

Mapping Ukraine: From Identity Space to Decision Space

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Over thirty years ago Frank Sysyn argued that in 1917–18 “a revolution in perception” had occurred—a revolution more important than the political events commonly associated with the period:

This “revolution” was the acceptance of the idea of an entity with fairly well-defined borders called the “Ukraine,” and the self-identification of the masses living in this area as “Ukrainians.” This was a revolution in perception, and it brought about a general recognition that Ukrainians were a separate nation. Even the Russians or Poles, who had hitherto viewed Ukrainians as merely a part of their own nations, came to accept this new view.

Sysyn further stated that “by the 1920’s the concepts ‘Ukraine’ and ‘Ukrainians’ were almost universally accepted” and this happened even though the level of national consciousness among the Ukrainian masses before 1917 was “debatable” and, besides Russians, “Little Russians”—in Sysyn’s words, “Ukrainians who believed that they were the Little Russian branch of an ‘All-Russian’ nation” also “questioned the existence of a Ukrainian nation.”¹

Sysyn’s reminder that in 1918 in addition to Ukrainians and Russians there were still “Little Russians” in Ukraine would seem to indicate that the transition from historic Little Russia to modern Ukraine was a prolonged and complex process. Historic Little Russia, an entity that modern historians of Ukraine prefer to call the Hetmanate, had ceased to exist as

¹ Frank Sysyn, “Nestor Makhno and the Ukrainian Revolution,” in *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977), 277. Ivan L. Rudnytsky also pointed out that up to 1917 only two intellectual and political currents competed within Ukrainian society: one, “Little Russianism,” favored “the union with Russia,” and the other, “conscious Ukrainianism,” as he put it, “clamored for the maintenance and reactivation of Ukrainian identity” (Ivan L. Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, ed. Peter L. Rudnytsky [Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1987], 140). However, Rudnytsky also argued that a Ukrainian national awareness “in an embryonic stage in the form of a ‘South Russian’ sectionalism, or ‘territorial patriotism’” also existed in pre-1917 Ukraine (*ibid.*, 13).

a legal and administrative entity in the 1780s. Yet even at that time, while the Russian Empire was abolishing old institutions and rules, some members of the Hetmanate's elite began imagining a Ukraine that included but also extended beyond Little Russia. Scholars generally agree that the originators of the idea of a modern Ukraine—something greater than Little Russia—were either members of the last generation that lived in an autonomous Little Russia or their immediate successors. Can we be more specific as to where and when this idea emerged?

The rise of modern nations in Europe, not only in “central” or “eastern” Europe, has been a complex and multifaceted, multidimensional process. What Christopher Duggan, the author of *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796*, says about his subject applies to other cases as well, including Ukraine: “Once unleashed in the 1790s, the idea that “the people” constituted the nation and that the nation should be coterminous with the state was a genie of ferocious power. As the case of Italy suggests, the imperative inherent in the concept of unity could be as disruptive and coercive as it was liberating.”² One may view other cases, including Ukraine, in the way that *The Force of Destiny* treats Italy. According to Adrian Lyttelton, himself a historian of Italy, Duggan's book “is a history of the national idea, which takes the existence of Italy not as a given but as a problem.”³

Drawing attention to regularities or similarities in the formation of modern nations does not mean denying or downplaying the importance of special features of any individual case, including that of Ukraine. This essay draws, of necessity selectively, on the work of historians of modern Ukraine and attempts to relate their ideas to other scholars' studies on nations and nationalism in the hope that this approach will encourage placing the Ukrainian case in a comparative, international frame. Nation formation involved, among other things, the formation of a modern standard language and literature, but I will deal with language only briefly and literature will remain outside our purview.⁴ Instead I will focus on two problems: first, the political function of the nation's pre-modern history in modern times, and second, the development of a new “identity space”—that is, the “mapping” of the nation's territory.

² Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), xx.

³ Adrian Lyttelton, “Citizens of the Sponge,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 June 2008, 7 (review of Duggan's *The Force of Destiny*).

⁴ I discuss these questions with reference to modern Ukrainian nation formation in my article “Publish or Perish: Texts and Peoples.” in the Festschrift for George G. Grabowicz forthcoming in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*.

As is generally recognized, all national “awakenings” or “revivals” have critically included the creation of a national history. To prove that a given people is really a nation, its “awakeners” have felt compelled to establish a *national* past. They have emphatically rejected the status of being an “unhistoric nation.” However, just as a map is an anticipation of future political realities, so is the writing of history. By its very nature the history of an awakening nation is a critique of the present condition in which it lacks independence. One may go further and argue that in such cases the historian is (to quote Lord Acton) not only “a politician with his face turned backwards,”⁵ but also a politician with his face turned *forward*.

For support and clarification of the idea that historical writing sometimes plays a revolutionary or subversive role, I turn to Frank Hearn:

Rebellion presupposes a viable set of critical categories which enables people to discredit the legitimacy of the present order, legitimate resistance and opposition to this order, and anticipate future, alternative arrangements.

The remembered past is not an objective, historically factual portrayal of the past, rather, it constitutes an imaginative reconstruction of the past...

Accordingly, images of the future provoke, not a denial of the present, but a restructuring of the present in accordance with the organizing principles exhibited in the idealized portrayal of the past. Thus, the future society, the society which “ought to be”, represents a synthesis of the mythical past and those features of the present society which are necessary for the actualization of the “good life.”⁶

In East-Central Europe the most famous admission recognizing that national history is a way of relativizing the status quo and making a different future at least thinkable may be found in a statement by František Palacký, “the father of the Czech nation” (who earned that title by proving in his monumental history that the Czech nation had existed for at least a thousand years before him). In 1867, as the Habsburg monarchy was being transformed into Austria-Hungary and the Czechs felt particu-

⁵ John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton, “Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History,” in his *Essays on Freedom and Power* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956), 46.

⁶ Frank Hearn, “Remembrance and Critique: The Uses of the Past for Discrediting the Present and Anticipating the Future,” *Politics and Society* 5, no. 2 (1975): 201. But nationalists are not the only ones who make use of the distant past in order to justify their political programs: Karl Marx admitted that the “awakening of the dead in revolutions served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old” (quoted in David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* [Oxford: Blackwell 1992], 108).

larly disillusioned by Vienna's failure to grant *them* broader autonomy, Palacký said: "We were before Austria and we shall be after Austria." Everyone understood what Palacký meant: thus more than thirty years later, in 1899, Thomas Masaryk, the future founder of Czechoslovakia, wrote to a fellow Czech politician: "The main thing: you worry about Austria! I don't. Palacký said: We were before Austria and we will be after it. But while for him this was only a catchword—I want it to become a fact. (Such facts do happen too.)"⁷

What role did history writing play in bringing about the "revolution in perception" that, according to Sysyn, took place in 1917–18? Were Ukrainian authors practicing criticism of the present and dreaming about the future as they were ostensibly occupied with describing what had actually happened?

In one of his studies on the Ukrainian "national revival" of the early nineteenth century, Sysyn reminds us that writings about the past performed a political function by supporting the national "revivalists."

The Cossack chronicles/histories of the turn of the eighteenth century were published in the 1840s and 1850s.... Unlike sources from the Muscovite government or the Polish nobility that survived in abundance from the seventeenth century and were published in the nineteenth century, few Ukrainian sources survived.... The Ukrainian revivalists longed for their own voice about the events and found it in *Istoriia Rusov* and the earlier Cossack chronicles. That they discovered manuscripts that had passed from hand to hand only added to the texts' authority among the Romantics. The populist revivalists could at least see them as analogous to the voice of the people that they found in historic songs and *dumy*.⁸

To bring about "a restructuring of the present" and formulate a vision of "the society which 'ought to be,'" it was necessary for Ukrainian "revivalists" or "awakeners" to overcome the legacy of the worlds of "Theologia," "Monarchia," and "Agraria."⁹

⁷ Cited in my book *The Political Thought of Thomas G. Masaryk* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 1981), 110. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the "Ukrainian Palacký," has also been compared to Masaryk. See Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

⁸ Frank E. Sysyn, "The Cossack Chronicles and the Development of Modern Ukrainian Culture and National Identity," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14, nos. 3–4 (1990): 605.

⁹ Benedict Anderson connects the rise of modern nations to the decline of what we call here the worlds of Theologia and Monarchia: "nationalism has to be understood by aligning it ... with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being.... [T]he two relevant cultural systems are the *religious community* and the *dynastic realm*. For both of these, in their heydays, were taken-for-granted

In the Ukrainian case, overcoming “Theologia” meant transcending the great divide between the Orthodox and the Uniates. As Sysyn recognizes, by the eighteenth century the Uniate church was “to a considerable degree Latinized and Polonized” and “became the instrument for binding Ukrainians and Belarusians to the Commonwealth that some had hoped it would be in the late sixteenth century.”¹⁰

In the Commonwealth, the Uniate church did not remain simply one of the elements supporting the old world of “Theologia,” however. In the late eighteenth century, at the dawn of the modern age—the time of the American and French revolutions and the beginning of modern national movements in Germany and Italy—the Uniate church became actively involved in the Polish reform movement, in its work to transform the old-regime society dominated by the nobility into a modern *Polish* nation. Because the reformers wanted the new Polish nation to include people of all social classes and religions, they paid special attention to including the Uniates. On their part, Uniate bishops and lower clergy supported the Polish reform movement. Their service was recognized: shortly after his death, the head of the Uniate church in the Commonwealth, Metropolitan Yason Smohozhevsky (considering his national identity, it would be more accurate to call him Jason Smogorzewski) “was hailed in the report of the deputation [a special committee of the Sejm] as a Polish national hero, demonstrating the perfect combination of ‘patriotic loyalty

frames of reference, very much as nationality is today” (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. [London and New York: Verso, 1991], 12). Anderson stresses the profound difference in people’s perception of the world order in the old and the new age: “These days it is perhaps difficult to put oneself empathetically into a world in which the dynastic realm appeared for most men as the only ‘political’ system. For in fundamental ways ‘serious’ monarchy lies transverse to all modern conceptions of political life. Kingship organizes everything around a high centre. Its legitimacy derives from divinity, not from populations, who, after all, are subjects, not citizens” (*ibid.*, 19). While I borrow the terms “Monarchia” and “Theologia” from Anderson, I take the concept of “Agraria” from Ernest Gellner, who located the rise of nations and the emergence of nationalism in the period of transition from “Agraria,” under which an overwhelming majority of population lived in the village and worked in agriculture, to “Industria.” See Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 171. I discuss Gellner’s theory of nationalism and problems with its applicability to East European history in two articles: “Thoughts about Change: Ernest Gellner and the History of Nationalism,” in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23–39; and “In Search of the Drama of History: Or, National Roads to Modernity,” *East European Politics and Societies* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 134–50.

¹⁰ Frank E. Sysyn, “The Formation of Modern Ukrainian Religious Culture: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn, *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine* (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 18–19.

and religious zeal.”¹¹ Textbooks and other surveys of Ukrainian history usually mention that after 1772 a church was provided for the Uniates in Vienna. But they rarely, if ever, mention that in 1781, in the presence of the king, who was one of the benefactors, the construction of a Uniate church in Warsaw began.¹² The message of that move was clear: Uniates within the old borders of the Commonwealth were Poles. (It would take more than two hundred years after Vienna and Warsaw to build a church of the same rite in Kyiv.) There is no need to add that not all ethnic Ukrainians or Belarusians within the Commonwealth accepted the church union with Rome or that Right-Bank Ukraine was the scene of a bloody conflict—a religious war of people of the same language and, as we see it now, nationality.

While the Uniate rite was viewed as something compatible with Polish patriotism (though it remained unacceptable to the Orthodox part of the Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnic group in the Commonwealth) in those areas taken by Vienna in 1772, the Uniates (now called Greek Catholics) became the most loyal subjects of “Monarchia,” especially after the Austrian emperor launched his own version of a “revolution from above” and offered them a place and a better life under the new order.¹³ At the same time, those Greek Catholics in Galicia who were prepared to embrace the ideas of modern nationality opted for the *Polish* cause not only after 1772, but also long after 1795.

If the Greek Catholics or Uniates did not care about the Hetmanate or Little Russia, there were Poles who did. After 1795 some Polish fighters for independence were not only aware of the existence of what they

¹¹ Larry Wolff, “The Uniate Church and the Partitions of Poland: Religious Survival in an Age of Enlightened Absolutism,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 26, nos.1–4 (2002–2003): 184.

¹² *Ibid.*, 180. Among those Polish patriots who supported Tadeusz Kościuszko's 1794 insurrection was the Uniate bishop of Chełm, Porfiriusz Ważyński (Porfyrrii Vazhynsky). In May 1794 Kościuszko, as chief (*Naczelnik*) of the insurrection against Russia, wrote a letter to Ważyński, who was then heading the “Committee of Public Order” in Chełm. For Kościuszko the prelate was an unquestionable Polish patriot, as revealed in his letter addressed “Do Porfiriusza Ważyńskiego, biskupa Chełmskiego, prezesa Komisji Porządkowej Chełmskiej w Szredzinie,” in *Pisma Tadeusza Kościuszki*, ed. Henryk Mościcki (Warsaw: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1947), 110–11.

¹³ See Larry Wolff, “Inventing Galicia: Messianic Josephinism and the Recasting of Partitioned Poland,” *Slavic Review* 63, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 818–40. “Throughout the Habsburg monarchy, the decade of the 1780s witnessed the tremendous upheaval caused by Joseph's campaign for revolutionary enlightened absolutism, later labeled Josephinism: the encouragement of administrative centralization from Vienna, the imposition of state control over religious life, the concession of religious toleration, the relaxation of censorship, the partial abolition of serfdom through the legal protection of peasants, and the corresponding assault on noble privileges” (*ibid.*, 822).

called the land of the Cossacks: they even thought of the Cossack nation as their ally against the tsar. One such Pole was Józef Pawlikowski, a close associate of Tadeusz Kościuszko. In 1800 Pawlikowski published a pamphlet in Polish titled *Can the Poles Win Their Independence by Their Own Efforts?* On his mental map everything to the west of the pre-partitions border of Poland was Polish, and, as he put it, everybody knew that Smolensk and Kyiv (which the Poles had lost in 1667) were “old Polish domains.” But at the same time Pawlikowski argued that if the Polish struggle of independence were to succeed, it would have to become a part of a broader international coalition of oppressed nationalities—of, in other words, what in the twentieth century would be called “captive nations.” Among Poland’s allies Pawlikowski included the Cossack nation beyond the Dnipro, that is, Little Russia.¹⁴

“Territory is not just a background factor in history,” wrote Charles S. Maier. This generalization applies to the Ukrainian case as well. Before they could become a modern nation in the sense in which Sysyn and other historians speak about Ukraine after World War I, Ukrainians first had to form their “identity space—the unit that provides the geography of allegiance.” They could accomplish this by drawing a map of their imagined homeland, the place where Ukrainians, held together by such criteria as language and history, lived. The task of their new history was to explain why, despite all the tragic conflicts of the past, it was more important for them to be Ukrainian than Catholic or Orthodox. Only after doing that could they proceed to make their identity space “congruent with ‘decision space’—the turf that seems to assure physical, economic, and cultural security.”¹⁵

There is no evidence that the Orthodox elites of Little Russia showed much interest in such events as the first partition of Poland, even though it placed ethnic Ukrainians of historic Rus' under Vienna, or that they considered the Uniates in the Commonwealth to be their compatriots. Neither do we find much information on whether Vienna's new Greek Catholic subjects in Lviv or their coreligionists in Podillia and Volhynia, still under

¹⁴ Józef Pawlikowski, “Can the Poles Attain Their Independence?,” in *The Crucial Decade: East Central European Society and National Defense, 1859–1870*, ed. Bela K. Kiraly (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1984), 593. For the Polish original, see *Czy Polacy wybić się mogą na niepodległość*, ed. Emanuel Halicz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1967), 89. Andrzej Nowak, in *Jak rozbić Rosyjskie Imperium? Idee polskiej polityki wschodniej (1733–1921)*, 2d expanded ed. (Cracow: Arcana, 1999), shows that the idea of an alliance of nations was continued in the Polish political tradition in exile and included Prince Adam Czartoryski (1770–1861) among its prominent advocates.

¹⁵ Charles S. Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” *American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 816.

the Commonwealth, expressed any interest in, or concern about, such events as the abolition of the Hetmanate and the destruction of the Sich. It would take several generations for Ukrainians on both sides to incorporate those events into their *common* national history and place Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Lviv in the same “identity space” on a mental map.

A map is commonly understood to be “a scientific abstraction of reality,” wrote Thongchai Winichakul. However, according to him, in the making of Siam “[a] map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa ... a map was a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent.”¹⁶ So to the Hearn argument we can add that maps sometimes do what histories do: they draw a picture of the future and imagine a country long before it appears on the map. Bearing this role of the map in mind, Benedict Anderson, who quotes Thongchai in his *Imagined Communities*, speaks about “the census, the map, and the museum” as “institutions of power.”¹⁷

The Polish freedom fighter in exile had a Ukraine on his map when he looked for allies against Russia. But were there any individuals, Ukrainians or others, in the late eighteenth century who were already imagining a map of *modern* Ukraine—the first map of a Ukrainian identity space that could serve as a model for those who would later want to create a modern Ukrainian nation with its own “decision space,” that is, statehood?

Who were the first people to transcend the geographical frame of Little Russia and inject, if only by implication, a political content into an ethno-linguistic group, thereby drawing a new map of Ukraine and, at the same time, making the religious map politically subordinate to the new, ethno-political one? Contemporary writers on the emergence of modern Ukraine have not agreed on this matter. To this writer it seems that the first mental map closely approximating modern Ukraine is to be found in a book titled *Topograficheskoe opisanie Kharkovskago namestnichestva* (A Topographic Description of Kharkiv Vicegerency), published in Moscow in 1788. (It is up to specialists on the period to tell us how representative of contemporary thought the book was.) This *opisanie* contained a section devoted to history, which scholars believe was written by

¹⁶ Thongchai Winichakul, “Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of Siam,” 310, quoted in Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 173–74.

¹⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 163. For a study of how maps functioned as “institutions of power” in matters concerning Ukraine and its neighbors, see Steven J. Seegel, in “Beauplan’s Prism: Represented Contact Zones and Nineteenth-Century Mapping Practices in Ukraine,” in *Rebounding Identities: The Politics of Identity in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Dominique Arel and Blair A. Ruble (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 151–80.

one Ivan Pereverzev. Of special interest is what kind of historical background its author decided to provide for a book on the Kharkiv region.¹⁸

First of all, the *opisanie* located Kharkiv's history within the frame of the history of "Southern Russia" and used this term as a synonym of the Grand Principality of Kyiv. By implication it excluded from the latter the "non-Southern" parts of that principality—in other words, modern Russia and Belarus. (By the way, none of the eighteenth-century figures mentioned in this article, whether in Little Russia or in the Commonwealth, asked about the Belarusians' identity.) The reader was informed that Southern Russia consisted of the regions of a single Slaveno-Russian people ("*oblasti odnogo slaveno-rossiiskogo plemeni*") and that at the time of writing those regions belonged to three states—Russia, Poland, and "the house of Austria."

Under the name of the former Grand Principality of Kyiv, or Southern Russia, we understand the regions [*oblasti*] of one Slaveno-Rossiiskoe tribe [*plemia*] i.e., people, now belonging to three states:

1. Russia—the vicegerencies of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Novhorod-Siverskyi, Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, and parts of Kursk and Voronezh,
2. Poland—Volhynia, Podillia and Polish Ukraina [*sic*], and
3. The house of Austria, the two principalities of Galicia and Lodomeria in Crimson or Red Ruthenia, which were ceded to Hungary in 1772.¹⁹

According to the author, the Southerners, whom he called *rusiny* (earlier in the chapter he says that the Poles introduced the name), "served Poland" from 1340 to 1650 and consequently became different from the the people of the North: "This fateful separation of Southern from Northern or Great Russia so transformed its inhabitants forever that consequently a seemingly alien nation [*kak budto by inoplemennaia kakaia natsiia*] appeared; from it emerged the Little Russian, Ukrainian dialect as a distinct [*udelnyi*] language of the Slavonic people [*slavenskogo plemeni*]." ²⁰

¹⁸ In this context, see *Opysy Kharkivs'koho namisnytstva kintsia XVIII st.*, ed. V. O. Pirko and O. I. Hurzhii (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1991), containing reprints of three "descriptions" of Kharkiv vicegerency, in the years 1785, 1787, and 1788. The passages quoted here were originally published in the 1788 volume. On Pereverzev, see V. O. Pirko, "Ivan Opanasovych Pereverziev i yoho pratsia 'Topohrafichnyi opys Kharkivskoho namisnytstva,'" *Shhid-Zakhid: Istoryko-kulturolohichniy zbirnyk* (Kharkiv), no. 3 (2001): 39–51.

¹⁹ *Opysy Kharkivskoho namisnytstva*, 17. The author seems to have assumed that Galicia and Lodomeria had been made part of Hungary, which was the official justification for Vienna's participation in the partition of 1772 rather than being placed directly under Vienna.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

Despite all their differences, the author wrote, the people of Southern Russia have one thing in common—veneration for the city of Kyiv.

An informed observer's attention is drawn to the inhabitants of Southern Russia, who are separated from one another by distance, foreign governments, different administrative systems, and civic customs, speech, and even in some cases by religion (the [Church] Union). When they gather for worship in Kyiv from the east—from the Volga and the Don—and from the west—from Galicia and Lodomeria, as well as from places closer to Kyiv, they regard each other not as people speaking a foreign language but their own kin, though very differentiated in speech and behavior, which seems a strange phenomenon to both sides; but in general, all these scattered compatriots [*razseiannye odnozemytsy*] to this day preserve a filial respect for the mother of their ancient homes, the city of Kyiv.²¹

The Kharkiv region, known as the “Land of Free Communes” or, better still, “Slobidska Ukraine,” had long maintained close ties in education and church affairs with Kyiv and the Hetmanate, and people regularly moved in both directions. Without ever belonging to Little Russia's “decision space,” it thus became a part of a new *Ukrainian* “identity space.” Thus Kharkiv vicegerency became a part of the “Southern Russia” that, according to the *opisanie*, included lands under Poland, the Habsburg monarchy, and Russia, and one is tempted to say that the Kharkiv region was the first to be “annexed” by Ukraine so successfully that in the future it would be even called a part of historic Little Russia. (Most famously, Yuliiian Bachynsky made this error in his *Ukraina irredenta*, published in 1895.)

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The message implicit in the Kharkiv volume's geography and history was revolutionary for several reasons. First, it claimed that Southern Russia was unlike Northern or Great Russia because it had a different

²¹ Ibid, 18. Because the author chose the designation “Southern Russia” for what, to a contemporary observer, corresponds to the map of Ukraine, let us note that according to V. V. Kravchenko, *Narysy z istorii istoriohrafii epokhy natsionalnoho vidrodzhennia* (Kharkiv: Osnova, 1996), 35–36, at that time “Russian” was sometimes used as a synonym for “East Slavic.” But Pereverzev's “map” of Southern Russia was not an immediate winner. As we are reminded by Oleksii Tolochko in his presentation of the thoughts of early nineteenth-century Ukrainian “fellows” and Russian “travelers” on the history-cum-geography of Ukraine, set forth in his “Fellows and Travelers: Thinking about Ukrainian History in the Early Nineteenth Century,” in *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, ed. Georgii Kasianov and Philipp Ther (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), “The territory we think of today as Ukraine was not so designated at the turn of the nineteenth century” (165).

past (three hundred years with Poland) and consequently possessed a distinct Slavic language of its own. Second, it declared that Southern Russia consisted of the lands of the old Grand Principality of Kyiv, which meant that it was much larger than Little Russia: it included the Kharkiv region but also areas under Austria and Poland. For some reason, it failed to mention that the old Kyivan state had also extended to what became *Northern* Russia. Finally, it clearly stated that the people of Southern Russia were one nation, despite their differences in speech and, even more strikingly for a text written in the 1780s, their division into Orthodox and Uniates.

These ideas were presented well before their time. It is very doubtful that there were any individuals in Lviv during the decade of the 1780s (or later, before the 1830s) who would have placed Lviv in an identity space that included Kharkiv and Chernihiv while excluding it from a common space with Warsaw or Vienna. Yet they were not just utopian speculations: in 1918 and 1919 the Greek Catholics who had turned into Ukrainians fought a war with Poland while declaring, quite in the spirit of the Kharkiv *opisanie*, that Kyiv was indeed their capital.²²

Compared with the interconfessional integration, Ukrainian nation builders were much less successful in overcoming the legacy of the old world of “Agraria.” At the turn of the century the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire were illiterate peasants.²³ Things were not much better in 1917, and this fact played a very significant role in the final outcome, as shown by Sysyn and other authors' contributions to *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*.

Despite this, one can see confirmation of Sysyn's thesis of a “revolution in perception” in Lenin's treatment of the Ukrainian problem during the revolution and civil war. To fight against independent Ukraine—and he took Ukrainian nationalism seriously, of that there is no doubt—Lenin felt compelled to create his own, alternative Ukraine, the Ukrainian SSR. In it he included territories the Provisional Government of democratic Russia had refused to recognize as Ukrainian, among them the Kharkiv,

²² Mark von Hagen shows how tsarist Russia remained committed to the world of “Theologia” when it invaded Galicia in 1914 and fought Ukrainian “separatism” by launching a religious war against the Greek Catholics. See his *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

²³ Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 23: “In the light of the 1897 census 18 percent of Ukraine's population could read, five percent less than the average for European Russia. Thirteen percent of Ukrainians were literate. In the villages illiteracy predominated—91 to 96 percent, depending on the province.”

Odesa, and Donbas regions, which were ethnic Ukrainian but had not belonged to historic Little Russia.²⁴ Ivan L. Rudnytsky, also writing in the 1970s, asserted that while the statehood of the Ukrainian SSR was “a sheer myth manipulated to the advantage of the rulers,” a myth becomes a force after it has “entered the consciousness of a people.” Rudnytsky thus shared Sysyn’s view that the Ukrainian revolution was a success. “The clever manipulators,” he prophesied, “may well find themselves someday in the position of the sorcerer’s apprentice, unable to master the genie whom they have conjured.”²⁵

²⁴ Yaroslav Bilinsky, “The Communist Take-Over of the Ukraine,” in *Ukraine, 1917–1921*, 102–27. For Lenin’s view of Ukraine in relation to his concept of the Russian nation, see my article “Lenin, ‘Great Russia,’ and Ukraine,” in *Rus’ Writ Large: Languages, Histories, Cultures: Essays Presented in Honor of Michael S. Flier on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, 245–60, ed. Harvey Goldblatt and Nancy Shields Kollmann, vol. 28 (2006) of *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. For an area-wide survey, see Geoff Eley, “Remapping the Nation: War, Revolutionary Upheaval and State Formation in Eastern Europe, 1914–1923,” *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, 2d ed., ed. Howard Aster and Peter J. Potichnyj (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1990), 205–46.

²⁵ Rudnytsky, “Soviet Ukraine in Historical Perspective,” in his *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, 467. (This article was originally published in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* in 1972.) There he noted that Stalin, “the perpetrator of unspeakable crimes against the Ukrainian people,” uniquely among political leaders during World War II “showed the greatest awareness of the potentialities of the Ukrainian problem. It was in the name of Ukraine, and not of Russia, that Stalin successfully claimed vast territories west of the pre-1939 frontier, thus extending the USSR into central Europe and the Danubian valley” (*ibid.*, 469). We may presume that the author of the Kharkiv *opisanie* would have understood. Pawlikowski would have been shocked, but he might later have realized that what happened in 1991 would have been impossible without the course of 1939–45.

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