



Myroslav Shkandrij

*Revolutionary Ukraine, 1917–
2017: History's Flashpoints
and Today's Memory Wars*

New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2020.

216 pp.

ISBN 9780367333768

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The book *Revolutionary Ukraine, 1917–2017: History's Flashpoints and Today's Memory Wars* by Myroslav Shkandrij represents the author's vision on such pages of the history of Ukraine as the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, the Stalinist period of 1928–1934, the nationalist struggle before, during, and after World War II, and finally, Euromaidan and War in the Donbas, 2013–2017. Eloquently calling these periods “history's flashpoints,” Shkandrij, a professor of Slavic Studies at the University of Manitoba, considers them as four revolutions that had crucial influence on Ukrainian history in the past hundred years.

The research results of all mentioned periods were gathered in one monograph on the basis of its common features as highlighted by the author: “a conflict with Moscow and its proxy forces in Ukraine,” “dramatic social and political transformations” as a consequence, and “memory wars” in the current discussions of these episodes (p. 1). Accordingly, the book's structure represents Shkandrij's idea about four revolutions and consists of four main sections: “Revolution, 1917–21”; “Stalin's ‘Second Revolution,’ 1928–34”; “Nationalist Revolution, 1938–45”; “Euromaidan and War, 2013–17.” Every section contains a collection of the author's essays (from one to four) dedicated to a broad range of issues pertaining to the review period.

In each essay the author attempts to reveal a research problem from the position of so-called “insiders” — Bolshevik historians, victims of Stalin's purges, Galician newspapers reporters, Nationalists, Euromaidan participants. It is also worth noting that five out of the eleven essays in the book are modified articles by Myroslav Shkandrij, the first one — jointly written with Olga Bertelsen, previously published in international journals and collections, including *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal*.

A few aspects of the book may be considered questionable. The first is the periodization used by the author. In fact, a certain discrepancy between declared years

in the topic of the section and the periods contained in the essays can be traced in all parts of the book. The essay “Repressed Memory: Bolshevik Accounts of the Ukrainian Revolution” covers the period to end of the 1920s and partially even to the second half of the 1930s (pp. 15–22); the essay “Call to Violence: Red Terror of 1918–22 and Literary Rhetoric of 1932–34” deals in a significant way with the regime that had acted ten years before Stalin’s rule (pp. 77–81); the essay “The Ukrainian Underground of the 1940s in Today’s Memory War” is more about contemporary discussions on the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) than about their revolutionary activities in the 1940s (pp. 112–24); the essay “The Archival Revolution and Contested Memory: Changing Views of Stalin’s Rule in the Light of New Evidence” relates to the period of 1990s (pp. 135–43).

The second aspect that should be mentioned in this context is the absence of some unifying comments in the book. Every essay is complete with its own topic, main idea, structure, and references. Consequently, it is hard to understand without the author’s comments why, for example, the section announced as “Nationalist revolution, 1938–45” includes essays about the image of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi in Nationalist literature, the war for Carpatho-Ukraine, and contemporary memory wars on the OUN and UPA (pp. 85–131).

Nevertheless, in general, the content of the book is the result of perceptive and thorough interdisciplinary research. Each essay presents a detailed analysis of a certain issue that can be informative for many experts. Historians will find non-trivial the essay about Bolshevik historians (Moisei Ravich-Cherkasskii, Moisei Rafes, Nikolai (Mykola) Popov), their works and destinies (“Repressed Memory...”) (pp. 9–25). For literary scholars it will be interesting to have access to the research on Pavlo Tychyna’s and Leonid Pervomaiskyi’s poetry of the 1930s and the roots of its violent rhetoric (“Call to Violence...”) (pp. 68–83), as well as to the analysis of Khmelnytskyi phenomena in the works of Dmytro Donstov, Yurii Lypa, and other Ukrainian Nationalist authors (“The Cult of Strength...”) (pp. 68–83). Art critics may review Euromaidan and Postmaidan art in the context of memory from the perspective of the Canadian scholar (“The Landscape of Contemporary Memory”) (pp. 174–96). And finally, memory studies and historical policy researchers will find valuable information for their specialization in almost all essays of the book.

In summing up the review, it must be noted that Myroslav Shkandrij’s book *Revolutionary Ukraine, 1917–2017* is a collection of the author’s excellent essays on various issues of Ukrainian society development, starting with 1917. This research will be useful for a wide range of humanities specialists.