

## РЕЦЕНЗІЇ / REVIEWS

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**A NEW STAGE OF HISTORIOGRAPHIC UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION PHENOMENON**  
(the peer-review on the monograph: **Oleksandr Reyent, Volodymyr Velykochy.**  
**The Ukrainian Revolution: Modern National Historiographical Discourse.**  
**Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk: Publishing House “Misto NV”, 2024. 396 p.)**

**НОВИЙ ЕТАП ІСТОРИОГРАФІЧНОГО ОСМИСЛЕННЯ  
ФЕНОМЕНА УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ**  
(рецензія на книгу: **Олександр Реснт, Володимир Великочий.**  
**Українська революція: сучасний вітчизняний історіографічний дискурс**  
**Київ, Івано-Франківськ : Вид-во “Місто НВ”, 2024. 396 с.)**

Reasonably each new monograph in the genre of analytical historiography always attracts more attention of experts than a monograph on a specific historical topic. Historiographic monograph marks the entry of historical science, its reflective component, into a new stage. It is the mass of historical literature, not individual publications (no matter how valuable and resonant they may be), that form the basis for the historiographical understanding of our ideas about the Ukrainian past. In this sense, the monograph by O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy “Ukrainian Revolution: Modern Domestic Historiographical Discourse” is precisely a marker of the entry of Ukrainian historical science into a new, more qualitative stage of theoretical, methodological and historiographic understanding of the phenomenon of the Ukrainian Revolution at the beginning of the 20th century. There is no doubt that the Ukrainian Revolution, among other events in national history, has been at the epicenter of scientific discussions for over 100 years, generating, according to the authors of the

monographs, such a mass of historical literature that only the era of Bohdan Khmelnytsky can be compared with in national history (p. 3), but also sharp political debates both within the country and in international (interstate) relations. The topic of the Ukrainian Revolution is a classic example of history instrumentalization in favour of opportunistic political views.

In the author's preface to the monograph there is clearly outlined the goal of this study: to offer, first of all, to scientific co-authorship, as well as to the general public, a compendium of knowledge about the Ukrainian Revolution, the main approaches to its coverage in national historiography. Therefore, the main emphasis is focused on, figuratively speaking, the "nationalization of the revolution". The Ukrainian revolution is not the "Great October Socialist Revolution in Ukraine", not a consequence of the Russian revolution, but a phenomenon of national history and one of the landmark events of European and world history.

There should be mentioned provisions of the monograph by O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy which differ from the more or less determined points of view on the events of the Ukrainian Revolution, and also sometimes contradict stereotypical receptions of the revolutionary era phenomena. Firstly, the authors suggest considering the Ukrainian Revolution in a broader chronological framework, namely 1914 – 1923, rather than 1917 – 1921, which is common among the majority of researchers. Secondly, the Ukrainian Revolution is interpreted as an important component of the "Great Eastern European Revolution", including Great/World War I of 1914 – 1918. Thirdly, the authors set out to look at the Ukrainian Revolution as a phenomenon of a conciliar nature, which was supposed to lead to the revival of Ukrainian statehood within ethnic borders, granting the entire Ukrainian people the status of a sovereign Ukrainian nation, a full-fledged subject of international politics. Thus, the authors of the monograph gave rise to a new concept in the historiography of the Ukrainian Revolution – the national conciliar one. This concept also explains the new chronotope of the Ukrainian Revolution – 1914 – 1923, substantiated by the authors. At the same time, World War I is an organic component of this phenomenon. Having in their scientific output numerous studies on the history of the Great War, O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy convincingly prove that the war catalyzed the national-state efforts of the Ukrainians, contributed to their self-knowledge and transformation into a nation. The Treaty of Riga (1921) cannot complete the chronological framework of the Revolution, because the struggle of Ukrainians for the right to be masters of their land continued for at least next two years – 1922 and 1923, which was manifested in social, economic, military, and foreign policy spheres. The authors have already announced the new version of the chronological framework of the Ukrainian Revolution (1914 – 1923) earlier, before the publication of this monograph, at scientific forums organized by the Institute of Ukrainian History and the UINP, and on the pages of the "Ukrainian Historical Journal", but there is neither clear denial, nor a general approval of such a chronotope. The relevant specialized department of the Institute of History of Ukraine considers the chronological framework – 1917 – 1921. It is obvious that discussions on these issues are still ahead at forums. And it is the authors of the peer-reviewed monograph who should organize and moderate such forums.

The historiographical understanding of the phenomenon of the Ukrainian Revolution of the early 20th century is of decisive importance to the entire process of modern Ukrainian historiography formation. The authors of the monograph are well aware of it. According to O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy, the Ukrainian Revolution is a "core phenomenon in national history", "a mental component of a new paradigm of the national history formation and representation". And, therefore, the formation and implementation of a new or updated

concept of the Ukrainian Revolution should become an important component of the national historical narrative. Researchers of the history of the Ukrainian Revolution, the results of whose work over thirty years were presented by the authors of the monograph (“compendium”), have achieved significant success in overcoming many false postulates of the initial version on the Revolution concept, which developed at the beginning of the 21st century. The most difficult thing to overcome was the overt dependence of the Ukrainian Revolution on the Russian one, the conscious following of the Russian “fairway” instead of considering it as a component of revolutionary processes of a pan-European nature, which prevailed in historiography. Similarly, under the influence of the fact that before the Great War of 1914 – 1918, Ukrainian lands belonged to the territories of two empires – the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, historians viewed the Ukrainian Revolution as two different processes that arose at different times, had different durations, intersected at a certain stage, united for a short time, but later diverged again. Thus, separate concepts and, accordingly, separate definitions appeared – “The Ukrainian Revolution of 1917 – 1921” and “The November National Democratic Revolution in Western Ukrainian lands of 1918”. Enormous intellectual efforts were expended by the authors of the monograph to formulate in historiography the idea of, in fact, the unity of these processes. It was O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy who became the authors of the new concept of the Ukrainian Revolution – national conciliar.

With great effort, the so-called “Kyiv-centrism” was overcome in the historiography of the Ukrainian Revolution, when all the defining events of the revolutionary era were tied to the capital, while ignoring the deeper and more important processes of the formation of the Ukrainian nation as a political one, which took place at an accelerated pace before the Great War in the Ukrainian “Piedmont” – Galicia. It should be noted that the authors of the monograph – O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy – contributed not only to the scientific understanding of the national conciliar phenomenon of the Ukrainian Revolution, but also directly participated in the initiation and implementation of the scientific, research, and educational project “Conciliar Ukraine (Spiritual Axis of Ukraine)”. During the period of 2004 – 2005, a series of conferences, round tables, and seminars were held, and four scientific collections “Ukrayina Soborna” (Conciliar Ukraine) were published. The theoretical methodological, institutional, and didactic aspects of this project marked a significant shift in understanding the phenomenon of Ukrainian Sobornism and a new view of the Ukrainian Revolution through the prism of Sobornization. Discussions on the very concept of “conciliarity” rose to a higher level. It should be taken into account that the concept of “conciliarity” appeared in documents of the revolutionary era rarely, and the understanding of conciliarity of the Ukrainian nation and conciliarity of the Ukrainian statehood in the ideas of contemporary figures did not often coincide. Historiography was captive to an ambiguous interpretation of sobornosty – in a narrow sense, limited by the Act of Union of January 22, 1919, and in a broad sense – as a continuity of processes of state-political, territorial, spiritual, and cultural unification. Historians have argued two levels of understanding of conciliarity – as the unity of all Ukrainians regardless of their place of residence and as the state-national unity of all who live on the Ukrainian ethnic territory. Ukrainian conciliarity involves achieving both ethno-territorial unity within the framework of one national state and the spiritual unity of its entire population, regardless of ethnicity, religion, social status, etc. Owing to the studies by O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy, as well as their fellow historians specializing in the study of the Ukrainian Revolution, whose

works collectively have become a body of historical literature that signifies the overall rise of the historiography of the revolutionary era to a new level. The once myth of “conciliarity”, which dominated political discourse, acquired a scholarly status in history, political science, Ukrainian studies, and other fields of the humanities. But the authors warn that in reality the processes of soborization were not so linear and unambiguous, and the attempt mechanically and immediately unite parts of the nation oriented towards different political traditions could not but be accompanied by difficulties and even failures. It is known that, for example, at the initial stage of the Ukrainian Revolution, both “under Russian rule” (Naddniprianska) and “under Austrian rule” (Galicia) parts of the Ukrainian people sought unification, but as soon as it was formalized by relevant legal acts (universals), immediately centripetal tendencies began to dominate, which led to the rupture of national state-building camp and the loss to more powerful enemies – Bolshevik Russia and Poland.

It is natural that O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy devoted a significant part of their monographic study to the historiographical understanding of the reasons for the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution of the early 20th century. They share the consolidated opinion of Ukrainian historians that the defeat of Ukraine’s liberation struggle was caused by the internal weakness of the national movement, the insufficient degree of its maturity and consolidation at the time and in the process of decisive actions, and the multi-vector nature of its political forces. It is quite clear to modern historians that, despite the difference in the maturity of the Ukrainian movement in eastern and western Ukraine, the common weak point of national politicians was the too-long parliamentary and federalist illusions of the political elite (both in relation to Russia and Austria), the underestimation of the neglect of force factors, primarily the army and military personnel, in building a national state. There was a lack of consolidating efforts by the political leadership to unite the entire population around the restoration of the Ukrainian state. Political leaders of the first plan met the era of liberation struggles with varying degrees of compliance with the requirements of the moment. S. Petliura, P. Skoropadsky, V. Vynnychenko, M. Hrushevsky, M. Mikhnovsky – the politicians who had noticeably controversial views, were at odds with each other and, a priori, could not act as a consolidated unifying factor of the Revolution. Having objectively analyzed the reasons for the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution in a scientific (historiographic) sense, the authors led the scientific community and, importantly, Ukrainian society to possible praxeological answers to the sacramental question: why, for example, Finland, Poland, etc. were able to gain (restore) independence at the beginning of the 20th century, while Ukraine was not.

The architectonics of the monograph by O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochy is dictated by the ideological content of the study. This study consists of previously published scientific research and specific historical and historiographical articles, and conference materials. That is, the texts have already been approved in advance in both scientific and educational circles. Compositionally, the monograph consists of four sections: “Theoretical and Historiographical Foundation of the National Concept”; “The Great War and the Ukrainian Revolution”; “Doomed to Be” (the metaphorical title of this section falls out of the general framework of definitions, but is motivated by the author’s style of presenting the main subjects of the revolutionary era – state formations, personalities, political structures, military formations); “National Unity: from Theoretical Aspirations to the Consequences of Practical Implementation”. Re-publication of previously published studies in a different composition and with a new ideological concept is a possible option for the creative workshop of the historians. Some may criticize this approach, there were even critics who came up

with a vague definition of “self-plagiarism” (!). Back in 2005, one of the authors of this monograph, O. P. Reyent, published a collection of his own studies with a provocative (in a positive sense) title for the professional environment, “Rereading the Written”. Not everyone then agreed with the author’s bold reputational and scientific position – once again to turn to his own studies and, over time, draw conclusions about their scientific value. Only those historians who write for the future, who are not biased by the political situation and are not captive to “media history or fashion” for a “blogger flavour” can do this. Authorial revision of previously published studies is a methodological necessity. This is how the scientific need to rewrite history based on a new methodology and involving new sources is realized, which has nothing to do with the politically opportunistic “rewriting of history” within the framework of one political regime.

The combination of previously published studies in one monograph somewhat neutralized the author’s positive idea: there are repetitions of the same plots, the presentation of the material has acquired a discrete character, which in some moments led to the violation of a chronological sequence. Historiographic generalizations and conclusions are scattered in the text of the monograph. One can agree with the authors of the monograph that the concept they currently suggest “represents a rather schematic initial version”. In the monograph O. P. Reyent and V. S. Velykochoy have formed “main areas of research” that will allow it to be filled with a broader factual and historiographical material, subject to further study. It is easier to reproach the authors of the peer-reviewed monograph for what they did not do than to analyze the written texts. The list of hypothetical additions to the creation of the narrative can be endless. In our case, the main suggestion to the authors is the need for additional research into foreign historiography. The domestic historiographical discourse of the Ukrainian Revolution is represented fully and structured well. However, there is a critical lack of analysis of the historiography, for example, of Poland, Austria, Hungary, Germany, and other European actors during the period of the liberation struggles of the early 20th century. The position of modern foreign historians regarding the process of Ukrainian history emerging from the shadow of the so-called “Great Russian” history is of significant cognitive interest and practical significance. In order to separate modern Ukrainian historiography from the Russian one completely and definitively, it is also worth, even in times of war, to study Russian historiography in depth and in detail. It would also be very useful from a scientific point of view to present the achievements in the field of historiography of the Ukrainian Revolution in the newly created Encyclopedia of the History of the Revolution by the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Professor V. F. Verstiuk).

Unfortunately, we cannot ignore another problem that is a chronic disease among the members of the National Academy of Sciences. Scholars, even being members of the Academy, are forced to find funds for their studies themselves. The Academy’s participation has been reduced to one thing – to be in the “cap” on the title page of the monograph. The basics and principles of editology – the science that teaches how to transmit scientific information to society – are further discredited by the notorious phrase in the source data: “the text is published according to the author”. Authors are forced to perform functions that are not typical of them: searching for investments, typing and proofreading texts, artistic design, etc. As it has not been before, there is no infrastructure of historical science in Ukraine today. Without it, history will not be able to fulfill the consolidating and self-identifying mission necessary in wartime fully.

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