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Making and Breaking the Russian Empire

The Case of Kiev's Shul'gin Family



Fig. 12: Dmitrii Ivanovich Pikhno (1853–1913), c. 1910



Fig. 13: Vasilii Vital'evich Shul'gin (1878–1976), 1910

Over the last two decades, historians of tsarist Russia have increasingly turned their attention to the theme of empire, exploring how Russia's ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity informed its politics and society. The practitioners of this "imperial turn" have traced the evolution of imperial policies and identities, producing a bird's-eye view of the empire at work.¹ This essay examines the inner workings of the empire from a more personal vantage point, tracing the experiences and contributions of

1 The pathbreaking work here was Andreas Kappeler: *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung – Geschichte – Zerfall*. Munich 1992. See also Theodore R. Weeks: *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914*. DeKalb 1996; M. Dolbilov and A. Miller: *Zapadnye okrainy rossiiskoi imperii*. Moscow 2006; Robert Geraci: *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Imperial Russia*. Ithaca 2001; Michael Khodarkovsky: *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800*. Bloomington 2002; Jeff Sahadeo: *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923*. Bloomington 2007.

several generations of Kiev's Shul'gin and Pikhno family. It argues that recapturing the complexities of individual lives not only provides a richer and more variegated portrait of how the empire functioned on the ground, but also reveals the role that personal trajectories and local communities played in shaping all-imperial norms and practices.²

The Shul'gins and Pikhnos lived in Russia's southwestern borderlands, which in the nineteenth century became a major focus of the imperial campaign to diminish the influence of the region's powerful Polish-Catholic nobility (or *szlachta*), who had organized rebellions against tsarist rule in 1830–1831 and 1863. The official de-polonization campaign ultimately gave way to a broader effort to enhance the status of the Russian language and the Orthodox Church on the empire's western frontier and to police the cultural expression of the borderlands' Poles, Jews, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians—an effort that some have described as “russification.”³

Imperial attempts to manage the diverse population of the borderlands are generally viewed from the vantage point of St. Petersburg—a perspective that foregrounds the imperial authorities' centralizing and standardizing ambitions and their attempts to discipline the non-Russian cultures of the imperial periphery. The case of the Shul'gin-Pikhno family, however, suggests that the dynamics of “russification” on the ground were substantially more complex. The family patriarch, Vitalii Iakovlevich Shul'gin, self-identified as “Little Russian”—a term then commonly used to describe the Ukrainian-speaking population of the southwest. Although Shul'gin acknowledged the distinctiveness of Little Russian culture from that of the Great Russian center, he insisted that the former could nevertheless serve as a powerful weapon in the officially-sponsored campaign to undermine Polish-Catholic civilization in the western borderlands and to unify the East Slavs. Shul'gin managed to establish himself as mass media pioneer and to cultivate a cooperative relationship with local officials. Both accomplishments ultimately permitted this provincial activist who lacked an official bureaucratic position to become an influential political figure in a contested and strategically sensitive zone.

If Vitalii Shul'gin sought to marshal Little Russian culture in defense of the empire, his successors viewed local traditions as a foundation on which a Russian (by which

2 On the analytic potential of imperial biographies, see Malte Rolf: Einführung: Imperiale Biographien. Lebenswege imperialer Akteure in Groß- und Kolonialreichen (1850–1918). In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 40 (2014), pp. 1–16.

3 On state ambitions in the region: Weeks, *Nation and State* (see footnote 1); Witold Rodkiewicz: *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire, 1863–1905*. Lublin 1998; Malte Rolf: *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland: Das Königreich Polen im Russischen Imperium (1864–1914)*. Munich 2014; Alexei Miller: *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York 2003; Darius Staliunas: *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863*. New York 2007.

they meant East Slavic) nation-state could be built.⁴ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Shul'gin's protégé, Dmitrii Ivanovich Pikhno (who would go on to marry his mentor's widow), and son, Vasiliï Vital'evich Shul'gin, presided over the emergence of a powerful, mass-oriented Russian nationalist movement in the southwestern borderlands. This movement ultimately became the dominant force in local politics and expanded its influence across the empire; the militant and well-organized Russian nationalism that flourished in the Russian empire in its last years owed much to activists who hailed from Kiev and its outskirts.

The story of the Shul'gin-Pikhno clan demonstrates how much one family could shape politics, identities, and ideas across the tsar's vast domains, in spite of the persistence of the autocracy. It also sheds new light on the life cycles of the empire. It reveals the allure of the imperial idea, showing how upwardly mobile individuals came to identify their own life experiences with the political structures and cultures of the state. It highlights the efforts of the family and its associates to strengthen the tsarist system through their creative attempts to reconcile the interests of the bureaucracy and society, the borderlands and the heartland, the autocracy and mass politics. However, the story of the Shul'gin-Pikhno clan also lays bare the fatal weaknesses of the old regime. As we shall see, the family's activities unwittingly created conflicts that tested the bonds of kinship, the unity of the movement that it spearheaded, and the integrity of the empire at large.

Little Russian Culture, the Imperial State, and the Career of Vitalii Iakovlevich Shul'gin

The story of Russian imperial expansion is embedded in the very genealogy of the Shul'gin family. The Shul'gins traced their origins to the military elite of the Cossack Hetmanate—a polity of Orthodox warriors founded on the left bank (east side) of the Dnieper River in the seventeenth century.⁵ By the eighteenth century, the Hetmanate had been absorbed by the Russian empire, and its elites were ennobled, constituting a distinctive “Little Russian gentry.” The Little Russian nobles of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries no longer enjoyed the political autonomy of their fore-

⁴ Many scholars have argued that the Little Russian identity, which celebrated the peculiarities of local culture while remaining loyal to the empire at large, had become untenable by the mid-nineteenth century. For example, Olga Andriewsky: *The Russian-Ukrainian Discourse and the Failure of the ‘Little Russian Solution,’ 1782–1917*. In: Andreas Kappeler and Zenon E. Kohut (Eds.): *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*. Edmonton 2003, pp. 182–214. By contrast, my analysis reveals that the Little Russian identity survived well into the twentieth century, contributing to the articulation of a modern Russian national project.

⁵ Oleksander Ohloblyn: *Predky Oleksandra Iakovycha Shul'hyna*. In: Volodymyr Ianev (Ed.): *Zbirnyk na poshanu Oleksandra Shul'hyna*. Paris 1969, pp. 67–70.

fathers. They did, however, maintain their ancestors' unique cultural traditions and historical memory. They thought of the Ukrainian lands as the cradle of East Slavic civilization, their Cossack ancestors as the direct descendants of the Rus' princes, and they celebrated the role that their forebears had played in defending all Orthodox believers from alleged incursions by the Polish-Catholics and Jews who also resided in their homeland.⁶ Henceforth, I will call this constellation of beliefs that drove the political and cultural activities of the left-bank gentry the Little Russian idea.⁷

In the wake of the Polish revolt of 1830–1831, many Little Russian nobles from the left bank moved across the Dnieper River to settle in Kiev, the administrative center of the Russian empire's southwestern borderlands. Although Kiev had been incorporated into the Russian empire in the late seventeenth century, the rural lands that stretched west of the city to the Austrian border had been claimed by the tsar only as a result of the partitions of Poland in the late eighteenth century. Dominated socially, politically, and culturally by the *szlachta*, the region became a major focus of imperial efforts to diminish Polish influences and to reimagine it as a “primordially Orthodox” locale.⁸

What instigated the mass migration of left bank nobles to the right bank? Although Little Russian nobles lamented imperial infringements on the rights that their ancestors had enjoyed, many sympathized with the official de-polonization campaign, which purported to defend the Orthodox believers of the right bank from “foreign” threats. Indeed, Little Russian notables played a crucial role in imperial efforts to claim the right bank. M. A. Maksimovich, a Poltava noble, accepted a position as the first rector of Kiev's newly founded university; already acclaimed for his collection of Little Russian folk songs, he used his official capacity to encourage research on regional folk traditions that supposedly pre-dated Polish rule. In 1840, he launched *Kievlianin*, an historical almanac that chronicled the efforts of local Orthodox leaders and Cossacks to preserve the values and faith of the Kievan princes over the centuries.⁹

Maksimovich was a founding member of the Kiev Commission for the Analysis of Historical Documents, convened by the Governor-General of the southwestern borderlands in 1843. Directed to consolidate church registers and court documents under the imperial state in order to prevent Poles from claiming historical privileges, the Commission provided an official forum in which Little Russian patriots could continue their local historical and ethnographic research. Uniting elite clergy, bureaucrats, and left-bank notables with younger and more radical local patriots

6 The classic formulation of this worldview is the “Istoriia Rusov”, widely circulated among the Little Russian gentry in the early nineteenth century and published as: *Istoriia rusov, ili Maloi Rossii*. Moscow 1846. For more on the political activities and historical memory of the left-bank gentry, see Serhii Plokhyy: *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Age of Empires*. New York 2012.

7 For a fuller elaboration of this ideology, see Faith Hillis: *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation*. Ithaca 2013, pp. 30–35.

8 Hillis, *Children of Rus'* (see footnote 7), pp. 35–39.

9 See M. A. Maksimovich: *Kievlianin*. Kiev 1840.

such as T. G. Shevchenko, P. A. Kulish, and N. I. Kostomarov, the Commission published Ukrainian-language Cossack chronicles and historical accounts that bemoaned the supposed exploitation of the right-bank's Orthodox peasantry by Poles and Jews.¹⁰ In the southwest, at least, the Russification campaign was not merely an imposition of the imperial center; it was also shaped by local activists who viewed it as an opportunity to promote the culture of the Ukrainian peasant masses.

A mid-ranking bureaucrat named Iakov Shul'gin was among the Little Russian nobles who resettled in Kiev and joined the de-polonization campaign in the 1830s. Little is known about Shul'gin's bureaucratic career or family life, other than that he had two sons. Both came of age in the semi-official Little Russian milieu that flourished in post-revolt Kiev. One, Nikolai, married the daughter of a Ukrainian-language author and followed in his father's footsteps, finding employment in the governor-general's chancery.¹¹ Another, Vitalii (1822–1878), found his calling in the world of ideas. Reserved and hunchbacked, he had struggled to navigate the social obligations of the urban *beau monde* in his youth; once he enrolled in the history department of Kiev University, however, he discovered his talents as a writer and researcher. After earning his degree, he served as inspector of the Kiev gymnasium for noble girls and a part-time lecturer in history at the university. Aggravated by the Polish student protests that regularly shuttered establishments of higher education, he soon became an active member of the city's local history groups (including the Kiev Commission) and gained a reputation as an eloquent supporter of the "Orthodox cause."¹²

By the early 1860s, it became clear that the collaborative efforts of imperial officials and Little Russian elites to undermine Polish claims on the southwest had not entirely succeeded, and that a second Polish insurrection was imminent. Impatient with the slow pace of de-polonization, a new generation of youth initiated more radical efforts to promote the interests of the Orthodox masses [*narod*] and to diminish the influence of the borderlands' non-Orthodox populations. M. P. Dragomanov, an impoverished left-bank noble and Kiev University student, and Iakov Shul'gin (1851–1911), Vitalii's nephew, organized Ukrainian-language Sunday schools. Both men also joined the Kiev *Hromada*, a group that sought to raise awareness of the value of local folk culture, to enlighten the peasant masses, and to "liberate" orthodox believers from the feudal yoke supposedly imposed on them by the *szlachta*.¹³

¹⁰ On the activities and membership of the Commission, see: O. I. Levitskii: Piatidesiatiletie Kievskoi Kommissii dlia razbora drevnikh aktov, 1843–1893. Istoricheskaia zapiska o eia deiatel'nosti. Kiev 1893. On Ukrainian-language chronicles, consult O. I. Levitskii (Ed.): Pamiatniki, izdannye vremennoi kommissiei dlia razbora drevnikh aktov. Kiev 1898.

¹¹ V. Sherbyna: Pamiaty Iakova Shul'hyna. In: *Zapysky Ukrains'koho Naukovoho Tovarystva v Kyivi* 9 (1912), p. 11.

¹² "Vitalii Iakovlevich Shul'gin." In: Kievlianin. Kiev 1880.

¹³ M. P. Dragomanov: Avtobiograficheskaia zametka. In: Literaturno-publitsychni pratsi. Kiev 1970. Vol, 1, pp. 43–46; Ihnat Zhytets'kyi: Kyivs'ka Hromada za 60-tykh rokiv. In: *Ukraina* 1 (1928), pp. 91–125.

The second Polish revolt, which began in 1863, outraged Kiev's large and influential Little Russian intelligentsia. Interestingly enough, the empire's political crisis coincided with a series of unsettling developments in Vitalii Shul'gin's personal life. In the spring of 1863, in the midst of the insurrection, Kiev University refused to hire Shul'gin on a full-time basis, a decision that the historian attributed to the ongoing political influence of Poles at the top levels of the institution. Around the same time, an infectious disease swept through his family, claiming the lives of his brother, sister-in-law, and parents. Left to care for his orphaned nieces and nephews—including Iakov, the *Hromada* member—Shul'gin fell into a deep depression and became incapacitated by migraine attacks that paralyzed him for days at a time.¹⁴

By late 1863, Shul'gin began to emerge from his depression. As he recovered, he more clearly than ever connected his life experience to the fate of the empire at large. Shul'gin presented his own suffering as part and parcel of the misfortunes that had befallen the entire Little Russian people, whom he saw as victims of “the triple yoke of Catholic clergy, Poles (landlords, rentiers, and estate managers) and Jews.”¹⁵ This realization led him to believe that the Orthodox believers of the right bank needed a force that could unify them in support of the imperial state and mobilize them against their putative oppressors. Enlisting the help of fellow Kiev Commission members as well as radical young *Hromada* activists such as Dragomanov, Shul'gin established Kiev's first daily newspaper, *Kievlianin*, in June 1864. He secured an official subsidy for the organ shortly thereafter.

“Our region isn't the Kingdom of Poland and it isn't even Lithuania,” thundered the paper's first issue. “Our region is Russian, Russian, Russian.”¹⁶ Yet Shul'gin's insistence on the “Russianness” of the southwest did not mean that he was a Great Russian chauvinist or a proponent of administrative centralization, as some have claimed.¹⁷ Rather, *Kievlianin*—whose debt to Maksimovich's earlier publication of the same name was substantial—continued to celebrate Little Russian folk culture, which it presented as the purest manifestation of East Slavic traditions. Described by Dragomanov himself as “radically democratic” in spirit, the paper overtly praised the *Hromada*'s cultural and political activities and its efforts to defend the welfare of the

¹⁴ Vitalii Iakovlevich Shul'gin (see footnote 12), pp. 8–11; “Shul'gin, Vitalii Iakovlevich.” In: V. S. Ikonnikov (Ed.): *Biograficheskii slovar' professora i prepodavatelei imperatorskogo universiteta Sv. Vladimira (1834–1884)*. Kiev 1884, p. 770. I have been able to locate very few sources that speak to the family's private life or to the ideas and activities of the Shul'gin women.

¹⁵ The quote is from V. Ia. Shul'gin: *Iugo-zapadni krai pod upravleniem D. G. Bibikova*. In: *Drevnaia i novaia Rossiia* 6 (1879), p. 89, which is a reprint of an 1864 essay.

¹⁶ “Ob'iavlenie.” In: *Kievlianin*, 1 July 1864, p. 1.

¹⁷ For claims of *Kievlianin*'s “reactionary” character, see John D. Klier: *Kievlianin and the Jews: A Decade of Disillusionment, 1864–1873*. In: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, No.1 (1981), pp. 83–101; Iuliia Polovynchak: *Hazeta “Kievlianin” i Ukrainstvo: Dosvid natsional'noi samoidentyfikatsii*. Kiev 2008.

toiling masses.¹⁸ Railing against “illegal encroachments” by Polish nobles and Jewish capitalists on peasant communities, it demanded that the government promote the welfare and enhance the political power of local Orthodox believers.¹⁹ *Kievlianin*, which would remain the most widely read periodical in the southwestern borderlands until the 1917 revolution, was more than a private intellectual outlet for Shul’gin. It quickly became the centerpiece of a lively public sphere uniting other self-professed Little Russians who shared the editor’s background as well as his respect for local culture and imperial authority.

The Little Russian activists who surrounded Shul’gin and his newspaper sought to introduce their ideas in other settings as well. Populist papers promoting the Little Russian idea proliferated across the southwest, some openly crediting *Kievlianin* as their inspiration.²⁰ Kiev-based Little Russian activists drew up blueprints for a monument to the seventeenth-century Cossack leader Bohdan Khmelnytsky, which celebrated the brotherhood between the Great Russian and Little Russian people as well as the victory of both over their Polish and Jewish “enemies.”²¹ Shul’gin, Maksimovich, Dragomanov, and other Little Russian intellectuals participated in ethnographic research projects organized by the Imperial Geographic Society that delineated the features and cultures of the Little Russian people; on the heels of this effort, they convinced the authorities to allow them to open a Kiev branch of the Geographic Society in 1872.²² Like *Kievlianin*, each of these ventures presented the empire as the guardian of local culture, insisted on the unbreakable unity of the East Slavs, and denounced the region’s non-Orthodox residents as interlopers.

By the early ‘70s, however, internecine conflicts had begun to emerge within Kiev’s powerful Little Russian lobby. Many of these disputes centered on the legacy of the edict issued by Minister of Interior P. A. Valuev in 1863, which banned the distribution of mass-oriented publications in the Ukrainian language. (Unlike many imperial officials, who eagerly cooperated with the Little Russian lobby, Valuev feared that Polish nationalists might use Little Russian activism for their own purposes.)²³ In

18 Dragomanov, *Avtobiograficheskaia zametka* (see footnote 13), p. 47; “Zapiski ob universitetskoi zhizhi (1860–64).” In: *Kievlianin*, 13 August 1864 and 25 August 1864, p. 1.

19 For example, *Ob’iavlennie* (see footnote 16), p. 1; “Narod i narodnye shkoly.” In: *Kievlianin*, 4 August 1864, p. 4; “Kiev.” In: *Kievlianin*, 1 August 1864, p. 1; *Zhdat’ ili iskazhat’?* In: *Kievlianin*, 8 April 1871, pp. 1–2; *Kievlianin*, 9 January 1875, p. 1.

20 These titles included *Drug naroda* and *Trud*. Hillis, *Children of Rus’* (see footnote 7), p. 81, p. 100.

21 On these developments, see Faith Hillis: *Ukrainophile Activism and Imperial Governance in Russia’s Southwestern Borderlands*. In: *Kritika* 13, No.2 (2012), pp. 303–328. On officials’ relationship with southwestern activists, see also Miller, *Ukrainian Question* (see footnote 3), pp. 61–246.

22 Research on the southwest resulted in: P. P. Chubinskii (Ed.): *Trudy etnograficheskoi statisticheskoi ekspeditsii v Zapadno-Russkii krai*. 6 vols. St. Petersburg 1872–1876. On the founding of the Kiev branch of the Geographic Society, see Fedir Savchenko: *Zaborona ukrainstva 1876 r.* Munich 1970, pp. 14–17.

23 David Saunders: *Russia and Ukraine under Alexander II: The Valuev Edict of 1863*. In: *The International History Review* 17, No.1 (1995), pp. 23–50.

1873, the younger generation of Little Russian activists, including Dragomanov, publicly denounced Vitalii Shul'gin for having passively accepted Valuev's limitations.²⁴ Meanwhile, Dragomanov and his young associates challenged Shul'gin's dominance in the cultural institutions of the Little Russian lobby, excluding the senior scholar from the census that the Kiev branch of the Geographic Society carried out in 1874.²⁵ Outraged at these slights, Shul'gin initiated a campaign against those who had wronged him. In an 1874 editorial in *Kievlianin*, Shul'gin accused the Geographic Society of promoting a threatening brand of Ukrainian national separatism instead of the salutary Little Russian patriotism that had for so long defended the empire on its embattled western frontier.²⁶ A fellow elder founder of the Society, who had also been demoted in its ranks, took Shul'gin's allegations even further, claiming before the imperial authorities that the group served Polish revanchist interests and hoped to see Ukraine secede from the empire and join a free Poland.²⁷

The St. Petersburg authorities, who had relied so heavily on Little Russian activists to claim the southwest for the empire, took these allegations very seriously, convening a commission on the "Ukrainophile" threat. Having reviewed the Commission's final report, Tsar Alexander II issued the Ems Decree, which disbanded the southwestern branch of the Geographic Society, removed Dragomanov from his position at Kiev University and placed new limits on the public use of Ukrainian.²⁸ Choosing to live in European exile for the rest of his life, Dragomanov would begin to formulate an alternative to the Little Russian idea: a vision that presented local folk culture not as the purest expression of East Slavic values, but rather, as the foundation of a distinct Ukrainian national culture. Dragomanov's vision of a Ukrainian nation would win the support of some who had once supported the Little Russian lobby—including Vitalii Shul'gin's nephew Iakov, who, in the wake of the scandal within the Geographic Society, disowned the uncle who had raised him. Iakov Shul'gin followed Dragomanov into exile in 1876 and donated his inheritance to the scholar; by the turn of the century, he would resettle in Odessa and join that city's *Hromada*, which by then called for Ukrainian national autonomy.²⁹

Vitalii Shul'gin had helped to define a political program that effectively reconciled local traditions with imperial rule and cultivated a provincial intelligentsia that

24 M. P. Drahomanov: Antrakt z istorii Ukrainofil'stva (1863–1872). In: M. P. Drahomanov (Ed.): Vybrane. Kiev 1991, pp. 204–233; Dragomanov, Avtobiografiia (see footnote 13), p. 59.

25 F. Volkov: P. P. Chubinskii. In: *Ukrainskaia zhizn'* 1 (1914), p. 47; Miller, Ukrainian Question (see footnote 3), pp. 162–163.

26 *Kievlianin*, 3 October 1874, p. 1.

27 "O tak nazyvaemym ukrainofil'skom dvizhenii," c. 1875, Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv Ukrainy, m. Kyiv (hereafter TsDIAUK), KMF-22, op. 1, d. 21.

28 The findings of the commission are contained in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (hereafter RGIA), f. 1282, op. 1, d. 374.

29 M. Hrushevs'kyi (Ed.): *Z pochyniv ukrains'koho sotsiialistychnoho rukhu*. Mykh. Drahomanov i zhenevs'kyi sotsiialistychnyi hrutok. Vienna 1922, p. 53.

was loyal to the empire. In the end, however, Shul'gin's provocation of a crisis within the Geographic Society had not only produced a schism between Little Russian activists who remained loyal to the imperial state and a new group who embraced a Ukrainian nationalist and separatist program; it also created a division within his own family that would last for generations. The discord that rocked Shul'gin's professional networks and family late in his life foreshadowed the ways in which his ideas would unwittingly destabilize the empire that he hoped to save.

D. I. Pikhno, the Little Russian Idea, and Mass Politics

By the time that Ukrainian nationalists began to distinguish themselves from the Little Russian lobby, Vitalii Shul'gin lay on his deathbed. It would fall to Dmitrii Ivanovich Pikhno (1853–1913)—a professor of economics at Kiev University and the man to whom Shul'gin turned over control of *Kievlianin* in 1878—to determine the future of the newspaper and the Little Russian idea. The succession was overshadowed by controversies: Pikhno quickly married Shul'gin's widow Mariia, and was rumored to be the father of Vasili, the infant to whom Mariia had given birth just before her late husband's death. Following Mariia's death several years later, Pikhno eloped with his own step-daughter (Vitalii Shul'gin's biological daughter)—a union that Ober Procurator K. P. Pobedonostsev himself later intervened to annul.³⁰ Although these scandals impugned Pikhno's reputation, the influence of *Kievlianin* continued to grow under his direction. The paper became not only the premier media outlet in the southwest but also an influential voice in imperial politics whose circulation would surpass five million by the early twentieth century.³¹

If Vitalii Shul'gin regarded himself as the defender of the Little Russian peasantry, Pikhno could claim to be a man of the people himself. The son of a poor petty trader from the right bank and a pupil at one of the earliest schools run by *Hromada* activists, Pikhno was open about and proud of his humble beginnings.³² He was determined to lift his Little Russian comrades out of poverty and suffering, but he insisted that the capitalist take-off then transforming the southwest complicated rather than facilitated this task. In his academic publications, Pikhno traced how the state's economic

³⁰ Sidney Harcave (Ed.): *The Memoirs of Count Witte*. Armonk 1990, pp. 82–83.

³¹ "Spisok povremennym izdaniiam, vypushchennye v svet v g. Kieve v 1906 g.," TsDIAUK, f. 295, op. 1, d. 139, l. 3.

³² O. Levits'kyi: "Storinka z zhyttia Volodymyra Antonovycha." Instytut rukopysu, Natsional'na biblioteka Ukrainy im. V. I. Vernads'koho (hereafter IR NBUV) I. 8076; V. S. Ikonnikov (Ed.): *Biograficheskii slovar' professor i prepodavatelei imperatorskogo universiteta Sv. Vladimira (1834–1884)*. Kiev 1884, p. 553.

policies had enriched bankers, sugar magnates, and railroad industrialists while forsaking the toiling masses.³³ Translating his ideas to a lay audience in the pages of *Kievlianin*, Pikhno fused his critique of the capitalist system with Shul'gin's earlier narratives of Little Russian suffering under "foreign exploitation." But in contrast to Shul'gin, who had presented the feudal system allegedly supported by Polish landed interests as the primary threat to the welfare of the masses, Pikhno now denounced Jews engaged in the capitalist marketplace as the new oppressors of the *narod*—in his words, a "kulak nation that is strong by virtue of its unity, solidarity, single faith, beliefs, and views and has mastered the art of exploiting all non-Jews for more than ten decades."³⁴

Yet alongside these harsh denunciations of the "enemies" of the Little Russian people, the populist and liberationist rhetoric expressed in earlier manifestations of the Little Russian idea survived. Pikhno's *Kievlianin* took a hard line against "Ukrainian separatists" such as Dragomanov, whom the paper excoriated as servants of "foreign" plots.³⁵ Nevertheless, *Kievlianin* remained a reliable voice of Little Russian patriotism, praising the "unique features of the southern Russian people"—which it presented as the purest expression of East Slavic traditions and a source of inspiration for local peasants struggling to resist foreign incursions.³⁶ Pikhno and his paper called for political reforms, including the introduction of *zemstva* in the southwest and new initiatives to expand peasants' access to land, cheap credit, and education. However, he insisted that these reforms should be carried out in a "national" spirit that would benefit only the "native" residents of the region—and not the Poles and Jews who allegedly had exploited the East Slavs for centuries.³⁷ Pikhno had begun to build a movement that was at once reformist, populist, anti-liberal, and nationalist on the foundations of Shul'gin's efforts to marshal Little Russian culture in the service of the de-polonizing state.

In the last years of the nineteenth century, the southwest's industrialists, liberal intellectuals, and supporters of the Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian national causes began to join together to contest the claims made by prominent Little Russian acti-

33 D. I. Pikhno: *Kommercheskie operatsii Gosudarstvennogo Banka*. Kiev 1876; D. I. Pikhno: *O svobode mezhdunarodnoi torgovli i protektsionizme*. Kiev 1889; D.I. Pikhno: *Po povodu polemiki o deshevom khlebe*. Kiev 1897.

34 The quote is from: "Evrei i trudiashchiasia massa v nashem krae." In: *Kievlianin*, 20 March 1881, p. 1. See also *Kievlianin*, 18 February 1883, p. 2; "Sakharnoe proizvodstvo i normirovka." In: *Kievlianin*, 21 January 1894, p. 1; "Zasedanie sakharozavodchikov." In: *Kievlianin*, 11 January 1894, p. 3.

35 "Narodnaia shkola na iuge rossii." In: *Kievlianin*, 14 February 1881, p. 1; Andrei Ivanov, "Po povodu khokhlomanii." In: *Kievlianin*, 20 March 1881, p. 2.

36 The quote is from N. Petrov: "O stepeni samobytnosti ukrainskoi literatury." In: *Kievlianin*, 20 March 1881, p. 1.

37 For example, *Kievlianin*, 26 April 1881, p. 1; "Kredit i sel'skoe khoziastvo." In: *Kievlianin*, 24 February 1883, p. 1; *Kievlianin*, 18 February 1883, p. 1; "Eshche raz o volostnykh sudakh." In: *Kievlianin*, 27 April 1882, p. 1; "Obkhod novago zakona o evreiiakh." In: *Kievlianin*, 5 May 1882, p. 1.

vists. By 1905, this local coalition had become part of the all-imperial “Liberation Movement,” which spearheaded a revolution demanding basic civil rights for all imperial subjects. Amidst the political turmoil, *Kievlianin* became an important gathering place for the opponents of the Liberation Movement. The paper’s contributors, who continued to present themselves as the defenders of the *narod*, pressed for major political, social, and economic reforms. They insisted, however, that the equal rights platform endorsed by the liberationists would enslave the Orthodox masses; only anti-liberal reforms that undermined the privileges enjoyed by Poles, Jews, and other minorities, benefiting the East Slavs alone, could be considered legitimate.³⁸ In the disputes between Kiev’s Little Russian activists and their liberationist opponents, defenses of local particularism and imperial patriotism were increasingly articulated in the language of Russian nationalism. Many *Kievlianin* contributors proclaimed themselves “true Russians”—a term that signaled their devotion to tsarist traditions, their opposition to the Liberation Movement, and their resistance to “foreign” influence.³⁹

Indeed, the turmoil of the revolution seems to have expanded *Kievlianin*’s readership and profile dramatically. The newspaper’s archive contains hundreds of letters and cartoons sent to the paper’s editors by residents of the southwest, some of whom were barely literate.⁴⁰ Many of these correspondents praised the paper for presiding over the creation of a vibrant, anti-liberal public sphere in the southwest; one woman who claimed that she had previously been apolitical celebrated the publication’s role in teaching her what it meant to be a “truly Russian citizen.”⁴¹ Readers of *Kievlianin* from many walks of life now entered the orbit of the Shul’gin-Pikhno family, coming to share the clan’s political views as well as its pride in defending the empire.

However, the paper and its readers also deepened the divides that had emerged in southwestern society. Contributors to the organ defined themselves against a variety of others—Poles, Armenians, revolutionaries, and socialists—but they reserved special vitriol for Jews, whom they branded as both capitalist oppressors *and* dangerous revolutionaries bent on destroying the empire.⁴² During the three-day pogrom that ravaged Kiev in the aftermath of the October manifesto, rioters momentarily halted their violent acts to gather in front of *Kievlianin*’s headquarters. There, they waved portraits of the tsar, sang patriotic hymns, and cheered Pikhno prior to resu-

38 For more on the anti-liberal concept of liberation that developed in Kiev, see Hillis, *Children of Rus’* (see footnote 7), pp. 146–169.

39 See, for example, D. I. Pikhno: V Osade: Politicheskie stat’i. Kiev 1905; *Kievlianin*, 25 November 1905, p. 4; *Kievlianin*, 26 November 1905, p. 4; *Kievlianin*, 27 November 1905, p. 3; “Iz pisem v redaktsiiu,” In: *Kievlianin*, 8 November 1905, p. 2.

40 Many of these letters are contained in TsDIAUK, f. 296, op. 1, d. 2 and d. 27.

41 Ol’ga Chubina to D. I. Pikhno, 20 December 1905, TsDIAUK, f. 296, op. 1, d. 27, l. 149. There are dozens of letters in this file that express similar sentiments.

42 For example, *Kievlianin*, 1 October 1905, p. 3; “Sborishche v universitete.” In: *Kievlianin*, 9 October 1905, p. 3.

ming their attacks on Jewish homes and businesses.⁴³ Far from distancing himself from the violence, Pikhno celebrated the pogrom as the rightful revenge of a people whose “national sensibility” had been insulted by “foreign” domination.⁴⁴

Pikhno, Vasilii Shul’gin, and Russian Nationalism

Pikhno’s role in mobilizing self-professed “true Russians” amidst the unrest of 1905 endowed him with more influence than ever. In the winter of 1905–1906, as elections to the newly convened imperial Duma approached, he now worked to maintain the unity of his followers. He began to hold mass meetings that attracted hundreds of city residents at a time; these meetings, which convened in the impoverished urban periphery as well as in the city center, ultimately evolved into a formal political coalition that agreed to support a common slate of “truly Russian” candidates.⁴⁵ The anti-liberationist coalition that emerged from Kiev revealed *Kievlianin*’s intellectual influence: it railed against any equalization in the rights of minorities and denounced Ukrainian nationalists, even as it called for the democratization of politics, enhanced local self-governance, comprehensive land reform, and improved access to education and credit for Orthodox peasants.⁴⁶

Pikhno’s stepson, Vasilii Vital’evich Shul’gin (1878–1976), played a key role in post-1905 efforts to advance the “truly Russian cause.” A recent graduate of Kiev University law school and a frequent contributor to *Kievlianin*, Vasilii took pride in his family’s political legacy, claiming to be the inheritor of the mission formulated by the dual father figures in his life—Vitalii Shul’gin and Dmitrii Pikhno. Yet Vasilii Shul’gin was not only devoted to the past; he was also a consummately modern man—a brilliant political strategist who understood how to mobilize the curious mixture of imperial loyalism and local patriotism that had defined the Little Russian idea of the nineteenth century in defense of a Russian nationalist project suited for the twentieth.⁴⁷

The “truly Russian” bloc performed poorly in the elections to the first Duma, soundly defeated by a coalition of liberals and progressive Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian parties, who elected a Kadet to the city’s Duma seat.⁴⁸ In response to this setback, Kiev’s “truly Russian” activists redoubled their mobilizing efforts. *Kievlianin* contri-

43 Report of Police Chief Tskhotskii to Civil Governor Savvich, 26 October 1905, TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 855, d. 391, ch. 1, ll. 121–123ob.

44 Editorial of 19 October 1905, reprinted in Pikhno, *V Osade* (see footnote 39), pp. 48–49.

45 On one such meeting that attracted hundreds in late 1905, see *Kievlianin*, 2 January 1906, p. 4.

46 On party meetings and platforms, see Hillis, *Children of Rus’* (see footnote 7), pp. 181–210.

47 On Vasilii Shul’gin’s self-styling: “Avtobiografiia Vasiliiia Vitaliavichia Shul’gina,” 1932–1933, Hoover Archives [hereafter HA] Maria Vrangeli Collection, Box 19, Folder 37. On his early years, see D. O. Zaslavskii: *Rytsar’ chernoi sotni: V. V. Shul’gin*. Leningrad 1925.

48 “Izbitatel’naia kompaniia v Kieve.” In: *Kievskaiia zaria*, 26 March 1906, p. 3.

butors organized a network of “Russian nationalist” workers’ unions, women’s clubs, voluntary associations, and penny papers aimed at Kiev’s urban masses.⁴⁹ Shul’gin and Pikhno convened the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists, which boasted nearly a thousand members (ranging from gentry to clergy, urban intellectuals, workers, and women from all walks of life) within a few years of its founding.⁵⁰ By the fall of 1906, Kiev’s “truly Russian” coalition had amassed 10,000 active supporters, a victory that encouraged its leaders to expand their sights beyond the city.⁵¹ Shul’gin and Pikhno organized all-regional conferences to unite their sympathizers and held voter mobilization drives across the southwestern borderlands.⁵² They forged close contacts with monks at Volyniia’s rural Pochaev monastery, who created extensive networks of anti-liberationist unions and parties and published pamphlets imploring Little Russian peasants to save the empire from foreign domination.⁵³

In the wake of these new mobilizing efforts, self-professed “Russian nationalist” activists began to secure electoral victories. In the elections to the second Duma, Kiev city chose as its representative an Orthodox bishop who had been a reliable supporter of the anti-liberationist coalition. The “truly Russian” movement performed well in Volyniia, too. Twelve of the 13 peasants, priests, and landowners elected by that province’s overwhelmingly rural voters declared themselves “true Russians”; the most prominent was V. V. Shul’gin, who had acquired a small estate there.⁵⁴ The southwest’s Russian nationalists performed better still in the elections to the third Duma; 36 of the region’s 41 Duma representatives aligned themselves with the Russian nationalist cause.⁵⁵ By 1907, right-bank Ukraine had become one of the most staun-

49 “Sobranie chlenov ‘kassy zhertv dolga.’” In: *Kievlianin*, 23 October 1906, p. 3; “Strakhovanie monarkhistov ot revoliutsionerov.” In: *Zakon i Pravda*, 11 October 1906, p. 3; “Zibrannia robitnikiv.” In: *Rada*, 25 September 1906, p. 3.

50 *Sbornik kluba russkikh natsionalistov*. Vol. 3. Kiev 1911, p. 59; Robert Edelman: *Gentry Politics on the Eve of the Russian Revolution: The Nationalist Party, 1907–1917*. New Brunswick 1980, p. 113.

51 The statistic is from: I. V. Omel’ianchuk: *Chernosotennoe dvizhenie na territorii Ukrainy (1904–1914 gg.)*. Kiev 2000, p. 63.

52 “Oblasnyi z’ezd ‘russkykh’ vybortsiv pivdenno-zakhidnoho kraiu.” In: *Rada*, 22 November 1906, p. 3; “Oblastnoi s’ezd Russkikh izbiratelei v Kieve.” In: *Kievlianin*, 21 November, 1906, p. 3.

53 Archbishop Vitalii: *Chto ia pomniu o sebe*. In: Archbishop Vitalii (Ed.): *Motivy moey zhizni*. Jordanville 1955, p. 180. See also N. D. Talberg: *The Life’s Journey of Archbishop Vitaly*. In: *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* No.3 (1959), p. 4.

54 Information culled from M. M. Boiovich: *Chleny Gosudarstvennoi Dumy. Portrety i biografii*. 2-oi sozyv. 1907–1912 g. Moscow 1907.

55 Electoral manipulation played a role in these successes. Counter-reforms that enhanced the power of the empire’s wealthy (and mostly conservative) landowners were implemented in many parts of the borderlands in 1907. In some corners of the southwest, Russian nationalists successfully lobbied St. Petersburg to organize the electorate on a national basis, offering expanded electoral rights to Orthodox East Slavs from all walks of life and diminishing the power of Poles and Jews. (More will be said about this campaign below.) But it was precisely the growing influence exercised by nationalist activists that permitted them to promote this change in the first place.

chly anti-liberationist and Russian nationalist regions in the entire Russian empire.⁵⁶ “Truly Russian” activists across the southwest celebrated this accomplishment, claiming that “ancient Kiev” again had intervened to save Orthodoxy, East Slavic civilization, and the imperial state from “foreign” threats.⁵⁷

Mass media, grassroots political agitation, and effective lobbying had allowed several generations of the Shul’gin family to reconcile imperial rule with local customs, and ultimately, to mobilize local residents behind a mass-oriented Russian nationalist movement created on the foundations of the Little Russian idea. Eventually, the Russian nationalism peddled by Dmitrii Pikhno and Vasilii Shul’gin itself began to create new forms of sociability, forging connections between priests, urban intellectuals, and rural peasants. Having established themselves as the dominant political force in the southwest by 1907, Pikhno and Shul’gin would increasingly turn their attention beyond the borderlands, hoping to spread the national ideas that had coalesced on the empire’s periphery to the rest of the empire.

Little Russian Patriotism, Russian Nationalism, and the Provincialization of the Center

In the aftermath of their electoral victories in the southwest, Shul’gin and Pikhno focused their efforts on expanding the unique brand of Russian nationalism that had coalesced in the right bank across the empire. Because both men had by then assumed prominent positions in the imperial government—the former had become one of the Duma’s most flamboyant orators, while the latter was appointed to the State Council in 1906—they were well placed to do so.

Pikhno and Shul’gin used their influence to spur the creation of new Russian nationalist lobbying organizations. In 1909 they helped to found a formal political party, the All-Russian National Union. The party’s agenda was informed by the curious mixture of populism, imperial loyalism, and anti-liberalism that had guided the Little Russian lobby since the days of Vitalii Shul’gin. Demanding progressive reforms that would benefit the Orthodox East Slavs—including a national parliament elected by a broad franchise, enhanced local self-government, universal elementary education,

56 Data culled from 3-ii sozyv Gosudarstvennoi Dumy. Portrety. Biografii. Avtografii. St Petersburg 1910. Several decades ago, Robert Edelman noted the strength of the Russian nationalist movement in the southwest, but he described this party’s base as conservative nobles. See Edelman, *Gentry Politics* (see footnote 50). As I have argued here and elsewhere, the southwest’s Russian nationalist movement (and the party that later developed out of it) was directed by urban professionals and aimed at the masses; it was relatively late in the movement’s history—between 1906–1908—that a conservative noble contingent joined its ranks.

57 The quote is from: “Provody chlena Gosudarstvennoi Dumy ot Kievna, preosviashchennogo Platona, episkopa Chigirinskogo.” In: *Kievskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti* 7 (1907), p. 157.

and increased support for workers and peasants—it also insisted that the influence of the empire’s non-Orthodox minorities must be reduced.⁵⁸ Although the southwest remained the center of Russian nationalist agitation, the ideas that the region produced managed to attain all-imperial prominence. The Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists established several local chapters beyond the borderlands; within a year of its founding, the All-Russian National Union had become the second-largest party in the Duma and Prime Minister P. A. Stolypin’s main partner in government.⁵⁹

As the lobbying organizations that they had built expanded their influence, Pikhno and Shul’gin launched a campaign to reorganize imperial governance structures on a national rather than an estate basis. In 1909, Pikhno sponsored a bill in the State Council that would limit the electoral power of Poles in the western borderlands.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, Shul’gin called for the introduction of nationalized *zemstva* in nine western provinces, which would dramatically expand the franchise of Orthodox East Slavs while limiting the role that Poles and Jews could play in the institution.⁶¹ The Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists and the All-Russian National Union vociferously supported both measures, urging politicians as well as the general public to support the bills.⁶² Stolypin himself soon introduced an only slightly modified version of Shul’gin’s plans on the floor of the Duma, touting their potential to save the “Russian-Slavic” people and the empire they had created from the clutches of Jewish and “Polish-Latin” civilization.⁶³

Dmitrii Pikhno and Vasilii Shul’gin fervently believed that they were continuing the family tradition of reconciling the interests of their native southwest region with that of the empire. Yet multiple critics representing a range of viewpoints suggested otherwise, insisting that their plans to nationalize the empire would encourage ethnic strife between the diverse residents of the borderlands, deprive whole segments of the population of fundamental political rights, and permit illiterate peasants to exercise political power that they were not yet prepared to handle.⁶⁴ Although Stolypin agreed to some slight modifications to placate his critics, he continued to support the basic premises of the *zemstvo* bill first advocated by Shul’gin. The bill, which in final

58 “Proekt platformy, ob’ediniavshchei russkikh narodnykh natsionalistov,” (1911 pamphlet with no further publication information), pp. 1–4; “Russkaia natsional’naia fraktsiia.” In: *Rossiiia*. 27 October 1909, p. 1; “Otkrytie Vserossiiskogo natsional’nogo kluba.” In: *Kievlianin*, 3 December 1909, pp. 2–3.

59 Of the State Duma delegates who affiliated themselves with the National Union, 37 self-identified as Great Russians, 35 as Little Russians, and 15 as Belarusians. See *Natsionalisty v 3-ei Gosudarstvennoi Dume*. St. Petersburg 1912, p. 141.

60 “K voprosu ob izmenii zakona o vybore chlenov Gosudarstvennogo Soveta v Severo-Zapadnom krae.” In: *Okrainy Rossii*, 11 April 1909, pp. 209–211.

61 V. Shul’gin: *Vybornoe zemstvo v Iugo-zapadnom krae*. Kiev 1909.

62 *Sbornik kluba russkikh natsionalistov*. Vol. 1. Kiev 1909, pp. 55–57.

63 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 5, d. 73, ll. 774–775; 778–786.

64 E. S.: *Istoricheskoe znachenie “Kievskogo Zapadno-Russkogo S”ezda”* 4, 5, i 6 oktiabria 1909 g. Kiev 1909; “Prozorlivtsy iz ‘Dziennik’a Kijowsk’ago [sic].” In: *Kievlianin*, 1 November 1909, p. 2.

form established nationalized *zemstva* in six western provinces and set the economic thresholds that qualified Orthodox East Slavs to vote at half the level of other provinces, easily passed through the Duma. However, an unusual coalition that united Kadets, Polish deputies, and more traditional conservatives defeated the bill in the State Council.⁶⁵ *Kievlianin* printed furious protests (many from members of the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists and the All-Russian National Union) complaining that the bill's defeat guaranteed that "Western Rus" would become "Polish property."⁶⁶ Bowing to this ongoing pressure from his allies in the southwest, a week later, Stolypin promulgated the bill through extra-legislative means.

The implementation of the western *zemstvo* reform was the Russian nationalists' greatest success to date. Having built an all-imperial nationalist project on the basis of much older efforts to marshal Little Russian culture in defense of the empire, Pikhno and Shul'gin had provincialized the empire, projecting the concerns of the periphery onto the imperial body politic at large. However, this victory also laid bare the challenges that faced the two men. Opponents on the left as well as the right continued to complain that the southwest's Russian nationalists destabilized the foundations of the empire rather than reinforced them. Meanwhile, tensions had begun to emerge within the nationalist movement, reducing Pikhno and Shul'gin's influence within it. The most extreme nationalists (including the Pochaev monks) now claimed that the government and even Pikhno had not done enough to protect East Slavs from the racial threats supposedly posed by Poles and Jews.⁶⁷ Peasants and workers, who had been an important constituency in the nationalist movement since 1905, expressed similar frustrations, challenging the mostly bourgeois, urban professionals who ran the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists for control of the movement.⁶⁸

The final challenge that faced Pikhno and Shul'gin harkened back to the family drama of the 1870s, when Iakov Shul'gin had disowned his uncle and reinterpreted the Little Russian idea in a Ukrainian nationalist vein. In the years after the 1905 revolution, Iakov's son (and Vasilii Shul'gin's cousin), who preferred to go by the Ukrainian version of his name, Oleksandr Shul'hyn (1889–1960), emerged as an eloquent spokesman for the Ukrainian nationalist project. Although the influence of Russian nationalism far overshadowed that of Ukrainian nationalism in the right bank, Oleksandr and his compatriots doggedly worked to promote the Ukrainian language and to create the political and cultural foundations on which a Ukrainian nation could eventually be built. Oleksandr thus continued the long family tradi-

⁶⁵ Stenograficheskii otchet. Gosudarstvennyi sovet. Sessia VI (St. Petersburg 1911), pp. 155–157, pp. 1998–1239.

⁶⁶ Quote from *Kievlianin*, 8 March 1911, p. 2. See also Weeks, *Nation and State* (see footnote 1), pp. 139–151.

⁶⁷ For example, *Dvuglavyi orel*, 20 March 1911, p. 1; clipping from *Volynskaia zemlia*, 8 August 1912, in TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 665, d. 101b, ch. III, l. 57.

⁶⁸ On these tensions, see F. Postnyi to Chief of Kiev Okhrana, August 1911, TsDIAUK, f. 275, op. 1, d. 2534, l. 2; Savenko to Chernov, 20 July 1911, IR NBUV, f. 167, no. 99, 1ob-3.

tion of highlighting the unique cultural traditions of the Ukrainian lands, while actively combating the claims of his cousin Vasiliï that the right bank was “truly Russian” in spirit.⁶⁹

A week after Stolypin implemented the western *zemstvo* bill, children playing in a working-class district of Kiev found the corpse of a young boy covered with multiple shallow wounds. The most radical segments of the southwest’s Russian nationalists immediately seized on this discovery, charging that murder had been perpetrated by Jews as part of a blood ritual. Although the local authorities initially expressed skepticism about these claims, they eventually relented in the face of vociferous protests by mobilized nationalists, who repeatedly threatened to incite a pogrom.⁷⁰ By summer, the local authorities charged Mendel Beilis, a Jewish employee of an enterprise adjacent to the land where the boy’s body was found, with the murder.⁷¹

Pikhno and Shul’gin had served as the major theoreticians of a Russian nationalist movement whose members had justified attacks on Jews as acts of patriotic resistance. Now, however, they distanced themselves from the movement’s ever more radical and violent impulses, dismissing the blood ritual allegations as mere “legends.”⁷² Yet in spite of their interventions, the nationalist movement continued to spin out of control. The Pochaev monks and extremist Duma deputies declared Jews the “enemies of Russia and its state structure.”⁷³ Peasants who aligned themselves with the nationalist movement gathered to denounce their Jewish neighbors.⁷⁴ Radical Russian nationalist organizations rapidly proliferated in the southwest; many established their own publishing houses and trade schools and even organized strikes against Polish landlords and Jewish long-term leaseholders.⁷⁵ By 1911, the ultra-nationalist Union of Russian People operated 117 chapters with more than 20,000 active members in Kiev province alone.⁷⁶

In 1913, when the Beilis case finally went to trial, Vasiliï Shul’gin again attempted to reclaim control of the nationalist movement. Having become the editor of *Kievliia-*

69 On Oleksandr Shul’gin’s youth and political awakening, see Volodymyr Ianev: “Uryvky iz spohadiv Oleksandra Iakovycha Shul’hyna.” In: Ianev, *Zbirnyk* (see footnote 5), pp. 199–308.

70 Kiev Governor A. F. Girs to Governor-General F. F. Trepov, 31 March 1911, TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 641, d. 2, ch. 1, ll. 180-180ob; Presentation of G. G. Chaplinskii to Kiev District Court, 16 April 1911, in TsDIAUK, f. 317, op. 1. d. 5482, l. 6ob.

71 Chaplinskii to Kiev district court, 16 April 1911, TsDIAUK, f. 317, op. 1. d. 5482, ll. 6–8.

72 See the clippings in *Ibid.*, l. 9.

73 Quote is from Gosudarstvennaia дума. Stenograficheskie otchety. 1911 goda. Sessiia piataia chast’ 1. Zasedaniia 1-41. St Petersburg 1911, p. 27. On the monks, see “Pered Vyborami.” In: *Rech’*, 3 July 1912, TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 665, d. 101b, ch. III, l. 46.

74 Petition of residents of Iablunovetskii district of Kiev province, RGIA, f. 786, op. 1, d. 1192, d. 26.

75 Office of Kiev Province Direction to Girs, 2 August 1911, TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 861, d. 102, ll. 5-11ob; Memorandum of the Chief of the Kiev Province Gendarme Direction, 6 October 1911, in *Ibid.*, l. 20; “S Kievshchiny,” clipping from *Russkoe znamia*, 2 August 1912, in *Ibid.*, l. 119.

76 Undated letter of Metropolitan Flavian, TsDIAUK, f. 127, op. 789, d. 743, l. 2.

nin following Pikhno's July 1913 death, Shul'gin used the paper to denounce his fellow nationalists for promoting mass violence and persecuting an innocent man.⁷⁷ Shul'gin explained that he was no defender of Jews, who he claimed had seized control of the "press, liberal professions, trade, and capital," and had "Yiddified" Russian culture by replacing traditional Orthodox values with capitalist exploitation and revolutionary violence. As much as he deplored "Jewish psychology" and "Jewish ethics," however, he insisted that implicating "Yids" in absurd medieval legends detracted from efforts to build a "healthy and sensible anti-Semitism" and to forge a Russian nation strong enough to resist alleged Jewish onslaughts.⁷⁸ The ultimate acquittal of Beilis partially vindicated Shul'gin, but he became more isolated than ever in the trial's aftermath. His one-time comrades denounced him as a crypto-Judeophile and a traitor to the *narod*; he even served time in prison for his critique of imperial officials' conduct during the Beilis affair.⁷⁹

In the months following the verdict, the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists and the Nationalist Party were rent by crisis, as radical intellectuals, workers, and peasants defected from the organizations that Shul'gin had built.⁸⁰ These dissidents began to create new political organizations and press organs that presented Jews as racial enemies of the East Slavic simple folk—adversaries whose deleterious influence could only be overcome by their complete exclusion from public life.⁸¹ On the eve of the First World War, Vasili Shul'gin could no longer claim to control the nationalist movement that his family had helped to define.

The Shul'gin Family and the End of the Empire

In spite of the high price that he paid for his public opposition to the prosecution of Beilis, the beginning of World War I renewed Shul'gin's hopes that the Russian national project developing within the empire could still be saved. Like many Russian patriots, he volunteered for military service and was sent to the Eastern Front. Within several months, however, he was injured, which forced him to leave the war zone. Fol-

⁷⁷ *Kievlianin*, 27 September 1913, p. 1.

⁷⁸ "Antisemitizm." In: *Kievlianin*, 15 October 1913, p. 2.

⁷⁹ "Otkrytoe pis'mo redaktoru 'Kievlianina'." In: *Dvuglavyi orel*, 4 October 1913, p. 3; "Otkrytoe pis'mo redaktoru gazety 'Kievlianin' V. Shul'ginu." In: *Dvuglavyi orel*, 5 October 1913, p. 2. "Prigovor po delu V. V. Shul'gin." In: *Kievskaiia mys'*, 5 February 1914, p. 2.

⁸⁰ "V klube russkikh natsionalistov." In: *Kievlianin*, 15 December 1913, p. 6; "V Klube russkikh natsionalistov," In: *Kievlianin*, 19 December 1913, p. 4.

⁸¹ A. Tregubov to Flavian, 24 October 1913, RGIA, f. 796, op. 205, d. 739, l. 1; *Dvuglavyi orel*, 1 December 1913, p. 1. I. A. Sikorskii, the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists member who conducted the autopsy on the body of the boy killed in Kiev, played an influential role in popularizing the language of scientific racism among the southwest's Russian nationalists. For more on his views and influence, see Marina Mogil'ner: *Homo imperii*. Moscow 2008, pp. 237–278.

lowing his recovery, he returned to St. Petersburg to continue his work in the Duma. However, he soon grew dismayed by the ineffective leadership that he believed had compromised the government's war effort. In 1915, he joined the Progressive Bloc, a newly formed coalition of politicians from the left and the right that demanded key military and political reforms from the government.⁸²

Vasilii Shul'gin, whose family had attempted to unify and strengthen the tsarist empire by mobilizing the Russian nation, had by 1915 become one of the most perceptive critics of the regime's weaknesses. Appropriately enough, Shul'gin was present at the moment of the empire's demise: he was one of the two Duma delegates dispatched to a railroad car on the Eastern Front to convince Tsar Nicholas II to abdicate the throne in February 1917.

Ever the intellectual entrepreneur, Vasilii Shul'gin continued his efforts to build a Russian nation on the ruins of the old regime. He returned to Kiev in mid-1917 to organize Russian nationalist parties, which scored major victories in the city's free and fair elections to the Constituent Assembly.⁸³ In 1918, he joined the White Army and helped to organize its intelligence bureau. In this capacity, he and his associates continued to draw up plans for a post-war national order that would guarantee equality and prosperity for ordinary East Slavs—and minimize the influence of their putative national enemies.⁸⁴ But Vasilii Shul'gin now faced competition not only from the liberals, anarchists, socialists, Zionists, and Bolsheviks vying for control of the Ukrainian lands, but also from his cousin, Oleksandr, who became a prominent politician in the independent Ukrainian state that emerged from the revolution. Much to Vasilii's dismay, Oleksandr continued to insist that Ukraine was a separate nation that deserved independence from its larger neighbors. Although Oleksandr Shul'hyn primarily associated this nation with its ethnic Ukrainian majority, he also supported the rights of Poles, Jews, and other minorities to participate in its political life.⁸⁵

Forced to flee the Bolshevik regime for European exile in the early '20s, the cousins would continue their polemics against each other for decades. Oleksandr, who settled first in Prague and later in Paris, continued to conduct research on Ukrainian history and remained active in attempts to restore Ukraine's independence.⁸⁶ After short stays in Bulgaria, Germany, and France, Vasilii Shul'gin settled in Bel-

82 On the collapse of the Nationalist Party and the participation of its more moderate members in the Progressive Bloc, see Edelman, *Gentry Politics* (see footnote 50), pp. 181–217.

83 Steven L. Guthrie: *The Popular Base of Ukrainian Nationalism in 1917*. In: *Slavic Review* 38, No.1 (1979), p. 43. For more on Shul'gin's views and activities in this period, see the journal *Malaia Rus'*, which he edited in 1918.

84 HA, Vrangeli' Collection, Box 29, folders 4, 14, 15, 18, 20. See also Peter Kenez: *Civil War in South Russia, 1918–1919: The Defeat of the Whites*. Berkeley 1977, pp. 65–71; Victor Bortnevskii: *White Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence during the Civil War*. In: *The Carl Beck Papers* 108 (1995).

85 Alexandre Choulguine: *Les problèmes de l'Ukraine*. Paris 1919.

86 Alexandre Choulguine: *L'Ukraine contre Moscou, 1917*. Paris 1935; Oleksandr Shul'hyn (Ed.): *Cours d'histoire de l'Ukraine*. Paris 1959.

grade. Radicalized by the trauma of war and revolution, he now saw Bolshevism as a Jewish plot that endeavored to destroy the Slavic race. Increasingly, he looked to the fascist parties coalescing across the continent as the force best suited to deliver Russia from this threat.⁸⁷ Although Shul'gin had become as ideologically extreme as the nationalist activists whom he had denounced in 1913, the traces of the Little Russian idea remained evident in his thinking. Indeed, on the occasion of Hitler's annexation of Austria, Shul'gin insisted that the Cossacks of his beloved "Little Russia" had invented fascism in the seventeenth century, citing their efforts to unify the Orthodox East Slavs and to expel foreign elements from "truly Russian" land.⁸⁸ The Little Russian idea and the anti-liberal, mass-oriented Russian nationalism to which it had given rise were creations of the tsarist old regime—and unwitting agents in its demise. But they also proved remarkably adaptable to the violent new world that took shape in the twentieth century.

In the end, the story of the Shul'gin-Pikhno family might be read as a biography of the empire itself—a means of tracing its political trajectory over the long nineteenth century, ascertaining the causes of its collapse, and tracing its lasting influences after its implosion. The experience of the first several generations of the family reveals that the empire did not only rely on administrative centralization and brute force to consolidate its territorial acquisitions; it also effectively built consensus on the local level. Through the mid-nineteenth century, Vitalii Shul'gin and other residents of the southwest successfully managed to reconcile their local traditions with imperial rule—and even came to see the imperial state as the protector of regional customs. Although the regime's efforts to centralize and standardize its governance practices intensified in the late nineteenth century, opportunities for individuals to reconcile local, national, and imperial interests—and even to shape the values and practices of St. Petersburg in consequential ways—did not disappear. Indeed, it was in the early twentieth century that the nationalist public sphere forged by Dmitrii Pikhno and Vasilii Shul'gin acquired its maximum influence and achieved its greatest successes.

However, the story of the Pikhno-Shul'gin family also reveals the limits of innovation within the Russian empire. In the end, its attempts to unify the population of the southwest under the auspices of an East Slavic nation that supported the tsar unwittingly produced centrifugal forces that undermined imperial stability and created political and personal discord within the family. The demise of the empire proved catastrophic for the Russian as well as the Ukrainian branches of the clan, creating an irresolvable rift between the two sides and forcing both to flee their homeland. Alt-

87 On racial rhetoric: V. V. Shul'gin: *Chto nam v nikh ne nraivit'sia: ob antisemitizme v Rossii*. Paris 1929. Peter Kenez characterizes Shul'gin's views as "proto-fascist" as early as 1919. See Kenez, *Civil War* (see footnote 84), p. 66. On Shul'gin's admiration for Mussolini, see O. V. Budnitskii (Ed.): *Spor o Rossii*. Moscow 2012, p. 211.

88 V. V. Shul'gin: *Anschluss i my*. Belgrade 1938.

though the simultaneous dissolution of the tsarist empire and the Shul'gin/Shul'hyn family marked an end to this story in many respects, it also created opportunities for new beginnings. Traveling with southwestern activists who fled the ruins of the old regime, the by-products of the Little Russian idea and the Russian national idea to which it gave rise would help shape a new era of extremism and ideological polarization in the interwar years.