

Iaroslav Petik

**Politics and Society in the Ukrainian People's Republic  
(1917–1921) and Contemporary Ukraine (2013–2022)**

A Comparative Analysis

With a foreword by Mykola Doroshko

# UKRAINIAN VOICES

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Iaroslav Petik

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# Foreword

This book is a symbiosis of political philosophy, philosophy of history, and certain elements of actual history. It proposes to gain new perspectives on the current political situation in Ukraine, amidst Russia's unprovoked aggression, through analysis and comparison of past stages of the country's development.

The periods examined by the author are the era of the Ukrainian National Revolution (1917-1921) and the period of Ukraine's development after the Revolution of Dignity and before the full-scale Russian invasion (2013-2022). Various aspects of the politics of both periods are compared and studied throughout the text.

The author employs the philosophy of history by Wilhelm Dilthey, which emphasizes empathetic understanding and non-linear analysis, coupled with a psychological approach to understanding the role of specific historical figures. This allows for a deeper understanding of key events while still enabling the drawing of general conclusions.

Different chapters analyze and compare key aspects of the life of the Ukrainian state and the Eastern European region in general. However, the analysis goes beyond a simple comparison of details. Instead, the author classifies events and processes, seeking both similarities and differences to make the comparison more fruitful. Special attention is given to culture and society.

Military history, foreign policy, and domestic policy facts are also studied and analyzed. This book will be beneficial for those interested in Ukrainian politics, history, and the philosophy of history in general.

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# 1. The Idea of Analysis

Wilhelm Dilthey was a German philosopher who lived in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. He was interested in hermeneutics and the methodology of science, but his most famous idea was his concept of the philosophy of history.

Prior to Dilthey, few philosophers had created original conceptions of the philosophy of history. The most popular such concept was probably that of G.W.F. Hegel, who speculated that the whole of human history is a development of the Absolute Idea. In this way, human history can be understood rationally through careful study of the meaning of each period in the general picture.

The great ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle started both the philosophy of history and political science by writing a book whence he argued that any state proceeds through a fixed cycle of a few periods—degrading from the Golden Age of the “enlightened aristocracy” to the horrors of the chaotic and corrupted “power of the crowd.”

Scholastic and early patristic philosophers of the Middle Ages who wrote on the topic of politics and history mostly theorized about the connection of the divine and material worlds. St Augustine is considered the first scholar who thought of history as a linear development and not as a continuation of Aristotelian cycles. Most of the classic political philosophers and philosophers of history, however, have their roots in the works of Hegel, who was the first scholar to propose a rational view on the subject.

Dilthey’s concept is completely different. Instead of the rational approach, Wilhelm Dilthey proposes something completely irrational—to try to understand history through empathy. Empathy is a method borrowed from psychology. It involves emotional, subjective involvement in an area that gives genuine intrinsic knowledge about it.

This method is incompatible with Hegel's rational idealistic philosophy as well as the political science method based on pure quantitative analytics. This does not mean, however, that it uses only subjective emotions or does not take facts into consideration.

On the contrary, particular facts about historical events are the starting point for empathetic understanding.

Empathetic “feeling” of the historical event helps to understand both its underlying mechanisms and its disposition toward contemporary history and events. In a sense, Dilthey theorized that past events are present in the contemporary epoch and by empathy we can understand not only the past but also the present and the future.

In this way, studying history is a hermeneutical search for special keys that open a deeper understanding of contemporary events. And that is the precise underlying idea of this book—to compare the past and the present to try to find new insights for actual problems.

Hermeneutics is a subdiscipline of continental philosophy devoted to the interpretation and understanding of texts and other symbol-based artifacts of human culture. Dilthey’s philosophy of history is tightly connected to hermeneutics as he attributed a major role to symbol-based artifacts for understanding history.

The period of the few years leading up to 2022 is chosen because it is precisely the most contemporary time for Ukrainian political history. It is dramatic and includes a number of unsolved problems and conflicts. The beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022, however, marks the next period, which is not yet possible to assess.

It is nevertheless possible to give a certain prognosis of what will happen in the next era based on the empirical data of previous events. It involves more political analysis than historical work, but these two spheres often come as a pair.

Why compare the period of the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the period between 2013 and 2022? These two periods have both astonishing similarities and deep differences. The UPR was one of the few times when the Ukrainian nation gained political autonomy and a separate state, a great achievement. The previous periods comprise the era of Bohdan Khmelnytsky and a few of his successors and (debatably) the medieval era of Kievan Rus’.

To clarify terms. In the period of the 1917–1922 on the territory of Ukraine, there were different political administrations. It

was not called the UPR during the Skoropadsky period. The name was “Ukrainian state.”. Some historians would prefer to refer to it together call this period as the “Ukrainian Revolution”.

The next such period occurred only seven decades later with the crash of the Soviet Union and the establishment of a new Ukraine as an independent state. The events that have unfolded since 2013, however, show that there are many obstacles for the Ukrainian nation and that whether Ukraine will still hold its political independence remains a question. This makes this research even more important.

Why did the UPR eventually fail? What were our predecessors' right and wrong decisions? What was the geopolitical situation at that time? And what does this say about its contemporary counterpart?

In 2013 and 2014, the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine caused the change of the government and the military annexation of Crimea by Russia as well as the start of the military conflict in the Donbass region of Ukraine. This event both raised the fervor of patriotism and the spirit of heroism among the Ukrainians and created a potential danger to the very existence of this independent nation.

Before February of 2022, Ukrainian society faced many challenges, problems, and unresolved internal conflicts. Nevertheless, it is hard to compare these problems to what followed with the full-scale Russian invasion. The bigger picture of Ukrainian politics changed dramatically, and the previous period is now history (albeit recent history). And it is important to assess these events historically and to learn the lessons of the past.

As we started from the philosophy of history, we should first define the methodology of the research. Why use Dilthey's concept instead of other, similar conceptions?

On the one hand, the global picture that we imagine when speaking about the political events in the two time periods seems to imply that the Absolute Idea conception is a more suitable candidate for the main methodological schema. Indeed, Hegel's idealistic philosophy of history often served as an ideological basis for

political systems with a strict hierarchy, including authoritarian regimes.

It was Hegel's systematic view that inspired Karl Marx's materialistic picture of human history. And it was precisely that picture that guided Vladimir Lenin and his party comrades when starting the Russian Revolution. Putin's Russia is evidently an authoritarian regime that seems even to be evolving into Soviet-like totalitarianism.

There is a famous historical anecdote that is hard to verify but very symptomatic of Hegel's worldview. It says that when Napoleon entered the city where the German philosopher lived at the time, Hegel praised him and said that the French conqueror was the "embodiment of an Absolute Idea."

Does the system's structure of the political theory presuppose authoritarian political structure as the foundation of its subject? The UPRR had many problems, but it cannot be called a purely authoritarian police state, especially when compared to the Bolshevik project. It is unlikely to be a suitable subject for a political theory that presupposes authoritarian social structure.

On the other hand, there are reasons to use empathetic understanding instead of only Hegel's method here. It is a question of the difference between a democracy and an authoritarian regime. The UPR is also probably a state that gives a much greater role to individual personalities and actions. In this way, a psychological concept of philosophy of history seems like a much more flexible option here.

Putin's Russia, however, is far closer to Hegel's ideas about a systematic and leader-centered political regime. In fact, contemporary Russian propaganda strives to present Vladimir Putin as a modern Napoleon. This brings all sorts of horrors connected to the imperialistic ambitions of the political leader, including war, but it is still an interesting case for political and historical analysis.

Apart from his main scientific activity, Dilthey was also a biographer who explored the lives of famous personalities. His biography of the philosopher Hegel studies the life of a great German idealist and how it influenced his own intellectual creativity.

Wilhelm Dilthey studies the people surrounding young Hegel, the culture of his time, his letters, and his intellectual projects. Dilthey then makes assumptions about how all of these little details defined the books of the German idealist and how his intellectual endeavors influenced the history of the society.

All these details are known as microhistory, the stories of separate personalities and families, as opposed to macrohistory, the stories of big movements, states, wars, and conflicts. For obvious reasons, the empathetic understanding of history is more grounded in microhistory. We try to understand particular personalities through the documents or interviews with witnesses, etc.

In this way, the idea of an empathetic understanding proposes to analyze the separate episodes rather than starting from a bigger, systematic picture. Nevertheless, it does not mean that this method is unsystematic—Dilthey still draws global conclusions and describes the epoch in general. Macrohistory can still be understood better through specific, minor details.

Consequently, this book will start by picking over each particular episode of the history of both periods to draw analogies and provide analysis. The bigger picture and the general context will be discussed later and in the light of the previously investigated details.

The book is devoted mostly to politics, and the table of contents lists chapters devoted to the different aspects of the life of the society of two periods. While there is a lot for a historian to study in the military history as well as the society of the UPR, politics remains the central term and topic. Why is that so?

Politics and policy encompass these different aspects and allow us to draw conclusions about the historical period in general. It also resonates with the proclaimed aim of the research: most of the actual problems of today's Ukrainian society concern politics or are at least connected to it.

Military, diplomatic, and sociological aspects are important for an understanding of the political situation. It is hard, however, to imagine the description of these particular aspects in isolation from the central term.

An empathetic understanding of history presupposes the analysis not only of the particular events and social groups, but also of the particular personalities and their biographies in the context of and in connection to the epoch. How can this part of the work be presented?

The UPR period was rich in strong and interesting personalities. The events of the Revolution brought many new people who could earn their new place only through talent and brave action to a previously closed and guarded political world. Some of these newcomers were intellectuals. Others were military-affiliated or even representatives of the lower social class. There were, of course, total failures, but all in all there are plenty of individuals who left their legacy in the history of the nation.

For contemporary Ukraine, the problem is far more complicated. There are many new faces in Ukrainian politics since 2013, and they also came up via the “social elevator” of the Revolution of Dignity and following military conflict. We cannot, however, assess their personalities the same way we assess historical figures. Most of the contemporary “newcomers” are still alive and active. There is no “historical horizon” between us and them that will allow for objective judgment.

There are interesting and strong-willed people among them too, of course. Our personal political affiliations and opinions, however, may cloud our judgment and be adding significantly to the simple “absence of horizon.” What is more, the biographical analysis should employ a justified methodology.

Simple searching for similarities and differences is not enough. Empathetic understanding presupposes a big role for the particular personality in the historical process. Hegel’s rational philosophy of history thinks in global variables and social systems, whereas Dilthey concentrates on the particular events and personalities.

Nevertheless, there is room to compare the intellectual biographies in this theory. Details about the life of an important political figure, especially the texts they read and other figures with whom they communicated, may be first incorporated into the picture of the period and their course of actions. Environment

forms an agent, but after the formation is complete, the agent starts to change the environment.

In this way, empathetic understanding goes from the particular details to the epoch and back to particular details—working both with macrohistory and microhistory. This perfectly fits the scope of this work.

There was a lot of theory, and it should be illustrated with some examples. Let us assume that we are viewing the biography of an important diplomat X of the UPR period. We know that X worked in a particular sphere and influenced international relations in a particular way. We study the intellectual biography of X, including his education, network of contacts, and written documents. We make an assumption that the socialistic works that he studied at university defined his political affiliation and some of his main actions during the peak of his career.

These actions had consequences on the bigger picture. As X was an important figure, his actions profoundly influenced the international relations of the UPR. We have already established our theory about the initial role of socialist literature. We then proceed by placing the role of X in international relations into an even more general picture of the UPR's big politics.

X's actions were professional, but they were not aimed at the nationalistic ideology vector. Instead, his course of action was to reconnect with Soviet Russia even in times of a crisis in relations between the two countries. Maybe he was not a straightforward traitor but rather the passive supporter of some other ideology than nationalism.

We also should be historians and not the supporters of this or that ideology. It is true that in the contemporary situation, the author as a citizen of Ukraine is a supporter of this country and the pro-European vector of development, but this should not be an obstacle to objective assessment of historical events and the conflicting ideologies.

It is even more important for the UPR period as it is definitely pure history that should be assessed professionally. It is evident that pro-Soviet ideology and people like X played a negative role for the country's national culture and politics, including the con-

sequences that are still present in Ukrainian society now. There is, however, no place for emotions.

X's status as only a passive supporter and not a direct adversary is also important. Was he afraid of persecution? Did he maybe not understand all the consequences of his actions at that time? These are also important things to understand about this personality and important details for an analysis of his actions in the scope of the general picture.

The process is simplified for the sake of example. It is doubtful that reading socialist literature alone would justify the complete career and key decisions of a political figure. The analysis, however, was guided by an empathetic understanding—we have tried to understand the objective diplomatic decisions through the details of an intellectual biography that are purely subjective. This analysis tries to understand the course of events by putting the researcher in the place of one of the agents who guided that course of events, by feeling and thinking like this agent, to a certain extent. That is a methodology of empathetic understanding.

The next phase is making general assumptions about the course of events in international relations during the UPR period and comparing them to international relations in a chosen contemporary period. Let us assume that the pro-socialist position of X was precisely why X and some of his colleagues were reluctant to support the nation-centered program of actions. This did not result instantly in the failure of international policy, but it was one of the complex of reasons for the downfall of the UPR.

We then state that international relations and diplomacy in contemporary Ukraine are still among the most important factors of politics, and there are different factions among Ukrainian diplomats as well. Empathetic understanding should not be understood as straightforwardly primitive. The researcher should not try to find the contemporary socialist who sabotaged the diplomatic process.

Nevertheless, we should concentrate on the contradictions among the diplomatic specialists in the UPR period. What were the reasons and consequences? What alternative decision could have been made? The existence of similar contradictions in con-



temporary history is already established. Of course, there will be a different set of reasons and consequences for those of today. But not completely different.

Some of the key contradictions, like pro-Russian and pro-Soviet ideology, still exist. In the case of X, he was a sympathizer of Soviet Russia for ideological reasons (i.e., reading socialist literature). It is doubtful that the same socialism literature would play the same role today. Nevertheless, these ideologies are still here, and they still can gain supporters through other media. They are transformed, and this makes the project of explaining this transformation from its roots even more interesting. But it is not a primitive analogy between two different events.

First of all, these events are connected, and they should be assessed genetically. There is an initial starting phase, significant details during the UPR period, and the continuing development through the next decades with an emergence in new form for contemporary Ukrainian society. This is the same as with macrohistory and microhistory: two different periods on the timeline complete each other, providing “keys” for each other. This goes perfectly well with Dilthey's empathetic understanding of history.

We cannot just find the contemporary counterpart Y who is also into socialism with all the following consequences. Most likely, we would say that X was a representative of a social group with a certain background, and that background for many historical reasons is still present in today's world albeit in a form that is a little bit changed. What is more, there are some diplomatic figures in contemporary Ukraine who may share that background.

By analyzing that background within its historical evolution, we will make an interesting case for comparative historical studies. That background is part of the historical circumstances of the epoch, and we reach the goal of the research by shifting from one period to another.

Empathetic understanding that concerns particular individuals is more or less intuitive because we try to understand others the same way in our daily life. But what does an empathetic understanding of abstract entities and events look like? What does it mean to have a genuine “feeling” of the event?

There is definitely a subtle process of hermeneutical decoding for a historian involved in microhistory. Studying the archives and artifacts that belonged to particular personalities and families inevitably involves scholars psychologically with the personalities and their stories.

These involvements include the empathetic understanding of the events that are part of the personality's story. Let us assume the historian X is studying a certain family of important public figures who lived a century ago. This family fell victim to political persecutions in the 1920s and 1930s, and an understanding of the persecution system of the period as well as the particular persecutions is vital to understanding the story of that family and continuing the research.

How is that possible? There are no such persecutions today, or persecutions in general take completely different forms. The idea is that by empathetically studying particular personalities and their life stories, the scholar becomes engaged in the life of the time period and the atmosphere of the society, including such events as the aforementioned political persecutions.

The scholar starts to understand those events through the guidance of the particular personalities. And just as Wilhelm Dilthey assumes this scholar starts to find "keys" for the contemporary world in past events, so too do they start to see their own reality differently than a non-educated individual.

That is the main advantage of studying history according to Dilthey, and it is the same with most of the humanities. Humanities are mostly studying different texts and artifacts created by humans. The main aim of this study, although it is sometimes not understood by all the participants of the process, is to understand humanity and human society better. Such a view is typical of a continental philosopher engaged in hermeneutics.

Hegel and his philosophy of history take a completely different approach. His hierarchical system does not take particular personalities and events into consideration. What is important for Hegel are structures and complex, long periods of time. Even such personalities as Napoleon are just a medium for general historical

laws that are projected into reality. Not a person, but a nation. Not an individual, but a society. Not a state, but an empire. And so on.

Military events and battles are a completely separate sphere. Without a military education, it is possible to assess mostly the political side of each episode by centering on the media and the ideological consequences of the tragic events in both conflicts.

There are some central points in each period that are in a certain way “seductive” to compare. These “pairs” include the Battle of Kruty (1918) and the Ilovaysk Battle (2014), for example. Both were actual defeats of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and both were the topics of heated ideological debates.

The Battle of Kruty happened during the Bolshevik offensive on Kyiv. Hundreds of young Ukrainian patriots, most of whom were students with no military experience or education (and some were even gymnastics students) marched to the Kruty railway station to meet the Russian army. Partially because of the difference in numbers (the Bolsheviks had a few thousand battle-hardened soldiers at their command) and partially because of some serious misguidance from their officers (also a topic for heated ideological debates), almost all the Ukrainian participants in the battle were slaughtered.

Ukrainians who fought and died at that battle are considered national heroes, whereas the Bolshevik army troops are condemned as war criminals. The pro-Soviet position is that although they were young, they were still soldiers (i.e., combatants). They were misguided by their officers and political leaders, but the Red Army commanders had no other choice than to face them in combat.

Counter arguments from pro-Soviet debaters include that one of the reasons no Ukrainian reinforcement was sent to Kruty was that at the same time a massive rebellion was started at the “Arsenal” factory in Kyiv. The rebellion was led by pro-Bolshevik proletarians and suppressed by pro-Ukrainian military forces. The ideology behind this counterargument is that despite the tragedy of the Battle of Kruty, pro-Ukrainian debate participants do not admit the tragedy of the opposing side.

The Ilovaysk Battle happened in August of 2014 in the Donbass region. It was part of the Anti-Terrorist Operation of the Ukrainian special services, police, and army against pro-Russian separatists. Before August, Ukrainian armed forces had managed to achieve serious successes, like defeating separatists at Slovyansk, and High Command planned to finish off the insurgents in just a few months. There were, however, experts who called for more caution lest a further offensive by the Russian Army from its borders create a so-called boiler.

A boiler is military-slang for the strategic situation when an opposing force surrounds the group of its adversaries and cuts off both supplies and communications. The surrounded group is a helpless target for artillery and without supplies or reinforcements is either slaughtered or taken as POWs.

Everything happened just as those experts predicted. Large Russian military forces invaded the region and surrounded Ukrainian battalions thereby blocking them in Ilovaysk. Ukrainian debaters state that those were regiments of the professional Russian Army, superior to opposing forces both in numbers and equipment. Separatists claim that those forces were comprised only partially of Russians who later legalized themselves as volunteers for the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). This remains a topic for strong debate.

After several days of fierce combat, the Ukrainians decided to retreat. The negotiations were problematic for both sides and ended in tragedy for Ukrainian forces. Ukrainians asked for a safe humanitarian corridor. What happened next is difficult to establish precisely. Ukraine claims that the Russians deceived our side so as to commit what would later be called the Ilovaysk Massacre. When Ukrainian soldiers started to retreat, separatists opened fire, killing a few hundred and causing one of the highest casualty rates for the Ukrainian side for the whole campaign.

For their part, Russians claim that negotiations never ended in a decision. Some experts state that the corridor was opened for people only (i.e., with no weapons or vehicles), and some state that even that variant was not negotiated. Again, a very hot topic for debate.

As with all such debates, it is very hard to assess rationally. Too many extremely strong emotions are involved. And there are no “recipes.” This, however, is exactly why political science and history of ideologies exist and why empathetic understanding is probably the only effective methodology here.

Pro-Russian and pro-Soviet journalists and historians, on the one hand, claim that these are precedents that prove the superiority of the invaders’ planning, military command, and fighting spirit. Ukrainians, on the other hand, admit the mistakes in planning while emphasizing the heroism of ordinary soldiers and their sacrifice.

But are these two events even comparable? Is that comparative analysis justified? The general political context of the two battles differs greatly. And the particular military maneuvers are different not only due to battlefield differences, but also due to differences in historical periods and the military technologies involved.

What creates a “family resemblance” between two events is more ideological than purely military or political. There was a mistake in the planning of an operation. There were sacrifices made for that by simple soldiers. There is a great ideological significance to that event in Ukrainian society.

An investigation was launched concerning the tragedy of the Ilovaysk Battle. It never delivered any results. As for the Kruty Battle, due to the rapid development of further events, the only investigation that can be done now is by historians. The sacrifice of young lives that was made at that tragic event is sacred for Ukraine, and it makes the analysis even more complicated.

There are also other factors involved that make plain comparison of the events problematic. For example, in ATO/JFO, there was another event that is reminiscent of the Kruty Battle—the Debaltseve Battle. Then the Ukrainian forces also retreated and suffered casualties, and mistakes in planning were still present. Does that mean we should make the second analogy and compare three battles instead of two? Or should we concentrate on the global strategic situation instead? Or should we completely withdraw such comparison in principle?

So, what is the right approach when analyzing these and other military events of the two campaigns? The answer is just as for the case of diplomat X—analyzing the background rather than concentrating on the particular “family resemblance.” The particular timeline with the key points of each period should be presented, but the analysis should refer to the ideology and background more than to the particular details.

The term “family resemblance,” despite its somewhat ironic connotations, is quite a good term for the described situation. It comes from mathematics, where it is used to compare different mathematical structures, like separate algebraic formulas, groups, rings, and so on. Particular operations and nodes of the structure differ drastically, but when you view the structure in a more abstract way, you can see that the structures in general resemble each other. What is more, they sometimes descend from a common source and form a separate class, a “family.”

Does the “family resemblance” between both the military and political events in two wars mean that history is repeating itself? From a historian’s view, this problem concerns the aforementioned conception of the philosophy of history proposed by Aristotle. If there are precise event cycles in the politics of the country, then there is a possibility that there are event cycles in the military history of such a region as Eastern Europe. If this is the case, then the conflict between Ukraine and Russia makes up the next phase of the cycle because the lessons of the previous phase were not learned and the contemporary leaders will make the same mistakes that will cause more or less the same tragic consequences.

But what about not only progress in technology and sociopolitical organization, but also different geopolitical circumstances? Is the idea of cyclic development of history even rational? It was widely believed in Antiquity, but since the 19th century, the idea of progress in history prevails.

The circulated anecdote-like answer to this and similar questions is that history is more Vico’s “infinite regress” than a circle, thereby implying it repeats itself but progresses toward some

distant point on a linear scale as well. This is a sarcastic comment on the situation, but it bears some truth.

If there is a cyclic structure to history as an entity, it is more complex than a repeating circle of events and coexists with linear progressive development. The very idea of comparing the events at the center of the book is implying a certain cyclic structure, but it is not an Aristotelian variant or at least not only Aristotelian.

Returning to the “family resemblance” — it seems to be a far more fitting concept. Events of the two periods resemble each other but not completely. This fact is a reason to dig deeper and analyze the general background of the periods, which is a common approach for comparative studies.

In this way, it becomes even clearer that society and politics should be in the center of the view because they encompass the background of military and historical events. Dilthey sometimes refers to the concept of the “Zeitgeist,” or the Spirit of the Time, which is a general pattern in the social and economic organization of the period that is also characterizing it in a subtle, existential way. Every epoch has a subtle aesthetic feeling for the one living in it.

There are definitely subtle and complex feelings best described by poetry and/or art of what it is to live through this particular day as an individual. How is this different from the Spirit of Time then? Is this Spirit just a sum of the poetic “feelings of time?”

Existential philosophy tends to explore that aspect of human life, centering also on the negative feelings connected to making decisions, etc. This is a type of philosophy genetically connected to hermeneutics, but it is very far from the philosophy of history. Spirit of Time is about an epoch, a big time period, and the social structures that form identity.

There is no room for the existential analysis of the period in the works devoted to comparative studies in history/politics. The Spirit of Time for the individual in the first sense presupposes subtle and deep feelings connected to philosophical aesthetics. As such, it is a natural companion to hermeneutics and empathy un-

derstood in a narrow sense. There is a second sense, however, which also was outlined by Dilthey.

Zeitgeist of the epoch is a vital part of the background and is important for the comparative study of the two time periods. The UPR is different from contemporary Ukraine because of not only the difference in technology and political circumstances, but also the difference in Spirit. Why that is so is a question for hermeneutics, but all in all, it is an established fact. The Spirit of Time in the second sense also presupposes certain empirical verification.

When we theorize about different epochs, we may say that this thing is hard to imagine happening in this epoch, whereas it was common in the second and vice versa. While it bears some spiritual component, most such instances arise for purely empirical reasons—the aforementioned technological and sociopolitical progress.

It was impossible for the UPR to hold against so many enemies in late 1919 and 1920, and this situation was caused by the geopolitics after the First World War. The geopolitical situation from 2013 to 2022 was completely different, so there is still a chance that it will worsen (from the Ukrainian point of view). This situation is part of the empirical data about the epochs, and it is empirically verified. Thus, Dilthey's second sense of the Zeitgeist is quite a good candidate for research here.

The geopolitical state of affairs in both of the time periods is probably the most complex topic that will be in the scope of this work. Intrinsically connected to the internal politics of the UPR and contemporary Ukraine, geopolitics requires deep knowledge of the history of the region and analytical skills to assess the situation of the planet and its connection to Eastern Europe.

Just to talk about the UPR period, you need to take the First World War into consideration, which involves the diplomatic and military history of Europe in the 19th century, and both Revolutions in Russia, which involves both the economic and social history of the Russian Empire in that period. You also need to know how to connect them to the local problems in the UPR and its influence on its neighbors. And it is not only about White Guard



and Soviet Russia—Poland, Antanta, and German military forces and their interests should be taken into account as well.

As for contemporary Ukraine, the story of the late Soviet Union and post-Soviet period in Eastern Europe is extremely important. You cannot understand Vladimir Putin's ambitions without an analysis of the shift from the Soviet Union to contemporary Russia and its social, economic, and political results.

Were the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbass good decisions even from the Russian pro-imperial point of view? Does it mean that the next phase of war will be successful for Russia or that Putin will be stopped? What are the lessons for Ukraine in this situation? How is the whole situation connected to its historical roots in the UPR period?

In this way, the research starts to concern comparative political science much more than just pure history. The project of the book assumes its main aim is not only a historical survey or philosophy of history practical drill, but also political science and contemporary policy-making analytics.

The last, but not least, aspect that should be considered is the society of both periods. As in the case of *Zeitgeist*, it is hard to provide an analysis of this aspect and stay neutral without dwelling in subjectivity. What was society during the UPR period like? We can only use empathy to understand the documents and artifacts of the epoch.

There are also some quantitative sociological parameters that should be compared (with empathy serving still as a guiding idea). Economically, contemporary Ukraine differs from the UPR greatly. Even if we do not take technological development into consideration, the proletarians in modern times are in completely different situations. The same applies for small farmers, etc. Yet there are still unsolved, old problems like poverty and quality of education.

War influences the state in both periods greatly—it consumes resources; creates additional, virulent corruption; and brings all sorts of internal conflicts inside the social structure. Nevertheless, as was outlined previously, the military conflicts of the UPR and contemporary Ukraine also differ greatly such that the quantita-

tive sociological parameters should be analyzed accordingly and general consequences of the policy drawn.

Dilthey's hermeneutical method claims that it is enough. There is actually no other logical way to study the epoch than through the written documents. Critics might say that even the best scholar may be subjective here, but it seems that this is just the way historical research is at its core.

As for contemporary Ukraine—we are the witnesses of this epoch. Yet we are still subjective. Is the objective “feeling” of the epoch just some of those “subjective feelings?” Again, this is a question that mostly concerns hermeneutics as a subdiscipline more than philosophy of history. There is a particular representation of the individual's thoughts about an epoch, and given that the individual is rational, it is enough for historical analysis. This is the way the humanities, in general, work.

The author hopes that the reader will enjoy this essay-like historical/political book based on the outlined methodology.