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From Imperial Russia to Colonial Ukraine

Mark von Hagen

After the end of the Soviet Union and its eastern European empire and – inspired to a very large degree by the work of Said – the emergence of the subaltern school of south Asian history,¹ as well as the publication of Gayatri Spivak's understanding of 'postcoloniality'² and other developments, cultural anthropologists and others have joined with colleagues in comparative literature and made connections between postcolonialism and postsocialism.³ One of the first to propose applying the label 'postcolonial' to post-Soviet Ukrainian literature was an Australian scholar of Ukrainian ethnicity, Marko Pawlyshyn.⁴ Following his 'postcolonial' lead, a Canadian scholar of Ukrainian ethnicity, Myroslav Shkandrij, wrote a wonderfully entangled history of Russia and Ukraine in modern literature.⁵ All the scholars discussed so far are primarily known as literary historians. Literary historians of this postcolonial orientation are a particular subset of cultural historians and are usually held in some suspicion by other historians, who often accuse them of anachronistically reading back into history their own contemporary multicultural politics. But more conventional and mainstream historians, especially those who interrogate categories of identity in national and imperial states, have begun to appropriate some of the commonplaces of the literary scholars and anthropologists who have been the most ardent 'postcolonialists'. For example, many of the writers discussed by literary historians or by anthropologists betray some fascination with what postcolonial theorists would recognise as 'hybridity',⁶ and this is a theme that is becoming more prominent in studies of historical identity in Ukraine and other parts of the former Russian and Soviet empires. Andreas Kappeler, whose history of the Russian empire has been highly influential in shaping the 'imperial turn' in Russian history and who has also contributed to the multicultural history of Ukraine,

has now embraced the paradigm of 'entangled history' (from the French *histoire croisée* and the German *Verflechtungsgeschichte*) to write a history of Russia and Ukraine through the biographies of two individuals with such hybrid identities in an environment with Jewish, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and many other cultures all exerting various degrees of attraction on individuals.⁷

Before I can make a case for revisiting the history of Ukraine from the perspective of colonialism, I need to establish the legitimacy of viewing the Russian empire, the Soviet Union and possibly also Poland as imperial states. This notion that Russia and the Soviet Union might be considered as imperial states, rather than nation-states, might come as a surprise to those outside the field. This may be due to the fact that historians of Russia and the Soviet Union until the last couple of decades had adopted as their primary paradigm the nation-state in embryonic form. This had been the historical vision of the liberal Constitutional Democratic Party ('Kadet' party), whose leadership included several prominent historians of Russia and western Europe. Former members of this party emigrated to the West as refugees and helped establish the most influential academic programmes in Russian and eastern European history. These historians saw the Russian state as a relatively progressive force that was leading the backward society along the road to Europe and its democratic and capitalist nations. A strong national state, in this case identified as Russia, was part of what being modern and European meant. Mainstream Kadet thought moved towards the more conservative slogan of 'Russia, one and indivisible' during the Revolution and Civil War. Several Kadets ended up as advisors to the White governments in the south and Siberia, and they vehemently opposed any movements for national liberation or independence, with particular vitriol directed against the Ukrainian movement.

Similarly, taking a modernisation theory perspective, historians of the modern Russian and Soviet periods and their political sciences colleagues also saw a state and society that was becoming more secular, literate and technologically modern with previous religious and ethnic identities becoming increasingly blurred as a common, modern Soviet identity emerged. Joseph Stalin and his successors also came to support a view of the Russian state as a progressive force in terms of leading Russian society out of its backwardness. The Soviet leadership and its educational and propaganda elites promoted the idea of an emerging Soviet people, thereby repeating some of the aspirations of the Kadets for the Russian state. Thus, there was one area of agreement between specialists on the Soviet region and Stalin himself, who declared that

the 'national question' had been settled by the early 1930s, an assertion which he also made with regard to the 'women question'. At the same time, the Soviet party and state leadership proclaimed itself to be the global leaders of the struggle against imperialism and colonial exploitation, and it gave institutional form to this commitment in the creation of the Communist International.⁸

A minority of historians of both imperial Russia and the Soviet Union did not accept this 'nation state in the making' teleology. Many of them were supported and encouraged by the anti-communist eastern European diasporas in the West, and they also included influential diaspora historians such as Richard Pipes, who long held the chair of Russian history at Harvard.⁹ This Cold War version of Russian and Soviet history was a narrative of unmitigated and constant imperial aggression against weaker neighbours¹⁰ and was politically enshrined in the 'captive nations' movement that called upon Western civilisation to overturn the Soviet conquest of eastern Europe, at times not shying away from calling for World War III. Among the diaspora communities in the West, Ukrainians played a very large role in such initiatives as the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, a multi-national non-governmental organisation that publicised cases of human rights abuses and Russification measures in the Soviet Union.¹¹ These diaspora groups viewed their 'captive nations' as brutally exploited colonies of the Soviet empire and based their politics of national liberation on this historical understanding.

An early pioneer of the history of non-Russian peoples – but from a decidedly left-of-centre perspective – was Ron Suny with his history of the Baku Commune during the Russian Revolution in the Caucasus.¹² In the context of Cold War academic politics, Suny refused to refer to the Soviet Union as imperial, reserving that label for the pre-1917 history of Russia. Since the end of the Soviet Union, Suny has been one of the leaders of a movement of scholars advocating the 'imperial turn' and has fully acknowledged that the Soviet Union can be usefully understood and investigated as an empire, albeit of a different kind.¹³ This dramatic change in perspective is reflected by two periodicals recently established by a younger, international generation of historians: *Kritika* in the US and *Ab Imperio* in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan in the Russian Federation. However, the same trend can also be identified in the main American Slavic studies journal *Slavic Review*.¹⁴

The acknowledgement of the imperial aspects of Russian and Soviet history did not automatically imply acceptance of the concept of 'colony' with regard to all the non-Russian peoples, and with some good reason.

Firstly, for most of their history Soviet leaders denied that they were imperialists, insisting instead that they were the leaders of the anti-imperialist camp in world politics. Francine Hirsch has identified what she calls a rather self-consciously anti-imperialist form of Soviet imperialism in the 1920s that encouraged a more critical look at Russia's own past, but also served as a critical tool for organising life among the multiethnic population of the new Soviet Union.¹⁵

Generally speaking, the Russian empire – though it spanned 11 time zones and claimed authority over a hundred diverse ethnic and national groups – did not think of itself as a colonial power. It rarely used the term in relation to itself, though the concept existed in Greek and Byzantine history, to which Russia had strong connections. When a region and its people were conquered by Russia, there was no colonial office to administer the new lands. Instead, an ad hoc *Kazanskii prikaz* took over the administration of conquered Kazan and the Tatar population there until it was deemed sufficiently 'colonized' and assimilated into general Russian and imperial structures. The same approach was adopted in relation to Siberia, which had its *Sibirskii prikaz*, and Ukraine, or the Cossack Hetmanate, which had its *Malorossiiskii* (or Little Russian) *prikaz*.¹⁶ The closest the empire came to agencies that had a pan-imperial purview along these lines was a late-imperial agency for the resettlement of Russian and Ukrainian peasants to what were perceived to be fertile and under-utilised lands in Turkestan and Siberia.

Despite the fact that the imperial administration did not have an office for 'colonial affairs',¹⁷ the autocracy did use the concept of 'colony', but in rather interesting and perhaps unexpected ways. As part of Catherine's 'enlightened absolutist' reign and her determination to improve her empire, she invited foreign settlers to move to the Russian empire with incentives of free farmland, tax benefits and exemption from military service for a period of time. These mostly German farmers were administered as 'colonists' by one of Catherine's favourites, Grigorii Orlov, in a special chancellery. The expectation was that the immigrants, or colonists, would bring with them all sorts of human capital that would be beneficial for backward Russian and Ukrainian peasants. In other words, colonists were invited because of their presumed superiority to the native population, whether due to their Protestant work ethic, or their technical skills. This bears comparison with the 'settler colony' practice of Britain in North America, Australia and New Zealand, where British settlers were expected to bring Christianity and private property to the indigenous population. Later Catherine, who imagined herself as a Greek empress if not the goddess of war and

wisdom herself, encouraged a number of Greek colonisation projects along the northern coast of the Black Sea, a region that had been colonised by Greek merchants in antiquity, thus, in effect, neo-colonisation. Germans, Greeks, Serbs and others were invited to 'improve' New Russia, the lands to the north of the Black Sea from which the Tatar and Cossack inhabitants and rulers had been largely removed to make way for the new settlements.¹⁸ Most of these colonies were in the lands that would become Ukraine.

Subsequently, under Tsar Alexander I, a social experiment called 'military colonies' was undertaken under the supervision of Aleksei Arakcheev, a military man. Ironically, the schools in these colonies were inspired by British Quaker 'Lancasterian' schools, one of which was the site of the prototype of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, made famous by Michel Foucault as the all-seeing observation tower of modern prisons. Bentham spent time in Ukraine while writing his Panopticon.¹⁹ Russian America, or Alaska, provides another opportunity to test the utility of the concept of 'colony' for understanding the complexity of the Russian empire. It is one of the few known cases in which the Russian empire sought to imitate the model established by the British and Dutch in their East India companies. The Russian-American Company was founded in 1799 to exploit the riches of the sea otter fur trade. The company was wound down in 1867 after Alaska was purchased by the United States. The Russians sent Orthodox priests to proselytise among the native tribes and built fortresses along the Pacific coast to protect their merchant-trader outposts in ways that resembled earlier French settlement of eastern North America.²⁰

One of the first and most influential uses of the term 'colony' as a critique of the Russian empire occurred in a volume entitled *Siberia as a Colony*, which was published by Nikolai Yadrintsev in 1892. Yadrintsev was a member of a group of Siberian regionalists, or *oblastniki*, who came together in the imperial capital during their university years. In a curious irony of imperial history, two of this circle, Yadrintsev and Serafim Shashkov, had come to St Petersburg after being exiled from Kiev and Kazan for their oppositional activities.²¹

A less obscure source of concepts of Russia as a colonising state – though in this case colonisation was positively connoted – were the writings of the 'father' of modern Russian history, the Moscow university professor Vasilii Kliuchevskii. In 1904, he wrote that Russian history is 'the history of a country that colonizes itself. The space of this colonization widened along with the territory of the state.'²² Kliuchevskii's own doctoral dissertation was about monastic colonisation in medieval

Muscovy. From the insights gleaned from this research, he went on to argue that 'the colonization of the country is the single most important fact of Russian history' and that, from the Middle Ages onward, the standard periodisation of Russian history merely reflects 'the major moments of colonization'. Alexander Etkind has brought us back to the classics of Russian historiography to recover this theme of 'internal colonization', which is the title of one of his latest books.²³ For the most part, Etkind writes about colonisation, and not quite yet colonialism, though he includes some postcolonial writing among his inspirations.

Outside the field of cultural studies, social scientists have turned to the term 'internal colonialism' from various vantage points. In the 1970s, the Marxist sociologist Alvin Gouldner made a case for understanding Stalinism, in particular the forcible collectivisation of the peasantry, as an example of 'internal colonialism'.²⁴ He argued that Stalin related to the peasantry as an alien colonial power would. He also highlights the turn from foreign enemies in Soviet politics to internal ones: the kulaks, the peasantry, Trotskyites. The peasantry, which is of particular interest to historians of Ukraine, was 'defined as outside the moral community'. As was typical of this stage of the history of peasant studies, Gouldner made no mention of nationality; peasants were assumed to be 'Soviet' or perhaps Russian, though this was implicit rather than being stated directly. The famine of 1932–1933, which hit Ukrainians and Kazakhs hardest of all peoples, has inspired comparisons with the Irish famine of 1846, the *Gorta Mór*. Indeed, mid-nineteenth century British officialdom, including the religious hierarchy, viewed the Irish peasants as less than human in many critical instances and was not terribly alarmed at the very high mortality rates among what it viewed as lazy Catholic subjects.²⁵ Even more recently, a decidedly non-Marxist sociologist, Michael Hechter, proposed 'internal colonialism' as a framework for understanding the development of the core and periphery of the British Isles, with a special focus on Wales, while retaining ethnic differences between the metropole and the colony as key to this internal colonialism.²⁶

Since the 'imperial turn', historians in the United States and Europe have increasingly applied the label 'colonial' to Russian expansion into the Caucasus, into the steppe frontier, and into Turkestan/Central Asia, but they have been more reluctant to think of relations between Russia and its western borderlands (Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic nations) in this way.²⁷ At various times in history, Great Russian statesmen, intellectuals and even revolutionaries viewed certain parts of the Russian empire as having a greater entitlement to autonomy, independence or secession

than others. During the nineteenth century, the focus of discussion among the Russian elite shifted from the 'Tatar' or 'Turkish' question (after the Crimean War), to the 'Polish question' (which became particularly acute after the 1863 Polish rebellion, and the 'Jewish question' (after the first violent anti-Jewish pogroms of the 1880s). However, it is harder to identify a 'Ukrainian question' in Russian thought, as Ukraine was predominantly viewed as part of the Polish and Jewish questions. For a variety of reasons, Russian writers, historians, and bureaucrats found it particularly difficult to recognise Ukraine's history as being distinct from that of Russia. I wish to reframe this understanding of the Ukrainian question by proposing that, from the Pereiaslav Agreement between Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Muscovite Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich in the mid-seventeenth century, Ukrainian-Russian relations can be understood and studied as Russian colonial rule over Ukraine. Even during periods that have been viewed as being characterised by 'liberalization' or greater tolerance on the part of the imperial capital (Moscow/Petersburg) towards the territory and population of Ukraine, such as the Soviet 1920s, colonial rule nonetheless prevailed in the relationship between the core and the periphery.

Let me begin to make a case for considering Ukraine's history in the late early modern and modern periods as colonial. Jürgen Osterhammel distinguishes between colonialism and imperialism. He defines imperialism as the behaviour of imperial states in general, while colonialism is a subset of this and refers specifically to the metropole's relationship with its colonial peripheries. He mentions Russia and the Soviet Union only in passing, though he seems willing to include both in his category of imperialist powers. He defines colonialism as 'a relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonised people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis'. He stresses that 'no matter what formalities may have been observed, it [the colonial state] was a government by administrative decrees of the governor, his council, and his staff.'²⁸

Recent scholarship suggests that the First World War had the effect of encouraging geographers, historians and other social scientists to think about Russia in colonial terms.²⁹ In tandem with this new fascination and the prospect of a colonial future for Russia, critical opposition to these ambitions emerged. The subject peoples of Russia's empire were not alone in experiencing these conflicts, but Russia and the Russian Revolution played a very important role in accelerating the global spread

of anti-colonial nationalism. Russia was located somewhere between the model British empire and the 'weak man of Europe', the Ottoman empire, in that it was both a colonising power and a semi-colonial power by virtue of its economic and cultural relations with western European empires.

Russia's defeat by Japan in the 1905 war marked the beginning of a radical change in the attitude of colonial peoples towards the idea of European civilisational superiority. Cemil Aydin asserts that 'the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 became a truly global movement; by shattering the discourse of the racial and civilisational superiority of the West over the East, and thus the legitimacy of European hegemony, the Russo-Japanese war confirmed that non-western societies, if they followed the path Japan had taken, could indeed fulfil all the standards of civilisation within a very short period of time.' This reorientation gave rise to early forms of pan-Islamism and pan-Asianism.³⁰ But the 1905 revolution, which also grew in part out of the Russo-Japanese War, also saw the first instances of anti-imperial nationalist movements within the Russian empire, including in Ukraine.³¹

The term 'Wilsonian moment' has been coined to refer to the new opportunity for the emergence of anti-colonial nationalism which was present in the post-war period. Arno J. Mayer has written the classic study on the 'new diplomacy' of American President Woodrow Wilson and Russian Bolshevik leaders Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.³² Newer studies highlight the way in which the Versailles negotiations and the treaties were viewed in the colonial territories, and these view the rise of anti-colonial nationalism as occurring in the context of the crisis of the international system and the disappointed hopes of colonial peoples throughout the world, who had looked to Wilson as the potential shaper of a better, more just world order. Aydin is one of several authors who highlight the Wilsonian moment. Erez Manela studies the evolution of revolutionary nationalist politics in India, China, Korea and Egypt, but argues that these are only individual cases of a global phenomenon. He views the First World War and the 'unprecedented decimation of human lives and the myriad political, social and economic dislocations it caused' as the 'crucial context for the articulation and dissemination of the Wilsonian message and shaped the perceptions and responses to it.' Furthermore, 'the war strained the resources of the European powers, exposed as hollow their claims to superior civilisation, and decimated the image of western military invincibility already tarnished by the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905.' What Manela describes as the Wilsonian moment 'lasted from the autumn of 1918, when Allied victory appeared imminent and Wilson's principles seemed

destined to shape the coming new world order, until the spring of 1919, as the terms of the peace settlement began to emerge and the promise of a Wilsonian millennium was fast collapsing.'

Manela concludes: 'Many in the colonial world who had followed Wilson's increasingly dramatic proclamations in the final months of the war, however, came to expect a more immediate and radical transformation of their status in international society. As the outlines of the peace treaty began to emerge in the spring of 1919, it became clear that such expectations would be disappointed and that outside Europe the old imperial logic of international relations, which abridged or entirely obliterated the sovereignty of most non-European peoples, would remain largely in place. The disillusionment that followed the collapse of this 'Wilsonian moment' fuelled a series of popular protest movements across the Middle East and Asia, heralding the emergence of anti-colonial nationalism as a major force in world affairs.'³³ The colonial elites viewed the Versailles settlement as 'the apex of imperial expansion' for the victorious powers, especially Britain, France and Japan.

The Allies had directed the language of self-determination at national groups under the control of the enemy Central Powers. And, indeed, national groups in the Habsburg empire adopted this language in their campaign for independence. The politics of self-determination quickly spread to the Russian empire as well. The collapse of the Russian and Habsburg empires resulted in the emergence of the independent polities of Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.³⁴ Most recent scholarship acknowledges that the socialist alternatives to the liberal Wilsonian politics of self-determination only made headway after the collapse of the Wilsonian moment,³⁵ though Mayer highlights the significance of the peace declaration of the Petrograd Soviet in March 1917 as an important catalyst in the struggle for a new set of rules for international politics, and above all national self-determination.³⁶ In May, the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which was still in moderate socialist hands, issued an appeal 'to the socialists of all countries' for a 'general peace on a basis which is acceptable to the toilers of all countries who do not want conquests, do not strive for plunder, and are equally interested in the free expression of the will of all peoples and in the destruction of the power of international imperialism [...] the program of peace without annexations and indemnities on the basis of self-determination of peoples.'³⁷ The 1917 revolutions brought together in a powerful movement of protest the anti-war and anti-imperialist politics that had been an important part of the discussion in international socialism.

Vladimir Lenin must be viewed as an important source of Soviet-era postcolonialism, and he continued the interest that Karl Marx had devoted to this subject in his writings.³⁸ Although he was not the original source of the concept of the Russian empire as a 'prison of nations' (*tiurma narodov*),³⁹ he studied the problem of empire, imperialism and colonialism in several seminal works, including *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916); *The Right of Nations to Self-determination*, and his 'Draft Thesis on National and Colonial Questions' prepared for the Second Congress of the Communist International.⁴⁰

What came to be seen as the Leninist alternative to Wilson's liberal vision of the new world order dates back to the articulation by Lenin and the German Social Democrat Rosa Luxemburg of the far-left position on the war and imperialism among Europe's socialists. At the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart in 1907, the leftists secured the adoption of a resolution that committed all socialist parties, if war should break out, 'to strive with all their power to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war to rouse the masses and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule.' The congress also voted to oppose any support of colonialism. At the same congress, German Social Democrat leader Karl Kautsky also delivered a critique of colonialism more broadly.⁴¹ After the outbreak of war, advocates of this leftist position, who were still clearly a minority in the Russian and German socialist parties, denounced the manner in which the socialists obediently lined up in their parliaments to vote for war credits, and Lenin, Luxemburg and the growing left wing condemned it as the collapse of the Second International and the betrayal of socialism. Lenin called for the creation of a new International to restore the socialist movement to its true revolutionary path.⁴² The first meeting of the leading socialist parties after the outbreak of war convened in Zimmerwald, Switzerland in September 1915. From this conference emerged the 'Zimmerwald Left' manifesto, which was another important step in a process which resulted in Lenin organising the Third International in March 1919. It also marked the definitive split of the left wing from the socialists of the Second International.

Shortly after the Bolsheviks came to power in November 1917, Trotsky, as the first Commissar of Foreign Relations, joined the anti-colonial forces against the imperialist powers. In his peace plan of 29 December, 1917, he denounced the Allies as hypocrites for their endorsement of Wilsonian principles while oppressing national groups in their own empires, among which he singled out Ireland, Egypt, India, Madagascar and Indochina. The Brest-Litovsk negotiations with the

Central Powers presented the Bolsheviks with their first opportunity to practice the new diplomacy that Lenin had advocated, but the weakness of the Bolsheviks' armed forces and the overwhelming strength of the German armies rendered this first attempt a failure. Lenin had to persuade his colleagues in the party leadership and throughout Soviet Russia that a dishonourable peace was better than the defeat of the revolution.⁴³ The German victory was itself very short-lived. In November 1918, the German generals were forced to surrender and the Hohenzollern dynasty was replaced by a secular republic dominated by the mainstream Social Democrats. Following the November Revolution, the German left broke from the mainstream and appealed to the Bolsheviks to aid them in their revolution.

Lenin invited delegates from dozens of countries to a four-day conference in Moscow in March 1919 to found a new Communist International to better further the cause of revolution worldwide. The congress adopted a 'Manifesto of the International' which declared the recent war to be one 'over colonies' and 'fought with the help of the colonies.' It went on to highlight the 'bloody street fighting' in Ireland; the 'uprising of colonial slaves' in Madagascar, Annam and other countries, and the 'revolutionary movement' in India and elsewhere. The delegates denounced Wilson's programme 'as no more than changing the label on colonial slavery.' The manifesto distinguished between the colonies in Asia, Africa and the Middle East on the one hand, and the 'smaller and weaker peoples' of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the tsarist empire on the other. But just as Wilson's promises to colonial peoples were masks for continued imperialism and colonial slavery, so too the 'imperialist Allies', while they 'never cease talking about the right of nations to self-determination,' have ground that right 'into the dust both in Europe and throughout the rest of the world.' The only guarantee of self-determination for the small nationalities is the proletarian revolution.⁴⁴

Although Irish independence was always on the Bolsheviks' anti-colonial agenda, Russia's Bolsheviks did not accede to requests from the Ukrainian socialist revolutionary parties for membership in the Comintern. The Ukrainian Communist Party (*Borotbisty*) was formed by left-wing militants of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party. On the other hand, Mykola Skrypnyk addressed the Congress of the Third International 'as a representative of the Communist Party of Ukraine', which was admitted as a delegation with a decisive vote. The CPU was one of the radical offshoots of Ukrainian Social Democracy, close to the Menshevik position. Skrypnyk reported that the party had nearly

30,000 members, and that their formal rivals, the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries 'are simply coming over as a whole to our party'. And he called for 'our revolutionary movement to spread even wider. It will engulf Galicia and form a bridge for the revolution to cross from Russia to Hungary.'⁴⁵

The next international initiative that Lenin undertook was to invite delegates from more than two dozen peoples to the First Congress of Peoples of the East, which was held on 1–7 September 1920. In a special session devoted to the national and colonial questions, once again Ukraine was highlighted as a success story for the Leninist alternative of national self-determination. Mikhail Pavlovich, a former Menshevik-Internationalist turned Bolshevik and currently an employee of the new Commissariat of Foreign Relations, delivered the report to the delegates. Pavlovich condemned the Poles for their 'long series of wars against Ukraine' and the Allies for seeking to turn over Ukraine to French stock-brokers, and announced that 'tens of hundreds of honest Ukrainians who sincerely desire the national and cultural rebirth of Ukraine [...] including [...] Hrushevsky and Vinnichenko, have become convinced that only Soviet power can now fulfill to the end the role of liberator of Ukraine from all forms of oppression.'⁴⁶

In these complicated and ambiguous political situations, scholarship took up the anti-colonial message, at least during the 1920s. Early Soviet literary historians⁴⁷ and historians of economic relations⁴⁸ followed in the path of the fiercely anti-imperialist Russian-Soviet historian Mikhail Pokrovskii, who sought to disprove all prior ideas of a benevolent and enlightened Russian autocracy.⁴⁹ Several scholars – particularly linguists and anthropologists – some with Imperial Academy training, developed a critique of European colonialism, particularly in Turkestan and the Tatar-Bashkir worlds.⁵⁰ This anti-colonial critique presaged in many ways the pioneering work of Edward Said in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*.⁵¹ More recently, a colleague in Britain, Vera Tolz, has made a more direct and persuasive link between Said and several Soviet-era academicians and scholars, especially the linguist Marr, the Orientalist Bartold, and the academician Sergei Oldenburg. She demonstrates that Oldenburg influenced Middle Eastern scholars, who in turn influenced a Marxist sociologist from Egypt whose essay Edward Said cites in his *Orientalism*.⁵² All this original and creative work fell foul of evolving Stalinist views, which redefined the 'prison of nations' as the 'friendship of peoples', discouraged any suggestion that there were multiple paths to revolution or socialism, and designated the Russian people the 'big brother' of the non-Russians.⁵³

Although these anti-colonial histories were especially attractive to scholar-activists from Turkestan (soon Central Asia) and the Caucasus, some Ukrainian scholars and political activists also began to argue that Ukraine had the status of a colonial possession in the Russian empire, while subtly implying that certain features of this relationship between Russia and Ukraine persisted into the present.⁵⁴ A relative liberalisation of cultural policies in Ukraine during the years when Petro Shelest was the Communist Party's first secretary in Ukraine encouraged students and intellectuals to organise literary and historical circles, which soon led to arrests and other forms of persecution against so-called 'bourgeois nationalists'. In this climate of renewed repression, Ivan Dziuba penned a critique of contemporary Soviet nationalities policies, which he argued were anti-Leninist and anti-communist.⁵⁵ Dziuba re-asserts the view that the history of the tsarist empire was one of colonialism, that this colonialism persisted into the early years of the Soviet state, and that this persistent colonialism was a legacy of Russian and non-Russian revolutionary democrats of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁵⁶ He also reintroduces a broader critique of Great Russian chauvinism, which the Communist Party committed itself to overcoming at its Tenth and Twelfth Congresses (1921 and 1923),⁵⁷ in the resolutions of the Communist International⁵⁸ and through the policies of Ukrainianisation of cultural and educational facilities and the promotion of ethnic Ukrainians into positions of political and cultural power. He starts from a critique of what he sees as the betrayal of Lenin's policy by Stalin and Khrushchev and a mistaken push towards the assimilation of the Soviet peoples at the expense of their national characters and state independence.⁵⁹ He evokes the memory of the *Borotbisty* communists, a breakaway faction of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries who called themselves communists and were accepted as such, at least temporarily, by Lenin and the Bolshevik Central Committee.⁶⁰ (This insistence by Dziuba that Lenin saw Great Russian chauvinism as a big obstacle to any revolutionary transformation of the empire has been echoed by Roman Szporluk with regard to Lenin's early years. Szporluk has also written extensively about the problem which nations pose for Marxists and about the early anti-imperial school of Soviet Russian historiography under Mikhail Pokrovskii).⁶¹ Although Dziuba does not go as far as to explicitly describe Soviet Ukraine as a form of colonial oppression by a new socialist version of the Russian empire, he makes the case in an implicit manner throughout his text by demonstrating how contemporary policies in education, culture, politics, economics and administration all contribute to the degradation not only of the

Ukrainian nation, but of all the nations of the Soviet Union, including the Russians themselves, and that Russification is the new cultural tool of imperialism in Soviet conditions.⁶²

Among those whose memory Dziuba evokes are Ukrainian communists and their allies who called for cultural and national autonomy during the 1920s, all of whom met tragic ends, either through suicide or in Stalinist camps.⁶³ Mykhailo Hrushevsky returned from exile in 1924 to work in the Soviet Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. His national model, though deemed bourgeois – a judgment which was reinforced from a communist perspective by his leadership role in the 1917–1918 Ukrainian republics – was nonetheless at least partly in line with anti-colonial trends.⁶⁴ The head of historical studies of the Ukrainian Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Matvii Iavorskyi, had worked on a model based on the Marxist understanding of history to apply to Ukraine. Even this suggestion of a distinct Ukrainian path to socialism brought disfavour and condemnation on Iavorskyi by 1928. He was accused by none other than Pokrovskii of having fallen under the influence of the ‘bourgeois’ historian Hrushevsky.⁶⁵ Most of those associated with Hrushevsky were also deemed to be ‘bourgeois’ Ukrainian historians and were arrested in 1931 for their associations with an underground organisation, the ‘Ukrainian National Centre’, that had been ‘discovered’ by the GPU. It was in this wave of arrests that Pavlo Khrystiuk first lost his freedom.

Historians have followed the political counterparts of these intellectual trends through the evolution of the left wing of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries into the *Borotbisty* and the evolution of some Bolsheviks in Moscow and Ukraine into Ukrainian nationalism. In an unpublished article, Stephen Velychenko makes a convincing case that there was an anti-colonialist trend among left-wing Ukrainian Social Democrats. He also compares Ukrainian politics with contemporary developments in Ireland, as well as with the politics of the Tatar Sultan-Galiev and Turar Ryskulov in Turkestan.⁶⁶ The pamphlets of Vasyl Shakhrai and Serhyi Mazlakh entitled *Do Khvyli* (On the Current Moment) written in 1918 are part of this trend, though they have mainly been dismissed as utopian or quixotic. Shakhrai and Mazlakh advocated a version of ‘anti-colonial Marxism’ and considered themselves to be Ukrainian communists.⁶⁷ Others in this wing of Ukrainian Social Democracy ‘accused the Russian Bolsheviks of invading Ukraine in 1918–1919, subverting its indigenous revolution and reinforcing rather than dismantling imperial structures of domination.’ Documents from the Ukrainian Communist Party (which broke away from the Ukrainian Social Democrats and was in opposition to the Communist

Party of Ukraine, which was set up by Moscow to represent the Bolshevik party's interests in Ukraine) make open references to the Bolsheviks as new 'communist governor-generals' (a reference to the tsarist rulers of the provinces) and informed the leadership in Moscow that it represented 'the metropole desirous of benefitting from the colony.' Iury Mazurenko, co-founder of the UCP, demanded that the Bolsheviks respect the 'character of national economic liberation' and the national movement.⁶⁸ Another co-founder of the UCP, Andrii Richytsky, also insisted that his party 'is that of a proletariat in an oppressed colonial nation.'⁶⁹ These charges were made in response to the vague declarations made by the Comintern congress 'on the national and colonial question'.⁷⁰ Another study entitled *The Economic Independence (Samostiinist') of Ukraine*, which was published in Vienna in 1921 by Vasyl Mazurenko (another UCP theorist and leader), was an early critique of Bolshevik centralism. He cited the arguments of Russian economists that Russia could in fact exist economically without Ukraine, and argued that Ukraine's dependence on Russia for manufactured goods was the outcome of decades of colonialist imperialism. He called for the International to 'save communism from Muscovite imperialism!'⁷¹ Such observations brought him accusations of 'national communism', a cardinal sin in the Bolshevik-controlled world.

Khrystiuk provides a very interesting account of the period of the World War, Revolution and Civil War in Ukraine.⁷² He shows how a historian attempts to develop and frame his understanding of a period of great turmoil and change, and the particularities of a recently 'imagined' place. What he calls his 'Notes and Materials towards a History of the Ukrainian Revolution' is in fact fragments left unfinished. They also expose the author's own involvement in the events that he describes. Khrystiuk also seeks to understand the rapidly evolving politics of revolution in Ukraine and insists that the revolution in Ukraine, though connected in intimate ways with the revolutions in Petrograd and Moscow, quickly began to diverge from the Russian model in response to local Ukrainian conditions. As a veteran political activist at the age of 27 in 1917, Khrystiuk is familiar with the major political parties and their leaders in Ukraine and the Russian capitals. He is an astute reader of the party newspapers and the platform statements and resolutions of congresses and conferences. He captures the political life of Kyiv, Kharkiv and other Ukrainian cities across class and ethnic divides. His perspective is that of an avowed revolutionary, someone who is fighting for the liberation of Ukraine from its double – national and socio-economic – oppression. Indeed, he offers this history as part of the story

of 'intensified efforts on the part of oppressed peoples everywhere to throw off the shameful and heavy yoke of national oppression', but also the story of the 'world-wide struggle of working and exploited classes against the contemporary bourgeois capitalist socio-economic system and for a new socialist society.'⁷³

At the same time, Pavlo Khrystiuk writes from the perspective of an active and important player in the events he describes, both in the various Ukrainian national center-left governments and in the insurgency against the 'Hetmanate dictatorship,' as he calls it. A leading member of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary party, Khrystiuk also tries to explain what happened in Ukraine from the perspective of his particular type of class analysis, but one coupled with a sensitivity to national identity that is remarkably absent in the accounts of the events given by both the revolutionaries previously mentioned. Another Russian Social Democrat, the Georgian Iraklii Tsereteli, spoke of a 'blindness' on the part of Russian revolutionary democracy with regard to the 'national question', by which he meant that the all-Russian parties could not reconcile class with national oppression and resistance, despite conventional commitments to the right of self-determination of nations, a commitment that proved much harder to realise than had been anticipated.⁷⁴ This frustration of Khrystiuk with Bolshevik and Social Democratic ideas about nations and – a related idea for Ukraine and all colonial societies – about peasants, a category which included the overwhelming majority of the Ukrainian nation (no matter how it is defined), brings us back to Dziuba. Like Dziuba, Khrystiuk never explicitly describes the Bolsheviks in Ukraine as Russian colonialists, but he, like Dziuba, implies that by their behaviour and statements they have thoroughly imbibed the Ukrainophobic legacy of ten generations of Russifiers in Ukraine.

Khrystiuk accepts that 'bourgeois' nationalism can be found among the elite classes of society, for whose benefit the recent war [the First World War] was waged, but he laments the fact that national chauvinism is not limited to the Russian elites, but manifests itself in the leadership of the working classes of the dominant nations [Russia] in the form a lack of appreciation of the importance of the national element, ignoring demands for the liberation of the workers and peasants of the oppressed nations and betraying their national intolerance and chauvinistic centralist tendencies.' He does not shy away from criticising the nationalist excesses of some of the Ukrainian parties, particularly those of his social milieu which he labels 'petty bourgeois'. In fact, Khrystiuk declares that the greatest tragedy of the events he describes is

that they involve the first war in history ever to be waged between two revolutionary and socialist states after the Bolshevik Council of People's Commissars in Petrograd declared war on the Ukrainian Central Rada. Benedict Anderson begins his influential reflections on nationalism in *Imagined Communities* by admitting that he is confused as to why a communist Vietnam was engaged in bloody war with its communist Laotian and Cambodian neighbours, and by asking what has happened to international proletarian solidarity and the international class struggle?⁷⁵ In his 'Notes', Khrystiuk may well have identified some historic precedents for conflict among 'socialist' nations, a prospect Marx and Engels had never considered. (A similarly utopian theory of liberalism which regards free markets as the basis for peace has been part of European thought since Immanuel Kant published his treatise *Perpetual Peace*.)

Khrystiuk, because of his steadfast adherence to his own version of Ukrainian national revolution, a revolution based primarily on the peasants but also on Ukrainian workers, exposes the dilemmas that nationalism has posed for Marxists and scholars with Marxist sympathies. He makes this contribution to nationalism studies by means of a political history of the revolution in Ukraine. He does so through extensive citation of important documents that he has had access to, even in exile in post-war Vienna. The documents are mostly quasi-governmental statements of the Rada and other rival governments in Ukraine, including the Provisional Government in Petrograd, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Peasant Deputies, the Bolshevik government after the October Revolution, the governments of Germany, Austria-Hungary and others. They also include excerpts from stenographic accounts of the conferences and congresses of various parties, social movements, and other mass organisations in Ukraine. Khrystiuk ruthlessly analyses these documents as political rhetoric in order to expose the class interests which inform them, as well as how these class interests overlap with 'national' interests.

In conclusion, Khrystiuk's history of the Ukrainian revolution is part of a leftist tradition which views Russian imperial rule and early Bolshevik rule in Russia and Ukraine as colonialism. The left-wing origins of Khrystiuk's perspective might have resulted in the marginalisation of this potentially very productive framework for understanding Ukrainian history, but for the 'turn to the right' of Ukrainian émigrés in the 1920s and afterwards. To the followers of Dmytro Dontsov and his brand of Ukrainian nationalism, many of whom saw themselves as allies of the Nazi New Order in Europe, leftists and communists were dangerous rivals for political and cultural power over the Ukrainian

population. Perhaps now, twenty years after the end of the Soviet Union and its particular variant of socialist colonialism, scholars might be able to revisit these earlier contributions with greater dispassion.

Notes

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3. Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, 'Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009), 1–29.
4. Marko Pawlyshyn, 'Post-Colonial Features in Contemporary Ukrainian Culture' in *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 6:2 (1992), 41–55.
5. Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2001).
6. Homi Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' in *New Formations* 5 (1988), 5–23.
7. Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001, orig. pub. in 1992) and Andreas Kappeler, *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine* (Munich: Beck, 1994).
8. C. Ford, 'Memorandum of the Ukrainian Communist Party to the 2nd Congress of the 3rd Communist International, July–August 1920', *Debatte* 2 (2009), 248–62.
9. See Pipes's first monograph, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).
10. Taras Hunczak, ed., *Russian Imperialism: From Ivan the Great to the Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974).
11. See Vic Satzewich, *The Ukrainian Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2002).
12. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Baku Commune, 1917–1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).
13. See Ronald Grigor Suny 'The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "National" Identity, and Theories of Empire' in R. G. Suny and Terry Martin, eds, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Stalin and Lenin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23–66; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
14. *Ab Imperio* has as its subtitle 'Studies in New Imperial History and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space'; the subtitle of *Kritika* is 'Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History'; the *Slavic Review* recently changed its subtitle to 'Interdisciplinary Quarterly of Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies'.
15. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.

16. Boris Nolde, *La formation de l'empire russe: Etudes, notes et documents* (Paris, 1952).
17. Willard Sunderland, 'The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was But Might Have Been' in *Slavic Review* 69 (2010), 120–50.
18. Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995–2000).
19. Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization, Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 133–37.
20. See Ilya Vinkovetsky, *Russian America: An Overseas Colony of a Continental Empire, 1804–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
21. Mark von Hagen, 'Federalisms and Pan-Movements: Re-imagining Empire' in Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev, eds, *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 494–510.
22. P. Fedorovich, *Kurs russkoi istorii* (Moscow, 1956), 31.
23. See chapter 4 in Etkind, *Internal Colonization*.
24. See Alvin Gouldner, 'Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism', *Telos* 34 (1977), 5–48.
25. Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen, Vincent Comerford, eds, *Holodomor and Gorta Mór: Histories, Memories, and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland* (London: Anthem, 2012).
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28. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005, orig. pub. in 1995), 51, 33, 58.
29. See the recent conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, 8–9 June 2012, St. Petersburg State University, entitled 'Empire and Nationalism in World War I'.
30. See chapter 4 of Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
31. Teodor Shanin, *Russia, 1905–07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth* (London: Macmillan, 1986).
32. Arno J. Mayer, *Wilson vs. Lenin, Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917–1918* (Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian Books, 1964) and Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918–1919* (New York: Knopf, 1967).
33. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5–6.
34. On East Central Europe, see Victor S. Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe 1914–1918: A Study in Wilsonian Diplomacy and Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).
35. See Manela, *Wilsonian Moment*, 7.
36. See Mayer, *Wilson vs. Lenin*, 61–97.

37. Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 170.
38. Shlomo Avineri, ed., *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization: His despatches [sic] and other writings on China, India, Mexico, the Middle East and North Africa* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1968).
39. See Marquis de Custine, *La Russie en 1839* (Paris, 1843).
40. This was first published in June 1920. See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 144–51 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965).
41. John Riddell, *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents 1907–16, the Preparatory Years* (New York: Monad Press, 1984), 5–36.
42. Georges Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War: The Collapse of the Second International* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); and James Joll, *The Second International, 1889–1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); also Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism*.
43. Mayer, *Wilson vs. Lenin*, 293–312.
44. John Riddell, ed., *Founding the Communist International: Proceedings and Documents of the First Congress: March 1919* (New York: Anchor Foundation, 1987), 226–28.
45. See Skrypnyk's report on Ukraine in Riddell, ed., *Founding*, 95–99.
46. John Riddell, ed., *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920. First Congress of the Peoples of the East* (New York: Pathfinder, 1993), 141–42.
47. See N. Svirin, 'Russkaia kolonialnaia literatura', *Literaturnyi kritik* (1934), 4–79. See also S. Piontkovskii, 'Velikoderzhavnye tendentsii v istoriografii Rossii' in *Istorik-Marksist*, 1930, 21–26.
48. See Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas*, 161–90.
49. See M. N. Pokrovskii, *Russkaia istoriia v samom szhatom ocherke* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1920).
50. See chapter 4 in Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
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52. See Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient* and Anouar Abdel-Malek, 'Orientalism in Crisis' in *Diogenes* 44 (1963), 102–40.
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56. See Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 16, 68, 74, 78, 80, 166–69.
57. Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 11, 131–33, 136, 200.
58. Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 129–30.
59. Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 8, 15, 213.
60. Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 57, 180.
61. Roman Szporluk, 'Lenin, "Great Russia", and Ukraine' in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28:1–4 (2006), 611–26.

62. See Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 66–81, 88–87.
63. See Dziuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 11, 34–37, 57, 80, 116, 143, 145–46, 172.
64. See Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), chapter 4.
65. See in Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas*, chapter 7; Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia*, 398–413.
66. Stephen Velychenko, 'Ukrainian AntiColonialist Thought in Comparative Perspective: A Preliminary Overview', *Ab Imperio* 4 (2012): 339–71.
67. Peter J. Potichnyj, ed., *On the Current Situation in Ukraine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970).
68. *Chervonyi prapor*, 8 February 1920, cited in Pavlo Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii*, 4 vols. (Vienna, 1921–1922), Vol. 4, 55–56, 72.
69. *Chervonyi prapor*, 4 and 26 March, 19 June 1920.
70. This memorandum was published as a pamphlet in Vienna in 1920.
71. *Ekonomichna samostiinist Ukrainy v tsyfrakh* (Vienna, 1921), cited in Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas*.
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73. Khrystiuk, 'Foreword' in *Zamitky*.
74. I. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniia o fevral'skoi revoliutsii* (Paris: Mouton and Co.).
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