

Empires and Nations of Eastern and Central Europe

by Iryna Vushko

Once upon a time there was the place called Eastern Europe. No one could ever tell precisely where Eastern Europe was, or what it was. For centuries, Eastern Europe served as a symbol of economic and political backwardness when compared to the west, but above all it was a political concept imposed upon a piece of geography without any clear-cut boundaries. The concept of Eastern Europe was invented in the eighteenth century, as Larry Wolff has explained in his groundbreaking *Inventing Eastern Europe*.¹ In the eighteenth century, European travelers visiting regions east of Prussia noted remarkable differences between the customary political order and civilization patterns west of Poland and a lack thereof towards its east. Ever since, Eastern Europe has become a powerful intellectual concept and an instrument of political manipulations.

The concept of Eastern Europe took shape during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the history of Europe, the nineteenth century was the age of empire and the twentieth century became the age of extremes, or extreme violence, as historian Erik Hobsbawm put it. Both nationalism and violence were pan-European phenomena, but Eastern Europe stood out. In the late nineteenth century, nationalism in Eastern Europe, as historian Brian Porter put it, “began to hate.”² In the twentieth century, things turned extremely violent, and violence in the East was often worse than it was in the West.³ The Cold War reinforced divisions between Eastern and Western Europe, two distinct regions separated by the Iron Curtain after 1946.

The concept of Eastern Europe has been long debated by intellectuals, mainly those from Europe’s East rather than its West. Political divides stimulated intellectual debates, and vice-versa. The fall of communism in 1989 caused yet another rearrangement of borders and political concepts. As a number of communist states became part of the European Union, the very concept of Eastern Europe became ever

¹ See Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: the Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994)

² See Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford University Press, 2000)

³ See Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010)

more problematic. The question of what Eastern Europe is and where it lies is as urgent and as contested nowadays as it has ever been in the past.

Since the eighteenth century, intellectuals in both the East and the West have justified civilizational differences between Eastern and Western Europe by the different historical trajectories that the two regions allegedly followed for centuries. In the twentieth century, a cohort of historians questioned the idea of two distinct historical paths. Scholarly debates on the historical legacy of Eastern and Western Europe sometimes reinforced the existing concepts and stereotypes, but above all these debates reveal a major trend in historical scholarship of Europe that has persisted to the present day. The historiography of Eastern Europe forms a separate field of scholarship on the margin of broader European scholarship. Across the new political divides, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Russians, and the Czechs, to name just a few, still share a specific approach to their histories, which is political history that is most often driven by a particular national telos.

It is not my aim to explain differences between Eastern and Western Europe that have been long discussed in detail. Rather, this is an attempt to address a major methodological problem in the historiography of Europe that still very much operates within the East-West divides. Few scholars of Europe in general have taken the history of Eastern Europe seriously, on par with the history of Western Europe; even fewer have made efforts to comprehend a history of Europe as a whole and thus integrate Eastern European histories within broader European narratives.⁴ Historians of Eastern Europe, with some notable exceptions, operate within a narrow framework of national histories. This essay is an attempt to place the historiography of Eastern (of East-Central) Europe in the historical and political context of modern Europe in an effort to address two major questions: If the historical scholarship of Eastern Europe is somewhat deficient (when compared to the historiography of Western Europe), than who is to be blame and what is to be done?

⁴ Tony Judt's *Post War* is an excellent example, which deserves emulation. See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005)

Early in the twentieth century a number of Eastern European intellectuals, among them Tomasz Masaryk, cited their countries' imperial legacies as a major political factor that shaped the fate of the regions through the twentieth century. Because of century-long imperial subjugation, the argument goes, nations of East-Central Europe lacked the benefit of political freedom of Western European nations. Modern empires suffered an irreversible blow in 1918, when the three continental empires – the Russian, the Austrian and the German – came to an end with the conclusion of World War I. The end of continental empires opened a new age in the history of modern Europe: the age of nation states, or what Eric Hobsbawm described as “the age of violence.” The boundaries between the age of empire and the age of nations are hardly clear-cut, though. Modern nationalism started showing its force well before the fall of the empires, and the nineteenth century witnessed the gradual acceleration of national tensions all over Europe, but most notably in Europe's German-speaking center or its Slavic-speaking east.

In the 1970s, the Czech scholar Miroslav Hroch addressed the particularity of Eastern European nations in his scheme of three-stage progressive developments: from the cultural awareness of national distinctiveness among the elites; to the emergence of a national political program; to mass mobilization around the national cause. Antony Smith and Ernest Gellner have since secured their prominent ranks among theoreticians of nationalism. Both addressed nationalism as a world-wide phenomenon, but in their research both provided niches that later allowed scholars to infer particularities of the East-European path towards nation. Thus, if full-fledged nationalism can only emerge in modern industrial society – as Gellner claimed – then Eastern Europe and its nations must be different, if only because in their modernization they almost always followed western models and almost always lagged behind their western counterparts.⁵

In the 1990s, the American sociologist Roger Brubaker reiterated differences between Eastern and Western European nationalisms, but he introduced another criterion

⁵ See Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: a comparative analysis of the social compositions of patriotic groups among the smaller European nations*, transl. Ben Fowkes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983)

of distinction.⁶ He set the Western European model of civil nationalism against the Eastern European model of ethnic nationalism. Western European nations, Brubaker explained, have adopted a model of civil or political nationalism that selected its members on the basis of political representation and loyalty. Eastern European nations, in Brubaker's scheme, followed an entirely different path by adopting an exclusive model of the nation that selected its members on the basis of ethnicity and language. The political nation leaves much space for negotiation and toleration, while the ethnic nation almost necessarily leads to conflict and violence. Brubaker not only revealed a major trend in the historical scholarship that preceded him; he also intuitively projected some important developments in the historiography of Eastern or East-Central Europe that gained momentum during the 1990s and even more so after 2000. Violence was always a key theme in the research on Eastern Europe, but it was never as overwhelmingly dominant as it became in the twenty-first century.

Each of the above-mentioned paradigms has been revisited by historians. Scholars have long explained the many deficiencies of Hroch's scheme, but the scheme itself has remained a powerful tool of historical analysis. Brubaker's distinctions between West-European civic nations and East-European ethnic nations have received even more attention from historians, as books and collections of articles have since poured out with the single aim of refuting Brubaker's scheme. Prolific criticism, however, often serves as the best testimony to the importance of intellectual models.

The national paradigm has long secured its dominance of Eastern European historiography. If West-Europeans and historians of Western Europe think about the nation as part of a historical process, East-Europeans and historians of Eastern Europe often regard the nation and history as two aspects of the same process. Examples of such an approach are legion. The vast majority of historical scholarship in contemporary Ukraine, with some notable exceptions, can be defined as a history of the nation, meaning the history of the Ukrainian nation alone. A large part of Polish historical scholarship falls into the same category, as Polish historians, with some notable exceptions, focus their efforts on Polish national history alone. The exclusive focus on the nation lends the

⁶ See Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

historiography of Eastern Europe a degree of uniformity not found in other fields of historical inquiry. The new trends in historical research on the Western Europe have barely impacted the historiography of Eastern Europe. If the nation is an imagined community, as Benedict Anderson claimed, then the nation seems to be all that scholars of Eastern Europe care to imagine.

The preponderance of nation-based histories of Eastern Europe can be partly attributed to the legacy of the past. The suppression of national subjects in the countries of the Soviet bloc backfired after the fall of communist regimes, with an explosion of interest in subjects long forbidden by the previous regime. What followed was an almost immediate substitute of the Marxist historical discourse with highly charged national narratives. When the choice of subjects changed almost entirely, the wording of these new national histories sometimes resembled earlier works from the communist period, to the tiniest of details. The fall of communism opened new unprecedented possibilities, but it also created new problems.

The basic training and professional qualifications of historians have remained an issue of concern to the present day. Humanitarian education was not particularly favored in the Soviet Union; technical specialties remained the core. Any expression of cosmopolitanism was particularly disfavored, and language training for historians remained poor. Years after the fall of communism, the professional preparation of historians has remained an unresolved issue. Language skills – or often, the lack thereof – is a serious methodological problem that inevitably generates a host of subsequent complications. It often results in the selective reading of sources in regions that almost always functioned with a great variety of languages. Access to archives and documents other than their native ones is another important issue. Few historians from Eastern (or East) Central Europe have a chance to engage in historiographical debates on regions and countries that are not their own. Native historians, as a result, closely engage with their native histories – whether Polish, Ukrainian, Russian or Belarusian.

Subjects that cross regional and national lines have become more common in recent years. Histories of the region that seek to defy histories of the nation started gaining ground in Polish and Russian historiographies as well. But the national paradigm proved to be particularly hard to eradicate in the most contested fields. The scholarship

of Austrian Galicia is one example of how national paradigms produced extremely diverse, sometimes self-exclusive views of the same problems. Galicia occupies a central place in both Polish and Ukrainian historiographies, regarded as a Polish Piedmont by Polish scholars and as a Ukrainian Piedmont by their Ukrainian colleagues. The vast majority of Ukrainian scholarship of Galicia focuses on various aspects of *Ukrainian* Galicia and presenting the extremely heterogeneous region in the uniquely national light. Polish scholarship of Galicia is not as uniform, but works that address Galicia as a whole and that stress Galicia's heterogeneity are rare. Ukrainian historians, writing about a Ukrainian Galicia, face the challenges of seriously misinterpreting the Polish, Austrian and Jewish factors in the history of Galicia and their impact upon the status of Galician Ruthenians. Historians of Galician Jews, at the same time, by focusing on the Jewish side of the story alone, fail to comprehend the complexity of Austrian policies and Polish and Ruthenian motives.

Two long-standing controversies illustrate well the danger of exclusively national interpretations. One example is the Polish-Ukrainian controversy over the events in Volhynia during 1943 and 1944. Without necessarily negating reciprocal violence between the Poles and the Ukrainians in Volhynia, Polish and Ukrainian historians engaged in a heated debate of who started it and who suffered most. Historical debates transformed into political debates that reiterated old stereotypes and produced new ones. When questions of national crimes and national responsibility were at stake, the historical context of the Volhynia events became marginalized. The Volhynia debates raised broader issues of Polish-Ukrainian relationships in historical perspective. For Ukrainians, admitting responsibility for widespread killings meant overcoming the complex of victimhood that dominated much of Ukrainian historical memory and scholarship.

In Poland, the Volhynia debates were overshadowed by the even more sensitive issue of Polish-Jewish relationships and Polish involvement in the Holocaust. Western European countries, mainly Germany, were forced to face the dilemmas of their involvement in the most gruesome stories of the twentieth century right after the conclusion of WWII. The process of coming to terms with the past was much delayed in the countries of the former communist bloc, and it only began in earnest after 1989. This

forty-year gap is essential for our understanding of how the extremely sensitive and controversial issues are being addressed – or oftentimes ignored – in Europe’s east. Poland, which before the war had one of the largest Jewish populations in the world, came closer to the Jewish issue than any of its East-European satellites. If the image of the Ukrainian liberation army killing Polish civilians does not easily fit into the Ukrainian national imagination, the image of Polish civilians turning their backs (literally or virtually) against their Jewish neighbors does not make for a nice image in the Polish national imagination. Both images were contested by Ukrainian and Polish historians, by historical arguments or by pure propaganda. This is not to imply the possibility of objectively true or objectively false history. Historical scholarship is almost inevitably marked by a personal bias. But in Eastern Europe personal biases often imply national biases, and national biases in Eastern Europe and East-European historiography sometimes reach their extremes when compared to other parts of Europe.

Since the 1990s, a number of Ukrainian historians have attempted to place the history of Ukraine into a broader European context. Natalia Yakovenko’s work on the Ruthenian nobility during the early modern period effectively deconstructs the national paradigm by demonstrating the fluidity of identities and allegiances of the most prominent members of the Ruthenian elites. Yakovenko’s work is interesting precisely because it reveals important parallels between Ruthenia and the rest of Europe and exposes the similarities – rather than differences – in political culture and social hierarchies in Europe’s East and its West.⁷ Yaroslav Hrytsak has long explored the European context in Ukrainian history, placing Ukrainian territories, Ukrainian personalities, and their histories within the broader context of European history in the modern period.⁸ Both Yakovenko and Hrytsak, however, present an exception that only confirms that rule, which is the history of Ukraine as equivalent to Ukrainian national history.

If Ukrainian, Russian, Polish historians fell victim to the national paradigm, their colleagues in the West were not entirely immune either. Both Anglo-Saxon (American and British) and German historiographies of Eastern Europe expose as strong a national

⁷ See Natalia Yakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit. Doslidzhennia z istorii uiavlen' ta idei v Ukraini XVI-XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002)

⁸ Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Prorok u svoii vitchyzni: Franko ta yoho spil'nota, 1856-1886* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006)

bias as do the local historiographies produced in Eastern European regions. For years, diaspora historians have provided a valuable bridge between local historians in Eastern Europe and their colleagues in the West. After the fall of communism, diaspora historians came to exercise an ever-greater impact upon the local historiographies in their respective motherlands. But the reciprocal influences between scholars in the West, diaspora historians in the West and native historians in Eastern Europe have always been rather ambivalent.

Jan Gross does not easily fit into the diaspora category. An émigré from Poland after 1968, he made a career in the USA. By the 1990s, he established his reputation as a scholar of totalitarianism with the focus on Poland. By the early 2000s, he provoked one of the most heated controversies in Polish historiography to date. His book *Neighbors*, a detailed analysis of the Jedwabne episode during which the city's Polish residents massacred their Jewish neighbors, drove home the issue of Polish-Jewish relationships during the war and the Poles' involvement in the Holocaust. His next book, *Fear*, projected the image of full-fledged anti-Semitism in Poland after WWII and became even more provocative than *Neighbors*.⁹ Both books became subjects of heated debates, both in Poland and in the West, and both received ambivalent receptions. But in Poland, the two books by an American historian with Polish and Jewish roots gave a new spin to scholarship by raising questions that could no longer be ignored.

John-Paul Himka fits better into the category of diaspora historians. Born and raised in Canada, Himka has published prolifically on subjects related to the history of Ukraine and more specifically, Austrian Galicia. Like Gross, he has long exerted a very important impact upon Ukrainian historiography. But his most controversial work is yet to come. His current work in progress raises the issue of Ukrainian-Jewish relationships and Ukrainians' involvement in the annihilation of their country's Jews, a subject that had so far received no due attention from Ukrainian historians. Both Poland and Ukraine proved themselves unprepared to deal with subjects that transgress the victim paradigm, that expose the very fluid boundaries between victims and perpetrators and that indirectly impose a new sense of responsibility for historical deeds. Both the Poles and the

⁹ See Jan Gross, *Neighbors. The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002); *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: an Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006).

Ukrainians fit well into Groch's category of small nations. Their historical experiences during the twentieth century, however, cannot be fully explained in reference to imperial subjugation and suffering. Explaining the history of small nations requires a degree of civil courage, which can be only achieved by overcoming the national paradigms and historical biases. Overcoming national paradigms and historical biases requires an intellectual engagement across different fields, as well as across different countries – for understanding and explaining the context should be as important a task for historians as exposing specific events and deeds.

If histories of the peoples – objects of imperial domination – suffer from the national bias, the histories of empires project different biases and generate different kinds of problems. The history of the Russian and the Soviet Empires, for example, had long suffered from a radical reductionism: Most works focused on Russians alone, or addressed the empire from the perspective of the center, Moscow. Perhaps no other book had a greater impact on historians' understanding of the Russian Empire than Andreas Kappeler's magisterial *Russia as a Multiethnic Empire*.¹⁰ First published in 1992, the book opened an entirely new age in the scholarship of the Russian Empire. Before Kappeler's publication, most works on the Russian Empire (in Russia, the Soviet Union and the West) focused either on Russians alone; on Russia's western borderlands; or on Russia's policies in the east. Kappeler's work was the first attempt to bring this heterogeneity together in a single narrative that presented imperial diversity and imperial policies in an entirely new light. By stressing the continuities between the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, Kappeler highlighted the essentially imperial legacy of the Soviet state. In 1991, he argued in his opening statement, brought to an end not just the seventy years of Soviet rule, but also the ancient empire known in turn as the Russian Empire, the Romanoff Empire, and the Soviet Union. The opening of the archive in 1991 marked the explosion of scholarship on Russian and Soviet imperial legacies. Research on Russian provinces and the relationships between the center and peripheries became common. Almost twenty years after the first publication of Kappeler's book, it is easy to forget the seminal impact the book had on historians' thinking about the empire.

¹⁰ Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (München: Beck, 1992)

Among the many works on the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union published in the West after 1991, one stands out for its breadth of research. In 1999, Terry Martin published his *Affirmative Action Empire*, which analyzes the Soviet nationality policies during the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹ Martin presented a new image of the Soviet regime – a regime, that, in Martin’s descriptions, was one of the most nation-minded regimes in Europe’s history, supporting minority nationalities in ethnically contested regions, and creating nations where none had existed in the past. Though he was covering the Soviet Union in its entirety, Martin focused on the western regions of the Soviet Empire, paying particular attention to the Soviet nationality policies in Ukraine and Belorussia. If the Ukrainians were major benefactors of the Soviet policies during the 1920s, they also became major victims of a change in policy that came in 1929. By placing Ukraine in the context of broader Soviet policies, Martin offered a nuanced explanation of the famine in Ukraine during the 1930s, which, he claimed, was shaped by national causes. Martin’s engagement with the broader political context of the Soviet Union sets his work apart from the many Ukrainian accounts dealing with the same period. The most urgent issues of national history could thus be best addressed in a rather a-national way, by exploring broader historical contexts and events rather than focusing on a single nation alone.

If Kappeler’s and Martin’s books highlight the importance of imperial context from within, Timothy Snyder’s work best explains the controversies of imperial policies and international coexistence on the borderlands. His *Reconstruction of Nations*, first published in 2003, proved to be just the beginning of a phase of research that sets the nation and national coexistence in a new context.¹² An outsider with no personal stakes in Polish and Ukrainian politics, Snyder has explored the most contested and tragic issues of Polish, Ukrainian and Soviet histories with his nuanced analysis of their shared past dating back to the Middle Ages, and by the equally nuanced analysis of the specific historical circumstances of interwar Europe and during WWII. Snyder has challenged

¹¹ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001)

¹² Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); *Sketches from a Secret War: a Polish Artist’s Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); *The Red Prince: the Secret Lives of a Habsburg Archduke* (New York: Basic Books, 2008)

the highly charged national narratives by demonstrating the fluidity of national identity in the past, and highlighting the very serious flaws of nationalized narratives in the present.

Shifting emphasis from the history of one nation to intra-national relationships thus became one response to the overwhelming dominance of national narratives in the historiography of Eastern Europe. A concurrent shift in the studies of the empires produced new research that focused on the reciprocal relationships between the centers and the provinces, rather than exploring the center or a province alone as independent units of analysis. In the 1990s, it was no longer satisfactory to write a history of one group (or nation) alone, and a new scholarship generated a wave of interesting research that addressed interrelationships among different groups in specific regions. Such an approach, however, requires certain linguistic skills and the ability to move between different archives, which was (and still is) often more affordable for the historians from the West than it is to their colleagues from the East. The historiography of the empire and the scholarship of the nation proved to be two interrelated fields of historical inquiry that influenced each other. But is there a way to think beyond nationalism when dealing with regions where nationalism became such a charged issue.

Intellectual history provides ample opportunities to explain regions, events and histories without writing the history of the nation or even nations. Perhaps no other research better demonstrates the intrinsic possibility of non-national subjects in the East-European field than does Larry Wolff's books, *Inventing Eastern Europe* and the *Idea of Galicia*.¹³ Both works analyze the intellectual construction of the regions during the age of the Enlightenment and beyond. The *Idea of Galicia*, in particular, demonstrates the resistance of intellectual constructions to political changes through different regimes. The concept of Galicia proved to be as resilient as the broader concept of Eastern Europe, to which Galicia belongs. Created by Austrian officials in the eighteenth century, Galicia survived the one and a half centuries of Austrian rule; it stayed alive in interwar Poland, and survived the seventy years of Soviet rule.

Intellectual history also provides a niche for historians to address questions that touch upon the nation without focusing on the nation alone. The Polish historian Maciej

¹³ See Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010)

Janowski has long demonstrated how intellectual history can address questions pertaining to the nation without falling into any single national paradigm. His work on the Polish liberal intelligentsia in Galicia in the late nineteenth century, first published in 1996, is a fine example of such an approach.¹⁴ A conventional national way of explaining the Polish intelligentsia in Galicia has been to demonstrate its struggle with other nationalities in the province. Janowski effectively challenges the image of reciprocal antagonism among Poles, Ruthenians and Jews, explaining how internal relationships within the Polish camp were often as complex as external relationships of these Poles to Galician Ruthenians and Jews.

Both Wolff and Janowski place their analysis of Galicia within the context of Austrian imperial history during the nineteenth century. The theme of empire is perhaps stronger in Wolff's book than it is in Janowski's, but both historians explain the complexity of Galicia in reference to the complexity of the empire, a theme that has so far received no adequate treatment in Ukrainian scholarship of Galicia. The Austrians invented Galicia, Larry Wolff has explained, and they imbued its new region with certain expectations and concepts. Austrian plans in Galicia were contingent upon Austria's broader policies towards its diverse territories. It is precisely within this sea of diversity and heterogeneity that Galicia gradually took on a life of its own as yet another Austrian province. The making of Galicia and its peoples – Poles, Ruthenians and Jews – could be only fully understood within the context of empire, as explored by Larry Wolff; and in the context of the reciprocal relationships between each of these groups, as explored by Maciej Janowski.

Intellectual history can thus provide one valuable avenue away from exclusively national histories. But other fields of historian inquiry – political, social and economic histories – do not need to be exclusively national either. In her 2006 book, the American historian Alison Frank explores one very important, and unjustly forgotten, aspect of Galician history.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century, Galicia was one of the world's largest oil reserves and a common destination for international financial investments and industries.

¹⁴ Maciej Janowski, *Inteligencja wobec wyzwań nowoczesności: dylematy ideowe polskiej demokracji liberalnej w Galicji w latach 1889-1914* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 1996)

¹⁵ Alison Frank, *Oil Empire: Visions of Prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005)

In Ukrainian and Polish historiographies, the oil aspect of Galician history is relegated to minor episodes, analyzed within the context of low-key regional history, the so-called *krajcznavstvo* in Ukrainian. But the oil industry was in no way marginal or regional in nineteenth century Galicia. It was at once international and cosmopolitan, revealing Galicia's important ties to Vienna, Berlin, and London. In Frank's work, Galicia appears as an integral part of European history, even though the region itself was more backward and poorer than most other regions within the Habsburg domains. In Frank's work, Galicia is firmly integrated into European history as part of a broader European narrative rather than an exception. Works like Frank's accomplish two targets at once: first, they overcome the implicit marginalization of Eastern Europe within Europe; second, they help bridge different historiographies by placing regions like Galicia within the broader context of European history during the nineteenth century.

National history is currently in serious crisis, but the crisis itself reveals some positive tendencies within European historiography. Claims of overcoming national narratives have become common in recent years, but it remains to be seen how successful new, non-national histories of Eastern Europe will be. Integrating Eastern Europe into the broader context of European history requires multi-fold efforts from historians of Western Europe and historians of Eastern Europe alike, both in Eastern Europe and in the West. An attempt to overcome the marginalization of Eastern Europe would require a different level of intellectual engagement with subjects that are not focusing on the story of a single nation alone. A new kind of intellectual engagement would also require a degree of civil courage, which, in turn, could lead to overcoming the victim paradigm that is still so firmly engraved in the historical and political imagination of the peoples of Eastern Europe.