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*The Ukrainian Revolution in Retrospect**

JOHN S. RESHETAR, JR.

The twentieth century has been characterized by the widespread application of the principle of national self-determination and the emergence of independent nation-states in Europe, Asia, and Africa. More recently the potent force of nationalism has also manifested itself in much of the communist world. In terms of this perspective the anomalous condition of Ukraine presents a fascinating subject for investigation. For here is a country the size of France and, in many respects, economically the equal of the most advanced western European states, which failed to retain its independence following the revolution of 1917–1920.

The events of the various stages of the Ukrainian revolution are sufficiently well known not to require detailed recapitulation here.¹ The central Rada (council) and the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) proclaimed by it were unable to survive the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty signed with the central powers on 9 February 1918. The Ukrainian state, headed by Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, came into being in April 1918 with the support of the German occupation forces and was, in turn, overthrown by the former leaders of the central Rada in November 1918. The Directory, under the leadership of Simon Petliura, provided a collegial form of executive for the restored

*This paper was originally presented as the third annual Shevchenko Memorial Lecture at the University of Alberta on 27 March 1968.

¹There is an abundant literature dealing with the Ukrainian revolution. The most thorough documentary study is that of Pavlo Khrystiuk (ed.), *Zamitky i materialy do istorii ukrains'koi revoliutsii, 1917–1920*, 4 vols., (Vienna, 1921–22). A series of recent studies by Matvii Stakhiv includes the following: *Persha sovets'ka respublika v Ukraini* (New York, 1956); *Druha sovets'ka respublika v Ukraini* (Scranton, Pa., 1957); *Ukraina v dobi Dyrektorii UNR* 7 vols. (Scranton, Pa., 1962–1966); *Zakhidna Ukraina, narys istorii derzhavnogo budivnytstva ta zbroinoi i diplomatichnoi oborony v 1918–1923* vols. 3–6 (Scranton, Pa., 1959–1961). Also see Jurij Borys, *The Russian Communist Party and the Sovietization of Ukraine* (Stockholm, 1960) and John S. Reshetar, Jr., *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton, N.J., 1952). For a thorough survey of the relevant sources see Jurij Lawrynenko, *Ukrainian Communism and Soviet Russian Policy toward the Ukraine: An Annotated Bibliography, 1917–1953* (New York, 1953).

Ukrainian People's Republic. Compelled to wage a fierce struggle against the invading Bolshevik forces, the UNR suffered many disadvantages and was poorly understood and little appreciated in the west.

The communist regime, which came to be known as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, was not able to establish itself until the end of 1919 and had to retreat again in May and June of 1920 before a Ukrainian and Polish force. The first soviet government in Ukraine was proclaimed in Kharkov in December 1917 but the officials had to take refuge in Moscow during the spring of 1918. The second Ukrainian Soviet Republic came into being in November 1918, again primarily as a result of Russian military intervention, and was in full retreat by August 1919. It was only after the third attempt and a partial modification of Bolshevik policy toward the Ukrainian national movement and the peasantry that Lenin's Soviet Russian regime succeeded in imposing its rule upon Ukraine in late 1919.

The changes in regimes reflected the clash of deep-seated indigenous forces as well as external influences. It is proposed in this paper to examine the determining factors of the Ukrainian revolution and of its outcome in 1920 and subsequent years. The causes were many and varied, and one can only assay an evaluation of their respective weights. Less controversial is the question of the consequences of the revolution; these will be dealt with in the latter part of this paper. Instead of presenting a descriptive account or chronicle of the events of the Ukrainian revolution this will be an attempt to assay its meaning and its significance for subsequent Ukrainian developments.

The opportunity that the Ukrainians seized in 1917 was largely fortuitous and was made possible by the disintegration of the Russian imperial regime. However, Ukrainian demands were initially pursued with some hesitancy which itself reflected the lack of certainty characteristic of the national movement at that crucial point in history. At first Ukrainian spokesmen of the central Rada were content to press for autonomy and a federal order in the relationship between Russia and the non-Russian lands of the former Russian empire. Yet the Russian provisional government refused to accept the initially modest Ukrainian demands, and the Rada then proceeded to proclaim autonomy in its First Universal of 23 June 1917. The Ukrainian leaders pursued the chimera of federalism long after it ceased to be a viable policy; this was true both of the Rada and of the last days of Hetman Skoropadsky's regime. Thus the Rada, in its Third Universal of 20 November 1917 — proclaimed only after the Bolshevik seizure of power — still cherished the illusion of a "federation of free and equal

peoples" including the Russians. When Ukrainian independence was proclaimed by the Rada on 22 January 1918 it was in response to the Bolshevik armed invasion of Ukraine. Thus Ukrainian actions were too often reactions to the blind obstinacy of the Russian provisional government or to Lenin's subterfuge rather than manifestations of purely Ukrainian initiative.

The outcome of the revolution was also affected by divisions within the Ukrainian leadership which contributed to the effectiveness of Bolshevik divisive tactics. To a significant degree this condition arose from the predominance of various socialist convictions at the time. National loyalties were weakened by the pursuit of socialist objectives at crucial junctures. Socialism in a vague and ill-defined sense was the professed goal of nearly all Ukrainian political groups and parties. Even an essentially non-socialist group such as the former Society of Ukrainian Progressives (TUP) found it advantageous to rename itself the Party of Socialist Federalists. The diversionary effect of the "internationalism" professed by socialists of nearly all varieties was to have a corrosive influence on the national cause.

Probably Volodymyr Vynnychenko of the Ukrainian Social Democrats, premier under the Rada and Directory, best exemplifies the schizoid nature of the nationalist who simultaneously served the cause of international socialism at that time. Vynnychenko, although disturbed by the Bolshevik invasion of Ukraine in January 1918, sought aid from Lenin's followers in negotiations during the summer of 1918 regarding the overthrow of the hetmanate. In January 1919 Vynnychenko supported efforts of the UNR Directory to negotiate its differences with Moscow.² The prevailing confusion and the preoccupation with being sufficiently "socialist" and "revolutionary" led to a split within the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party and also in the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party. The left-wing socialists seceded in January 1919, naïvely assuming that the invading Bolsheviks could be disarmed by promoting a soviet (*radians'ka*) order in Ukraine based on local councils as opposed to the democratic parliamentary system advocated by Petliura and other moderate socialists. However, the left-wing socialists ignored the fact that the Bolsheviks could always find another pretext for intervention if threatened with deprivation of their monopoly on the soviet political order.³

²Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, pp. 214–15.

³The Left Social Democrats formed a Ukrainian Communist party (Independents) in January 1920 but could not gain admission to the Russian-controlled Communist Third International since they were competing with the Russian-

The left wing of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party split off in May 1918 and formed the Ukrainian Communist Party, Borotbisty, in August 1919, adopting the name of its newspaper *Borot'ba* ("The Struggle").⁴ Dissatisfied with the policies of the less radical members of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party, they opposed the UNR and organized armed peasant resistance against the second Soviet Ukrainian Republic in 1919. However, by early 1920 the Borotbisty were absorbed into the Communist party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine on Lenin's orders, in an attempt to give to the alien soviet regime in Kharkov a Ukrainian colouring; their decision to accept membership was based on their desire to influence the new ruling party.

Divisiveness within the leading Ukrainian parties was accompanied by, and sometimes promoted by, bitter personal rivalries like that between Vynnychenko and Petliura. These two socialist leaders were often poles apart: Vynnychenko, the talented novelist, was given to making extreme and hasty statements and to acting impulsively. Petliura understood the inevitability of armed struggle as a means of consummating the nation's liberation; he had lived in St. Petersburg and Moscow and had no illusions regarding the possibility of reaching an understanding with Russian socialists or with Lenin's regime.

The divisions between the parties made themselves felt in the hostile attitude of the nationalists — both Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats — toward Hetman Skoropadsky's government. They objected to its social and economic policies and to the fact that it came into office with the support of the large landowners and opposed agrarian reform. They also regarded it as insufficiently Ukrainian in character and in commitment to the nationalist cause and viewed it as being beyond salvation.

Other divisive influences were represented by the divergent interests and concerns of the western Ukrainians and the UNR. The Ukrainians of Galicia had declared their independence from Austria at the end of World War I and had entered into a formal union with the UNR on 22 January 1919. Both Ukrainian regimes were confronted with different enemies and could offer each other only limited aid: the western Ukrainians fought the Poles, who were bent upon creating a greater Poland at Ukrainian expense, while the UNR forces were fighting the Bolshevik invaders. Western Ukrainian troops, weakened by disease

sponsored Communist party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine. Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, p. 250.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 252–53. See Iwan Majstrenko, *Borot'bism: A Chapter in the History of Ukrainian Communism* (New York, 1954).

and exhaustion, came to terms with the Russian White Guard forces of General Anton Denikin in the autumn of 1919 ignoring his intolerant attitude toward Ukrainian rights. The UNR and Petliura viewed Denikin as no less an enemy than the Bolsheviks since both were regarded as Russian imperialists albeit of different colours. The misunderstanding and divergence came full circle in April 1920 when Petliura entered into an alliance with the Polish regime of Marshal Josef Piłsudski and recognized the Polish occupation of western Ukraine (East Galicia).

However, it was the Bolsheviks and not the Poles who presented the greater threat to the Ukrainian revolution. The ultimate imposition of a soviet regime upon Ukraine by the Bolsheviks was the result of their ruthlessness and dedication, their demagogic techniques, and their reliance upon compulsion. Having established itself in the two largest Russian cities and having obtained control of the central part of European Russia, Lenin's regime was in a position to launch military operations in the name of a new Russian political orthodoxy — a revolutionary ideology that could be said to be of European origin and that could also be used to depict the Russians as liberators of mankind. Although the Bolshevik forces were able to invade Ukraine and overcome the newly organized military forces of the UNR, they could not readily remedy the numerical weakness of the Bolshevik party in Ukraine, especially among the Ukrainians. Among the urban socialists in Ukraine, the Mensheviks and the Jewish Bundists had always enjoyed greater popularity than the Bolsheviks.

Among the Ukrainians — and especially among the Ukrainian peasantry — Bolshevism had very few adherents.⁵ The few genuinely Ukrainian Bolsheviks, as distinct from non-Ukrainian party members in the larger Ukrainian cities, were "white crows" who were not trusted by the Russian party's Central Committee and who enjoyed no influence. Such Ukrainian Bolsheviks as Hryhoryi Petrovskyi, Volodymyr Zatontskyi, and Mykola Skrypnyk were also somewhat removed from the Ukrainian national movement. However, it is true that Lenin did seek to use Ukrainian grievances in a speech that he wrote for Petrovskyi in February 1914 when the latter was serving as a deputy in the imperial Duma.⁶ Most members of the small Bolshevik party organization in Ukraine were hostile to the Ukrainian national movement.

⁵This is attested to by official Bolshevik party censuses. See Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, pp. 75–79, 153–55, 159, 173–74, 186–87.

⁶John S. Reshetar, Jr., "Lenin on the Ukraine," *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.*, ix, 1–2 [27–28] (1961), 3–11.

When the Communist party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine was formally organized at its first congress, held in exile in Moscow in July 1918, it did not acquire the status of a separate party but was to be a part of the Russian Communist party enjoying autonomy in “local” matters.⁷

Both the first and second soviet republics in Ukraine were dominated by Russians and by other non-Ukrainians. The second and third soviet republics in Ukraine were headed by Christian Rakovsky, a Rumanian subject of Bulgarian origin who had obtained medical training in France and then had become a member of the Russian intelligentsia. Such non-Ukrainians as Eugenia Bosh, F. A. Sergeiev (Artem), V. Ausem, Ia. Martianov, K. E. Voroshilov, Iu. Piatakov, E. I. Kvirring, and V. I. Mezhlauk were members of the nominally Ukrainian soviet governments. The early Central Committees of the Communist party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine included most of these individuals as well as Stalin who was elected to the second Central Committee in October 1918. Viacheslav Molotov, who had no ties with Ukraine, served as first secretary of the CP(B)U from November 1920 to March 1921. Thus there developed the “classic” pattern of the communist takeover that was to be employed repeatedly on later occasions: a communist regime was organized on the territory of a foreign state and then exported to the recipient country on bayonets under the guise of “civil war.”

The first and second soviet republics failed – the former in February–March 1918 and the latter in August 1919 – because they antagonized the Ukrainian peasantry by looting, by requisitioning grain supplies, and by demonstrating a complete lack of respect for Ukrainian sensibilities and national rights. Communism at this stage bore no “Ukrainian” mask but was unabashedly Russian while claiming to be “internationalist.” The Bolsheviks controlled the larger cities but not the Ukrainian countryside. The rapid collapse of their regime in August 1919 was caused by widespread peasant revolts fed by the Bolsheviks’ support of a “single and indivisible” Russia. In the end it became necessary for Lenin to adopt a more moderate and more tactful policy in an attempt to win over the Ukrainian peasantry and to grant recognition to the Ukrainian language.⁸

⁷Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, pp. 140–42.

⁸The shift in Bolshevik policy – undertaken painfully and only under the pressure of the hard facts of Ukrainian resistance – is documented in Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, pp. 223–51 and in Arthur E. Adams, *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine: The Second Campaign, 1918–1919* (New Haven, Conn., 1963). For a contemporary attack on Lenin’s policies see Serhii Mazlakh and Vasyli’ Shakhrai,

However, the concessions were granted only after bitter conflict and a determined effort to destroy the UNR. Lenin's regime had deliberately sought war with the government of the Ukrainian central Rada and, subsequently, with the Directory. The ultimatum issued by the Bolsheviks to the Rada on 17 December 1917 implied that Lenin's government did not regard the Rada as independent, despite the Declaration of Rights of Peoples of 15 November 1917 which gave the Ukrainians and other nationalities the right of self-determination, including secession from Russia. Lenin's ultimatum demanded that the Rada government cease disarming Russian troops in Ukraine and permit the passage of troops that supposedly were to move against General Kaledin's anti-Bolshevik forces in the Don region. Yet, significantly, Lenin's army moved into Ukraine instead and hastened not only to replace the UNR but to appropriate, initially, its name.⁹

Lenin's government did not wish to see the UNR recognized by the central powers at the Brest-Litovsk peace talks and hoped, instead, to have the Bolshevik regime in Kharkov recognized and permitted to participate in the negotiations. However, when Lenin's government itself had to sign a peace treaty at Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918 it was compelled to recognize the UNR and the Rada government; it subsequently also recognized General Skoropadsky's Ukrainian government and conducted diplomatic negotiations with it. Yet at the first opportunity Moscow's recognition of Ukrainian independence was nullified, and diplomatic recognition was followed by military attack against the UNR Directory government in December 1918.

The failure to withstand the Bolshevik invasion had as a contributing cause the unwillingness of the western powers to provide either military aid or *de jure* diplomatic recognition. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points offered no consolation or hope for the Ukrainians, in contrast to the independence promised the Poles and the Czechs. London and Paris were interested initially in promoting Ukrainian military resistance to the central powers during December 1917 and January 1918 and extended a very limited and vague form of *de facto* recognition to the UNR.¹⁰ However, the inability of the Ukrainians to hold the eastern front once Lenin's government began armistice talks in December 1917 led to a severance of the newly estab-

Do khvyli, shcho diet'sia na Ukraini i z Ukrainoiu (2nd ed.; New York, 1967); this work was first published in Saratov in 1919.

⁹Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, p. 180.

¹⁰Oleh S. Pidhainy, *The Formation of the Ukrainian Republic* (Toronto, 1966). Cf. Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, pp. 98–106.

lished and tenuous relationship between Kiev and the British and French capitals. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty, signed by the UNR and the central powers on 9 February 1918, brought Ukraine *de jure* diplomatic recognition from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria while the second Brest-Litovsk Treaty brought recognition from Lenin's Russian SFSR.

At the end of World War I the western powers were again confronted with the question of whether or not to extend diplomatic recognition and material aid to the UNR in the effort to support resistance to Lenin's regime. An ineffective and heavy-handed attempt by France in this direction, during the French occupation of Odessa in December 1918–January 1919, involved humiliating conditions which the UNR would not have been able to accept.¹¹ Indeed, the very fact that the Directory entered into those abortive negotiations with French representatives in Odessa gave Moscow a pretext for adopting a hostile policy toward the UNR — as it had one year earlier. Yet Lenin's regime would have found, and did find, other pretexts for its military intervention in Ukraine. The Bolshevik claim that the UNR was “selling Ukraine to the Entente” powers — had it been credible — could have made a difference in the outcome of the conflict with Moscow, for France would certainly not have wanted the UNR to lose and would have rendered it every assistance.¹²

Indeed, one is tempted to speculate on the amount of American, British, or French logistical support, weaponry, and military advice that might have made the difference between defeat and victory for the UNR in 1919. In all likelihood it would have been a very small fraction of the outlay of the United States in the post second world war period under the Truman Doctrine and other efforts to contain soviet communism.

Yet the western powers were unwilling to aid the Ukrainian cause for a number of reasons. Ignorance of Ukraine in the west made a favourable response highly unlikely. The work of Professor Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Ukraine's most eminent historian and head of the central Rada, was insufficiently known in the west; his numerous writings had not been translated and westerners were not acquainted with the

¹¹Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, pp. 234–48 and Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, pp. 216–20.

¹²The use of a double standard by Lenin was quite evident in his refusal to apply to the UNR in January 1919 the rationale behind his own decision to conclude a separate peace with the central powers: make whatever concessions are necessary in order to preserve your regime.

provocative challenge to the basic tenets of Russian nationalist historiography advanced by this brilliant scholar. Instead, Americans, Englishmen, and Frenchmen too often preferred to ignore the multi-national nature of the Russian empire and to accept uncritically the claims of Russian historiography. The Ukrainian immigrants in the United States were unable to influence the policy of the US Department of State which favoured restoration of the unity of the Russian empire despite American hostility to Lenin's regime, the heir to that empire. The Ukrainian cause had no spokesmen who were as well known in the west as were Paderewski and Thomas G. Masaryk. The Poles and Czechs were assured success in 1919 also because they were to be the legatees of a multi-national empire, that of Austria-Hungary, whose dismemberment the western powers were committed to support.

The Ukrainians were, instead, fated to wage a war for survival on three fronts against Lenin's new Russian regime, the White Guard forces of General Denikin, and the Poles. The Bolsheviks had a more highly developed industry and a large supply of manpower. Denikin's forces enjoyed British and French support. The Ukrainians lacked an arms and munitions industry (their economy was largely extractive: producing iron, coal, grain, and sugar for Russia) and were unable to obtain arms and medical supplies from the western powers. Ukraine also lacked natural geographic frontiers of a strategic character that would have contributed to the country's defence against invasion.

Indeed, Ukraine's geographical location and the fact that the Ukrainians have the Russians as neighbours contributed as much as any factor to the course of the Ukrainian revolution. If the Russian provisional government did grant a few concessions to the Ukrainians it was the result of weakness and not of Alexander Kerensky's sympathy for or understanding of the Ukrainian cause. The liberalism of Russia's liberals — as in the case of Professor Paul Miliukov and the Constitution Democrats — did not extend to the recognition of Ukrainian national rights. None of the Russian political parties lent any support to the cause of Ukrainian statehood. The presence of too many Russians in Ukraine's eastern cities constituted a "fifth column" that was fatal for the UNR. The Russian minority in Ukraine played an important role in the establishment of soviet rule in the country. The Jewish minority, to a significant degree, chose to support the dominant Russians — as in earlier times it had supported Polish rule — and gave little support to Ukrainian demands.¹³

¹³For a balanced analysis of more recent Ukrainian-Jewish relations see Yaroslav Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine After World War II* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1964), pp. 395–409.

However, it would be incorrect to contend that the Ukrainians were not themselves responsible, at least in part, for their fate. The Ukrainian peasantry in particular played a crucial role and usually held the balance between the Bolsheviks and the UNR. The peasantry was isolated from the cities in which key political developments took place. Too often it was preoccupied with its attachment to the land and its desire to acquire more land. Its localism and its self-centred narrow outlook reflected limited horizons of a kind that hindered the integrative quality that is essential to a mature national movement. The qualities that had enabled the peasantry to preserve its Ukrainian identity in the face of tsarist oppression were not adequate to cope with the new onslaught directed against the Ukrainians.

The peasantry constituted a crucial sector of the population in a period of great confusion and turmoil during which the masses could be readily swayed and social conflict incited. The peasantry frequently succumbed to the siren song of such self-centred and short-sighted rural demagogues as the anarchist Nestor Makhno and the left-wing socialist revolutionary, Hryhoryiv. That Hryhoryiv's forces were able to drive the French out of Odessa in March 1919 while being an insubordinate part of Antonov-Ovseienko's Bolshevik army indicates the highly unstable nature of the situation at that time.¹⁴

Some observers might contend that a determining role was played by national character — that amalgam of virtues, values, and shortcomings that distinguishes a people from its neighbours — in this case the Ukrainians, Russians, and Poles. One can speculate on those characteristics of the Ukrainian way of life, bred by centuries of foreign rule, that might be said to have had a determining influence on the outcome of the revolution. Such an undertaking, while highly intriguing as well as challenging, would lead into another area of investigation and cannot be attempted here. However, it must not be ignored in any attempt to appraise the various factors that shaped the course of the Ukrainian revolution.¹⁵ One can ask whether the disruptive phenomenon of the *otamanshchina* — the independent operations of commanders of local para-military forces who would not submit to military discipline — was not in part a manifestation of the Ukrainian character. Nor should the Russian character be ignored in efforts to explain why Ukraine was engulfed in the Russian maelstrom of

¹⁴For a detailed discussion of Hryhoryiv's movement and his strained relationship with Antonov-Ovseienko see Adams, *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine*, chapters 5–11.

¹⁵There is an implicit treatment of national character — both Ukrainian and Russian — in Symon Petliura, *Moskovs'ka voshka* (Paris, 1966); this was Petliura's last work, written in 1925 as a political tract, but containing many observations regarding events of the revolutionary period.

1917 to 1920. Of course, it should be noted that the character of a people is not a biological phenomenon but is learned behaviour and is subject to change.

If the Ukrainians manifested both strengths and weaknesses during the revolutionary period it is not surprising in view of the generally adverse circumstances. Each Ukrainian government had to fight for its life and, in addition to the external threats, each faced formidable internal problems, the solutions to which would have been difficult to find under far better circumstances. Among these problems were the establishment of new military forces loyal to Ukrainian governments, the reorganization of the civil service, and the development of Ukrainian educational institutions with new textbooks and personnel of the kind that had been denied Ukrainians by the tsarist regime and by the Russian provisional government. Agrarian reform was a pressing need that could be met only with great difficulty in the face of a military campaign. There was the task of overcoming the depredations exacted by the russificatory policies of the tsars. Russification had taken its toll in the form of talented career-seeking Ukrainians who succumbed to the temptations and material rewards offered to those who would place their services at the disposal of the Russian imperial order. It had left deep scars, although it had not prevented the formation of a Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia during the nineteenth century. Ukrainian governments of the revolutionary period were aware of the need to replenish the ranks of the intelligentsia and the urban classes in order to reduce the social imbalance that characterized the nation as a result of centuries of oppression.

These problems and others could have been solved by the Ukrainians had they been left in peace for at least several years and permitted to develop free from foreign interference. Other nations, who were far less well-endowed, were granted independence in the post-World War II period and have succeeded in developing nation-states in the absence of foreign interference. Had the Ukrainians had a respite during which to consolidate their newly won independence the outcome of their revolution would undoubtedly have been quite different. Indeed, one is tempted to conclude that the Ukrainians might have been more fortunate had they inhabited a less attractive land — one that their neighbours would not covet. In a sense Iceland is, by comparison, fortunate for her insular position has given her very real advantages despite a numerically limited population, a northern latitude, and dependence on fish exports. If the Ukrainians had a more advanta-

geous geographical location — even at the price of having a numerically smaller population and a less well-endowed country — their lot in historical terms would probably be more enviable.

Although analogies are never perfect, it might be useful to compare the successful Finnish struggle for national independence in 1917–1918 with the unsuccessful Ukrainian effort which took place simultaneously. This comparison has a certain degree of validity in view of the fact that Lenin repeatedly referred to Ukraine and Finland in identical terms in 1917, paying lip service to their right to secede from Russia but opposing secession in fact. There are a number of essential differences that can be cited to explain the Finnish success. It is clear that the Finns acted with less hesitancy than the Ukrainians in proclaiming their independence in December 1917. Finland experienced a relatively brief but bitter civil war from January to April 1918. The Finnish communists — whose party was to be organized in Soviet Russia only in August 1918 — suffered defeat and had to abandon Helsinki. There followed severe recriminations administered by the victorious anti-communist forces under the determined leadership of General Mannerheim. The Finns, enjoying autonomy under tsarist Russian rule, as a grand duchy, had had a longer acquaintance with socialism; it did not have for them the novelty that it had for many Ukrainian intellectuals in 1917.

The Finns generally were little attracted to Russia; those Finnish conservatives who hesitated to sever the tie with Russia had their doubts regarding independence resolved very swiftly once the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd. Finland had been under Russian rule for but 108 years (since 1809) as contrasted with Russian influence and direct rule in eastern Ukraine since the mid-seventeenth century. Also the tsarist regime's russificatory policies were of shorter duration in Finland than in Ukraine. Relatively fewer Russians lived in Finland than in Ukraine, and Russians were in general less attracted to Finland, probably because of its northern latitude and the nature of its economy. By contrast, Ukraine has held great attraction for Russians and for others as well because of its rich soil, generally bountiful economy, and its attractive landscape. Thus Finland was of far less economic and strategic value to Bolshevik Russia than was Ukraine, and Lenin could afford to beat a retreat on the Finnish front and decide not to attempt to install the refugee Finnish communists in power. Instead, he directed his armies against Ukraine twice during 1919. The stakes were obviously much higher in Ukraine, which Lenin regarded as a

Russian granary rather than as a nation worthy of determining its own fate — despite lip service paid to Ukraine's right to national self-determination.

Finland received support from Germany while the left-wing Social Democrats or Communists had little aid from Soviet Russia. Ukraine can be said to have lacked a General Mannerheim, although General Skoropadsky conceivably might have played such a role. Mannerheim did not hesitate to incarcerate tens of thousands of Finnish communists and fellow-travelers in camps and to suppress ruthlessly any manifestation of pro-Russian or pro-soviet sentiment. The Finns experienced a two-way civil conflict and were not plagued with the disruptive conduct of the Ukrainian *otamany* and with a multi-dimensional conflict. Nor did the Finns have to wage the kind of three-front war against foreign enemies that the Ukrainians waged against Lenin's Russia, Denikin's Russia, and Poland.

The Finns also had less of a problem with national minorities than did the Ukrainians. Not only were there few Russians in Finland, but there was no problem of Jewish pogroms which had plagued Ukraine and which was to be unjustly attributed to Simon Petliura.¹⁶ The Swedish-speaking minority in Finland — a vestige of the fact that the country had been under Swedish rule for more than six centuries prior to coming under Russian rule — was not attracted to Russia.

The linguistic distinctiveness of the Finns, while important, should not be regarded as being of fundamental significance in any effort to explain why the Finnish independence movement succeeded. The criterion of linguistic distinctiveness as a means of explaining a nation's capability to establish its independence fails to find any general application. The Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Armenians, Georgians, Azerbaidjanis, Uzbeks, and Basques all possess highly distinctive, and in some cases unique, languages and yet have not been able to establish their independence on a permanent basis in recent times. Conversely, such peoples as the Austrians, Belgians, Dutch, Irish, Norwegians, and Bulgarians have been able to establish independent nation-states despite linguistic similarities with peoples of neighbouring states.

The Ukrainians, while not equaling the Finnish achievement, did succeed in attaining certain goals despite the profound scars left by

¹⁶For a revealing analysis of the trial of Petliura's assassin see Alain Desroches, *Le Probleme ukrainien et Simon Petlura: le feu et la cendre* (Paris, 1962). Also see chapters 8 and 9 of the biographical study by Vasył Ivanyś, *Symon Petlura: Prezydent Ukrainy* (Toronto, 1952). For a discussion of the legal rights and poli-

oppressive tsarist policies. Indeed, what was achieved in the Ukrainian revolution proved to be impressive despite inauspicious circumstances.

A revolution represents a profound turning point in a people's historical development that introduces a new quality or qualities into its structure, its goals, and expectations, and activates hitherto latent forces. To the degree that Ukraine continued to be subordinate to Moscow, as it had been subordinate earlier to St. Petersburg, it also experienced the Russian revolution. The Russian revolution involved the seizure of power by a single party, the reorientation of the economy to facilitate the pursuit of political objectives, the nationalization of resources and productive facilities, the imposition of a different ethos, the introduction of new forms of compulsion and persuasion, and the development of the prototype of the modern totalitarian regime.

While the Russian revolution precipitated the Ukrainian revolution, the latter developed a momentum and impact of its own and was distinctive in a number of important respects. These differences between the two revolutions might best be appreciated by examining the various consequences of the Ukrainian revolution.

First and probably foremost among the consequences was the emergence of the Ukrainian national movement as a political phenomenon. Although Ukrainian political parties had come into being in eastern Ukraine by 1900 and in western Ukraine during the 1890s, the national movement was primarily cultural and its demands prior to 1917 largely concerned cultural rights. As a result of the national resurgence following the revolution the apolitical and cultural Ukrainophile movement was no longer viable. Once Ukrainians made the effort to achieve independent statehood and actually succeeded in making the claim tenable in the short run, their subsequent actions were inevitably to have political implications even when confined to ostensibly non-political issues. An important precedent was set in asserting the claim to independent statehood.

A second consequence was that the Ukrainian national movement evinced a degree of vigour and determination that few had thought possible let alone likely prior to the revolution. The revolution involved a seesaw struggle for the fate of what is today Europe's most numerous subjugated people, but it is also clear that if the Soviet regime had been acceptable to the Ukrainians it would not have had to be

tical participation granted to the Jewish minority by the UNR see Solomon I. Gol'delman, *Zhydivs'ka natsionalna avtonomiia na Ukraini, 1917-1920 rr.* (Munich, 1963).

imposed upon them three times in the course of two years.¹⁷ The UNR governments would not have been able to wage the protracted and determined struggle that they did wage, without foreign aid, if the forces of conscious Ukrainian nationalism had not enjoyed a commensurate degree of popular support. It should be recalled that in the elections held for the constituent assembly in Ukraine it was the Ukrainian parties — the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries — that won and not the Russian parties of the same names.¹⁸ Thus it is evident that a rising sense of Ukrainian national identification did play an important role in the Revolution.

A third consequence was that Russians could no longer very well claim that Ukraine was “South Russia” or that the Ukrainian language was a “Russian dialect.” While the tsarist regime had openly employed heavy-handed repressive techniques in attempting to ban the Ukrainian language, the soviet regime found it advisable to develop more refined but hardly less transparent methods for containing Ukrainian aspirations and stunting Ukrainian cultural development. Thus, instead of banning the public celebration of Taras Shevchenko’s birthday, as the tsarist regime had done, the soviet regime endeavoured to distort and utilize the Shevchenko heritage.¹⁹ The inability to ban Shevchenko assured the abandonment of the pejorative term “Little Russian” that had created so much confusion earlier.

A fourth consequence was the establishment of a separate Ukrainian Soviet Republic. It is clear that initially the Russian Bolsheviks preferred that Ukraine be divided into several regional “republics.”²⁰ However, the proclamation of the UNR and more than two years of warfare between Ukraine and Russia made it necessary to abandon the earlier policy and to attempt, instead, to adopt a Ukrainian banner.

¹⁷Trotsky’s admission of November 2, 1920, in a communication to the Politburo of the Russian Communist party, found in his archives, is most revealing: “The Soviet power in Ukraine has held its ground up to now (and it has not held it well) chiefly by the authority of Moscow, by the Great Russian Communists and by the Russian Red Army” (quoted in Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, p. 281).

¹⁸Oliver H. Radkey, *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), pp. 18–19, 29–31, 36–8, 79–80.

¹⁹For incisive treatments of the Soviet regime’s use of Shevchenko as distinct from the poet’s true image see Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic*, chapter 6 and Petro Odarčenko, “Ševčenko in Soviet Literary Criticism,” in *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium* edited by Volodymyr Mijakovskij and George Y. Shevelov (’s Gravenhage, 1962) pp. 259–302.

²⁰Lawrynenko, *Ukrainian Communism*, pp. 76–80.

It is unlikely that the Ukrainian Soviet Republic would have been proclaimed had the UNR not come into being first.²¹

A fifth consequence was the achievement by Ukraine of a modicum of diplomatic recognition, both *de facto* and *de jure*. Both the UNR and Hetman Skoropadsky's regime had foreign ministries, entered into diplomatic relations with foreign governments, and concluded treaties. Thus Ukrainian governments established an important precedent for subsequent diplomatic undertakings conducted in the name of the Ukrainian SSR. The Bolshevik government of Ukraine found it necessary to have a foreign office and to claim that it was sovereign when it sought to replace the UNR diplomats at the Brest-Litovsk peace talks. Subsequently the Ukrainian SSR signed the Treaty of Riga (18 March 1921) with Poland in order to nullify Warsaw's recognition of the UNR in the treaty concluded between the Directory and Poland on 21 April 1920. The Ukrainian SSR concluded diplomatic agreements with and obtained recognition from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Turkey; it also concluded agreements with France, Italy, and Hungary. This record of diplomatic activity, based on the precedent set by the UNR, in turn provided a precedent for the re-establishment of a Ukrainian soviet foreign ministry in 1944 and for the admission of Ukraine to the United Nations as a charter member in 1945. Thus the activities of Ukrainian diplomats of the revolutionary period were to pay unanticipated dividends decades later.²²

A sixth consequence of the revolution was that it served as a catalyst, activating forces that have since remained operative. Although the proponents of the national struggle were said to have been defeated, they left behind a seedbed of future activity. The revolution made possible the cultural flowering of the 1920s and early 1930s. It also

²¹It is significant that at the outset, in December 1917, the first Bolshevik regime in Ukraine, established in Kharkov, called itself the "People's Secretariat of the Ukrainian People's Republic" (Borys, *The Russian Communist Party*, p. 180).

²²Vasyl Markus, *L'Ukraine soviétique dans les relations internationales, 1918–1923* (Paris, 1959); P. P. Udovychenko, *Z istorii zovnishn'oi polityky Ukrain's'koi RSR* (Kyiv, 1957); Romain Yakemtchouk, *L'Ukraine en droit international* (Louvain, 1954); Bohdan T. Halajczuk, "The Soviet Ukraine as a Subject of International Law," *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.*, ix, 1–2 [27–28], (1961), 167–88; R. Yakemtchouk, "L'Ukraine sur le plan des relations diplomatiques" and P. de Visscher, "A propos de la personnalité juridique de l'Ukraine" in I. Mirtchouk *et al*, *L'Ukraine dans le cadre de l'est européen* (Louvain and Paris, 1957), pp. 61–107.

made possible the national communism of those Ukrainian Bolsheviks who defended their country's rights. It facilitated the emergence of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church both in North America and in Ukraine. It made possible the national resistance of Ukrainians during and after World War II.

The impact of the Ukrainian revolution was manifold, and it has most recently found expression in the young soviet Ukrainian poets of the sixties and in the demands of those who have dared to challenge the regime's nationality policies. Moved by Shevchenko's poignant description of Ukraine as "our land that is not our own" and inspired by his appeal to "struggle and ye shall overcome the foe," the makers of the Ukrainian revolution accomplished much in the face of extremely difficult circumstances. That their successors have been able to continue the long and hard struggle is in itself testimony to what was achieved.