ideological front. For instance, English/American historian Robert Conquest

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\(^{2^0}\) I was acquainted with this phrase back when I was a student. It was often coupled with the adopted phrase, “Of all sciences, history is the most political one,” whose author, Marxist historian Mikhail Pokrovsky, was usually not mentioned.


(1917–2015) and Italian historian Andrea Graziosi were awarded the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise “for their substantial personal contributions to the study of holodomors in Ukraine, for attracting the attention of the international community to the recognition of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people, and for their active social stance to honor the victims of the tragedy.”

It can be said that both decorated intellectuals deserved their awards because their names are actively used to promote the genocide version of the Holodomor, but they themselves might be unaware of their crucial importance. However, there is a more impressive case in American historian James Mace (1952–2004), who became an icon of the national/nationalist memory narrative. Mace was the research director of a US congressional commission that articulated the idea of the Holodomor as genocide on the political level in the mid-1980s. He helped Robert Conquest gather materials for his 1986 book The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine that gave this idea academic backing. In the 1990s, Mace moved to Ukraine and became one of the most active participants in the historical projects of the Den’ newspaper. He formulated the idea of Ukraine as a “post-genocide society” that fits into the general trends of the national/nationalist narrative that is imbued with “lachrymose-genesis.”

To sum up the problem of role choice, a preliminary conclusion can be made: most historians simply follow the political agenda and respond to public requests, ensuring the re-transmission of dominant discourses and never seeing anything wrong with this. They maintain the functions of affirmative and didactic history and related memory models. A minority tries to meet the requirements of some basic canons of analytical history. Maintaining the role of an academic who is above politics is technically possible as a goal and mode of behavior. However, when history is constantly being mobilized by a political agenda, there are few chances for such historians to rent a small room in the “ivory tower.”

24 This is an ironic term used by Mark von Hagen (1954–2019) to characterize Ukrainian historical victimology.