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**ESF EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP:**  
**THE RE-INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE IN EUROPE: A HISTORICAL,**  
**HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL URGENT ISSUE**  
10-20 November 2004, Gargnano (Brescia) – Italy

Convenors: Giovanna Brogi Bercoff and Giulia Lami  
University of Milan, Italy

**SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The convenors invited two dozens of the most outstanding specialists representing various historiographical trends in interpreting the special position of Ukraine between the new enlarged European Union and the Russian Federation. Speakers were invited from several countries of the European continent, including Russia. Taking into account the special links between the Ukrainian emigration in North America and in Israel, 4 specialists were invited from Toronto, Edmonton and Jerusalem.

Papers were delivered as follows: 1. *The Ukrainian quest for identity: the Polish Commonwealth and the Austrian and Russian Empires*; 2. *The Ukrainian religious heritage*; 3. *Culture and literature in historical perspective*; 4. *The ambiguity of soviet and post-soviet era: history and historiography*; 5. *The challenge of Europe today*. A Round Table took place the last day under the title: *Ukraine and Europe: Horizons of expectation - Mutual approach – Understanding and misunderstandings*.

Among the aims of the Workshop the first was to explore and compare various approaches to the discussion concerning the relationship between the Western European tradition and its Eastern (Slavonic, Byzantine and Russian) heritage, in the light of the situation given after 13 years of Ukrainian independence (1991). The growth of a new, independent and scientific examination of past history and culture has been in the centre of the papers presented during the first day. A new evaluation of the most controversial historical facts is an important factor for the creation of a modern approach to self-consciousness in Ukraine itself and in the European countries that have to

cope with the difficulties of understanding the real needs of each partner in UE. Special attention has been given to the re-examination of Russian interpretations of past history and culture of Ukraine. The intense, but difficult relationship between Russia and Ukraine in the last 3 centuries have been discussed from the perspective of today's political tensions. Religious problems, social and cultural differences connected with Ukraine's belonging to different states for centuries (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire, the Soviet Union), the difficulties of integrating in one state people coming from very diverging systems – all these factors were examined by specialists in history, religion, language, literature, social studies. Regional specificities have been examined by some speakers (e.g. Galicia, Bukovina).

In sections 4-5 major attention was given to contemporary problems which may foster or impede a sound and equilibrated relationship of Ukraine with the European Union and with Russia. At stake were such phenomena as emigration, educational institutions, the overcoming of oligarchic political pressure, the spread of civic consciousness, the national sense of unity in diversity. Lively discussion arose about the need of Ukraine's efforts for approaching European standards of civil and democratic life and the insufficient efforts of European political institutions to support and encounter such efforts.

During the final Round Table some conclusions have been drawn from the papers given on the various subjects and possible scenarios of future evolution have been presented. The "Guidelines" presented during the Round Table and the discussion which arose around them demonstrated how really urgent is the question of cultural and political re-integration of Ukraine in the European discourse. The situation and problems of the two main "actors" have been the object of lively discussion.

#### A) ACTOR 1 – EUROPE:

The need for a reintegration of Ukraine into the main stream of European cultural and political development is not only a logical consequence of the country's history and cultural tradition, it appears also as an act of justice after the long separation which has been enforced upon its people in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is at the same time a great historical opportunity of present time: European institutions and public opinion should remember – as history shows – that such opportunities may last only for a relatively short time. This appears with more evidence if we take into account that all European countries and nations are faced with a wide globalization process.

Since the beginning of its history Europe's integration process has faced tensions between democratic values and political practice and reality. In present time the EU has extended to 25 member states, the Political Union has been created and the way to a Constitution is opened. This

positive development, however, is accompanied by increasing political difficulties: the general positive attitude to EU and its policies is more and more under the pressure of (new and old) increasing 'national' feelings and interests, EU institutions undergo criticism because of their "autocratic bureaucracy". Democratic support suffers by the decreasing turn out in the EP-elections, thus challenging the legitimacy of the EU. The EU Constitution is under pressure of referenda's in more than 10 member states. The political and financial burdens of the periodical rounds of enlargement provide additional stress on the political support given to the EU itself and its policies by the citizens, thus menacing to weaken its democratic legitimacy.

From a European point of view efforts to keep a positive attitude towards the EU and to increase the understanding of the policies of its institutions is an enormous challenge. There is a real need to give new force to the general process of creating the EU, to improve the inclusiveness of all the Europeans in EU-politics, and to re-build between Eastern and Western Europeans a solid and serious reciprocal knowledge as a necessary condition for integration, after a long separation has been imposed on the countries of Eastern-Central Europe after WW2 (and after WW1 for Ukraine).

#### B) ACTOR 2 - UKRAINE:

The points presented during the workshop and the discussions which arose during the sessions and the conclusive Round Table gave evidence to the existence of different interpretations of the general situation, of the horizon of expectations of various strata of Ukrainian people and political parties, of projects of mutual approach. To summarize, we may focus on the following points:

1) Ukraine is now in an extremely difficult position between Putin's Russia trying to retake its "imperial" strategy, and Europe engaging in the effort to complete its reintegration towards Eastern European countries. The coexistence of NATO's policy directed in the same sense creates a dialectic situation of ambiguity and may bring to a lack of clear and secure strategic attitudes when both institutions reach Russia's borders: every kind of impact with the Russian state and its political aims always presents a complicate and difficult set of economic, social and geopolitical challenges.

2) Ukraine is feeling pressures for integration from both East and West, and experiences serious difficulties in choosing her own way of integration in one or another camp. The creation of proper strategies for maintaining the recent conquest of independence together with a set of rules for

correct relationships with both Europe and Russia appears as an extremely difficult and dangerous task.

3) The burden of the past makes Ukraine's evolution towards modern policy and democratic life really difficult. The completion of the process of creating the Ukrainian cultural and national identity in the contemporary geopolitical situation needs, among others, a thorough historical reassessment. This demands a) serious and objective evaluation of the characteristics and consequences of the soviet experience, b) the spreading in Ukraine of concrete, factual knowledge of European civilization standards and perspectives, eliminating ideological and mythological bias; c) the need to favour a deeper knowledge of Ukraine among Western European citizens, media and political institutions. This concerns not only Ukraine, but also its East-Central European neighbours: Western European social and political institutions should elaborate a better comprehension of Eastern European countries in order to increase the possibilities of a real and fruitful cooperation, and to foster and exploit with the best mutual advantage the potentiality of human and cultural resources.

4) The events of the last 10 years have demonstrated how important the cooperation of recent new European member states is for a future assessment of Ukraine's relationship with the EU. Major importance should be given to the identification of rapid and effective instruments facilitating the process of Ukraine's reintegration in Europe.

European cultural institutions and foundations may have a fundamental role in the incrementation of this process of reciprocal knowledge, which should support and facilitate also the political cooperation.

## 2. SCIENTIFIC CONTENT OF THE EVENT

The primary issue of the Workshop was to stress the deficiencies in the knowledge of Ukraine and its history, as they appear in the most analyses dedicated by media and political institutions to this country. Though academic knowledge has given some precious contributions (mainly in UK, France, USA and Canada), the history and culture of Ukraine has seldom been put in the centre of investigation. Ukraine has almost always been considered as a part of the multinational states or empires to which it belonged (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austrian and Russian Empire, Soviet Union), her history has been overshadowed by one or another "dominant" culture or political entity. Being itself posited at a cross yard of various, often contrasting influences, having become a "frontier region" between Eastern Byzantine tradition and Western Renaissance culture, also

between Orthodox and Roman Christendom, Ukraine experienced the dramatic difficulties of finding her own identity. In the last two centuries the task of constructing her self-consciousness and an independent state was made more difficult and dramatically complicated by the dominant ideological trends which influenced the evolution of the religious, cultural and linguistic background of the nation. The tragic experience of the soviet period destroyed the intellectual life of the country and favoured the falsification of the “official account” of its past and of its specificity.

More than a decennia after the creation of an independent state, Ukraine demonstrates to have done a great advancement towards the recreation of her self-consciousness, of the reinterpretation of the collective memory and of the consolidation of the civil democratic life. However, economical and social differences, incremented by the pressure of international political game still weaken the Ukrainian position face to the enlarged UE and Russia’s “neo-imperialist” goals.

It has been extremely important that this Workshop held in Gargnano has been organised to examine in deep the past and present problems connected with Ukraine’s history and nationhood. They may be summarized as follows:

- a) The creation of Ukrainian self-consciousness and identity in the period between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and WW1.
- b) The influence of the various religious confessions in the various periods and regions of Ukrainian history, their role in the development of national identity.
- c) The influence of historical and socio-political conditions on the development of the literary heritage and the problems of the development of the Ukrainian language in a context of multi-ethnicity and multilingualism.
- d) The alternation of “nation building” and “nation disruptive” periods in Ukraine’s history in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century, with special emphasis on the new evaluation which has to be given after the ideologically biased interpretations given by foreign scholars.
- e) The need of a new evaluation of the soviet period and its impact on the Ukrainian nation and culture.
- f) An assessment of Ukraine’s position between the European and the Eurasian space, in political, economic and social terms.
- g) Contemporary Ukraine, the issues of its national and international political position, the possible scenarios connected with the presidential elections of 2004.

### 3. ASSESSEMENTS OF RESULTS, CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION IN THE FIELD, OUTCOME.

The issues considered during the conference were to become dramatically important in the light of the elections held on November 21. They showed how the process of transition is still going on from the post-communist era to a new, mature democratic stabilization. They showed also that the cultural and historical re-examination and evaluation of the past is a fundamental point in the growth of the civic and national self-consciousness. All the participants were unanimous in hoping that political independence and free expression of the will of the majority will be supported and guaranteed by international cooperation through an active participation of international institutions.

The Conference in Gargnano has given an important contribution to the reciprocal knowledge of Ukrainian and European past and present. This kind of contact and cultural exchange is extremely important in order to overcome the gap which has been created by 3 centuries of political separation between Ukraine and Europe. Future co-operations will certainly give new possibilities to increment a correct reintegration of Ukraine's past history in the modern consciousness of Ukrainians themselves and of European citizens.

In consideration of the importance Eastern European countries still credit to cultural manifestations and contacts, we are convinced that the Gargnano Workshop has not only a high scientific value, but will also show its fruit in the next future, giving ideas for new strategies and new indications for further development in international cooperation.

We intend to publish as soon as possible the papers presented at the Gargnano Workshop, in English. We hope that this will offer an important source of information for different milieus in Europe, in Ukraine and in North America.

## FINAL PROGRAMME

**18 November - 9 am**

*THE UKRAINIAN QUEST FOR IDENTITY:  
THE POLISH COMMONWEALTH  
AND THE AUSTRIAN AND RUSSIAN EMPIRES*

**Tatjana Jakovleva** (Russia)  
*The Role of Cossack's Idea in the Independence Movement  
of Ukraine (17th-19th centuries).*

**Wolf Moskovich** (Israel)  
*The Specificity of Bukovina in the context of Ukrainian  
Culture and Consciousness.*

**Hans Rothe** (Germany)  
*Ukraine and Europe: Two Chapters from History about  
Forces and Counterforces in forming a Nation.*

**Oleh Ilnytskyj** (Canada)  
*Deconstructing the Construction of "Russianness" and the  
Identity of Ukraine in Europe and the West.*

**Michael Moser** (Austria)  
*Some Viennese contributions to the Development  
of the Ukrainian Terminologies (1848-1918).*

**Hubert Laszkiewicz** - (Poland)  
*Landscape after the Battle: Ukrainian Quest for an Identity.*

**18 November - 3,30 pm**

*THE UKRAINIAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE*

**Yurii Isychenko** (Ukraine)  
*The Byzantine Factor of the Ukrainian Church History  
- a Factor of Integration or Desintegration?*

**Daniel Tollet** (France)  
*Religious and Confessional Confrontation in Western  
Ukraine (16th-18th Centuries).*

**István Baan** (Hungary)  
*Greek-speaking Hierarchs on a Ruthenian See:  
The Diocese of Munkács (Mukaceve) in the Subcarpathian  
Region at the end of the 17th century.*

**Yaroslav Isaevych** (Ukraine)  
*Pan-Slavism in Ukraine: Past and Present.*

**Gianpaolo Rigotti** (Vatican City)  
*Sources Concerning Ukraine in the Archives of the  
Congregation for the Oriental Churches (1862-1939).*

**19 November - 9 am**

*CULTURE AND LITERATURE  
IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE*

**Giovanna Siedina** (Italy)  
*Ukraine in the European Cultural Context. The Reception of  
the Classical Legacy at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy through  
the Prism of Poetics.*

**John-Paul Himka** (Canada)  
*What Constitutes an Ukrainian Artifact? The case of the  
Last Judgement Icons (15th-18th centuries)*

**Oksana Ostapchuk** (Russia)  
*Looking for Friends and Enemies: Philosophy of  
Borrowings in Ukrainian Literary Language in the 20th  
century.*

**19 November - 11,30 am**

*SHORT TRIP ON THE LAKE. VISIT TO SIRMIONE*

**19 November - 4,30 pm**

*THE AMBIGUITY OF SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET ERA:  
HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY*

**Andrea Graziosi** (Italy)  
*Soviet Ukraine in Ukrainian History: The Weight of the Past  
in Modern Ukraine.*

**Oxana Pachlovska** (Italy)  
*Ukraine-Russia-Poland: Cultural Background and Political  
Perspectives of Post-Communist Asimmetry in the 20th  
century.*

**Orest Subtelny** (Canada)  
*The Changing Nature of Ukrainian-Russian Relations  
in the post-1991 Period.*

**20 November - 9 pm**

*THE CHALLENGE OF EUROPE TODAY*

**Anne de Tinguy** (France)  
*Migrations: An Instrument of Ukrainian Integration in  
Europe?*

**Katarzyna Wolczuk** (UK)  
*Why Europe? Ukraine and its Attitudes and Policy towards  
the European Union.*

**Giulia Lami** (Italy)  
*The Destiny of Ukraine: Europe or Eurasia?*

**Mykola Ryabchuk** (Ukraine)  
*Strength and Weakness of the "Blackmail State":  
Checking the Limitations.*

**Andrew Wilson** (UK)  
*Virtual Politics: Ukrainian Democracy after the 2004  
Elections.*

**20 November - 3,30 pm**

*UKRAINE AND EUROPE:*

- *HORIZONS OF EXPECTATION*

- *MUTUAL APPROACH*

- *UNDERSTANDING AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS*

(A FINAL ROUND TABLE)

*Participants:*

**Oleh Ilnytskyj** (Canada)  
**Olena Ponomareva** (Ukraine)  
**Mykola Ryabchuk** (Ukraine)  
**Andrew Wilson** (UK)

*Coordinator:*

**Bianca Valota** (Italy)

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**STATISTICAL DATA ON PARTICIPATION**

*\* not including attendees at final round table discussion*

**Repartition by country:**

Austria	1
Canada	3
Germany	1
France	2
Hungary	1
Israel	1

Italy	5
Poland	1
Russia	2
Ukraine	3
UK	2
Vatican City	1

**Repartition by gender:**

Male	15
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Female	8
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*Total number of attendees: 23*