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Ukraine and Russia, Nation and Empire

Sergii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe, A history of Ukraine.* New York: Basic Books, 2021, rev ed.

Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald Gregor Suny, *Russia's Empires.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Abstract: The current conflict in Ukraine and the troubled course of its relations with Russia since declaring independence in 1991 has encouraged speculation and misinformation about the longer history of their relationship. These two new books by leading historian of Ukrainian and Russian history provide last chapters with informed accounts of relations since 1991. Their primary concerns and the bulk of their books are devoted to the much longer histories and complex relations from the Tsarist centuries through the Soviet period.

Keywords: Cossacks, Slavophiles / PanSlavists, Duma/Rada, Hrushevsky, famine, Khrushchev

Authors and Issues

Russian leadership justified its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 at least in part on past rights of imperial oversight. Ukrainian national history and its relations with the Tsarist Russian Empire and the USSR are therefore worthy of detailed scholarly examination. We are fortunate to have two recent studies from leading historians that help us to understand the centuries of Ukrainian and imperial Russian history. Both volumes address Ukraini-

an-Russian relations through the Tsarist and Soviet periods and up to the present. Oversimplification or misrepresentation of these past interconnections has troubled state-to-state relations since they began in 1991 and prompted speculation on the current conflict, including doubtful parallels with NATO's controversial role in the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution. Standing back with scholarly detachment, these two volumes justify a lengthy review that takes us through the long and complex course of these earlier relations.

The three widely published authors represent the range of American scholars in Slavic studies. They succeed the interwar Russian ėmigrees with a Tsarist education, like Aleksander Gershenkron, who dominated Russian history in the post-1945 period. Sergii Plokhy is a native Ukrainian with his doctoral degree from Kyiv who left the faculty of a Ukrainian university after the fall of the Soviet Union, coming first to Canada and then to the US. Since 2013, he has been Mykhailo Hrushevsky Professor of Ukrainian History at Harvard University and Director of its Ukrainian Institute. Valerie Kivelson received her doctoral degree from Stanford University and is one of the many Americans with no ethnic or family ties to the region who could pursue pre-1917 research in Russia thanks to the US-Soviet exchange program. Complementing her concentration on Tsarist Russia is Ronald Gregor Suny's concentration on the Soviet Union. Born in the United States to Armenian parents, a family visit to the Soviet Union introduced him to the field. Completing his doctoral degree at Columbia University, he began a long career at the University of Michigan, where he is William H. Sewell Distinguished Professor of History. His esteemed publication has been less critical of Soviet history than the hard Cold War views of contemporary US specialists like Richard Pipes. Here he joins Kivelson to focus on Russian history as imperial history.

Their 12 chapters take us through major issues and scholarly controversies, Western and Soviet views included. Also addressing controversial questions, Plokhy's narrative flows ahead more easily for the reader in 28 short, less thematic chapters in chronological order. Both volumes ignore the historical simplifications encouraged by the current conflict. Only before World War I will we see support for the current Russian temptation to regard Ukrainians with their closely related language as ethnic Russians. Nor does either book endorse the Ukrainian temptation to read the post-1991 Ukrainian national movement far back in time.

Ukraine and Tsarist Russia

Neither volume finds imperial status in Ukraine or Russia until the 13th century. For Ukraine, they dismiss Kievan Rus as neither a state nor an

empire. From the dozen Slavic tribes settling there from the seventh century, seven of their leaders did form a loose alliance after the conversion to Christianity in 862, but this Kievan Rus was easily swept aside by the Mongol invasion in 1240. Still regarded in Russian historiography as the repressive "Tartar yoke", both volumes identify a looser Mongol framework in Ukraine, allowing some autonomy to the local Slavic princes. They credit other Mongol features common to imperial regimes, such as tolerance of the Orthodox religion and the opening of trade routes to China and the Mediterranean (Plokhy, 54; Kivelson/Suny, 77). The Crimea became a commercial hub. Then a century earlier than in Russia, the Mongol regime lost its authority to local rulers and the Ottoman advance. Again, the new Ottoman Empire allowed religious tolerance and pursued wider trade linkages, now introducing Ukrainian grain to the world market. More Ukrainian peasants moved into the fertile western countryside and Jews came into the towns.

After this more promising century, both religious tolerance and a common Ukrainian territory suffered in the 16th and 17th centuries. Russian state-building had begun under Ivan the Terrible (1553–84), the first Tsar of what was originally called Muscovy. He found mercenary support for expansion from the Cossack horsemen of the infertile eastern steppes. They became Ukraine's one native military force. Plokhy (77) identifies them as originally Turkish, then almost all of Ukrainian origin, lacking horses and converted to infantry. Kivelson/Suny (77) calls them a mixture of Ukrainians and Tatars, who did have horses. The consolidation of Polish rule under its Commonwealth with Lithuania in the 17the century also brought religious division and a series of Cossack revolts. Polish Catholic support of the Uniate, or Greek Catholic faith loyal to Rome while preserving Orthodox ritual, brought religious division to Ukraine. Pulling the center and east back to Orthodoxy was the often-neglected Orthodox Reformation. It came from the educated elite clergy in Kyiv, who brought its teaching and demands for reform to Moscow and Russian orthodoxy (Plokhy, 94).

The 17th century became tsarism's Time of Troubles for western Russia and religious division for Ukraine, while the Muscovite Russian expansion to the east, launched by Ivan the Terrible continued. Plokhy's chapter on the Cossacks traces *their hetman* or military leaders' search for statehood only as tsarist allies against the Polish Commonwealth or the Ottoman Empire. Elsewhere, Kivelson/Suny (69) ascribe some of Muscovy's Russian motivation for its expansion across Siberia less to the desire for conversion to reformed Orthodoxy and more to the desire for profit. Fur pelts were its largest export at the time. They find no interest in nationalist Russification. Instead, they trace

an initial sense of imperial framework to the desire to incorporate the western Ukraine provided by its reforming Orthodox clergy. Closer Russian elations began instead after the Cossack Great Revolt of 1648. Beginning as a land dispute, the anti-Polish uprising soon attracted western peasant support. Polish manors and Jewish town shops were sacked. Some 20,000 Jews may have been killed. Meanwhile, as the Cossack *hetman* bargained for statehood, their only way of survival against the Commonwealth was the agreement for support, not union, signed with Russia in 1654 (Plokhy, 99). To separate its distinction from its later and present-day use to represent a single Russian ethnic origin, Kivelson/Suny interrupt their chronological advance with what they call a theoretical chapter. Chapter 3 reviews the recent scholarly literature that sees empires and nation-states as polar opposites.

Both volumes then move into the 18th century and the tsarist expansion that replaced Muscovy with the Russian Empire. It joined in the three partitions that replaced Polish rule but left a large Polish minority in the western Ukraine under an Austrian regime. Lviv became Lemberg and its public architecture was bult up with a Habsburg stamp that remains to this day. Plokhy's Ch 12, The Verdict of Poltava, calls the Russian defeat of the Polish' ally Sweden at Poltava in 1709. Afterwards, the tsarist advance could proceed to the west and then to the south. First, Peter the Great (1695–1725) absorbed Belarus and the Baltics. He recruited a large regular army led by officers obligated under ranks that provided or secured their estates. Then Catherine the Great (1763–85) pushed the Ottoman regime out of the central and eastern Ukraine, capturing the Crimea in 1783.

Under what terms did this enlarged regime rule its much-expanded territory? Both volumes speak only of a multinational empire with no mention of an emerging Russian nation-state. Kivelson/Suny devote one chapter to the limited centralization under Tsar Peter's regime other than the military obligations that bound the nobility to state service. Their next chapter lauds the local rights which Catherine's expanding empire left in place. In Ukraine's eastern steppe, Catherine did replace separate Cossack Hetmanite rule with provincial oversight that left only local Cossack authority in place. Enough Serbs fled the Ottoman reconquest in 1739 to have their region constituted as New Serbia, joining Jews and Mennonites in a large eastern minority population (Plokhy, 141, 145). But for the large Ukrainian peasant majority, Catherine authorized the local Cossack nobility to ban them from leaving in 1783., creating a third serfdom. Her hopes for a confederation with Ukraine went unfulfilled (Kivelson/Suny, 136). But the province she called New Russia kept its rights to provincial autonomy, a separate Orthodox church and use of the Ukrainian lan-

guage remained in schools. For the full expanded empire, the Ukrainian share of its population rose to 25 percent and the Russian share fell to 50 percent.

In the early 19th century, the regime of Aleksandar I (1801–15) went ahead with Enlightenment reforms that included founding the universities of Kharkov and Vilnius with no requirement for the Russian language. Many of the Tsar's advisors were in fact Poles with past experience in their universities despite the partitions. The military mobilization that managed to repel Napoleon's invasion in 1812 included Cossack volunteers. There were no tsarist measures to Russify Ukraine or the Baltics provinces. Such efforts would begin under Tsar Nicholas I (1825–55) but mainly to strengthen his autocratic regime under an Interior Ministry modelled on the Napoleonic example. Suppressing the Polish revolt of 1830 advanced the justification for this Official Nationality. In 1835, the Tsarist regime founded a university in Kyiv dedicated to advancing Russian language instruction and study. In 1839, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was dissolved into the Russian Church. But Plokhy details a Ukrainian reaction that his Ch 14 calls The Genesis of a National Movement. He identifies Ukrainian scholars ironically based at the new university. Until suppressed in the tsarist reaction to the European revolutions of 1848, their new Brotherhood of Cyril and Methodius supported several history books celebrating the Ukrainian community in the Ukrainian language. Although closely related, the language's distinction from Russian was long accepted in Ukraine, just as the fateful distinction between Serbian and Croatian had been in the two scholarly communities.

The Tsarist suppression of the Polish revolt of 1830 led a past advocate of the Slavic unity of Poles, Ukrainians and Russians, the Polish nobleman Adam Czartoryski, to turn against Russian oversight. On his well-known visit to Belgrade in the early 1840s, he drafted the famous *Načertanije* as a manifesto for South Slav unity, its wording famously changed to Serbian unity by its Interior Minister Ilija Garašanin. The original version reflected the rising Slavophile movement among the Russian *intelligentsia*, in which Czartoryski himself had seen Catholic Poles included before the 1830 uprising. In Russia, the Slavophile emphasis on peasant culture and the Orthodox Church saw its standing weakened by modernizing Westerners and military defeat in the Crimean War of 1854–6. Kivelson/Suny's section on this new Russian *intelligentsia* (pp. 161–166) takes us instructively through postwar rise of political Pan Slavism, advocating Russian state and military leadership of its near neighbors and support of South Slav liberation from the Ottoman Empire. Tsar Aleksandar's conversion to this imperial mandate culminated in the 1877–78 war against the Ottomans and a short-lived regime of Russian oversight in liber-

ated Bulgaria. Here is the appropriate historical precedent for the current demands by Russia's leadership from Ukraine.

Our two volumes do not support the current Russian leadership's focus on the regime of Aleksander III (1881–94) as the decisive Tsarist framework for relations with Ukraine. Instead, it was the otherwise reforming Tsar Aleksandar II (1856–81) who restricted Ukrainian language teaching and publication and Tsar Nicholas II (1894–1917) who suppressed Ukrainian political demands in the 1905 Revolution. Already in 1863, as Aleksander established his reforming credentials by abolishing peasant serfdom, he banned all publication in Ukrainian as he was putting down another Polish revolt. Then in 1876, as an Ottoman massacre in Bulgaria raised the Pan Slavic demands for war and Russian unity, the Tsar banned primary school grammar and geography books in Ukrainian and the import of any books in Ukrainian (Plokhy, 166–67). Meanwhile, the Tsar's regime had also been promoting military modernization. Western foreign investment was now welcomed, led by French loans for railroad construction. In Ukraine, the more fateful foreign investment came from Great Britain. A Welsh entrepreneur, John James Hughes, fastened on the discovery of substantial deposits of coal and iron ore in the present Donbas, the very juxtaposition of which the German Ruhr valley had taken so much advantage. After securing the necessary rail access, Hughes needed a labor force for mines and then steel plants. He tried but failed to attract enough Ukrainians from the good western land and peasant farms on larger plots than those received in Russia after serfdom. And so, as Plokhy (179) points out, here was the origin of the Russian workers who were brought in the new industrial towns like Huzov, later changed to Kharkov and now Kharkiv. According to the first Russian census in 1897, their numbers in cities matched the Ukrainian total of one million, but overall, their share of a total population of 20 million was only 15 percent where it remains today. Joining the large Ukrainian majority at the time were Jews, whose 5 percent did not survive the Nazi occupation in World War II.

Rather than the hard regime of Aleksandar III, which pursued radials with the new secret police (*Okhrana*) and encouraged Jewish pogroms inspired by a reactionary Orthodox Archbishop, it was his successor Nicolas II who presided over a political confrontation with Ukrainian representatives. The mid-century cultural confrontations with Ukrainian scholars and writers had long been contained by the aforementioned restrictions on the language. But as Great Power rivalries grew in the last pre-1914 decade, the humiliation of Russia's naval defeat in the 1903–4 war with Japan combined with urban unrest to trigger the abortive 1905 Revolution. To justify its suppression,

the Tsar's advisors persuaded him to allow elections to a representative assembly. The rising radical tide, Bolsheviks included, did not elect its candidates. In Ukraine, however, the Russian candidates who were expected to win were swept aside by moderate Ukrainians. In the second Duma, also short lived, the Ukrainian Social Democrats won a number of seats and the moderate Ukrainian Club even more. In Austrian Galicia, a young history professor at Lviv University, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, for whom Plokhy's Chair at Harvard is named, inspired and led demands for language and other specific rights. But in 1907 the Nicholas II turned to a reformist but hard line Russian nationalist as his Prime Minister. Petr Stolypin led the successful pressure to elect only Russian representatives in the third Duma (1907–1912). Accounting for less than one sixth of Ukraine's population, Russians made up two thirds of Ukraine's delegates to the fourth Duma (1912–14).

With the outbreak of World War I, some initial Russian patriotism spread in Ukraine as elsewhere in the empire. Yet when Tsarist forces advanced into Austrian Galicia, Russian administrators cut short the Ukrainian advocacy and publication that had been favored under Habsburg rule to restrain Polish demands. The year's Russian occupation demanded that Russian publication and language replace Ukrainian. This restriction returned in 1916 when the Brusilov offensive recaptured much of this territory. By 1917, Hrushevsky found himself exiled in Moscow when news of the Tsar's overthrow reached him. He soon returned to Kyiv to lead the newly elected Ukrainian Duma, where he welcomed Jewish and other minority representatives (Plokhy, 206). A useful review of recent scholarship by Kivelson/Suny (268–75) does not find rising nationalist pressure from the rest of the western periphery responsible for the empire's collapse. Instead, they cite weakness at the Tsarist center and increasing disillusion with the aristocracy that left a badly led and supplied peasant army uncertain of what they were fighting for.

Ukraine and the Soviet Union

In 1917, Ukraine experienced a brief period of independence that would not return until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Still, under Lenin and after surviving Stalin's regime and the German occupation, it would enjoy a privileged status under two Communist party leaders born there. Plokhy takes us through Ukraine's succession of privilege and oppression under Communist leadership, interrupted by the oppressive Nazi occupation. Kivelson/Suny examine these two Communist alternatives more broadly across a Soviet empire of republics.

The Ukrainian parliament, the Central Rada, asserted tentative independence from the summer of 1917 to the fall of 1918. Radical Democrats outnumbered the Social Democrats under the uncertain Kerensky regime in Petrograd and found support for their proclamation of an independent republic from the moderate Russian Liberals. Only some eastern Cossack members opposed independence from Russia, as did the Kadet party in Moscow. After the Bolshevik revolution in November, its leaders in Ukraine failed to replace the Central Rada with a Soviet Commission in Kharkiv. The separate Ukrainian effort to continue the Rada in Lviv did not survive a return to Kyiv under the Austro-German occupation conceded in March under the Brest-Litovsk treaty with the Bolshevik regime. After the German defeat in November 1918, the Rada faced a hard year under Bolshevik control and the threat of Polish occupation when Pilsudski turned back the Red Army's offensive. Lacking its own army and institutions, an irregular force of Ukrainians under Symon Petlura drew its recruits from the western Ukraine, what had been Austrian Galicia. They challenged the Bolsheviks while also attacking Jewish settlements. In the end, Petlura's troops could survive only briefly with a Polish alliance.

Lenin faced the challenge of a largely rural Ukrainian peasant population with Russian pluralities in the eastern industrial towns. Citing "the lesson of 1919" (defat by the Poles), he promised Ukraine political self-determination but within a Soviet republic. He expected that its Ukrainian Communist leadership would integrate Russian workers and the Jewish minority with the Ukrainian peasantry. This would be largest republic in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, proclaimed in 1922. Kivelson/Suny (281–83) emphasize Lenin's Marxist ideology, which had included the peasantry as part of the working class well before the Revolution, and not dismissed it as Marx did. From 1917 forward, Lenin hoped to win a war weary peasant majority away from the rival SRs (Social Revolutionaries) with his promise of peace and land. Less convincingly, Plokhy cites with no source the sort of cynical sentiment informing the criticism of Lenin's policy by the present Russian leadership. Lenin's USSR was intended to "keep the Ukrainians in, the Poles out and the Russians down" (230). We must wonder whether his source is borrowing the often cited post-1945 British maxim of keeping the Americans in, the Germans down and the Russians out. In any case, Lenin's Ukraine provided publication and schools predominantly in the Ukrainian language. Russian schools in the eastern towns attracted Jews and other minorities, all of whom had local district rights. As Stalin rose to power after Lenin's decline and death by 1924, a Ukrainian peasantry prospering under the free market of Lenin's New Economic Policy. It soon faced criticism from the new Party First Secretary, Josef

Stalin. Plokhy skips over Stalin's indictment of peasants for withholding grain for higher prices and his turn to intensive industrialization in 1926–27. We do see that ethnic Russians were a majority of mid-20s Communist Party membership in Ukraine despite constituting under 15 percent of the population of 30 million (Plokhy, 231).

Both books concentrate instead on the 1930s, Plokhy on the forced famine among Ukrainian peasants and Kivelson/Suny on the repressive centralization of Stalin's regime. Their book argues that for the first time in Russian history "the state had been transformed from an imperial patchwork into a military, centralized 'pseudo-federal union 'that paid lip service to its constituent parts and subjected them all to dictatorial enforcement of Kremlin mandates." (299). They acknowledge the charge of genocide against the largely peasant Ukrainian population in the seizure of its grain supplies that left millions to starve to death in 1932–33. But they also recognize the historians who have questioned the singling out of Ukrainians given the similar measures taken and deaths recorded in the Kazakh region. Stalin intended to absorb the surviving population into new national Bolshevism, an "imagined community", in Benedict Anderson often quoted paradigm, of the Soviet state. But within the USSR's brotherhood of equal nations, the 1938 celebration of the October revolution called the Russian nation the most Soviet and the most revolutionary (Kivelson/Suny, 313).

For Ukraine, Plokhy also singles out 1938 but for different reasons. By then the teaching of Russian in schools and in publication had entirely replaced Ukrainian. It also marked Stalin's assignment of his lieutenant Nikita Khrushchev, Ukrainian born of Russian parents, to rebuild the republic's party leadership after the Great Purge of 1937–38. His mission of making it a Soviet fortress was unchanged, but he selected his own Ukrainian lieutenant for a fresh start. At least the danger of foreign intervention was more real than it had been in the early 1930. Plokhy takes his argument for the *Holodomor (Holocaust)* beyond Stalin's desire to enforce collectivization and free Ukrainian grain for needed exports. He emphasizes fear of Ukrainian nationalism and the émigré OUN organization for a unified Ukraine as a motive for distrusting any Ukrainian survival. Providing a total missing from the other volume, Plokhy (251) cites some 4 million peasants who perished; they faced "a clear ethnological bias" that was missing for the Kazakhs. In Ukraine, whole families died not just from starvation but also from the winter cold since matches and kerosine were also withheld. And from 1934, OUN assassinations in Poland as well as Lviv maintained Stalin's suspicion of Ukrainians in general. Nev-

er mind that its new young leader Stepan Bandera, was quickly arrested in Poland and sent to prison for the rest of the decade (Plokhy, 240).

Bandera's fate during World War II and the Nazi regime in Ukraine, 1941–44, receives attention only from Plokhy. He acknowledges Bandera's agreement with Nazi authorities after the German invasion of Poland in 1939 freed him from prison. The NKVD arrests of over half a million Ukrainians in an anti-OUN drive before the German invasion in June 1941 created fertile ground for Bandera's OUN faction to declare independence late in 1941. But then, as Plokhy points out, the German occupation's military command quickly repudiated the declaration. When Bandera refused to agree, he was sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp for the rest of the war. The German regime used the Ukrainian population as forced labor and some collaborators as camp guards. Some Ukrainian involvement in Jewish persecution and the Holocaust is not denied. But neither is German responsibility for killing virtually all of the one million Jews in Ukraine. Another goal of the Nazi occupation was to transfer its grain growing lands to new German settlers, who would use the local peasants as forced labor. Few volunteers ever came before the Germans were forced to evacuate in 1944. Ukraine remained what Plokhy (269) calls "a largescale model of a concentration camp" in which 6 million Ukrainians had died along with the million Jews.

Stalin's postwar regime was also harsh, presuming widespread Ukrainian collaboration with the Germans. An SS *Divisien Galicien* had assembled 20,000 men from the western Ukraine in 1943, but the larger Bandera faction in the Ukrainian UPA resistance opposed it. A large majority of other Ukrainians fought with or for the Soviet Army. All together 7 million people. including one million Jews, had died in wartime Ukraine. The German retreat in 1944 had left a Polish majority in Lviv. Polish-Ukrainian fighting cost 150,000 lives, followed by the deportation of the remaining 780,000 Poles across the 1939 border to a reduced Poland. Aa similar number of Ukrainians were moved back. A harder fate awaited Ukrainians accused of collaboration. NKVD arrests in 1946 and again in 1947 sent 250,000 Ukrainians to Siberia or the Gulag camps (Plokhy, 285–86). The Uniate churches in western Ukraine were closed and any Catholic influence forbidden. Limited UPA resistance survived until 1950.

Otherwise, the Soviet Republic of Ukraine now began again under its party secretary Nikita Khrushchev. Facing another famine in 1947, he was briefly replaced by the hard-liner Lazar Kaganovich. He ignored Khrushchev's request to give the southern peasantry ration books to ease the rigors of restored collectivization. Over a million starved to death and Stalin recalled Kaganovich. Khrushchev continued Stalin's emphasis on heavy industry but also sought to

restore light and power to the devastated cities. He allowed the Ukrainian language to return to the schools and publication, a policy of what Plokhy (288) calls "grudging Ukraianization". Stalin died in 1953, and Khrushchev emerged from the succession struggle as First Secretary. For Ukraine, his decision to approve the corporation of Crimea in 1954 is well known. Less well known were his appointments of ethnic Ukrainians to leading party and administrative positions previously held by Russians, who were still for one half of the republic's party membership. Khrushchev praised Ukrainians as "the second most important Soviet nationality" (Plokhy, 298). The celebration of the Cossacks and the doubtful standing of Rus as a medieval kingdom was revived. Investment in infrastructure as well as heavy industry favored the eastern Ukraine while higher prices for collective farm goods favored the western region. The creation of regional economic councils gave local largely Ukrainian authorities control of 90 percent of the republic's enterprises (Plokhy, 301).

Kivelson/Suny praise these initiatives as overcoming an empire's dilemma of balancing central control with regional rights. Unlike Plokhy, however, they do not see Ukrainian rights surviving into the long Brezhnev era, 1963–82. They acknowledge that Khrushchev's last choice as republic party secretary in 1963, Piotr Shelest, paid special attention to "promoting Ukrainian national consciousness". But by 1972, it was Brezhnev who replaced him with a hard-line enforcer of the central state authority that resisted such concessions (Kivelson/Suny, 330). The local economic councils were disbanded, intellectual dissenters arrested, and instruction in Russian was again favored. Volidimr Shcherbetsky would remain in his position until 1989. But Plokhy counters this judgement by reminding us that Shcherbetsky was a Ukrainian born Russian like Brezhnev, who were both proteges of Khrushchev. More importantly, the continuing influence of the large Ukrainian cadre in central party decisions lasted until the end of Brezhnev's regime. In his chapter, Goodbye Lenin, Plokhly, details how the cadre was cut down in the short tenure of Yurii Andropov and even more in the term of Mikhail Gorbachev (1985–91). Although born of a Ukrainian mother and a Russian father, Gorbachev was not raised there. He ended the Ukraine's preferential status. Gorbachev's reforms were intended to promote needed structural reforms, *perestroika,* by mobilizing all the republics. In Ukraine, the party's standing was further weakened by the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown in 1986. Its radiation swept over Kyiv and 2,000 settlements, polluting agricultural land. forests and the Dnieper River. Meanwhile in the Politburo, Shcherebetsky continued to mock *perestroika* as "idiocy" until Gorbachev finally sacked him in 1989. He tried to repair the party's

credibility by appointing a new first secretary, Leonid Kravchuk, young and from the western Ukraine rather than the Donbas (Plokhy, 315).

For Ukraine's intellectual community, it was not this downgrading of political influence in Moscow but the cultural freedom promised by *glasnost* that reopened expression of national consciousness. Small numbers supported a new Helsinki Human Rights Committee in 1988, but many more flocked to the Society for the Protection of the Ukrainian Language in 1989. Its membership reached 150,000 by year's end. Then in 1990, as all the Soviet Bloc regimes broke away and federal Yugoslavia disintegrated, Gorbachev proposed a new formal federation to keep the Soviet Union together. In his March 1991 referendum, three quarters of those voting approved, but six republics abstained. Ukraine was not among the abstainers but its Supreme Soviet could not agree on ratification. Its membership now included representatives of a new political party. The independent *Rukh* had quickly attracted 3 million members. Elsewhere in the USSR, as Kivelson/Suny (314) point out, demands for even more autonomy had been growing in the Baltics, Armenia and Georgia since the late 1980s, now accompanied by a surge of Russian ethnic nationalism. Under the slogan of *rossiskaya, its advocates* wanted no part of the civic nationalism which Boris Yeltsin would champion in the 1990s as Gorbachev's successor. Their initial demand was the same separate set of ministries for the Russian republic already enjoyed by the others. As the newly elected President of the Russian Republic in 1990, Boris Yeltsin was able to put down the KGB coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 but he could not prevent the further disintegration of the Soviet Union. After the Ukrainian parliament voted for independence that same month, Gorbachev's resignation followed in December directly on Ukraine's overwhelming endorsement in a referendum. Plokhy (323) concludes his chapter on these last years of the Soviet Union by calling Ukraine's referendum for independence "the gravedigger of the last European empire".

Kivelson/Suny conclude their last chapter on the Soviet Union with less emphasis on the role of Gorbachev and a divided Ukrainian Communist leadership. They acknowledge that it was the popular new party secretary Kravchuk who overcame hard line objections to the vote on independence in a parliament still with a Communist majority. Yet *Russian Empires* pays more attention to the imperial dilemma of combining regional autonomy with central control. In the end, the Leninist model of empire, separate republics held together by a common Soviet identity could not survive central party control from Moscow, however representative its membership. Kivelson/Suny track the economic stagnation of the last Soviet decade into the spreading preference for the Western model of liberal democracy and a market economy. In

their post-1991 chapter, they follow the unsuccessful struggle with the market model under Yeltsin until his new prime minister reined in the oligarchs and stabilized the economy in 1999. Despite their doubts about the market model, Kibelson/Suny, show no sympathy for the rise of autocratic state power once Vladimir Putin had been elected President in 2000. They condemn his use of Russian nationalism and Orthodoxy to consolidate central control over the "pseudo-federation" of the Russian Republic (Kivelson/Suny, 389). They note the contradiction between what had become a nation-state, not an empire, and Putin's demands for imperial oversight in the Near Abroad, starting with Chechnya and now centered on Ukraine. They understand the Russian concern over NATO expansion. Still, they acknowledge that it was the Ukrainian demand for EU, not NATO membership whose rebuff brought down the last pro-Russian President in 2014.

Beyond his emphasis on the final political decisions of Gorbachev and Kravchuk, Plokhy agrees that that it was the economic decision of Viktor Yanukovich to reject EU candidacy in favor of Russia's Eurasian Union that brought out the demonstrations in Kyiv that forced his resignation (p 438). After his flight to Russia, charges of corrupt ties to Russian-backed oligarchs were also confirmed. Yet Plokhy looks further back in Ukrainian history than the lure of West European example from the 1980s. He reviews Ukraine's separate roots, from feudal autonomy under an easier Mongol occupation and the early modern Cossack search for statehood to the nationalist demands for political independence the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. These roots would remain with the status as a Soviet republic under Lenin, survive Stalin's famine and Hitler's occupation, and then reemerge under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. For Plokhy, these national aspirations had already opened Ukraine's gates to Europe as a modern nation-state seeking freedom from an old empire, even one wearing new clothes. These aspirations had already opened the gates for the Balkan states before World War I and afterwards for Eastern Europe. Here is one appropriate parallel from past to present.

Summary

Two new books by leading historians of Ukraine and Russia provide largely compatible and highly dispassionate accounts of a changing set of complex relations and connections. Plokhy follows Ukrainian history, while Kivelson/Suny track the Russian empires that began as Muscovy after the Mongol invasion. From Ivan the Terrible as the first Russian Tsar forward into the 17th century, Kivelson/Suny emphasize the shifting relations of the Cossacks,

Ukraine's major military force, as an informal ally or official agent of the Tsar, while Plokhy recognizes their efforts to assert independent statehood. From St Petersburg under the Tsars Peter and Catherine the Great, Kivelson/Suny track the emergence of a Russian Empire absorbing Ukraine but leaving its language, education and Orthodox Church still autonomous. By the 19th century, two Tsars, the autocratic Nicholas I and the reformist Aleksandar II, restricted that cultural and religious autonomy more for state control than for ethnic identification. Plokhy finds a Ukrainian national literature nonetheless emerging but does not see a political movement for Ukrainian independence until the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. Kivelson/Suny agree with Plokhy that Lenin's creation of the Soviet Union was designed particularly to give Ukraine republican status as a defense against Polish incursion. Both volumes find the same repressive features in Stalin's regime, but Plokhy sees the forced famine of the early 1930s as ethnic targeting. Kivelson/Suny cite arguments for peasants in general as class enemies for Stalin not just in Ukraine. In the subsequent Nazi occupation, Plokhy shows how quickly the German administration dismissed a demand of the Ukrainian opposition for independence. In the postwar years, the authors agree that the Ukrainian born Khrushchev favored the republic not just by annexing Crimea but also by industrial investment and agricultural assistance. Plokhy sees this favoritism continuing under the Ukrainian born Brezhnev's Politburo, but Kivelson/Suny do not. They blame the Soviet Union's collapse on its failure to solve the imperial dilemma of relying on central control to provide regional economic reform. They agree with Plokhy that Gorbachev's determination to apply *perestroika* equally in all republics ended any Ukrainian advantage. After the further disadvantage of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, a Ukrainian popular movement used the cultural reopening of Gorbachev's *glasnost* to start on the road to independence in 1991.

Резиме

Џон Р. Лемпи

УКРАЈИНА И РУСИЈА, НАЦИЈА И ИМПЕРИЈА

Апстракт: Актуелни сукоб у Украјини и проблематичан ток њених односа са Русијом још од проглашења независности 1991. подстакли су нагађања и дезинформације о дужој историји њихових узајамних односа. Две нове књиге водећих историчара украјинске и руске историје у својим последњим поглављима нуде информативне приказе односа две земље од 1991. године. Главни интерес аутора и највећи део садржаја књига посвећени су много дужим историјским периодима и сложеним односима, од царистичких векова до совјетског периода.

Кључне речи: Козаци, словенофили/панслависти, Дума/Рада, Хрушевски, глад, Хрушчов

Две нове књиге водећих експерата за историју Украјине и Русије пружају углавном усклађене и веома непристрасне приказе променљивог сплета сложених односа и веза. Сергеј Плохи своју књигу је посветио украјинској историји, док Валери Кивелсон и Роналд Сани у својој коауторској књизи прате историју руских царстава која су зачета као Московија након монголске инвазије. Од Ивана Грозног, првог руског цара, па све до 17. века, Кивелсон и Сани истичу промену односа Козака, главне украјинске војне силе, као неформалних савезника или званичних агената цара, док Плохи признаје њихове напоре да успоставе независну државност. Кивелсон и Сани прате настанак руске империје од Санкт Петербурга под царем Петром и царицом Катарином Великом. Руска империја овладава Украјином, али оставља њен језик, образовање и православну цркву и даље аутономним. Два цара – аутократски Николај Први и реформиста Александар Други – ограничили су до 19. века ту културну и верску аутономију више ради државне контроле него због етничке идентификације. Плохи сматра да се украјинска национална књижевност ипак појављује, али не види политички покрет за украјинску независност све до руских револуција 1905. и 1917. године. Кивелсон и Сани се слажу са Плохим да је Лењиново стварање Совјетског Савеза осмишљено нарочито како би Украјина добила статус републике, а ради одбране од пољског упада. Обе књиге налазе иста репресивна обележја Стаљиновог режима,

мада Плохи примећује да је присилна глад из раних 1930-их била етнички селективна. Кивелсон и Сани наводе аргументе према којима су сељаци генерално били Стаљинови класни непријатељи, и то не само у Украјини. Плохи показује како је током потоње нацистичке окупације немачка администрација брзо одбацила захтев украјинске опозиције за независност. Аутори се слажу да је у послератним годинама Хрушчов, рођен у Украјини, фаворизовао републику не само анексијом Крима већ и помоћу инвестиција у индустрију и пољопривреду. За разлику од Кивелсона и Санија, Плохи види да се ово фаворизовање наставља и под Политбироом Леонида Брежњева, који је такође рођен у Украјини. Кивелсон и Сани сматрају да је распад Совјетског Савеза онемогућио Брежњева да разреши империјалну дилему ослањања на централну контролу како би се обезбедила регионална економска реформа. Слажу се са Плохијем да је Горбачовљева одлучност да Перестројку подједнако спроведе у свим републикама окончала сваку украјинску предност, односно преимућство. После даљег неповољног утицаја нуклеарне катастрофе у Чернобиљу, украјински народни покрет је искористио поновно културно отварање Горбачовљеве гласности да крене ка независности 1991.