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## MYKOLA KOSTOMAROV (1817–1885) AND THE CREATION OF A UKRAINIAN ETHNIC IDENTITY

David Saunders

In the month of his death Mykola Kostomarov attacked Mikhail Koialovich's *History of Russian Self-Consciousness from Historical Memorials and Academic Works*. He believed that the author of what he repeatedly called this 'book with a queer title' (*kniga s mudrenym zaglaviem*) had subordinated the pursuit of historical truth to the propagation of his political convictions. Koialovich ought not to have mocked Gerhard Friedrich Müller's dictum that 'A historian must appear to be without a fatherland, without a faith, without a ruler'. Kostomarov thought the dictum so admirable that he re-stated it in his own words:

a historian must not dare to say in his historical works something that, in conscience, he considers incompatible with the truth, however necessary it appears to be for the good of the ruler to whom he has sworn loyalty or the honour of the country he acknowledges as his fatherland.

To Koialovich's belief in the need for historians to be avowedly tendentious Kostomarov opposed the view that 'In all probability, to judge by his own example, the author is unwilling to allow that there can be completely untendentious writers (*pisateli bez vsiakoi tendentsii*), or that writers can at least try to be completely untendentious'.<sup>1</sup>

Kostomarov had first attacked Koialovich twenty years earlier.<sup>2</sup> He seems to have disliked him for somehow managing to combine a conscious sense of his Belorussian ethnicity with Russian nationalism.<sup>3</sup> The important thing about the essay of 1885, however, is not the insight it offers into a long-forgotten academic rivalry. Rather, it is the evidence it provides for the view that, at the end of his life, Kostomarov thought of himself as 'completely untendentious'. In youth he had been quite the reverse. His most celebrated composition of the 1840s, *Holy Writ* or the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* (*Zakon bozhii, Knyhy*

*buttia ukrains koho narodu*), gives the impression that he was an utterly intemperate Ukrainophile.

[It] presented the history of the world as a series of departures on the part of Jews, Greeks, Romans, speakers of Romance languages, Germans, Poles, and Russians from a divinely ordained principle that the affairs of a community ought to be managed by the community as a whole. When lords appeared, decline set in. [But] Ukrainians...had retained their primal feeling for democracy. They would surmount the trials to which they had been subjected and lead their neighbours back to the path of virtue.<sup>4</sup>

How could the man who, at the end of his life, indicted Koialovich for falsifying the historical record in the interest of a political conviction, be the same man who, forty years earlier, forced the history of the world into a pattern which made Ukrainians look like the people who were going to lead their fellow human beings out of darkness into light?

Many possible answers come to mind. Perhaps Kostomarov was tententious early in his career when he wrote the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* but became a sort of Casaubon-like dry-as-dust in the following forty years. In view of the fact that the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* was largely a translation from Mickiewicz, perhaps it should not be thought of as genuine evidence of Kostomarov's youthful opinions. However mistaken the outline of world history contained in the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People*, perhaps Kostomarov had convinced himself that it was true. If Kostomarov did not consider the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* to be a historical work, perhaps he did not feel that it had to exemplify the historiographical probity which, in later life, he believed Koialovich lacked. Perhaps Kostomarov simply applied one set of rules to people like Koialovich with whom he disagreed and another to himself. In view of the political environment in which he was obliged to conduct all his work as a historian, ethnographer, archivist, and public activist, perhaps working out whether he was fundamentally scrupulous or fundamentally propagandistic is simply impossible. Or perhaps, finally, Kostomarov behaved in one way when he was dealing with things that he considered to be peripheral to his main interests and another when he turned his attention to things he thought central.

What follows is an attempt to show that the last of these answers comes closest to the truth: Kostomarov behaved in one way when dealing with something which, to him, was a matter of only secondary importance (the history of the Russian Empire in general) and another

when concentrating on his principal concern (Ukraine). His chief objective, in this interpretation, was the separation of the identity of Ukrainians from that of the other peoples with whom their fortunes were entangled. In pursuit of the chief objective, he was prepared if not wholly to suspend the rules of scholarship, then at least to bend them. But because he did not pursue his chief objective continuously, he did not bend the rules all the time. After falling into the hands of the secret police in 1847 (for writing the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People*), he did not want to be prosecuted again. He needed, furthermore, to make a living. To survive, he had to hide the leaf of his Ukrainophilism in the forest of his activity in general. He put forward the opinions to which he was most deeply committed only in the brief periods when he thought it was safe to do so.

The implication of this interpretation is that, at heart, Kostomarov was a deeply committed Ukrainophile. This is a view to which, in public at least, Kostomarov himself objected strongly.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see, most secondary studies of Kostomarov have questioned it too. It is probably sensible, therefore, to begin by playing devil's advocate and sketching the case for the view that Kostomarov's Ukrainophilism was only short-lived or skin-deep.

It is certainly the case that between writing the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* in the mid-1840s and his death forty years later Kostomarov became a much more careful scholar. By the end, indeed, a refusal to accept things on trust was one of his most striking intellectual characteristics. He had become a debunker. His first obituarist, Volodymyr Antonovych, appears to have felt obliged in the course of a long encomium to devote some space to protecting Kostomarov's memory from the reputation he had acquired for extreme historiographical scepticism.<sup>6</sup> Sources persuaded him, on occasion, to change his mind, notably, perhaps, in respect of the origins of the Rus', a people whom in a celebrated public debate with Pogodin in the *Passazh* in St Petersburg in 1860 he held to be Lithuanian, but whom later he believed to be Slavs.<sup>7</sup> In the last part of his life sources seem to have interested him almost for their own sake. His only regular income between 1862 and 1885 came from being a member of the empire's 'Archaeographic Commission', in which capacity he edited many volumes in the series *Acts Relating to the History of Southern and Western Russia*.<sup>8</sup> In the 1870s he applied his editorial skills in addition, and for love, to three volumes of Pavlo Chubyns'kyi's mammoth *Works of the South-Western*

*Section of the Ethno-Statistical Expedition to the West-Russian Region.*<sup>9</sup> It is hard to escape the impression that by the later years of his life Kostomarov had turned into a sort of 'archive rat'. To judge by the expert assessment of Ivan Krypiakovich, he excelled in the part.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1840s, by contrast, Kostomarov appears to have been a dreamer. The circumstances of his childhood and youth may have inclined him to seek out alternative realities.<sup>11</sup> He was born a serf. His eyesight was poor. His non-serf father was murdered by peasants when he was eleven. His serf mother lost most of her material resources in the battle for the inheritance. He was freed from serfdom only in 1832. He needed special instruction in mathematics before gaining entry to Kharkiv University in 1833 (and was the only boy that year to gain entry from the gymnasium at Voronezh). Having enlisted in the army after graduation, he was asked to leave within weeks. The first dissertation he wrote for his master's degree was destroyed by government order. The second gained him the degree but was derided in the press.<sup>12</sup> He was not one of those favoured students whom, in the nineteenth-century Russian Empire, it was the practice for the authorities to keep on at university after they gained their master's degree in the expectation that they would become professors. He had to endure two years as a school-teacher in right-bank Ukraine before being appointed to a junior position on the staff of Kiev University in 1846. Above all, perhaps, he was uncertain, as a boy, of his ethnic affiliation. His father was Russian, his mother Ukrainian. The village in which he was brought up was inhabited by Ukrainians, but since it was due east of Kharkiv and due south of Voronezh it was a long way from the Ukrainian heartland. The wife whom he eventually married in 1875 (some thirty years after they met) wrote in 1903 that 'It is impossible to call the life of N.I. Kostomarov happy'.<sup>13</sup> She was speaking of her husband's life as a whole, but the early years were by no means easier than the later.

Kostomarov's response to his early tribulations seems to have been to single out the Ukrainian element in his make-up and develop it to a fault. His first real friends were academics at Kharkiv University who, in the 1830s, had responded to Nicholas I's declared enthusiasm for 'nationality' (*narodnost*) by rapidly accelerating the Russian Empire's first, tentative, and apolitical wave of Ukrainophilia. His first published work was a five-act play in Ukrainian which came out in Kharkiv in 1838. His second and successful dissertation, 'On the Historical Significance of Folk Poetry', was based almost entirely on Ukrainian folk

poetry rather than Russian (which was one of the reasons why it was derided in the thick journals of Moscow and St Petersburg). The group now known as the 'Kirillo-Methodian Society', in which he was a prime mover in Kiev in 1845 and 1846, was more aptly entitled the 'Ukraino-Slavonic Society' by the official investigators who dissected it in 1847. The very fact that it was a discussion circle rather than a conspiracy—the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* captured its utopianism perfectly—bears witness to the youthful Kostomarov's preference for the non-testable. It may be another sign of the young professor's preference for the abstract that his first scholarly monograph after the two master's dissertations was a book called *Slavonic Mythology* that came out in Kiev in the year of his circle's arrest.<sup>14</sup>

The argument so far makes Kostomarov look like a Ukraine-orientated visionary who, with the passage of time, suppressed his youthful enthusiasms and turned himself into a careful scholar. He was certainly traumatized by his arrest in 1847. The self-confidence he had built up with difficulty in Kharkiv and Kiev deserted him completely under police interrogation in St Petersburg.<sup>15</sup> A year in the dungeons of the Peter and Paul Fortress and what turned out to be eight years of internal exile in Saratov not only inclined him to stay on the right side of the law thereafter but also greatly broadened the range of his intellectual interests. After 1856 he wrote almost as much Russian history as Ukrainian, perhaps most notably the 1858 *Rebellion of Sten'ka Razin* (clearly inspired by the years on the Volga), the 1860 *Essay on the Domestic Life and Manners of the Great Russian People in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, and the seven-volume *Russian History in the Life-Stories of its Principal Actors*, a series which began to appear in 1873 and concluded only three years after the author's death. His appointment as Professor of History at St Petersburg University in 1859 seemed to mark not only Kostomarov's complete Russianization but also the final stage in his political rehabilitation. Radical students made much of him between 1859 and 1862 because they knew what he had been through in 1847, but he resigned his chair in 1862 because he was out of sympathy with the students rather than because he supported their opposition to the authorities' new constraints on university life. Although the terms of his release from exile in 1856 permitted him to live anywhere he liked, he never again lived permanently in Ukraine. A critic who attacked him for Ukrainophilism in the early 1880s pointed

out that he was not sufficiently confident of the merits of the Ukrainian language to write his major books in it.<sup>16</sup>

All this, however, is only part of the story. A different picture can be painted. It is not possible, in the end, to argue that Kostomarov dreamed dreams before 1847 but concentrated on staying out of trouble thereafter. In the first place, Kostomarov was not just a dreamer in the years prior to his arrest. His penchant for close documentary study emerged early, in the brief period in 1837 when he served as a soldier. The reason why it was put to him that he was ill-suited for a military career was that he spent all his time studying the regimental archives instead of square-bashing, playing cards, and drinking. He conceived what was to be his greatest book, *Bogdan Khmel' nitskii*, as early as 1843, and positively sought out a teaching position in right-bank Ukraine in 1844 because it offered him the chance of gathering material in the region of Khmel'nyts'kyi's battles.<sup>17</sup> Not just as a child but even at the height of his pre-1847 Ukrainophilia he was capable of questioning whether he could properly call himself a Ukrainian and whether the Ukrainian language was an appropriate vehicle for anything more than 'peasant stories'.<sup>18</sup> It is a mistake to think that between the ages of about twenty and thirty Kostomarov was little more than a naive Ukrainian enthusiast.

In the second place, and this is the central part of the argument, Kostomarov was anything but a time-server in the thirty years between his rehabilitation in the second half of the 1850s and the end of his life in 1885. The best single piece of evidence for what was dear to him in these years is probably the only substantial essay he ever published in which the Russian censors had no say, namely a long letter to Alexander Herzen which came out in *Kolokol* under the headline 'Ukraine' in January 1860.<sup>19</sup> This took as its point of departure a two-part piece Herzen had written on relations between Russians and Poles.<sup>20</sup> Herzen had conceded that an entity called Ukraine might one day emerge as part of a Slavonic federation. The idea could have been lifted directly from the political philosophy of the Kirillo-Methodians of the 1840s. Kostomarov jumped at the chance of confirming Ukraine's distinctiveness. His letter to Herzen began by lamenting the fact that 'The majority of the Great Russian and Polish public has been accustomed not to think of us [Ukrainians] as a separate people'. But 'Ukraine, or southern Rus', he wrote, 'has a highly significant and instructive history'. In the High Middle Ages it had been federated with northern Rus' via the Riurikovichi. In 1320 it had returned to a 'separate existence' in the

wake of Gedimin's intervention from Lithuania. In and after the sixteenth century Cossacks had stood for liberty in Ukraine in the face of the double despotism of Tatars and Poles. Ukrainians of the early modern period 'hated all big-headedness (*prevoznoshenie*) and privileges; in soliciting *rights* and *privileges* from the Poles, they wanted and demanded them not for a handful, but for the whole of their people'. The Cossacks' treaties of 1654 and 1658 with Muscovy and Poland had been not sell-outs but free associations. The second of them represented 'the first attempt at a Slavonic union, which you and I', Kostomarov said to Herzen, 'are both thinking about at the moment'. Unfortunately, this second treaty came to nothing. Poland and Muscovy partitioned Ukraine at Andrusovo in 1667. The massive Ukrainian peasant rebellion of 1768, the so-called *Koliivshchyna*, was the country's 'last convulsive attempt to get back its freedom'. Catherine the Great enserfed the local peasantry and Ukraine 'fell silent'. 'The awakening of Slavonic nationalities', however, 'was quickly reflected in Ukraine and elevated popular thought and feeling from their lethargic sleep'. The idea of panslavism 'clothed itself immediately in the radiant form of a federal union of the Slavs'. The prosecution of the Kirillo-Methodians in 1847 interrupted the development of this idea, but St Petersburg's plans for the emancipation of the serfs had revived Ukrainians' longing for freedom. 'We ask', Kostomarov said, 'that the people be freed not in name alone, but that it enjoy the same rights before the law as the gentry: stubborn in its convictions, Ukraine comprehends no other freedom'. Whilst claiming not to want the separation of Ukraine from Russia, he reiterated his dream of a Slavonic union in which 'our Southern Rus' must constitute a separate, civic whole on the entire expanse in which the people speak South Russian, with the preservation of a unity founded not on destructive, deadening centralization, but on the clear perception of equal rights and its own advantages'. Kostomarov ended with an injunction: 'Let neither Great Russians nor Poles call *their own* the lands settled by our people'.

If these are not the convictions and programme of a deeply committed Ukrainophile, it is hard to see what, in the mid-nineteenth century, would have qualified. In a way, Kostomarov had anticipated both the greatest single work of the Ukrainian political thinker Mykhailo Drahomanov, whose *Historical Poland and Great Russian Democracy* of 1881 was a much lengthier attempt to separate the fortunes of Ukrainians from those of Poles and Russians, and even the celebrated

outline of east European history published by Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi in 1904 which Ukrainian intellectuals still think of as the proper starting-point for what they call a 'rational' approach to their country's history.<sup>21</sup>

In work published in Russia, Kostomarov had to be more circumspect than he was when he wrote to Herzen. In the first part of the reign of Alexander II, just after his release from internal exile, the censors watched him like a hawk.<sup>22</sup> Superficially, the tenor of his 1857 book on Khmel'nyts'kyi was integrationist. The preface stated that the age of Khmel'nyts'kyi marked the turning-point in the relationship between the Poles and the Russians, the only two Slavonic peoples who had succeeded in establishing their political independence without the assistance of outsiders.<sup>23</sup> By switching her allegiance from the former to the latter, Ukraine ensured Russian pre-eminence. Readers could easily have concluded from this line of argument that Ukraine's historical importance was secondary. In fact, they did not. Until the publication of *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii* even the small number of liberally minded Russians who were prepared to advocate breaking up the empire thought that Ukrainian territories which had been part of Poland when Poland existed as a separate state might have to be returned to the Poles if they re-established their independence. The popularity of Kostomarov's work started to increase the number of people who were prepared to conceive of Ukrainians as a people distinct from Poles.<sup>24</sup>

So Kostomarov had been shrewd. That he needed to be is evident from the fact that, although he phrased the book in such a way that it got past the censors, he did not succeed in avoiding a hail of criticism from his Russian (and Polish) academic contemporaries. A modern analyst says of the book that 'Kostomarov...saw in [the Cossack] the bearer of the progressive idea of emancipation from the religious, national, and social yoke of the Polish lords'.<sup>25</sup> The Russian historian Sergei Solov'ev substituted for this notion the argument that:

The free Cossack, a young man, did not want to work at all or wanted to work as little as possible, wanted to live at other people's expense, at the expense of the labour of others. Thus, far from being a step forwards in the development of society, the departure of the Cossack from the state to the steppe was a step backwards; however unsatisfactory the condition of the society from which the Cossack came, it was much higher than that of the Cossack society forming in the steppe, which in its fundamentally rapacious character had a purely negative historical significance



and approximated to the surrounding societies of Nogais, Kalmyks, and Crimean Tatars.<sup>26</sup>

Another contemporary Russian critic went so far as to discern positive Russophobia in Kostomarov's book.<sup>27</sup>

But Kostomarov was not as frightened of academics as he was of the secret police. Instead of caving in to Solov'ev and the rest, he worked round them. Whilst persevering with his specifically Ukrainian interests, he set them in a context that, in the late 1850s and early 1860s, was likely to win him as many friends as enemies. Perceiving Ukrainians as an oppressed underclass, he took up underclasses in general and presented himself as an academic populist. In his inaugural lecture as Professor of History at St Petersburg University in November 1859 he declared:

We...shall select from ['the wearisome series of internecine princely conflicts and wars with foreigners'] only what points to the degree of the people's involvement in them, the people's view of them and the effect they had on the people's life. We shall not dwell even on any celebrated state event more than is necessary to understand its importance for the people's life and development... No law, no institution will be important to us in themselves, but only their application to the people's lives... If my lectures take the form of a continuous narrative, then they are likeliest to do so in those periods when the people act of their own accord. Features that are unimportant for the historian who puts the life of the state first will for us be a matter of the first importance. Thus, for example, our chroniclers' tales of harvest failures, floods, fires, and the various calamities that caused the people to suffer, and of the eclipses and comets that disturbed their minds, will be much more important for our mode of exposition than many other things.<sup>28</sup>

Since Kostomarov delivered this lecture a year before Afanasii Shchapov's more famous but similar inaugural at the University of Kazan,<sup>29</sup> it is probable that he rather than Shchapov should be described as the Russian Empire's first populist historian. That he tends not to be described in this way has much to do, of course, with the fact that in Soviet times he used to be accorded less than his due in the history of Russian-language historiography because of the specifically Ukrainian dimension of his activities.

This specifically Ukrainian dimension remained firmly in place after the publication of the book on Khmel'nyts'kyi. Between 1861 and 1863 Kostomarov's Ukraine-related activities were probably at their height. In 1861 and 1862 he was heavily involved in the St Petersburg-based

Ukrainophile monthly *Osnova*; in 1862 and 1863 he spent much of his time organizing subscribers to fund the publication of textbooks in Ukrainian to be used in primary schools for the newly emancipated Ukrainian peasantry.<sup>30</sup> Even after 1863, when speaking on behalf of Ukrainians became more difficult in view of their association in the minds of the authorities with rebellious Poles, Kostomarov did what he could to keep the Ukrainian flame alive. He had given up his professorship and his health was declining, but he never laid down his pen. Not the least of the more than 200 works he published between 1862 and his death were books on Mazepa and on the 'Ruin' (a period of anarchy in Ukraine that ran from the early 1660s to 1687). The extensive work in which he engaged in the 1860s and 1870s on the publication of sources lay exclusively in the field of sources to do with Ukraine. His reviews of other people's work on Ukraine in the 1870s would probably fill a book in themselves. In January 1881 he took advantage of the relative freedom enjoyed by the press during Loris-Melikov's brief 'Dictatorship of the Heart' to launch a campaign for the lifting of the 'Ems ukaz' (the Russian ban of 1876 on most forms of publishing in the Ukrainian language). On the day of his death he was hoping to be well enough to go and hear the celebrated Ukrainian bandura-player Ostap Veresai. At his own request a copy of the fourth edition of his book on Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi was placed by his head in his coffin.<sup>31</sup> Since one of the other major Ukrainophiles of the mid-nineteenth-century Russian Empire, Panteleimon Kulish, shifted his ground to such an extent after 1863 that he can almost be said to have abandoned the Ukrainian cause,<sup>32</sup> it is not unreasonable to argue that in maintaining his Ukrainophilism in the later part of his life Kostomarov displayed unusual tenacity.

If viable nations may be said to need statehood, a dominant language, religious cohesion, native leaders, economic resources, well-marked borders, and a sense of their historical legitimacy, Kostomarov's main contribution to the potential viability of a Ukrainian nation lay in his elucidation of their history. Work on the Ukrainian past prior to the publication of his book on Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi in 1857 was largely compilatory in nature.<sup>33</sup> Kostomarov made the subject intellectually respectable. His letter to Herzen provided a framework for the whole of it. His work on the mediaeval period was very substantial.<sup>34</sup> His studies of Khmel'nyts'kyi, the 'Ruin' and Mazepa amount to a complete picture of Ukrainian affairs from the end of the sixteenth century to the

beginning of the eighteenth, the period in which the rate of change in the fortunes of Ukrainians was greater than at any point in modern times with the exception of the late twentieth century. Kostomarov believed very strongly, furthermore, in connecting the past with the present. In welcoming the publication of a collection of Ukrainian historical songs in 1874, he expressed particular approval of the editors' definition of 'historical' as meaning everything prior to the present day, for he held that this definition 'undermine[d] the narrow, old-fashioned view that considered historical only what related to people or events who were deserving of mention in the chronicles and various other written sources'.<sup>35</sup> Just as the past informed the present, so, in Kostomarov's opinion, the study of contemporary phenomena—ethnography—could assist in the understanding of the past. 'Until now', he said in a lecture of 1863 on the relationship between history, geography and ethnography, 'we have begun history with the Varangians...now let us think about the opposite route; instead of burying ourselves in the unfamiliar and from its gloom gradually approaching what is known, let us proceed from the known to the unknown, from the light to the dusk and the darkness'.<sup>36</sup> For Kostomarov, time was a seamless garment. He knew very well that in working on the Ukrainian past he could promote the Ukrainian present. He did not, of course, speak of the past's 'usability' in so many words, but it seems certain that he knew what the concept meant and where it might lead.

It is not sensible, in other words, to think of Kostomarov as a youthful enthusiast for Ukraine who abandoned his enthusiasm with the passage of time. It would be more reasonable to say that, having suffered at the hands of the authorities in 1847, he became more judicious in the methods he employed to disseminate his enthusiasm. Why then was he viewed with ambivalence by later protagonists of Ukrainian distinctiveness?

Writing in 1880, when Kostomarov was still alive, Mykhailo Drahomanov said of him that

in his historical works, particularly after the intense period of *Osnova*, [he] sometimes appears to deviate from his Ukrainian-federal notions; at least, his use of the terms 'Russian', 'Russia', 'national interests', etc, sometimes becomes confused. And it is almost always the case that when the populist and federalist aspect of his outlook recedes, his historical talent and political perception recede too.<sup>37</sup>

Drahomanov tempered this criticism by saying that the slippage of which he spoke ‘happens to [Kostomarov] very rarely’,<sup>38</sup> but he had sown a seed of doubt. In July 1885, within three months of Kostomarov’s death, he spoke more sharply. Introducing a reprint of Kostomarov’s 1860 letter to Herzen, he acknowledged that

The ideas of Kostomarov’s circle [as represented by the activities of the Kirillo-Methodian Society in the mid-1840s and the *Osnova* group in 1861–62] undoubtedly represent the link which unites the aspirations of the society known as the Society of United Slavs which was formed in Kiev province in the years 1823–5 with the principles of the ‘Ukrainophiles’ and ‘peasant-lovers’ of the 1860s and those of the Ukrainian socialist federalists of the present day.

The Society of United Slavs, however, had not made much of its specifically Ukrainian ethnic affiliation, and Kostomarov’s circle had not made enough. Many of the ‘southerners’ who participated in the empire-wide populist movement of the 1870s ‘did not feel they had to organize independent groups with the primary object of working explicitly for the Ukrainian people’. Instead, they ‘put off “until the day after the victory over the common enemy” both the formation of such groups and the open declaration of their Ukrainian sympathies and even their federalism’. In consequence, ‘the southern federalists obscured in the eyes of society the very essence of their political ideals’. ‘It must be acknowledged’, Drahomanov said, ‘that the blame for the above-mentioned silence and for the virtually fruitless destruction of so many sons of Ukraine rests to a significant extent on the weaknesses and mistakes of the representatives of that orientation from which, in its day, emerged the letter by N.I. Kostomarov which is reproduced below’. Drahomanov wanted Ukrainian activists to be more forthright. Those whom he was criticizing—‘people of Kostomarov’s orientation’—had:

not only not developed the socio-political aspect of their programme, but had even allowed it to atrophy to a significant degree. When questions were put to them on this score, they usually replied by indicating that, at the given time, the situation of the Ukrainian people and nationality required conscious Ukrainians to engage for the most part in work of a cultural kind. This answer, however, overlooked the fact that, first, culture has a political and social dimension, and, second, that without that scope which only free political *institutions* confer [Drahomanov’s italics], no cultural activity, however pacific, even of a purely literary and cultural kind, is easy, and for peoples who lack national independence it is well-nigh wholly impossible.<sup>39</sup>

Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi's criticism of Kostomarov was comparable to that of Drahomanov. He wrote four essays about him, one on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, one on the fortieth, and two as introductions to his journalistic and ethnographic writings.<sup>40</sup> All of them make clear that Kostomarov was to be thought of as one of the 'founding fathers' of Ukrainian studies, but all of them contain an element of reserve. The first, perhaps, makes Hrushevs'kyi's position clearest. Most of it is complimentary. Kostomarov was to be congratulated for moving beyond the 'military-administrative' history that had preoccupied earlier writers on the Ukrainian past. His emphasis on 'the idea of the people' had immeasurably enlarged his subject. The breadth of his chronological interests enabled him to make clear the length and continuity of the history of Ukraine. He had grasped the essential difference between the historical evolution of Ukraine and Muscovy. His populism and federalism made him seem highly radical in the 1850s and 1860s. His vision of Ukraine was as forward-looking as was to be expected in the Russian Empire of the mid-nineteenth century. But because he did not succeed in freeing himself altogether of the 'statism' to which he objected, he was less effective at dealing with periods in the Ukrainian past when unity was lacking than he was at dealing with periods when it was present. His treatment of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, for example, lacked rhyme and reason. He appeared to be lost when he could not set the particular phenomena he was studying in the context of a stable political structure. Thus 'to express new principles is not to translate them into action'.<sup>41</sup> His multi-volume *Russian History in the Life-Stories of its Principal Actors*, moreover, implied a Russian rather than Ukrainian framework for East Slavic history by allowing that Kievan Rus' was succeeded by Vladimir and Moscow instead of by Halych, Lithuania, Poland-Lithuania, and Cossacks. 'The ideas enunciated by the late historian went far beyond not only their own time but also the considerable creative powers of the historian.'<sup>42</sup> Kostomarov had started down a road, but had left his heirs much to do.

Hrushevs'kyi's imputation to Kostomarov of halfheartedness is worth thinking about. If he meant to imply that Kostomarov thought Ukrainians were politically powerless, he was right. Kostomarov thought this throughout his life. In his first master's dissertation, the one the Russian authorities destroyed in 1842, he argued that in the face of the degradations of Polish Uniates in the seventeenth century Ukrainians had

nowhere to turn but to Moscow.<sup>43</sup> When, in 1881, he re-opened the debate he had started in the period of the 'Great Reforms' about promoting the use of the Ukrainian language, he accepted wholeheartedly the need to keep Ukraine and Russia together. 'The thought of separating Little Russia from the empire', he said, was 'as fatuous as the thought of [advocating] the separate standing of all the appanage principalities into which the Russian land was divided at one time or another in the appanage-assembly (*udel'no-vechevoi*) period of our history; but this thought would hardly find room for very long in a mind that doesn't need the help of a psychiatrist'.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the best evidence of Kostomarov's reluctance to adopt a confrontational stance vis-à-vis the central authorities of the Russian Empire is a letter he wrote to Drahomanov in January 1877 after the latter had asked him to part with the four thousand rubles he had collected in 1862–63 for the publication of low-brow educational literature in Ukrainian. St Petersburg had just enacted the second of its two mid-nineteenth-century bans on Ukrainian-language publishing. Drahomanov had known what was coming and was already working in the Ukrainian interest in the freer climate of western Europe. He thought it was pointless for ethnically conscious Ukrainians to continue trying to work within the tsarist system. Kostomarov disagreed, and refused to help him by surrendering the money he had collected fifteen years earlier. 'I hope', he said, 'still to see the day when it will be possible to utilize these funds for the purpose for which they accrued, i.e. for the publication of the Gospels; and if I do not, then others will'. The domestic political climate, Kostomarov said, was in constant flux.

Who, knowing the unpredictability of our affairs, can be sure that the ban on singing Little Russian [i.e. Ukrainian] songs and staging Little Russian plays will not be succeeded by a time when the great people of our world will be enraptured by these songs and promote the well-being of the people's creativity?

Drahomanov intended to write for an educated Ukrainian public. In Kostomarov's opinion, he was targeting a non-existent audience. 'There is no Little Russian public, but there are the masses (*a est' narod*), who need elementary books rather than journalism. What is needed is the sort of literature which is feasible only on the basis of full agreement with the authorities, not the sort which arises out of an oppositional movement'. Despite the Ems ukaz, Kostomarov remained a gradualist. Ethnically conscious Ukrainians had to dedicate themselves to con-

verting the unconverted. Drahomaniv's pamphlets *On the Question of Little Russian Literature* and *Turks at Home and Abroad* were of interest to people who shared his opinions already, but would not persuade 'those who still think differently' to change their minds.<sup>45</sup>

So Kostomarov did not advocate complete Ukrainian independence. He spent most of his time trying to delineate a specifically Ukrainian ethnic identity by tracing a continuous Ukrainian history. Insofar as he had a political programme, it consisted in trying to guarantee the long-term survival of the Ukrainian ethnic identity through the medium of federalism. To Hrushevs'kyi this approach looked fainthearted, but in fact it may have been more likely to benefit Ukrainians in the long run than an approach based on strident calls for completely separate development. Kostomarov's approach amounted to a sort of early advocacy of 'indigenization' (*korenizatsiia*). By generating literacy in Ukrainian among the Ukrainian peasantry, it stood a good chance of increasing the number of ethnically conscious Ukrainians. The implication of Kostomarov's approach was that Ukrainians ought not to run before they could walk. In view of the difficulties that the Ukrainian community was to experience in the twentieth century, this implication deserved more serious consideration than it got from Kostomarov's immediate successors in the Ukrainian intellectual tradition.

It may be that Kostomarov is not being assessed at his true worth even now. Interest in him has been growing, but it is still the case that there has been no attempt at a full bibliography of his work since 1890, no major edition of his historical writings since the first decade of the twentieth century, no collection of his journalism since 1928 or of his ethnographic writings since 1930, and no attempt whatever at an edition of his voluminous correspondence.<sup>46</sup> A recent essay on him by a Russian scholar mentions his work in the field of Ukrainian history only in passing.<sup>47</sup> Thomas Prymak's biography lends undue weight to Hrushevs'kyi's doubts about him.<sup>48</sup> A full account of Kostomarov's contribution to the creation of a Ukrainian ethnic identity remains to be written.

## NOTES

1. M. Kostomarov, *Naukovo-publitsychni i polemichni pysannia* (ed. M. Hrushevs'kyi; Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukraïny, 1928; hereafter *Pysannia*), pp. 304-12 (quotations from pp. 308, 312; first published in *Vestnik Evropy* in April 1885). Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705-83) was the Russian Empire's

- 'Official Historiographer' from 1748 until his death; on Koialovich see n. 3.
2. Kostomarov, *Pysannia*, pp. 204-15.
  3. Recent sketches of Koialovich include A.E. Shiklo, 'Mikhail Osipovich Koialovich (1828-1891)', in A.A. Chernobaev (ed.), *Istoriki Rossii XVIII-XX vekov* (5 vols.; Moscow, Rossiiskaia politicheskaiia entsiklopediia, 1995-98), IV, pp. 16-23, and V.A. Teplova, 'M.O. Koialovich i russkaia pravoslavnaia istoriografiia', in M.O. Koialovich, *Istoriia vossoedineniia zapadnorusskikh uniatov starykh vremen (do 1800 g.)* (Minsk: Luchi Sofii, 1999 [1st pub. St Petersburg, 1873]), pp. 385-95.
  4. David Saunders, 'The Kirillo-Methodian Society', *Slavonic and East European Review* 71 (1993), p. 687. The most authoritative texts of the *Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People* are to be found in P.S. Sokhan' *et al.* (eds.), *Kyrylo-Mefodiivs'ke tovarystvo* (3 vols.; Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1990; hereafter *KMt*), I, pp. 152-69, 250-58.
  5. See, for example, his essay of 1875, 'Moe ukrainofil'stvo v Kudeiare', in *Pysannia*, pp. 248-51.
  6. V.B. Antonovich, 'N.I. Kostomarov, kak istorik', *Kievskaiia starina* 5 (1885), pp. xxxii-xxxiii.
  7. Antonovich, 'Kostomarov', pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.
  8. A. K-va, 'Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov (Biograficheskii ocherk)', in N.I. Kostomarov, *Sobranie sochinenii: Istoricheskie monografii i issledovaniia* (8 vols.; St Petersburg: Obshchestvo dlia posobiia nuzhdaiushchimsia literatoram i uchenym, 1903-1906; hereafter *Monografii*), I, p. x.
  9. *Trudy etnograficheskoi-statisticheskoi ekspeditsii v zapadno-russkii krai: Iugo-zapadnyi otdel* (ed. P.P. Chubinskii; 7 vols. in 9 books; St Petersburg: Imperatorskoe Russkoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo, 1872-78); Kostomarov supervised volumes 3-5.
  10. I. Krypiakevych, 'Arkheohrafichni pratsi Mykoly Kostomarova', *Zapysky naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 126-27 (1918), pp. 105-40.
  11. Except where otherwise stated, biographical information comes from Iu. A. Pinchuk, *Mykola Ivanovych Kostomarov 1817-1885* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1992); Thomas M. Prymak, *Mykola Kostomarov: A Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); and the reprint of Kostomarov's autobiography in N.I. Kostomarov, *Istoricheskie proizvedeniia: Avtobiografiia* (Kiev: Kievskii universitet, 1989), pp. 425-651.
  12. On the hostile reception of Kostomarov's second dissertation ('Ob istoricheskom znachenii russkoi narodnoi poezii'), see P.M. Popov, *M. Kostomarov iak fol'kloryst i etnohraf* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1968), pp. 28-32.
  13. K-va, 'Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov', p. xiii.
  14. Reprinted in *Etnohrafichni pysannia Kostomarova* (ed. M. Hrushevs'kyi; Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukraïny, 1930), pp. 23-40.
  15. For the evidence he gave to the police before and after he broke down under questioning see *KMt*, I, pp. 275-87, 295-301 (and 304).
  16. M. de-Pule, 'K istorii ukrainofil'stva', *Russkii vestnik* 3 (1881), p. 225.
  17. On the effective use that Kostomarov made of his time in right-bank



Ukraine, see Volodymyr Miiakovs'kyi, 'Kostomarov u Rivnomu', *Ukraina* 3 (1925), pp. 28-66.

18. *KMt*, I, 268, 269.

19. Anon. (M.I. Kostomarov), 'Ukraina', *Kolokol* 61 (15 January 1860), pp. 499-503.

20. Iskander, 'Rossiia i Pol'sha', *Kolokol* 32-33 (1 January 1859), pp. 257-60, and 34 (15 January 1859), pp. 273-76.

21. M. Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha i velikoruskaia demokratiia* (Geneva: Tipografia 'Rabotnika' i 'Hromady', 1881); Mykh. Hrushevs'kyi, 'Zvy-chaina skhema "russkoi" istorii i sprava ratsional'noho ukkladu istorii Skhidn'oho Sloviaanstva', in V.I. Lamanskii (ed.), *Stat'i po slavianovedeniiu* (St Petersburg: Imperatorskaia akademiia nauk, 1904), pp. 298-304.

22. I. Butych, 'M.I. Kostomarov i tsars'ka tsenzura', *Arkhivy Ukrainy* 6 (1967), pp. 60-70; P. Lobas, 'Ukrains'kyi literaturnyi zbirnyk v otsyntsi peterburz'koi tsenzury', *Arkhivy Ukrainy* 2 (1968), pp. 74-80.

23. Kostomarov, *Monografii*, IV, pp. 5-6.

24. Or so at least Mykhailo Drahomanov implied in Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha*, p. 70.

25. B.G. Litvak, 'Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov: Ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva', in N.I. Kostomarov, *Ocherk domashnei zhizni i nravov velikoruskogo naroda v XVI i XVII stoletiiakh* (Moscow: Respublika, 1992), p. 75.

26. S. Solov'ev, 'Malorossiiskoe kozachestvo do Khmel'nitskogo', *Russkii vestnik* 23 (1859), p. 178.

27. Litvak, 'Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov', pp. 78-79. For Kostomarov's replies to Solov'ev and this second critic, see *Pysannia*, pp. 53-57, 237-39.

28. N.I. Kostomarov, *Lektsii po russkoi istorii* (St Petersburg: V. Bezobrazov, 1861), p. 12.

29. On which see G.N. Vul'fson, *Glashatai svobody: stranitsy iz zhizni Afanasiiia Prokof'evicha Shchapova* (Kazan': Kazanskii universitet, 1984), pp. 29-44.

30. See David Saunders, 'Mikhail Katkov and Mykola Kostomarov: A Note on Pëtr A. Valuev's Anti-Ukrainian Edict of 1863', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 17 (1996 for 1993), pp. 365-83, and 'Russia and Ukraine under Alexander II: The Valuev Edict of 1863', *International History Review* 17 (1995), pp. 23-50.

31. The last two of these details come from D.L. Mordovtsev, 'Istoricheskie pominki po N.I. Kostomarovu', *Russkaia starina* 6 (1885), p. 648.

32. See George Luckyj, *Panteleimon Kulish: A Sketch of His Life and Times* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1983), pp. 141-65.

33. See especially D.N. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* (3 vols.; Moscow, 1822), and N.A. Markevich, *Istoriia Malorossii* (5 vols.; Moscow: O.I. Khrustalev, 1842-43). For analysis of these works, see E. Kosachevskaia, N.A. Markevich 1804-1860 (Leningrad: Leningradskii universitet, 1987), pp. 98-183, and V.V. Kravchenko, *Narysy z ukrains'koi istoriohrafii epokhy natsional'noho Vidrozhennia (druha polovyna XVIII—seredyna XIX st.)* (Kharkiv: Osnova, 1996), pp. 158-91, 232-59.

34. See especially his 'Mysli o federativnom nachale v drevnei Rusi', *Mono-*

*grafii*, I, pp. 1-30, and also Jaroslav Iwanus, 'Democracy, Federalism, and Nationality: Ukraine's Medieval Heritage in the Thought of N.I. Kostomarov' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Alberta, 1986).

35. N. Kostomarov, 'Istoricheskaia poeziia i novye materialy', *Vestnik Evropy* 12 (1874), p. 575.

36. N.I. Kostomarov, 'Ob otnoshenii russkoi istorii k geografii i etnografii', *Monografii*, I, pp. 729-30.

37. M. Drahomanov, *Mykola Ivanovych Kostomarov: Zhyttypysnyi ocherk* (L'viv: Prosvita, 1901; written 1880), p. 25.

38. Drahomanov, *Mykola Ivanovych Kostomarov*, p. 25.

39. N.I. Kostomarov, *Pis'mo k izdateliiu 'Kolokola', s predisloviiem M. Dragomanova* (Geneva: Hromada, 1885), pp. iv, vii-viii (italics in the original); this publication is reprinted in P. Struve and B. Kistiakovskii (eds.), *Sobranie politicheskikh sochinenii M.P. Dragomanova* (2 vols.; Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1905-1906), II, pp. 741-55.

40. 'Ukrains'ka istoriografiiia i Mykola Kostomarov', *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* 5 (1910), pp. 209-25; 'Kostomarov i Novitnia Ukraina', *Ukraina* 3 (1925), pp. 3-20; 'Z publitsystychnykh pysan' Kostomarova', *Pysannia*, pp. iii-xxi; 'Etnografichne delo Kostomarova', in *Etnografichni pysannia Kostomarova*, pp. ix-xxiv.

41. Hrushevs'kyi, 'Ukrains'ka istoriografiiia', p. 223.

42. Hrushevs'kyi, 'Ukrains'ka istoriografiiia', p. 225.

43. *Pysannia*, pp. 36-37.

44. *Pysannia*, p. 283.

45. Drahomanov printed Kostomarov's letter in full in his *Mykola Ivanovych Kostomarov*, pp. 26-30. For the pamphlets *On the Question of Little Russian Literature* and *Turks at Home and Abroad*, see Struve and Kistiakovskii, *Sobranie politicheskikh sochinenii Dragomanova*, II, pp. 153-99, 46-74.

46. Recent interest in Kostomarov is apparent in, for example, the biographies by Pinchuk and Prymak and the reprint of Kostomarov's autobiography (cited in n. 11, above); the publication of the documents in the case of the Kirillo-Methodians (n. 4); M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvokh tomakh* (Kiev: Dnipro, 1990); V.A. Zakharchenko, 'Arkhivni dzhherela do biohrafii M.I. Kostomarova v TsNB im. V.I. Vernads'koho AN Ukrainy', *Arkhivy Ukrainy* 3 (1990), pp. 62-64; N.I. Kostomarov, *Russkaia istoriia v zhizneopisaniiakh ee glavneishikh deiatelei* (3 vols.; Moscow: Kniga, 1990-92 [1st edn St Petersburg, 1873-88]); Litvak, 'Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov' (n. 25); and the study by Kireeva cited in the next footnote. The one full bibliography of Kostomarov's writings is to be found in N.I. Kostomarov, *Literaturnoe nasledie* (St Petersburg: M.M. Stasiulevich, 1890), pp. 493-521; the standard editions of his historical, journalistic and ethnographic writings have been cited here as *Monografii*, *Pysannia* and *Etnografichni pysannia Kostomarova* (see nn. 8, 1, 14, above).

47. R.A. Kireeva, 'Ne mog zhit' i ne pisat': Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov', in A.N. Sakharov (ed.), *Istoriki Rossii: XVIII—nachalo XX veka* (Moscow: Skriptorii, 1996), p. 306.

48. Prymak, *Mykola Kostomarov*, e.g. p. 191.