

Ukraine: Coming to Terms with the Soviet Legacy

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The seven decades of Soviet rule had both a negative and positive impact but broadly advanced the cause of Ukrainian statehood and nationhood. Tsarist Russia administered Ukraine as provinces of Russia and regarded its inhabitants as 'Little Russians', for whom a separate identity was not contemplated. The Soviet system accorded Ukraine the trappings of statehood, including UN membership, and this undoubtedly helped reinforce a distinctive identity; nevertheless, official attitudes against bourgeois nationalism meant that the flowering of Ukrainian identity could not take place in Soviet conditions; the indigenization policy of the 1920s was abandoned and replaced by suspicion and hostility towards manifestations of a Ukrainian *ethnos*. In the post-Soviet period, state-building is deemed to have been achieved, but the distribution of ethnic and linguistic groups on the territory of modern Ukraine means that nation-building is a continuing process.

This article attempts to assess the Soviet legacy within Ukraine and argues that it was neither a completely black nor a white legacy. The Soviet legacy of state-building in Ukraine has more positive attributes than that within the realm of nation-building, although in both areas we should not treat the advantages and disadvantages as absolute.

In both state- and nation-building the tsarist legacy is negative whereas the Soviet legacy is mixed. In the tsarist era Ukrainians were divided among a number of *gubernias* (provinces) with no distinction based on a separate ethnicity. Ukrainians within the former USSR were given a separate quasi-state with its own symbols and a seat at the United Nations (UN), a quasi-state which the independent Ukrainian state claimed it inherited constitutionally in 1992. Ukraine also benefited from the unification of the bulk of the territories where Ukrainians represented a majority of the population into one quasi-state and by the ethnic cleansing of most Poles from western Ukraine. This had the unexpected benefit of helping to promote Ukrainian nation-building both within its western regions and

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throughout the republic. The development of Ukraine as a modern Soviet republic also gradually reinforced the Ukrainian national element within its capital city, Kyiv, which had been weak prior to 1917.

Therefore, although the Soviet record on state-building does have some positive aspects to it, this article will argue that the Soviet record in Ukraine on nation-building is, on the whole, more negative. But, here again, the record is mixed. After all, in the tsarist era Ukrainians were not recognized as a separate ethnic group, but merely as a regional branch of 'Russians' (*Russkie*). Therefore, eastern Ukrainians living within the tsarist empire never evolved from an ethnos to the status of a modern nation. Although conscious of their difference from their neighbours (especially Poles and Muscovites) they harboured a primary allegiance to their region – not to any Ukrainian nation.

In contrast, the Soviet era did recognize Ukrainians as a separate ethnic group with the right to their own republic (and not merely an autonomous republic within the Russian SFSR). National communists had hoped that the indigenization (*korenizatsiya*) and Ukrainianization policies of the 1920s in eastern Ukraine would have led to the simultaneous construction of communism, a Ukrainian nation and a modern country. Modernization and urbanization would have therefore been accompanied by Ukrainianization of the towns. This policy became a threat to Soviet rule in Ukraine and was replaced by repression and Little Russianization (that is the maintenance of a pre-national Ukrainian identity) from 1933/34 with the rise of Stalinism.

This article is divided into three parts. The first section provides an overview of the impact of the tsarist and Soviet inheritance upon Ukrainians, particularly from the viewpoint of the development of a state and national consciousness. The second section surveys the debates within Ukraine over the Soviet legacy. The final section discusses Soviet nationality policies within the former Soviet republics and more specifically within Ukraine.

The Tsarist and Soviet Inheritance

Nation-building in Western Ukraine, and Little Russianization in Eastern Ukraine

In 1917 ethnic Ukrainians were divided between two empires (Austria–Hungary and tsarist Russia) and one state (Romania). The bulk of Ukrainian territories had not been united together since the seventeenth century when Ukrainians established a brief independent state. Within the three states where Ukrainians resided the most favourable treatment was provided to them by Austria. Until the late nineteenth century western

Ukrainians had described themselves as Ruthenians (*Rus'yny*), but the Austrians had encouraged the development of a Ukrainian orientation for two reasons: first, to counter russophile tendencies at a time when Russia and Austria were enemies; second, to divide and rule by promoting a counterweight to Poles.

These Austrian nationality policies were implemented within a more liberal environment found within the Austro-Hungarian empire compared with that prevailing within tsarist Russia. They were coupled with continuing and often violent conflict with Poles right up until the 1940s. These factors served to help transform the former Ruthenian (*Rusyn*) *ethnos* of western Ukraine by the turn of the twentieth century into Ukrainians conscious of themselves as members of a larger Ukrainian nation.

Such developments were not to take place in tsarist Russia. In his study of tsarist nationality policy, the British historian David Saunders concluded that they had attempted to eradicate any separate Ukrainian identity since the autonomous Hetmanate was abolished in the 1790s. Therefore, 'Between the mid-seventeenth century and the outbreak of the First World War tsars worked hard to prevent a Ukrainian identity from surfacing', Saunders concluded.¹ The tsarist regime never prohibited the use of Polish, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Georgian, Hebrew or Tatar. It did, though, prohibit the use of Ukrainian, especially in primary education and when pertaining to the masses. The question is, why? Saunders gives us five main reasons:

- (1) to prevent Ukrainians at large from developing a sense of their ethnic identity;²
- (2) to prevent Ukrainian intellectuals from transferring the national idea (that is, recognition of an all-encompassing Ukrainian identity) to the masses;
- (3) concern about the long-term cultural orientation of Ukrainians because, through the provision of a Ukrainian education to the masses, an identity different from Russian might eventually emerge (as was also seen during the indigenization programme of the 1920s in Soviet Ukraine);
- (4) tsarist nationality policies towards Ukrainians, therefore, 'betrayed an awareness on the part of Valuev (the tsarist minister of the interior) of the potential emergence of a Ukrainian nation';³
- (5) Little Russians (Ukrainians) had only two options – to become either Russians or Poles. The tsarist authorities wanted to prevent a third

choice from appearing – Ukrainian: ‘The severity of the minister’s edict on Ukrainian-language publishing reflected the degree of his concern. Having sensed the possibility of a broadly-based Ukrainian identity, he was determined to prevent it becoming a reality.’⁴

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, state- and nation-building progressed throughout western Europe. Russian officials and all Russian political parties, apart from those of the left, looked to France as the traditional model for a ‘nation-state’ which they felt Russia should emulate in its modernization drive. The core for this future Russian nation would be the three eastern Slavic branches of the *Russkie* (Russian) peoples because ‘nation’ was defined in terms of language, ethnicity and religion (Orthodoxy). Ukrainians and Belarusians were defined simply as ‘Russians’: in this way, describing them merely as regional offshoots of ‘Russians’, the problem of denying that they spoke separate languages was circumvented. Russian officials and nationalists ‘often reacted furiously at even timid pleas from local Ukrainians for the use of their native tongue in schools and other cultural institutions’.⁵

Ukrainians and Belarusians were therefore perceived as ‘ethnographic raw material’ in the same manner as Bretons, Corsicans and Alsations: regional, backward peoples who would be assimilated into the ‘higher’ language and culture of Russians and French respectively during the course of the country’s modernization, state- and nation-building.⁶ What was denounced as Russification by Ukrainians and Belarusians was therefore never perceived in such a negative light by Russians, who believed it was a necessary stage in the drive to the modernization of their country (tsarist Russia or the USSR). Nation-building, after all, Walker Connor reminded us, was always accompanied by nation-destroying.⁷ Theodore Weeks, in one of the few Western studies of tsarist nationality policies, concluded:

That the Russian government wanted to encourage assimilation of non-Russians into the Russian nation seems on the whole undeniable, though not entirely unprobable (consider the Jewish example) ... The final aim of government policy in the Western Provinces was complete fusion (*sliianie*) with the surrounding ‘Russian’ population, whereas in Poland it would suffice for a Pole to ‘subordinate himself to the Russian state idea ...’.⁸

Nation-building and Ukrainianization in Eastern Ukraine

Perhaps not surprisingly, in view of these tsarist nationality policies, the drive to create a Ukrainian independent state between 1917 and 1920 failed. The White armies, dominated by liberal supporters of the Provisional

Government, were unwilling to accept Ukrainian demands in 1917 that the tsarist empire be reconstituted along federal lines. They often regarded Ukrainian nationalists as a graver threat than their Bolshevik opponents.⁹ Yet the strength of national feeling in Ukraine did have the unexpected result of forcing the Soviet Russian state to agree to the creation of a quasi-state, the Ukrainian SSR. The Soviet military commander, Leon Trotsky, admitted that Soviet power had been established in Ukraine ‘largely by virtue of the authority of Moscow, Russian Communists and the Russian Red Army’.¹⁰

This weakness of Soviet power in Ukraine, the strength of Ukrainian national communism, and the more liberal environment of the New Economic Policy, forced Moscow to allow the Ukrainianization and *korenizatsiya* policies of the 1920s. These policies provided rapid and impressive results where the development of Soviet power and modernization (urbanization and industrialization) occurred simultaneously with Ukrainian nation-building within the Soviet Ukrainian quasi-state. In a manner similar to what had taken place in western Europe decades earlier, peasants with a local and pre-modern identity migrated to Ukrainian-speaking urban centres where they exchanged their local identities (*Tuteishi* – meaning literally ‘From here’) for a Ukrainian national identity.

However, this second attempt on the part of Ukrainian intellectuals and elite to create a modern Ukrainian nation was again thwarted. By the early 1930s the Soviet authorities had become concerned, just as had their tsarist counterparts in the second half of the nineteenth century, that if *korenizatsiya* were allowed to continue the Ukrainian ethnos inherited from the tsarist regime would probably evolve into a modern nation. George Liber concluded that ‘Had the Ukrainianization program continued during the height of industrialization, the cities would have become culturally Ukrainianized. They would have followed the pattern of Prague and Warsaw set at the end of the nineteenth century.’¹¹ This modern Ukrainian nation might have then proceeded to raise political demands.

Return to Little Russianization in Eastern Ukraine

In 1933 the Soviet state reversed these policies of nation-building when it unleashed an artificial famine that claimed upwards of seven million Ukrainian lives. Russian nationalism returned, in the form of Soviet nationality policy and historiography. The success of the policies of *korenizatsiya* in the 1920s had represented a grave threat to Russian domination and control. By reversing these policies an ‘imperial consciousness’ masqueraded as ‘a theory of modernization’. As Myroslav Shkandrij argues, ‘The Bolshevik attitude to the peasantry, the belief in the “victory” of the city over the village, was inextricably interwoven with faith

in the “victory” of Russian culture over the Ukrainian’.¹² From the early to mid-1930s Soviet nationality policies and historiography reverted to, and incorporated, some aspects of, their tsarist predecessors.

Since the 1930s Soviet nationality policies and historiography were shot full of contradictions that were to lead to the Soviet Union’s demise in 1991. Liber points out that Stalin did not nullify the agreements made between the centre and periphery in 1918–23 and the multinational USSR retained its commitment to national homelands. Nationally assertive elites were replaced by more pliant, loyal ones. Nevertheless, republican elites were allowed to grow and identify with their own designated homelands, although they had to be guarded by Moscow’s ‘watchdog’ (the ethnic Russian Second Secretary of the republican communist parties). Stalin and his successors introduced policies which gave Russians a dominant role that blurred the distinction between ‘Russian’ and ‘Soviet’.¹³ Even so, national consciousness and assertiveness was often allowed to grow – within limits and depending upon the strategic significance of the republic.¹⁴

Ukraine represented a key strategic republic in Moscow’s eyes and any threat from Ukrainian ‘bourgeois nationalism’ was regarded as a greater security threat than that from the other non-Russian republics or from Russian human rights activists. From the mid-1930s Soviet nationality policies and historiography therefore preferred to maintain the majority of Ukrainians in a frozen pre-national *ethnos* which would gradually assimilate, together with the Belarusians, into Russians as the future east Slavic core of *Homo sovieticus*.

Ukrainians possessed their own separate republic but nationality policies and historiography promoted a Little Russian, regional and geographical identity (not a Ukrainian national identity separate from Russian). ‘This political *mankurtization* reduced Ukrainian culture to the status of a folklore, to the *hopak* (a Ukrainian peasant dance) and *varenyky* (Ukrainian dumplings)’, Liber concluded. Russian remained the language of ‘modernity’, ‘progress’ and urban life. Ukrainian language and culture, which had been set to dominate the industrial and urban centres of 1920s Ukrainian SSR, became in effect ‘provincialized’.¹⁵

Therefore, the Ukrainian state which became independent on 1 January 1992 inherited a contradictory mix of legacies from its Soviet Ukrainian predecessor. In the realm of the state it inherited a quasi-structure which possessed symbols, certain institutions, over-blown security forces and a small elite. These could be relatively easily either built up, through state-building, or downgraded and reformed, in the case of the armed forces. But on the national side of Ukraine’s Soviet inheritance the legacy was more difficult and problematical. In western Ukraine a population with a self-confident, modern national level of development had been incorporated into

the Soviet state in the 1940s. In eastern and southern Ukraine no such modern Ukrainian nation existed, and in the country at large no unified political community existed. Large numbers of ethnic Russians had been purposefully transferred to Ukraine while an equally large number of Ukrainians had become bilingual. When they migrated to urban centres in eastern Ukraine they exchanged their local (*Tuteishi*) identity not for a Ukrainian one – as in the 1920s – but for an eastern Slavic, amorphous Little Russian one.¹⁶

Independent Ukraine is faced with the task of creating a united political nation from this inherited blend of peoples comprising modern and pre-modern attributes.¹⁷ Such a task of nation-building will be more difficult than state-building because Soviet nationality policies deliberately fostered internal disunity between eastern and western Ukrainians. Stanislav Kulchyts'kyi, the head of the Institute of History at the National Academy of Sciences, lamented that 'It is unfortunately easier to reconcile France and Germany between themselves. It will take new generations and time to get rid of negative connotations.' A Ukraine which had successfully established an independent state between 1917 and 1921 would have therefore been faced with far fewer difficulties in nation-building than the Ukraine which became an independent state in 1991.

Debating the Soviet Legacy

Which Questions Are Being Asked and By Whom?

Should questions dealing with the Soviet legacy be asked at all? Yes, they should, for four interrelated reasons. First, no new regime anywhere is ever able to start with a clean slate. It is therefore impossible for a new regime or state to completely break with its *ancien régime*. Secondly, the bulk of Ukraine's citizens lived for the majority of their lives under the Soviet regime. It is probably impossible for them to reject this past completely. Many of them incorporated within themselves some of the values, ideas and psychology of the former Soviet regime. President Kuchma, himself very much a product of the Soviet era (as was his predecessor, Leonid Kravchuk), argued on the fourth anniversary of Ukraine's declaration of independence that

we cannot thoughtlessly brush aside everything that has been accomplished previously. This particularly applies to such values as sound collective ability of sacrifice in the name of national ideals, and preparedness to defend our land selflessly.¹⁹

Thirdly, the task of historians in the Ukrainian state has been defined, just

as it was for Italian and German historians in the late nineteenth century, to ensure that Ukraine's new post-Soviet historiography serves to consolidate society. However, consolidation through history can come about only by incorporating *all* aspects of Ukraine's past. Any new national historiography should therefore include Little Russian nobles and *literati* who felt comfortable and loyal to *both* Little Russia and tsarist Russia, the anarchist leader Nestor Makhno during the period 1917–21, and Soviet and nationalist partisans during the Second World War.

Finally, the question of coming to terms with the Soviet legacy perhaps rests 'not in the contradiction or rejection of these traditions, but in their utilization', one Ukrainian author suggested. It would be difficult to denounce the Soviet inheritance completely, he points out, since it is directly tied to the modernization and industrialization of Ukraine.²⁰ Ukraine also obtained a seat at the UN in the late 1940s which provided it with a small ministry of foreign affairs and some experienced diplomats.²¹ All these legacies of the Soviet era were inherited from the Ukrainian SSR quasi-state, providing it with a better starting-point for state- and nation-building than that inherited by many former African colonies.

A Grey Soviet Legacy

How should Ukraine relate to its Soviet legacy? What is the Soviet legacy? Is it purely the Gulag or is it also industrialization, urbanization and modernization of an economically underdeveloped country? Should the Soviet legacy be totally ignored? Indeed, can it be ignored?²² Should it be painted completely black, white or a shade of grey?

It would be difficult – if not impossible – to reject the Soviet past in its entirety. In addition, Soviet rule in Ukraine cannot be painted either completely black or completely white. After all, Birch argues that

The incorporation of local communities into a sizeable multipurpose state involves cultural and other sacrifices together with economic and other advantages. The balance of sacrifices and benefits varies from place to place and from period to period, and at any one time it may also be the subject of differing evaluation by the individual affected.²³

The three Baltic states are able to reject the entire Soviet legacy only because they can portray the arrival of Soviet power as a 'Russian' invasion of their inter-war independent states. Such a view can be successfully promoted in only western Ukraine. The former parliamentary speaker (1991–94), Ivan Pliushch, who was a long-time member of the Communist Party until 1991, believes therefore that 'Whatever we say about our past, we built it all together. These are pages of our history.'²⁴

The fact that Ukraine succeeded in gaining independent statehood

between 1989 and 1991 while failing in this endeavour during 1917–21 should, in itself, be a subject of debate. Although Sherman Garnett argues that Ukraine inherited little more in 1991 than it had inherited in 1917, this is not the case. Ukraine was in a far more advantageous position in 1991 to attain independent statehood than on many previous occasions in its history.²⁵ The failure to find common ground between the *ancien régime* and the leadership of the new state in 1917 and between 1919 and 1921 is often blamed as a main cause of the failure of the independence struggle.²⁶ In the early 1990s this perceived policy mistake was rectified. The *ancien régime* held on to power and was encouraged in this by a sizeable proportion of the nationalist community and Ukraine's cultural elites. This alliance allowed both a smooth transfer of power from the Soviet to the Ukrainian regime and a 'normal functioning of state institutions'.²⁷

Painting a Black Soviet Legacy

Nevertheless, for many Ukrainians there is no doubt surrounding the Soviet legacy: it is *all* black. The Ukrainian state should therefore draw a line under its past and start with a clean slate. This is more easily said than done. After all, no South African-style 'Truth Commissions' have been established in any former Soviet republic. A *wholesale* condemnation of the Soviet past was not attempted by either Kravchuk or Kuchma because they themselves are both products of the Soviet era.

Such a complete condemnation of the Soviet past tends to dominate nationalist and national democratic political parties and civic groups. However, these have weak support in eastern and southern Ukraine where such a complete denunciation of the Soviet past would not be entirely accepted during an acute socio-economic crisis which serves only to revive nostalgia for the Soviet past. Therefore, wholesale denunciation of the Soviet past is still largely limited to western Ukraine.

There is, though, a clear divide throughout Ukraine between those who look backwards to an alleged 'radiant' Soviet past and those who look forward to building a democracy and market economy in a modern nation-state. The former view is backed only by the three main left-wing Communist, Socialist and Peasant parties. Pro-reformist political parties tend to be divided in their attitudes towards the Soviet past between 'romantics' (usually nationalists, national democrats and the cultural intelligentsia) and 'pragmatists' (liberals and social democrats).

The 'pragmatic' group, to which Kuchma belongs, seeks to draw upon certain elements of the Soviet past in Ukraine's post-Soviet transformation project. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Second World War, Kuchma said that 'Today, a broad-scale transformation is no less important for Ukraine's survival than the victory in 1945. This should

have been started two or three years ago.’²⁸ Kuchma also used the same occasion to link this anniversary to that of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Hetman Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi, a seventeenth-century Ukrainian Cossack leader. Kuchma instructed his military officers to look to both Cossack and Soviet traditions to help them in the construction of new Ukrainian armed forces.²⁹ In an attempt to overcome divided views over different legacies, current textbooks now portray all Ukrainians fighting in the Second World War (nationalists and those in the Soviet army) as part of a mythical anti-fascist coalition based upon Ukrainian patriotism.³⁰

There is no disputing the fact that the Soviet era also inflicted a great number of atrocities upon its own citizens. President Leonid Kuchma himself asked, ‘would sovereign Ukraine allow itself to destroy by famine millions of its citizens? Would it have allowed its national intelligentsia to be executed without trial, its most hard-working village people to rot in camps?’³¹ The answer to Kuchma’s question is, of course, ‘no’.

This negative Soviet legacy, which is largely ignored by the extreme left while dominating the views of their opponents, included Ukraine’s own artificial famine which claimed upwards of seven million lives. This famine has been termed as a Ukrainian ‘genocide’.³² President Kravchuk described the famine as follows:

It was an action planned by the state and by the Communist Party authorities. One in five Ukrainians starved to death. This was genocide against one’s own people on the basis of instructions issued from outside. The dreadful pressure put on Ukrainians was based on a striving to uproot the entire Ukrainian soul ... Unacceptable living conditions were created to destroy a nation.³³

It is also difficult to accept completely that the Soviet era was all ‘white’ when new myths and legends are being promoted by Ukraine’s emerging post-Soviet elites. A central myth is that the independent state did not simply come into being by luck, caused by a failed putsch in Moscow in August 1991. On the contrary, Ukraine had allegedly always striven to establish its own independent state, which therefore logically culminated in its establishment in 1991–92. This was ‘the natural result of our centuries-old striving for our people to be in charge of their own household’, Kuchma argued.³⁴ The then deputy head of the presidential administration, Vasyly’ Kremen’, and the secretary of the national security and defence council, Volodymyr Horbulin, agreed with Kuchma, their president.³⁵

Although Ukraine endured seven decades of the ‘cosmopolitan ideas of communism’, Kuchma believed, ‘[u]ntil then Ukraine had always maintained its own ferment of independence’.³⁶ The independent state is also defined as inheriting the legacy of the Ukrainian People’s Republic

(UNR) of 1917–18. In August 1992, the symbols of the émigré UNR were transferred to President Kravchuk in a symbolic act linking the UNR to the modern independent state. The 1917 democratic and Soviet revolutions in Russia ‘did not lead to the resolution of the Ukrainian problem. It could be resolved only by creating one’s own national state.’³⁷ The myth of the independence struggle is also closely linked to past martyrs who died for the cause of independence.³⁸ It is promoted as a confirmation of the triumph of ‘the renewal of historical justice’ and ‘the revival of the centuries-old scarred genetic memory of the people, an all-embracing national revival’.³⁹ These, then, are powerful arguments and myths which denounce both Soviet totalitarianism and external rule, arguments and myths which are useful in legitimizing the contemporary Ukrainian state.

Defending a White Soviet Legacy

The negative legacies of the tsarist and Soviet eras are therefore not in doubt for many Ukrainians and outside observers.⁴⁰ What is still open to debate is the question of whether the tsarist and Soviet legacies, particularly the latter, contributed anything of benefit to the Ukrainian independent state.

Here the Ukrainian left (particularly those with a national communist perspective) have something to say. Stanislav Nikolaenko, a Socialist member of Ukraine’s parliament, warned against painting the entire Soviet era in black terms. One should remain conscious of the entire range of legacies, he believed, of the Soviet era because ‘this is our history, our misfortune, our tragedy’. Each era of Ukrainian history prior to 1992 should therefore be investigated from both its positive and its negative aspects. As a member of a political party with decidedly national-communist leanings, Nikolaenko specifically emphasizes that ‘It is imperative to find positive things in our contemporary history’.⁴¹

Piotr Symonenko, leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, argues that the origins of the Ukrainian state should be traced beyond 1991 to 1918, thereby including the Soviet era. In other words, the Ukrainian SSR should also be defined as a state.⁴² Oleksandr Moroz, leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine and parliamentary speaker (1994–98), also linked today’s independent state directly to the Ukrainian SSR when he asked in an appeal on Ukrainian state television: ‘Would Ukraine today be a state if not for the events of the past decade? ... To a large extent, the independent Ukrainian state grew out of the Great October Social Revolution.’⁴³ Moroz went on to argue that

neither the emperor nor the provisional government had the slightest idea about the sovereign rights of Ukraine, its language, culture and statehood ... Ukraine would certainly have become ... a state in other

ways, but if this had happened its lands would not have united had it not been for the October [Revolution] and the heroic struggles of 1939–1945. When fascism was resisted by a great power it was defended by representatives of over 100 nations who also defended Ukraine.

Undoubtedly the existence of the quasi-Ukrainian SSR state cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, Symonenko and Moroz, like their nationalist opponents, make the mistake of ignoring one side of the picture. Ukrainian history should include *both* the independent governments of 1917–20 (the *Central Rada*, Hetmanate, Directory) *and* the creation and existence of the Ukrainian SSR. Only to include either one of these two separate events would not provide a full picture of Ukraine's turbulent history.

'Histories of the Ukrainian State' should therefore include the entire period 1917–91, prior to the creation of the independent Ukrainian state in 1992. Yet nationalist historians tend to emphasize only the period 1917–20 whereas national-communists focus upon the 1921–91 era.

The main manner in which Communists and Socialists are attempting to paint the former USSR in less black terms is by pointing to their record on uniting Ukrainian territories.⁴⁴ The Soviet era, in the view of Moroz, fulfilled three tasks: it united Ukrainian lands,⁴⁵ it achieved international recognition of the Ukrainian SSR through the UN, and the Ukrainian language was allegedly introduced into 'all spheres of life' (when prior to 1905 it had not been recognized as a separate language).⁴⁶ They argue that where the nationalists failed between 1917 and 1921 the communists subsequently succeeded:

The process of bringing together all Ukrainian lands into one state ended in 1945, when the lands of Trans-Carpathian Ukraine were added to it. Well then, Soviet power undertook the historical mission to gather all Ukrainian lands into one state.⁴⁷

Moroz is right when arguing that Ukrainians were at least recognized as a separate ethnic group and given their own designated homeland, in contrast with the tsarist era. But the Soviet record is not as glossy as Moroz claims. From the 1930s onwards, the Soviet state promoted russification, de-nationalization and internal colonialism within Ukraine. Its record on quasi-state-building is therefore far better than that of its record on the prevention of nation-building and support for nation-destroying. In contrast to Ukraine, the Trans-Caucasian and Central Asian republics may have largely benefited from Soviet nation-building (see below).⁴⁸

Soviet Policies

The USSR: Nation-Destroying, Nation-building – or a Bit of Both?

A majority of the studies of Soviet nationality policies conducted by Western scholars focused on issues such as language, russification, de-nationalization and attempts to create a Russian-speaking *Homo sovieticus*. These studies usually concluded, therefore, that Soviet policies were nation-destroying.

A more sober analysis of the Soviet era would point to a more confused legacy. Nation-destroying undoubtedly occurred on a great scale physically in the Stalin era and linguistically in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras.⁴⁹ But, as Victor Zaslavsky has noted, 'Soviet nationality policy, despite its professed goal of subverting ethnic loyalties and destroying ethnic difficulties, promoted and accelerated the process of nation-building'.⁵⁰ In a *post mortem* study of the former USSR, Ronald Grigor Suny also argued that the former USSR had been a 'victim not only of its negative effects on the non-Russian peoples but of its own "progressive" contribution to the process of nation-building'.⁵¹ In other words, Soviet repression and its failed socio-economic policies turned the republics against the state as well as providing them with the means to dismantle this state in an orderly fashion into its 15 component parts. Ultimately, the former USSR disintegrated because Soviet nation-building failed (Russians, Ukrainians and others felt more Russian or Ukrainian than Soviet). This, coupled with former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's evident lack of understanding of nationality problems, led the republican elites to turn their backs on the Soviet centre in favour of republican nation- and state-building.⁵²

Rogers Brubaker therefore believes that the former USSR pursued a contradictory policy of repressing nationalism while consolidating 'nationhood and nationality'.⁵³ This is probably more the case for some former communist countries than for others. That the Soviet era can also be termed for some peoples nation-building can be particularly seen in the cases of Kazakhstan and Kirgizia. Until 1936 they were part of the Russian SFSR. If they had not been re-created as Soviet republics they would not have been able to become independent states after 1992.⁵⁴

Macedonia and Moldova are also two examples of nation-building under communism. Prior to the Second World War both regions were regarded as either ethnically 'Bulgarian', 'Greek' or 'Serb' in the case of the former or 'Romanian' in the case of the latter. Yet to deny that today there exist Moldovan or Macedonian peoples (or nations?) would be clearly ignoring recent history and contemporary reality. Similarly, it is doubtful whether before the Second World War there was a Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnic group. Again, they were regarded by both Croats and Serbs as 'Islamicized

Slavs'. In the aftermath of decades of the existence of a republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the civil war in that region in the 1990s it would be again folly to conclude that no Bosnian identity exists (whether this is exclusively Muslim or not is a separate, although related, question).

Zaslavsky points to eight areas which aided the process of nation- and state-building in the Soviet era:

- barriers were erected between nationalities;
- peoples were associated with particular national groups through republican bureaucracies;
- links were created between territories, nationalities and political administrations;
- defined administrative territories populated by titular nationalities were created;
- political elites ('a new national "comprador" elite') were developed;⁵⁵
- embryo middle classes emerged;⁵⁶
- cultural elites grew;
- a tradition emerged of a culture and language of the titular nationality associated with a given republic.

Andrew Wilson,⁵⁷ Mykola Ryabchuk⁵⁸ and Yaroslav Bilinsky⁵⁹ add another five legacies of the Soviet era when referring specifically to Ukraine:

- institutions (Cabinet of Ministers, Supreme Soviet, Academy of Sciences, National Opera, and so forth);
- respect for state symbols;
- the Ukrainians became a legitimate people with the right to turn the Ukrainian SSR into an independent state; they had a distinct titular ethnic group, territory and administrative entity;
- the growth of 'Ukrainian Titoism' (national communism);⁶⁰
- modernization and industrialization.

A Confused Soviet Legacy

Although many former Soviet republics in Trans-Caucasia and Central Asia may have benefited from Soviet support for nation-building this could not be said of Ukrainians and Belarusians. The titular nations in Ukraine and Belarus, as in Kazakhstan, increasingly divided between Russian and native language speakers. These three former Soviet republics, coupled with Latvia and Estonia, also experienced a large influx of ethnic Russian migrants who occupied high-ranking positions. By the late 1980s, on the eve of Ukrainian independence, ethnic Russians proportionately outnumbered ethnic Ukrainians in every profession in the Ukrainian SSR except forestry and agriculture.⁶¹

These Soviet policies of internal colonialism are having a negative influence on the post-Soviet transformation process in Ukraine and Belarus. In the latter its inherited weak national identity is still being repressed by the quintessential Little Russian, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, who became president in 1994 as he drove for union with Russia. In Ukraine, Russian-speakers are slowing the process of creating a civil society, political community and national identity because Russian speakers tend to be the most nostalgic for the former USSR and least supportive of nation-building in independent statehood. Their demands for close relations with Russia also hamper Ukraine's drive to 'return to Europe'.⁶² After all, the creation of a democracy and a market economy cannot proceed 'unless there is prior agreement on the fundamental legitimacy of the overall project itself – namely, that a people wish to be governed by a state within a given boundary.'⁶³

All of the many legacies listed in the previous section undoubtedly helped in the creation of post-Soviet state-building, but their impact upon nation-building in Ukraine is more convoluted. Zaslavsky seems therefore to confuse nation- and state-building. As Brubaker has noted:

No other state has gone so far in sponsoring, codifying, institutionalising, even (in some cases) inventing nationhood and nationality on the sub-state level, while at the same time doing nothing to institutionalise them on the level of the state as a whole.⁶⁴

In some Soviet republics national minorities were given autonomous republics even where they constituted less than 50 per cent of the population, a practice of supporting group rights which would not have been necessarily supported by multi-culturalists in the West.⁶⁵

Ukraine, like many other states of the former USSR, therefore inherited *both* a quasi-state and a quasi-nation.⁶⁶ The Soviet legacy was both quasi-state-building and largely nation-destroying in the Ukrainian case. In an

independent Ukrainian state (created, for example, during the independence struggle of 1917–20) its elites would have long ago promoted the transition of its pre-national ethnos into a modern nation (that is, nation-building). Instead Kravchuk and Kuchma inherited a people composed of attributes which included a modern nation in western Ukraine and a pre-modern ethnos in eastern Ukraine.

In a manner similar to the remainder of the former Soviet republics, Ukraine inherited no united political community. However, specific Soviet policies within the fields of nationality policy and historiography had targeted only the Ukrainians and the Belarusians for continued ‘Little Russianization’. Ukraine and Belarus (together with Kazakhstan) all inherited titular ethnic groups which were divided by language, and this made it difficult for them to mobilize along ethnic lines. Ukrainians are divided on linguistic grounds between Ukrainian- and Russian-speakers, with a large proportion bilingual.

Russian identity is based upon language and culture. Therefore, the ‘Russian nation’ is sometimes confused with Russian speakers, a perception which closely affects Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Russia’s relations with Ukraine and Kazakhstan will therefore become increasingly strained during the course of the state- and nation-building projects of the latter two. Even democratic members of the Russian elites, such as the Yabloko leader Grigorii Yavlinskii and the former prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, have criticized what they see as attempts to provide affirmative action for the Ukrainian and Kazakh languages and so reverse some of the trends of the Soviet era. These policies, they claim, are ‘essentially directed against the country’s Russian-speaking citizens’.⁶⁷ Ironically, the signing of the Russian–Ukrainian treaty in May 1997 may have provided the incentive for Ukrainianization because it confirmed Ukrainian sovereignty over previously disputed territories, such as the city of Sevastopol.⁶⁸

The majority of Russians and Belarusians, together with upwards of a third of Ukrainians, therefore inherited from the former USSR a view of themselves as not three separate ethnic groups.⁶⁹ On the contrary, they believed that they were all branches of the one *Russkii narod* (Russian People) which had once existed in unity in the medieval Kiev Rus’ state. This eastern Slavic unity – not separate independent states – is therefore seen as the norm.

The post-Soviet consequences of this legacy are profound. Three-quarters of Russians believe that Ukrainians are not a separate ethnic group; Ukrainian independence is therefore ‘artificial’ and ‘temporary’.⁷⁰ A survey of the Russian press concluded that it found it difficult to see Ukraine as a serious country. After all, British rulers had also been unable to understand how Irish ‘peasants’ could establish and run their own state after the First

World War. Ukrainians were therefore portrayed by the Russian press as desiring union with their Russian 'co-ethnics' but prevented from undertaking this by a corrupt, Communist-turned-nationalist elite. Sixty-four per cent of Russians supported the union of Ukraine and Russia into one state.⁷¹ The persistence of these views explains why it took Russia until May 1997 to recognise Ukraine's borders in an inter-state treaty – a treaty which the Russian media claimed was more difficult to sign than that with the Chechens and NATO during the same month.

Ukraine consequently inherited a number of key launch-pads that required further nation- and state-building policies to complete the process in the post-Soviet era of nation-creation and state-construction.⁷² Alexander Motyl gives Soviet rule the following credit to post-Soviet Ukraine: 'for all its vicissitudes, it did endow Ukraine with a linguistically coherent population that resembled a nation, a set of political activists who resembled an elite and an administration that resembled a state'.⁷³ In other words, the Ukrainian SSR transferred to independent Ukraine a quasi-state and a quasi-nation (although this is far more than the Central Rada inherited from the tsarist regime).

Post-Soviet elites could choose to freeze these legacies of quasi-statehood and nationhood (for example, by accepting, as in neighbouring Belarus, that Ukraine was a bi-national Russian–Ukrainian state). The famous Belarusian writer, Vasil Byakov, argued that 'The leader of the state is not the leader of the nation. All his strength is being used to destroy the nation, its national consciousness, its culture and language'.⁷⁴ Alternatively, post-Soviet elites, as in Ukraine, could attempt to build on the legacies, reversing some (or all) elements in favour of seeking to construct a developed state and a modern nation.

The Ukrainian SSR: A Quasi-State

In the tsarist era Ukraine as an entity did not exist. It was divided into nine *gubernias*, its language and culture made illegal from the 1860s to 1905 when it was defined as a dialect of Russian. In the 1897 tsarist census Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians were all categorized as branches of the *Russkii narod*, a general designation for east Slavs. In other words, they were no different from regional branches of the English people (Yorkshiremen, Cumbrians or Devonians). The *Russkii narod*, together with the remainder of the peoples of the tsarist Russian empire, was classified as *Rossiiskie* (a designation that links them to the state territory). Whereas the secession of Georgia, say, could be to some degree accepted because it was only a subject of the *Rossiiskaya* empire, the secession of Ukraine would be the equivalent in Russian eyes, of the secession of Yorkshire from England: it would tear apart the *Russkii narod* and the Russian soul. Mary

McAuley found that Russians as late as 1991 could not conceive of Ukrainians and Belarusians as possessing separate, independent states: 'That idea defied the imagination, both politically and conceptually'.⁷⁵

Any attempt at looking objectively at the Soviet era has to begin not when the Ukrainian SSR was established or from when the 1922 Union Treaty was signed. The struggle for Ukrainian statehood during 1917–21, although ending in failure, forced the Soviet Russian leadership of the time to agree to the creation of the Ukrainian SSR and the Ukrainization campaign of the 1920s.⁷⁶ If Stalin's plan had prevailed over Lenin's there would have been no union republics but merely a unitary state. Ukraine would have been simply incorporated within the Russian SFSR (in the manner of Kazakhstan and Kirgizia until 1936).

The former USSR never approximated to a genuine equal federation. States in the USA had greater power devolved to them than the Soviet republics did. Although the 1977 Soviet and republican constitutions gave republics the right to secede from the USSR, anyone who attempted to implement this article was subject to administrative repression. Nevertheless, in contrast to the tsarist era, Ukrainians as an ethnic group were provided with a republic of their own which possessed clearly defined boundaries. Brubaker explains the significance of this:

That this paradigmatically massive state could disappear in so comparatively orderly a fashion, ceasing to exist as a subject of international law and withering away as a unit of administration, was possible chiefly because the successor units already existed as internal quasi-nation-states, with fixed territories, names, legislatures, and administrative staffs, cultural and political elites ...⁷⁷

The Ukrainian SSR was therefore not a complete sham. The myth of the Ukrainian SSR *did* enter the consciousness of the Ukrainian public. Rudnytsky, the well-known and respected Canadian-Ukrainian historian, noted nearly two decades before the disintegration of the USSR that the Soviet Ukrainian state had helped to lift the Ukrainian ethnographic masses of 1917 in the direction of quasi-nationhood, although very distorted and 'psychologically mutated'. He predicted that 'The clever manipulators may well find themselves some day in the position of the sorcerer's apprentice, unable to muster the genie who they have conjured'.⁷⁸ Two decades after Rudnytsky's prophecy the Ukrainian elites created by the Soviet regime ensured the success of its drive for independence.

National Consolidation

Andrew Wilson, like Garnett (quoted above), believes that during the Soviet era there was little national consolidation beyond that achieved during the

civil war period of 1917–20.⁷⁹ Again, we have a confused picture. At the macro-political level, Wilson is probably correct. But, for example, national consolidation has certainly occurred in Ukraine's capital city in comparison with a century ago. During the elections to the Constituent Assembly and city Duma in 1917–18 support for Ukrainian political parties in Kyiv hovered between 21 and 26 per cent (in Odesa they amounted to only four per cent in the election to the Constituent Assembly).

In the late Soviet and post-Soviet eras, Kyiv has consistently shown itself to be becoming more Ukrainian where voters – when they can be bothered to vote – back national democrats and the radical right. In a study of linguistic preferences in Kyiv, Dominique Arel concluded that within a few generations Kyiv would become a Ukrainian-speaking city. Without some national consolidation in the Soviet era this progress would most likely not have occurred.⁸⁰

A similar picture emerges in western Ukraine, where Ukrainian national identity 'benefited' from the ethnic cleansing of the Polish inhabitants of western Ukraine between 1944 and 1947. With the removal of the two main ethnic urban groups (Poles and Jews) modernization and industrialization in western Ukraine could occur simultaneously with the Ukrainianization of its urban centres (which had been the hope of Ukraine's national communists in the 1920s in eastern Ukraine). Between the 1959 and 1989 Soviet censuses, the Ukrainian share of L'viv's population increased from 60 to 79.1 per cent at the same time as the Russian share declined from 27 to 16.1 per cent.⁸¹ Western Ukraine and Kyiv were therefore becoming more Ukrainian under Soviet rule.

Borders and Territory

The creation of a quasi-state (the Ukrainian SSR) with defined boundaries that became from January 1992 international borders is an important beneficial legacy of the Soviet era. The secession of Ukraine came about by constitutional means, as President Leonid Kravchuk often noted. Independent Ukraine was not therefore a completely 'new' entity because it represented the constitutional continuation of the Ukrainian SSR.⁸² The 1977 Ukrainian SSR constitution, with numerous amendments, held legal force in independent Ukraine until the adoption of Ukraine's post-Soviet constitution in June 1996.⁸³ The Ukrainian state claimed the right to inherit everything found on its territory in December 1991 (apart from nuclear weapons), plus the Ukrainian SSR's share of the former USSR's assets. All post-colonial states (except those bent on territorial expansion) have insisted that their inherited borders should be maintained, while at times rejecting demands for self-determination from Crimeans, Kurds, Tibetans and Eritreans.⁸⁴

Throughout Ukraine, with the possible exception of the Crimean autonomous republic, there is a strong identification with the territory of the former Ukrainian SSR.⁸⁵ Support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and maintaining a firm hand against Crimean separatism is as strong in eastern as it is in western Ukraine. This territorial loyalty to the geographical boundaries of the former Ukrainian SSR and the post-Soviet Ukrainian state provides us with two pointers. First, it helps to explain the strong support throughout Ukraine for independence in the referendum of 1 December 1991. Secondly, it explains the lack of any widespread support for separatism in eastern Ukraine (again, the Crimea is an exception here).⁸⁶ Hennadi Fomenko, governor of Luhans'k *oblast* in the Donbas, said, 'The press used to constantly say that eastern Ukraine was on the verge of a separatist revolt. It didn't happen then and it won't happen now.' Fomenko went on: 'The east is an integral part of Ukraine. Besides, we know how our neighbours are doing in Russia, and they live no better than we do.'⁸⁷

The former Soviet internal administrative borders therefore did play a role in changing or moulding the identities of the peoples within their respective republics. Russians living in eastern and southern Ukraine do not share the same identities as those across the border in the Russian Federation. Ukraine's Russian population has largely lost its attachment to the Russian Federation as a 'homeland'. The only two factors that remain which link them to Russian proper are '*pelmeny* [Siberian dumplings] and language', Yaroslav Hrytsak, Director of L'viv's Institute of Historical Research, confided to the present author.⁸⁸ This is clearly seen in Table 1:

TABLE 1
TO WHAT POPULATION DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOURSELF? (PER CENT)

	Ukrainians	Russians	Others	Total
Ukraine	56.9	28.3	29.2	48.3
CIS	5.3	10.4	8.0	6.7
USSR	15.5	33.0	27.4	20.5
Region	13.2	15.9	23.9	14.5
Russia	1.0	5.3	1.8	2.0
Europe	2.3	2.1	2.6	2.3
Don't Know	5.8	6.1	7.1	5.7

Source: Based upon a poll in June 1995 prepared by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences and the Democratic Initiatives think-tank. Copy in the author's possession.

The Soviet Ukrainian state's greatest claim to fame is the fact that it united, for the first time since the Middle Ages, the bulk of territories where Ukrainians constituted a majority of the population. As Roman Szporluk

has written, the former Soviet state combined 'Little Poland' with 'Little Russia' into a 'Greater Ukraine'.⁸⁹ Ivan Rudnytsky viewed the consolidation of the Polish and Ukrainian states after the Second World War as enabling both countries to normalize their relations after centuries of bitterness. In the past the Ukrainian national movement had always been divided between two adversaries (Poland and Russia). Ironically, the unification of the bulk of the Ukrainian territories by the Soviet regime produced two outcomes which were never predicted.

First, it enabled the Ukrainian elite to focus on only one potential adversary (Russia): opinion polls of the Ukrainian elite have therefore consistently shown that Russia is still regarded as Ukraine's greatest threat (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
THREATS AND ALLIES

	Main ally	Biggest threat
Russia	27	48
USA	13	11
Germany	12	0
Former Soviet Republics	3	1
Eastern Europe	8	—
Western Europe	5	—
Turkey	—	3
China	—	1
Others	6	5
Don't know	26	31

Source: *Den'*, 18 June 1997.

Secondly, the incorporation of Western Ukraine increased the Ukrainian nationally-consciousness element within the Ukrainian SSR. Western Ukrainians have no inferiority complex, they do not perceive Russian language and culture as higher than Ukrainian, they are westward-leaning and the Greek-Catholics (of the Uniate Church) among them look to the Vatican for spiritual leadership. The Western Ukrainian intelligentsia played a disproportionate role (in comparison to the size of their region's population) within Kyiv's ruling elite. Western Ukraine went on to exact its final revenge by heading the drive for independence during the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁹⁰

The significance of the incorporation of territories where Ukrainians were in a majority into the Ukrainian SSSR should not be discounted. After all, Ukrainian lands could have been left under foreign rule. It was certainly not predetermined that they, as with western Belarus, would be united with the Ukrainian and Belarusian SSRs. There are large numbers of Somalis living in Ethiopia and Djibouti, outside Somalia proper. Tajiks and Azeris

live in greater numbers outside the Tajik and Azeri independent states, in Afghanistan and Iran respectively. Clearly, the strategic value to the former USSR of annexing these Tajik and Azeri areas was not as high as that of Eastern Poland which brought Moscow closer to Warsaw and central Europe (the USSR did temporarily annex north-western Iran after the Second World War). Indeed, many ethnic groups (Biafrans, Kurds, Tamils, Pathans, Baluchis, Sikhs and until the mid-1990s Palestinians and Eritreans) were denied the right to self-determination because of accidents of imperial history which confined them to larger states. Accordingly, they have 'been barred from entering the international community', as Jackson concludes.⁹¹

Throughout the bulk of Azeri history, Azerbaijan had been part of Iran, with the area north of the Araxes river going to the tsarist Russian empire only in the early nineteenth century. This Azeri region within Russia, later inside the USSR and from 1992 as an independent state, was able – unlike the Azeri region which remained within Iran – to remove Persian influences and undertake nation-building. From the 1860s to 1914 the Azeris within Russia emancipated themselves from the domination of the Persian literary language: 'Under the Soviet rule which followed the independent Republic, the building of the Azerbaidzhani Soviet nation-state was in some ways the continuation of the intelligentsia's old programme', an expert on Azerbaidzhan has persuasively argued.⁹²

Conclusions

The Soviet record within Ukraine is one of both tremendous cruelty in the Stalin era and economic advancement. Soviet and nationalist critics will also argue respectively that the Soviet regime was either completely white or black, but the truth is closer to being grey, lying somewhere between these two extremes. No new regime or independent state completely erases the past and the *ancien régime* which preceded it, allowing it to start with a clean slate. This could occur only in the three Baltic states and in western Ukraine, where the Soviet regime could be portrayed as alien and imported. It would be particularly difficult in Ukraine as a whole, where the inherited quasi-state could be forged into a modern state only by elites created by the Soviet regime and with former Soviet Ukrainian borders accepted by the bulk of the population. Ukraine was therefore in a better starting position in 1991 than it had been in 1917 when it attempted, but failed, to achieve independence. Kravchuk, as the radical right Ukrainian National Assembly pointed out, was therefore successful where the 1940s nationalist leader Stepan Bandera had failed. In 1991, Ukraine inherited some elements of a state and its institutions, elites and a defined territory – all factors which were absent in 1917 when the tsarist empire collapsed.

But the Soviet legacy of nation-building in Ukraine is far weaker. True, the Soviet regime united the bulk of the territories where Ukrainians resided. But, at the same time, after the nation-building (through Ukrainianization and indigenization) of the 1920s was abandoned. In the following decade the Soviet state preferred to maintain the majority of Ukrainians as a pre-national Little Russian *ethnos*. In 1992 the independent state therefore inherited elements of both a modern nation in western Ukraine and a pre-national *ethnos* in eastern and southern Ukraine. Ukraine's achievement of independence, as with many other former dependencies, is therefore only the beginning – and not the prologue – of the story.

As one Ukrainian author pointed out, 'So far Ukraine has become Ukraine only *de jure*; ahead of us is a long path to real independence and the formation of a real national state.'⁹³ On the fifth anniversary of Ukrainian independence in August 1996, President Kuchma claimed that state-building had been completed. Kuchma's optimism was also backed by the adoption of Ukraine's first post-Soviet constitution two months earlier, an event that was perceived as signalling 'no going back'. However, nation-building, prevented in eastern Ukraine by both the tsarist and the Soviet regimes, was still a project in the process of implementation – the third (and perhaps final) attempt at creating a Ukrainian nation in over one hundred years.

NOTES

1. David Saunders, 'What Makes a Nation a Nation? Ukrainians since 1600', *Ethnic Groups*, Vol.10 (1993), p.109.
2. David Saunders, 'Russia's Demographic Policy (1847–1905): A Demographic Approach', *European History Quarterly*, Vol.25, No.2 (April 1995), p.188.
3. David Saunders, 'Russia and Ukraine under Alexander II: The Valuev Edict of 1863', *International History Review*, Vol.17, No.1 (Feb. 1995), p.28.
4. *Ibid.*, p.50.
5. T.R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1883–1914* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), p.129.
6. *Ibid.*, pp.46 and 64.
7. See W. Connor, 'Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?', *World Politics*, Vol.24, No.3 (April 1972), pp.319–55.
8. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia*, pp.12 and 73.
9. See Anna Procyk, *Russian Nationalism and Ukraine: The Nationality Policy of the Volunteer Army during the Civil War* (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1995).
10. Bohdan Krawchenko, 'The Impact of Industrialization on the Social Structure of Ukraine', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol.22, No.3 (Sept. 1980), p.338.
11. G. Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923–1934* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.182.
12. Quoted from M. Shkandrij's review of G. Liber's *Soviet Nationality Policy*, *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, Vol.21, Nos.1–2 (1996), p.296.
13. Most Russians identified with the USSR – not the Russian SFSR – as their 'homeland'; as

- late as 1993 only 41 per cent of Russians identified with the Russian Federation. The Russian SFSR possessed no republican institutions and no republican communist party until 1990: see Mary McAuley, *Russia's Politics of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.16, 21, 27, 28, 31 and 300.
14. Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy*, p.181.
 15. *Ibid.*
 16. See Roman Solchanyk, 'Language Politics in the Ukraine', in Isabelle Kreindler (ed.), *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Soviet National Languages* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1985), pp.57–108.
 17. See Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation-building* (Studies in Societies in Transition Series, 9) (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).
 18. *Reuters*, 6 May 1995.
 19. *Holos Ukrainy*, 28 Aug. 1995.
 20. Victor Stepanenko, 'Natsional'no-derzhavne budivnytstvo i problema sostiokul'turnoi identychnosti', *Politolohichni chyttania*, 1994, No.1, p.15.
 21. Mykola Porovsky, then a leading member of the centre-right Republican Party, makes this point when arguing that the Soviet legacy was not completely negative (*Holos Ukrainy*, 7 Dec. 1995).
 22. It is probably impossible to ignore the Soviet era. Roman Szporluk believes that 'The intertwined history of communism and nationalism will largely determine the character of the postempire era': see his 'After Empire: What?' *Daedalus*, Vol.43, No.3 (Summer 1994), p.29.
 23. Anthony H. Birch, 'Minority Nationalist Movements and Theories of Political Integration', *World Politics*, Vol.30, No.3 (April 1978), p.334.
 24. Interviewed in *Vysoky Zamok*, 25–27 April 1997.
 25. S.W. Garnett argued that in 1991 Ukraine 'did not look much stronger than its predecessor': see his *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 1997), p.11.
 26. In 1918 the Ukrainian Hetmanate did sign a pact with the *ancien régime*, much to the disgust of the then pro-independence Ukrainian socialist leadership.
 27. Petro Kraliuk, 'Kudy zh my iydemo?', *Suchasnist*, 1993, No.6, p.92.
 28. *Reuters*, 8 May 1995.
 29. *UNJAR*, 2 Dec. 1995.
 30. See I.T. Mukovs'kyi and O.Ye. Lysenko, *Zvytiaha i zhertovnist*. *Ukrainitsi na Frontakh Druhoii Svitovoi Voiny* (Kyiv: Knyha Pam'iaty Ukrainy, 1997).
 31. *Uryadovyi kurier*, 29 Aug. 1996.
 32. S. Kul'chyts'kyi, 'Genotsyd? Genotsyd!', *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 10 June 1993; see also Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine* (London: Hutchinson, 1986).
 33. Quoted from Yaroslav Bilinsky, 'Basic Factors in the Foreign Policy of Ukraine: The Impact of the Soviet Experience', in S. Frederick Starr (ed.), *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), p.179. James Mace, an American historian now based in Kyiv, described the 'murder-famine' as the 'central question' for Ukraine. 'The enemy number 1 for Stalin and his circle was not only the Ukrainian farmer, or the intelligentsia. The enemy were Ukrainians as such', Mace believes: quoted from his 'Politychni prychny holodomoru v Ukraini (1932–1933rr.)', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1995, No.1, p.46.
 34. *Holos Ukrainy*, 28 Aug. 1995.
 35. Kremen' argued that independence had 'brought to life the age-old yearning of our ancestors to be the masters of their own land, the shapers of their own destiny': *Ukrainian Review*, Vol.44, No.1 (Autumn 1997), p.33. Horbulin said practically the same on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, *Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 Sept. 1996.
 36. *Uryadovyi kurier*, 29 Aug. 1996.
 37. V.F. Verstiuk, 'Rol' i mistse Tsentral'noi Rady v moderniy istorii Ukrainy', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1997, No.5, p.22. I. Pivnenko, a deputy naval commander, wrote in *Flot Ukrainy* (24 May 1997) that after the crushing by Soviet forces of the Ukrainian

- independent states of 1917–20 the regaining of this independence ‘existed as a hidden dream of our people’.
38. The Ukrainian naval newspaper *Flot Ukrainy* (30 Nov. 1996) wrote that Ukrainian independence ‘was achieved through the blood and pogrom of thousands of Ukrainian patriots who gave up their lives for its liberty’.
 39. As quoted from the then Prime Minister Valerii Pustovoytenko’s speech on the anniversary of Ukraine’s declaration of independence: *Uryadovi kurier*, 28 Aug. 1997.
 40. The author is, of course, aware that the Communist Party and certain liberal-leaning political parties, such as the Inter-Regional Bloc of Reforms, may not agree with this comment. Nevertheless, these two constituencies have little, if any, influence within Ukraine’s ruling elite and within the Kyiv-based policy-making community.
 41. S. Nikolaenko, ‘Ideolohiya derzhavy chy ideolohiya peremozhstv?’ *Holos Ukrainy*, 30 April 1996.
 42. Piotr Symonenko, ‘Rozbudova Derzhavy: otsinky i prohnozy’, *Uryadovi kurier*, 24 Aug. 1996.
 43. *Holos Ukrainy*, 6 Nov. 1995.
 44. Orest Subtelny agrees with them: ‘Given their weakness in 1917–1920, it is extremely doubtful whether Ukrainian national forces could ever have been as effective in maintaining and expanding Ukraine’s borders as was the Soviet regime’: see his ‘Imperial Disintegration and Nation State Formation: The Case of Ukraine’, in John W. Blaney (ed.), *The Successor States to the USSR* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1995), p.188.
 45. Three Ukrainian authors wrote that ‘The historical paradox is that this was promoted by the communist totalitarian empire which brutally suppressed any kind of national revival’: see Vasyl’ Boyechko, Oksana Hanzha and Borys Zakharchuk, *Kordomy Ukrainy: Istorychna Retrospektyva ta Suchasnyi Stan* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1994), p.104.
 46. O. Moroz, “‘Naukovyi Natsionalizm” na Derzhavnomy Rivni’, *Viche*, March 1994, p.27. Moroz is, of course, correct to argue that unlike the tsarist and even the Provisional Russian governments the Soviet regime at least recognized the existence of a Ukrainian language which was different from Russian. Moroz’s views concerning the progress of the Ukrainian language under the Soviet regime cannot, however, be wholeheartedly accepted within the context of the widespread policies of russification adopted by the Soviet state.
 47. Mykola Kyrychenko (Socialist Member of the Ukrainian Parliament), ‘My povynni znaty pravdu’, *Tovarysh* (Oct. 1996), No. 42.
 48. See Yaacov Ro’i (ed.), *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (The Cummings Center for Russian and East European Studies) (London: Frank Cass, 1995).
 49. The proportion of Ukrainians giving Ukrainian as their ‘native language’ in Soviet censuses declined from 93.5 per cent in 1959 to 91.4 and 60 per cent in 1970 and 1989 respectively. This trend was part of a general one towards greater bilingualism, on the one hand, and greater Russian-language proficiency, on the other: see Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification? A Study in the Soviet Nationalities Problem* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968).
 50. Victor Zaslavsky, ‘Nationalism and Democracy: Transition in Postcommunist Societies’, *Daedalus*, Vol.121, No.2 (Spring 1992), pp.97–122.
 51. Ronald G. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp.100–101.
 52. On this question see Carol Barner-Barry and Cynthia A. Hody, *The Politics of Change: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1995), pp.85–91.
 53. Rogers Brubaker, ‘Nationhood and the National question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutional Account’, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb. 1994), p.58.
 54. Mark R. Beissinger, ‘The Persisting Ambiguity of Empire’, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.11, No.2 (April–June 1995), p.178.
 55. Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.18.
 56. It is surely no coincidence that former leading members of Ukraine’s Komsomol have played an active role since the Gorbachev era in new business development in the Ukrainian state (for example, through the Liberal and People’s Democratic parties).

57. Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s*, p.17.
58. Mykola Ryabchuk, 'Between Civil Society and the New Etatism: Democracy in the Making and State-building in Ukraine', in Michael D. Kennedy (ed.), *Envisioning Eastern Europe: Postcommunist Cultural Studies* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), p.135.
59. Yaroslav Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine after the Second World War* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1964), pp. 306–7, and his 'Basic Factors', p.172.
60. The radical right Ukrainian National Assembly explained its support for Kravchuk as president in the December 1991 elections with the assertion that he was successfully building an independent state, a feat which Symon Petliura and Stepan Bandera, Ukrainian nationalist leaders in the 1910s and 1940s respectively, failed to accomplish, in their eyes.
61. Tetyana Rudnyts'ka, 'Sotsial'no-profesiynoho haluzevoho ta kvalifikatsiynoho skladu zaynyatoho naselennia Ukraïny', *Filosofska i sotsialohichna dumka*, 1996, Nos.1–2, p.115.
62. See Taras Kuzio, 'The Sultan and the Hetman: Democracy Building in Belarus and Ukraine in a Grey Security Zone', in Jan Zielonka (ed.), *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe: International and Transnational Factors* (Florence: European University Institute, forthcoming).
63. Karen Dawisha, *Post-Communism's Troubled Steps Toward Democracy: An Aggregate Analysis of Progress in the 27 New States* (College Park, MD: Center for the Study of Post-Communist Societies, University of Maryland, 1997), pp.9–10.
64. Brubaker, 'Nationhood and the National Question', p.52.
65. See Taras Kuzio, 'The Perils of Multiculturalism: A Theoretical and Area Studies Approach to the Former USSR', *Contemporary Political Studies*, Vol.1 (1998), pp.108–23.
66. The Russian Federation is an exception to the remainder of the former USSR. It inherited many of the institutions of the former Soviet outer empire. Nevertheless, these institutions and personnel were top-heavy, dominated heavily by the security forces and inculcated with Soviet Great Power and cold war ideology.
67. *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 26 July 1997.
68. Ukrainianization of Sevastopol is surveyed in Klara Hudzyk, 'U Sevastopoli konkurs na kursy ukraïns'koi movy 2 choloviky na mistse', *Den*, 12 June 1997.
69. See S.M. Samuylov, 'O nekotorykh amerikanskykh stereotipakh v otnoshenii Ukraïny', *SShA: Ekonomika. Poltyka. Ideologiya*, 1997, No.3, pp.84–96 and No.4, pp.81–90. A very critical response was provided by V. Kremen', head of the Directorate on Domestic Issues of the Ukrainian Presidential Administration, in *Uryadoviy kurier*, 21 June 1997.
70. See Taras Kuzio, 'National Identity and Foreign Policy: The Eastern Slavic Conundrum', in Taras Kuzio (ed.), *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post Soviet Transformation* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1998), pp.221–44.
71. *Argumenty i fakty*, 1997, No.27. This compared with 75 and 40 per cent of Russians who supported union with Belarus and Kazakhstan respectively.
72. See Taras Kuzio, 'National Identity in Independent Ukraine: An Identity in Transition', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol.2, No.4 (Dec. 1996), pp.582–608.
73. Alexander J. Motyl, 'The Conceptual President: Leonid Kravchuk and the Politics of Surrealism', in Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), p.105.
74. *AP*, 27 July 1997.
75. McAuley, *Russia's Politics of Uncertainty*, p.34.
76. Omeljan Pritsak and John S. Reshetar, 'The Ukraine and the Dialectics of Nation-Building', *Slavic Review*, Vol.22, No.2 (Summer 1963), p.254.
77. Brubaker, 'Nationhood and the National Question', p.61.
78. Ivan L. Rudnytsky, 'The Soviet Ukraine in Historical Perspective', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol.14, No.2 (1972), p.240.
79. Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s*, p.39.
80. Dominique Arel, 'A Lurking Cascade of Assimilation in Kiev?' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.12, No.1 (Jan.–March 1996), pp.73–90.
81. Roman Szporluk, 'The Soviet West – or Far Eastern Europe', *East European Politics and*

- Society*, Vol.5, No.3 (Fall 1991), p.480.
82. Roman Szporluk, 'Nation-building in Ukraine: Problems and Prospects', in Blaney (ed.), *The Successor States*, p.177.
 83. See Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's, 1997).
 84. See Benyamin Neuberger, 'National self-determination: dilemmas of a concept', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.1, No.3 (Nov. 1995), pp.297–325.
 85. John A. Armstrong wrote that 'Gradually these categories shaped the consciousness of their inhabitants, until many people of diverse backing identified with their republics of residence': see his 'Nationalism in the Former Soviet Empire', *Problems of Communism*, Vol.41, Nos.1–2 (Jan.–April 1992), p.122.
 86. The Communist Party of Ukraine does not support separatism per se; in fact, in the Crimea the local branch of the Communist Party was a strong opponent of Crimean separatism, but it, like the Inter-Front-type Civic Congress of Ukraine based in Donetsk, is hostile to Ukrainian independence; the Civic Congress issued leaflets during the 1994 elections which agitated in favour of 'With Russia – forever! Yes to a Union with Russia! Yes to Donbas autonomy! No to Ukrainian independence!' – quoted from Hryhoriy Nemirja, 'A Qualitative Analysis of the Situation in the Donbas', in Klaus Segbers and Stephan De Spiegeleire (eds.), *Post-Soviet Puzzles: Mapping the Political Economy of the Former Soviet Union. Emerging Geopolitical and Territorial Units. Theories, Methods and Case Studies*, Vol.II (Ebenhausen: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 1995), p.57.
 87. Chrystia Freeland, 'Eastern Ukraine turns its back on Russia', *Financial Times*, 23 July 1997.
 88. Interview with Y. Hrytsak, Kharkiv, 28 Aug. 1996.
 89. Szporluk, 'After Empire: What?', p.34.
 90. See Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* (London: Macmillan, 1994).
 91. Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge Studies in International Relations, 12) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.41.
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