

In Search of “Good Russians”: Ukrainian-Russian Encounters in the United States During the First Cold War

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the topic of Ukrainian-Russian intellectual encounters in exile during the Cold War. The author focuses on Ukraine’s and Russia’s mutual representations in historical narratives in connection with their respective discourses of national identity. The article also describes sporadic attempts at establishing Ukrainian-Russian public dialogue in exile starting in the early 1960s. All of them were initiated and conducted by Ukrainian public activists and intellectuals. The author concludes that participants on both sides ascribed opposing meanings to historical terms. Russian authors, on the one hand, consistently used the modern designation “Ukrainian” as a synonym for “Little Russian,” which automatically situated Ukraine within the “pan-Russian” historical framework. Ukrainian historians, on the other hand, tried to reinterpret “Russian” as a modern national designation rather than an imperial one. Hence the Ukrainian-Russian dialogue had no chance of succeeding unless Russian participants agreed to rethink their discourse of national identity. It is no wonder that many American observers remained confused about the nature of Ukrainian-Russian debates: to them, they looked like a dead-end situation. Thus, rather than trying to find alternative interpretations of Ukrainian and Russian history, most Western specialists followed either one or the other respective national narrative.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, exile, Cold War, identity, historiography

Introduction

The Russian aggression against Ukraine, which started in 2014 and escalated into war in 2022, fits into the context of the political reformatting of two overlapping geopolitical regions, former Soviet and East European, which emerged on opposing sides of the “Iron Curtain” after World War II. This radical change of geopolitical landscape has been accompanied by attempts to rethink the entire complex of ideas and symbols associated with the eastern periphery of Europe. Revision of the “Soviet,” “European,” and “Russian” designations was an important part of this process.

The role of Russian-Ukrainian relations in rethinking and rewriting the eastern edge of Europe was rather underestimated by the Western expert community until recently. The vast majority of research and publication on this topic was initiated and conducted by Ukrainian scholars, with only limited participation of Russian scholars and sporadic contributions from Western specialists.¹ I believe that this fact could be better understood in the context of modern nation-state building. In Ukraine, it developed initially in two entwined discourses of identity, “Little Russian” and “Ukrainian.”² In the case of Russia, the complexity and ambiguity of “Russianness” remains a subject of endless debate.

In the course of the “short” twentieth century, the “Little Russian” discourse under “Ukrainian” guise established *de facto* the interpretive framework for historians in the Soviet Union, while the “Ukrainian” discourse dominated among Ukrainian scholars beyond the Soviet space. Topics related to the entangled Ukrainian and Russian histories, shared geographies, and national identities – especially those pertaining to Kyivan Rus’, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and Ukrainian statehood – have acquired different, most often opposing interpretations in the respective narratives. Chances of arranging a dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian historians on these topics appear to be extremely remote.³ The question arises whether it was even possible.

Today, when Russia is once again challenging world order established on the principles of liberal democracy, views of Russian history and politics dating from the “first” Cold War era seem quite relevant.⁴ In particular, the Ukrainian aspects of that legacy might shed additional light on the roots of Russian (self-)identification in time and space. So far, Ukrainian-Russian intellectual encounters during the Cold War have been

¹ *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, eds. Peter J. Potichnyj et al. (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1992); *Culture, Nation and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*, eds. Andreas Kappeler et al. (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2003); *Rossiiia-Ukraina: istoriia vzaimootnoshenii*, eds. Aleksei Miller et al. (Moscow: “Iazyki russkoi kul’tury,” 1997); *Ukraïna i Rosiia v istorichnii retrospektyvi*, 3 vols., eds. Valerii Smolii et al. (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 2004); Georgii Kasianov, Valerii Smolii, and Oleksii Tolochko, *Ukraïna v rosiis’komu istorichnomu dyskursi: problemy doslidzhennia ta interpretatsii* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny, 2013).

² See: Volodymyr Kravchenko, *The Ukrainian-Russian Borderland: History versus Geography* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2022), 47–78; Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus’: Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Klymentii I. Fedevych and Klymentii K. Fedevych, *Za viru, tšariã i Kobzariã: malorosii’ski monarkhysty i ukraïns’kyi natsional’nyi rukh (1905–1917 roky)* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2017).

³ See: Zenon E. Kohut, *History as a Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine* (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2002).

⁴ Theodore P. Gerber, *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), July 2015* (ASEEES & Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2015), 44, <https://www.aseees.org/sites/default/files/downloads/FINAL-ASEEES-assessment-report.pdf>.

inadequately studied. Ukrainian scholars have touched upon them only occasionally. Taras Kuzio is one of the few scholars who pays special attention to Russian-Ukrainian studies during the Cold War.⁵ Contemporary Russian authors used to interpret them in the spirit of the old Soviet tradition of “struggling with Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism.”⁶ Other specialists either confined themselves to general observations and comments on this issue or focused on the post-Soviet period.⁷

In this article, I focus on Ukrainian and Russian historians in the United States with the aim of analyzing their respective views on each other’s history. I also describe sporadic attempts to establish dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian intellectuals and political activists. Some aspects of these topics have been presented in my book on the history of Ukrainian studies in North America during the Cold War.⁸ In this article, they are complemented with new facts and observations.

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- ⁵ Taras Kuzio, *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War. Autocracy-Orthodoxy-Nationality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022); Kuzio, *Crisis in Russian Studies? Nationalism (Imperialism), Racism and War* (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2020). See also: Thomas Prymak, *Gathering a Heritage: Ukrainian, Slavonic, and Ethnic Canada and the USA* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Prymak, *Maple Leaf and Trident: The Ukrainian Canadians During the Second World War* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988), 144–9; Mykola Soroka, “On the Other Side: The Russian–Ukrainian Encounter in Displacement, 1920–1939,” *Nationalities Papers* 37, no. 3 (May 2009): 327–48; Frank Sysyn, “English-Language Historiography in the Twentieth Century on the Pereyaslav Agreement,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 32, no. 3–4 (2005): 513–29; Lybomyr Wynar, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky. Ukrainian-Russian Confrontation in Historiography* (Toronto, New York, and Munich: Ukrainian Historical Association, 1988).
- ⁶ Andrei I. Dvornichenko, *Russkii istorik Georgii Vernadskii. Puteshestvie v mire ludei, idei i sobytii* (St. Petersburg: Evraziia, 2017); Petr Bazanov, “Russkii myslitel’ Nikolai Ivanovich Ul’ianov o fenomene Ukrainkogo separatizma” [“The Russian Philosopher Nikolai Ivanovich Oulianoff on the Phenomenon of Ukrainian Separatism”], *Vestnik Russkoi khristianskoi gumanitarnoi akademii* 16, no. 1 (2015): 157–68; Bazanov, “Professor N. E. Andreev i ego vklad v izuchenie russkoi istorii i kul’tury” [“Professor N. E. Andreev and His Contribution to the Study of Russian History and Culture”], *Dialog so vremenem*, no. 68 (2019): 215–23.
- ⁷ See, for example: Ilya Gerasimov, “Narrating Russian History after the Imperial Turn,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2020): 21–61; Andy Byford et al., “Introduction: transnationalizing Russian studies,” in *Transnational Russian Studies* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 1–34; *Russian/Soviet Studies in the United States, Amerikanistika in Russia: Mutual Representations in Academic Projects*, eds. Ivan Kurilla and Victoria I. Zhuravleva (Lexington Books, 2015); David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Russian Experts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Mirosław Filipowicz, *Emigranci i Jankesi. O amerykańskich historykach Rosji* (Lublin, 2007); Clarence A. Manning, *A History of Slavic Studies in the United States* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1957).
- ⁸ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Ukrainian Historical Writing in North America during the Cold War: The Struggle for Recognition* (Lexington Books, 2022).

Russian Views

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the most visionary American politicians and intellectuals became aware that their country was poorly prepared for political, ideological, and cultural conflict with one of its most dangerous adversaries, one that was literally armed to the teeth. According to the historian Robert Byrnes, in the early stage of World War II “Ignorance of things Russian and Soviet was almost total. Libraries were small and usually consisted only of books and journals in Western languages, and interest in strengthening these collections was limited.”⁹ Highly confusing terminology may also be added to this record, since definitions (“Soviet,” “Russian,” and “Slavic”) inherited from the past did not adequately reflect the new political and social realities.

Awareness of this situation led American elites to establish a new system of producing and disseminating expert knowledge of peoples and states on the Western side of the “Iron Curtain.” Accordingly, the new academic disciplines of Sovietology, East European studies, and a number of nation-oriented studies were added to more traditional Slavic studies. In the early stage of the Cold War, these disciplines, according to David Engerman, were conducted mainly by immigrant specialists from that part of the world.¹⁰ Needless to say, most of those immigrants were strongly influenced by their respective national traditions and stereotypes. Russian scholars occupied the very top of the pyramid of knowledge, owing primarily to the powerful waves of intellectual immigration during and after the Great War, and secondarily to the high prestige of the former Russian imperial science and culture. It is no wonder, then, that all those relatively new disciplines were initially dominated by Russian topics, approaches, and arguments.¹¹

George (Georgii) Vernadsky, Michael Karpovich, Alexander Dallin, George Florovsky, Sergei Pushkarev, Georgy Fedotov, Nicholas Timasheff, and Marc Raeff, to name just a few, represented the *crème de la crème* of Russian intellectual emigration to the US. They were the last of their kind, successors to the great imperial tradition destroyed by the Bolshevik “revolt of the masses.” Most of them might be labeled “Russian Westernizers” or “Russian Europeans.”¹² Politically, they were both anti-communists and Russian imperial nationalists, basically in the same manner as their compatriots and prominent political figures Alexander Kerensky, Anton Denikin, or Boris Nikolaevsky.

Russian exiles tried to draw a strict dividing line between imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in order to present the “Russian people,” whoever they were, as allies of the

⁹ Robert F. Byrnes, *A History of Russian and East European Studies in the United States: Selected Essays* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 132.

¹⁰ Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 130–1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 153; Manning, *A History of Slavic Studies*, 85, 98.

¹² Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, 136, 154.

West in their common struggle against world communism. In a collective letter to the *New York Times* published in 1951, representatives of a wide circle of Russian émigrés in America, including Alexander Kerensky, Michael Karpovich, and Georgy Fedotov, tried to historicize the old Russian imperialism by pointing out similarities with its British, French, German, and Austro-Hungarian counterparts.¹³ Soviet imperialism, in their interpretation, had nothing to do with Russian national traditions and was considered part of an international, cosmopolitan communist conspiracy. The same line of argument was used by a younger member of the Russian academic community, the historian Nicholas Riasanovsky, in a polemic with his Polish colleague Oskar Halecki.¹⁴

The popular textbooks and synthetic monographs on Russian history written by Russian historians in the US represented, according to James Cracraft, “old-fashioned imperial history, such as used to be written by British, French, or German historians with reference to other peoples who at one time or another came under British, French, or German rule; and it no doubt draws sustenance from the fact that so much of the old Russian Empire lives on in the Soviet Union.”¹⁵ However, there were certain trends in Russian historical thought and writing in the twentieth century with the potential to promote national reidentification and change attitudes toward the Ukrainian question after the dissolution of the Russian Empire.

The Soviet experiment and the Eurasian intellectual movement challenged traditional imperial-Orthodox ideas of Russianness articulated by Count Sergei Uvarov in the 1830s. Soviet nationality policy of the 1920s was based on the need to restrict the imperial dominance of Great Russia and promote affirmative action intended to accelerate the national development of ethnic minorities under Soviet ideological control.¹⁶ The Eurasianist school of historical writing emphasized the importance of local historical and cultural traditions in order to present the “all-Russian” imperial civilization as a unique synthesis of “East” and “West.”¹⁷ Both the Soviet and the Eurasian discourses of Russian identity were more sensitive to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the former “Russia.” Their adherents also tried to come to terms with Ukrainian national aspirations. The

¹³ “Russia’s History,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1951, 8E. The letter was signed by Alexander Kerensky, Michael Karpovich, and Georgy Fedotov, among other Russian political activists and intellectuals.

¹⁴ Nicholas Riasanovsky, “Old Russia, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,” *American Slavic and East European Review* 11, no. 3 (October 1952): 171–88; Oscar Halecki, “Imperialism in Slavic and East European History,” *American Slavic and East European Review* 11, no. 1 (Feb., 1952): 1–26.

¹⁵ James Cracraft, “Introduction,” in *From Kievan Rus’ to Modern Ukraine: Formation of the Ukrainian Nation*, eds. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Omeljan Pritsak, and John Stephen Reshetar (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Studies Fund, Harvard University, 1984), i-ii.

¹⁶ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

¹⁷ *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism*, ed. Mark Bassin et al. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).

question arose, however, as to the meaning of “Ukrainian” terminology and its relation to the “Little Russian” identity discourse.¹⁸

In the Soviet Union, the affirmative action policy gave a new impetus to Ukrainian national development under the communist banner during the 1920s. When the process of “Ukrainization” in the Soviet Union was brutally terminated by Stalin, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic turned into a new version of “Little Russia” under the façade of its “Ukrainian” designation. Its ambiguous status became apparent during the pompous celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Pereiaslav agreement between Ukraine and Russia organized by the Kremlin in 1954. It was canonized in the new Soviet/Russian official narrative, which lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.¹⁹

The Russian Eurasianists’ attitude toward Ukraine was similar to the Soviet one. They recognized the existence of a distinct Ukrainian history and even admitted the beneficial Ukrainian impact on Russian imperial culture. Professor George Vernadsky of Yale, himself of Ukrainian ethnic origin, cooperated with Ukrainian diaspora communities in America and was heavily criticized for that by Soviet-oriented circles.²⁰ He acknowledged the Ukrainians as the second-largest Slavic nation (after the Russians) and proclaimed Ukraine “the pivot of Eastern Europe,” essential to an understanding of recent developments in that region.²¹

Vernadsky made a substantial contribution to Ukrainian studies in the United States. Compared to all his predecessors and many contemporaries, he gave more space to Ukrainian topics in his new synthesis of Russian history. Vernadsky supported the English-language edition of Mykhailo Hrushevsky’s *History of Ukraine*, and he himself published a popular biography of the Ukrainian hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky.²² The historian was even prepared to recognize the *de facto* independent status of Ukraine following its political agreement of 1654 with “Great Russia” and acknowledged the historical

¹⁸ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *The Ukrainian-Russian Borderland: History versus Geography* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2022), 17–78; Andreas Kappeler, *‘Great Russians’ and ‘Little Russians’: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Perceptions in Historical Perspective* (Seattle, WA: The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, 2003).

¹⁹ *Pereiaslavs’ka rada 1654 roku (istoriografii ta doslidzhennia)*, ed. Pavlo Sokhan (Kyiv: Smolodskyp, 2003).

²⁰ Charles J. Halperin, “(Re)Discovering George Vernadsky,” *Journal of Modern Russian History and Historiography*, no. 11 (2018): 134–57; Ernest Gyidel, “Ob ‘Ukrainofil’stve’ Georgiia Vernadskogo, ili variatsiia na temu natsional’nykh i gosudarstvennykh loial’nostei,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2006): 329–69; Igor Torbakov, “Becoming Eurasian: The Intellectual Odyssey of Georgii Vladimirovich Vernadsky,” in *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism*, 113–36.

²¹ George Vernadsky, “Preface,” in Michael Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*, ed. Oliver J. Frederiksen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941), v.

²² George Vernadsky, *Bohdan, Hetman of Ukraine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941); Vernadsky, “Preface.”

right of the Ukrainian people to recolonize the southern steppe, even on condition of Russian assistance.²³

At the same time, all Vernadsky's concessions to the Ukrainian national discourse did not incline him to accept the prospect of a separate Ukrainian past and future. Like his father, Vladimir Vernadsky, the distinguished Russian scholar and thinker of Ukrainian origin, George Vernadsky maintained a "Little Russian" outlook on the Ukrainian question. Following populist Russian and Soviet historiography, he emphasized the weakness of Ukrainian statehood as well as the schism between Ukrainian political elites and the rest of society. George Vernadsky definitely favored Bohdan Khmelnytsky over Ivan Mazepa and approved of the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich by the Russian tsardom.

The Harvard University historian Mikhail/Michael Karpovich, whose influence on American *Rusistika* surpassed even that of Vernadsky, was very close to the latter in his attitude toward Ukraine. He was ready to discuss Ukrainian topics with his Ukrainian counterparts and once accepted an invitation from the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences to deliver public lectures on the histories of Ukraine and Russia. Karpovich recognized the accomplishments of the founding father of Ukrainian national historiography, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, in criticizing the imperial Russian historical narrative, even though he could not agree with the Ukrainian historian's interpretations of Kyivan Rus' and the Russian Empire.²⁴ Contrary to Hrushevsky, Karpovich treated the former as a "neither 'Russian' nor 'Ukrainian'" polity and considered the latter beneficial for the Ukrainian people.²⁵

Both Vernadsky and Karpovich, perhaps the most important representatives of the Russian historians' cohort in the US, were echoed by their contemporaries Michael Florinsky and Nicholas Riasanovsky in their attempts to "expropriate" the Kyivan Rus' legacy for the Russian historical narrative.²⁶ They all demonstrated the limits of what Russian scholars were prepared to concede with regard to the Ukrainian question. They simply adopted "Ukrainian" terminology and formally recognized the existence of a distinct Ukrainian history and culture while adhering to the "all-Russian" discourse of Russian imperial identity, including "Great Russian," "Little Russian," and "White Russian"

²³ "...the whole area of the southern steppes down to the shores of the Black Sea was thrown open to Ukrainian colonization." With Russian military assistance, Ukrainians "were now able to recover the territory populated by their forebears but long since lost" (Vernadsky, *Bohdan, Hetman of Ukraine*, 125).

²⁴ Wynar, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky: Ukrainian-Russian Confrontation*, 46–7.

²⁵ "...it was possible both for the Russians and the Ukrainians to treat the Kiev period as an integral part of their respective national histories for the reason that at that time there were, strictly speaking, neither 'Russians' nor 'Ukrainians.'" Quoted in Wynar, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky: Ukrainian-Russian Confrontation*, 45.

²⁶ Kuzio, *Crisis in Russian Studies*, 19–21.

components.²⁷ Russian intellectuals simply could not imagine Ukraine outside the boundaries of the “Russian world,” neither in the past nor in the future.

Russian exiles of liberal orientation believed that “Russia, freed from communism, should be transformed into a federation of free and equal nations, with the right of every nation to claim its statehood through the democratic process... under the supervision of the United Nations.”²⁸ But such an idyllic picture did not fit well with political realities. It was no accident that Alexander Kerensky, one of the Russian exiles who signed the aforementioned collective letter, stigmatized pro-independence Ukrainians as “separatists.”²⁹ The differences between liberals and their opponents on the left and right of the political spectrum with regard to the Russian future remained insignificant. They were all resolutely opposed to any prospect of the political disintegration of the Russian imperial polity along national or regional lines.

Russian Marxists in exile recognized, in theory, the Ukrainians’ right to independence. There was, however, a “but,” and in this case, as in all previous cases, it was the part following the “but” that really mattered. According to Lev Trotsky, Ukrainian independence should be supported because it was directly and indissolubly connected to the program of proletarian revolution: “Real liberation of the Ukrainian people is unthinkable without a revolution or a series of revolutions in the West which would lead in the end to the establishment of the Soviet United States of Europe. Independent Ukraine could, and definitely will, join such a federation as an equal.”³⁰

Far-right Russian nationalists, for their part, rejected any notion of “Ukraine” and spoke only about good old “Little Russia” as a local branch of the “all-Russian” imperial-Orthodox nation. Horace Lunt summarized their views as follows: “Ukrainian is really just a variant of Russian, ‘Little Russians’ are somewhat backward, but they do have some endearing folk-customs; all they really need is a bit more time and education and they will be proper Russians.”³¹ “Ukraine,” according to this logic, was just an invention of the ever-hostile and perfidious “West” designed to dismember “eternal Holy Russia.”³²

²⁷ I accept the definition of “imperial nationalism” to describe Russian collective identity (see: Paul Kolsto, “Is Imperialist Nationalism an Oxymoron?” *Nations and Nationalism* 25, no. 1 (2019): 18–44.

²⁸ “Russia’s History,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1951, 8E.

²⁹ “Dismembering Russia,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1951, 118.

³⁰ Lev Trotsky, “Ob Ukrainskom voprose” [On the Ukrainian Question], *Biulleten’ oppozitsii*, no. 77–78 (1939), accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.marxists.org/russkij/trotsky/works/trotm465.html>.

³¹ Horace Lunt, “Notes on Nationalist Attitudes in Slavic Studies,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 34, no. 4 (December 1992): 465.

³² Rt. Rev. Peter G. Kohanik, *Highlights of Russian History and the “Ukrainian” Provocation* (Passaic, NJ, 1955); Rt. Rev. Peter G. Kohanik, *The Biggest Lie of the Century, “The Ukraine”: Historical Facts Concerning Russia and “The Ukraine”* (Russian Orthodox Clergy Assoc. of North America, 1952).

The same basic ideas were expressed in the historical pamphlet *The Origin of Ukrainian Separatism* published by Nikolai Ulianov in 1966. Its author was a member of the Union of Struggle for the Freedom of Russia (*Soiuz bor'by za svobodu Rossii*) and lecturer at Yale University, personally close to George Vernadsky. Ulianov had much in common with his spiritual predecessor Sergei Shchegolev, the Russian Black-Hundreder whose pamphlet *The Ukrainian Movement as a Contemporary Stage of South-Russian Separatism* (*Ukrainskoe dvizhenie kak soveremennyi etap iuzhnorusskogo separatizma*) was published on the eve of the Great War and used as an instruction manual on combating Ukrainian national activists.

Shchegolev's denunciation of the Ukrainian movement was condemned by at least some Russian émigrés, including Vladimir Ulianov (Lenin). The pamphlet of his namesake, Nikolai Ulianov, as far as I know, was not given such treatment. Not one member of the Russian academic community renounced it publicly. Nicholas Riasanovsky only slightly reproached Ulianov for his excessive emotionality and "simplification" of history, however understandable...³³ Nikolai Ulianov's book might be considered the only monographic "contribution" of the postwar Russian academic diaspora to Ukrainian history.

The following decades brought no substantial changes in the attitude of Russian historians to the Ukrainian question. According to Omeljan Pritsak, "throughout this century, only a very few Russian intellectuals ever dealt seriously with the Ukrainian problem. And even in our own time [the early 1980s], the Ukrainian problem is not on the list of important matters considered by Russian intellectuals."³⁴ The main reason for that was obvious: for most Russians, "there was nothing to discuss." From this perspective, the second half of the twentieth century was significantly inferior to the first.

Only a few individuals in the Russian émigré community were prepared to acknowledge that the Ukrainian nation-building process was bound to culminate sooner or later in the creation of an independent state. Georgy Fedotov, the famous Russian philosopher and publicist, recognized that the Ukrainians had already consolidated into a separate nation and admitted that Russian society was guilty of overlooking this fact: "A new nation was being born in front of our eyes, but we turned a blind eye to it."³⁵ Fedotov considered the origin of the Ukrainian movement an "organic," natural phenomenon and did not fear the prospect of the inevitable disintegration of the Russian Empire.

Fedotov truly believed that liberating Russia from its imperial burden would be in the national interests of the Russian people: "For Russia itself, the forcible continuation

³³ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "Review: Proiskhozhdenie ukrainskogo separatizma by N. I. Ulianov," *Russian Review* 26, no. 4 (Oct. 1967): 411–13.

³⁴ Omeljan Pritsak, "The Problem of a Ukrainian-Russian Dialogue," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al. (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1992), x.

³⁵ Georgii Fedotov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadsati tomakh*, t. 9 (Moscow: Martis, 2004), 247.

of its imperial existence would mean the loss of hope for her own freedom.” Fedotov was among the few insightful observers who managed to recognize the fascist nature of Stalin’s Soviet Union and predicted that “fascism is the only regime capable of prolonging the imperial existence of the [Russian] ‘convict prison.’”³⁶

Fedotov’s views on Russia and Ukraine met with recognition from the Ukrainian side. Arnold D. Margolin, a Ukrainian activist and intellectual of Jewish origin, considered Fedotov “a great Russian patriot in the best sense of this word” and contrasted him with the younger Pavel Miliukov, a contemporary Russian liberal imperialist and renowned historian.³⁷ Whether or not Fedotov could be considered the Russian equivalent of Jerzy Giedroyc, a great Polish patriot who managed to overcome the Polish imperialist legacy and recognize Ukraine as an equal partner of his country, remains an open question. In fact, the Russian diaspora failed to produce its own “Giedroyc” and adopted a different attitude toward Ukraine.

Ukrainian Views

The Ukrainian academic community in post-World War II America yielded to the greater influence of its Russian counterpart in the political and academic mainstream. During the early stage of the Cold War there were just a few Ukrainian specialists in the humanities and social studies in North America. It took about two generations of scholars to establish the academic respectability of Ukrainian topics in various university disciplines. But even after that, Ukrainian studies remained a risky enterprise for those seeking an academic career in America. Considered from a distance, however, this may have been a blessing in disguise.

In order to survive, Ukrainian studies in exile needed to become more dynamic, diverse, and open to innovation. Dozens of Ukrainian intellectuals and university scholars worked on the problem of Ukrainian-Russian relations within the contexts of Russian and Soviet studies, compared to only a few Russian authors who were interested in Ukrainian topics. Practically every new publication devoted to recent Ukrainian history also shed light on the Russian/Soviet historical phenomenon.

Ukrainian historical writing in exile fulfilled a triune function: furthering the process of national consolidation; disentangling Ukrainian history from “all-Russian”/Soviet

³⁶ “Fashizm iavliaetsia edinstvennym stroem, sposobnym prodlit’ sushchestvovanie katorzhnoi imperii” (Fedotov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 252).

³⁷ Arnold D. Margolin, *George Fedotov and His Predictions on the Future Fate of the USSR and of Its Enslaved Peoples* (Scranton, PA: Ukrainian Workingmen’s Association, 1955).

history and integrating it into the “Eastern European” symbolic space; and backing up a Ukrainian bid for political independence. The Ukrainian metanarrative was based on the historical schema elaborated by Mykhailo Hrushevsky and developed by his followers in light of recent events. Essentially, all Ukrainian activists rejected any notion of a future political union with Russia. Consequently, the Ukrainian and Russian metanarratives developed in direct opposition to each other.

Where their Russian colleagues saw integrity, Ukrainian historians emphasized diversity. Compared to their Russian counterparts, Ukrainian scholars were more sensitive to the difference between the imperial and national components of Russian history and politics. Roman Smal-Stocki expressed his and his colleagues’ views on that issue in the following statement: “We are not fighting the Russian nation and all its legitimate rights: we are fighting Russian imperialism and intolerant chauvinism, merged together with Russian communism into a messianistic, dynamic force aimed at world conquest...”³⁸

Ukrainian authors also contradicted those Russian émigrés who treated the Bolshevik Revolution as a perverse deviation from Russia’s “natural” historical path and sought to disentangle the Russian imperial and Soviet phenomena. Contrary to them, Ukrainian intellectuals approached both Russia and the Soviet Union from the perspective of historical continuity, perceiving them as “natural” components of the “eternal” tradition of Russian imperialism.³⁹ While Russian authors emphasized factors that included them in European history and symbolic space, Ukrainians stressed unique features of the Russian historical process that set it apart from European development.

In order to substantiate the Russian *Sonderweg*, Ukrainian scholars focused on the Byzantine and Oriental roots of Russian political culture. Hence the popularity in Ukrainian post-war historical writing of such topics as the “Third Rome” doctrine and

³⁸ Roman Smal-Stocki, *A Tribute of the Shevchenko Scientific Society to Professor Manning. Collection of Papers, Presented at the Conference Honoring Prof. Clarence A. Manning, PHD On His 70th Birthday Anniversary* (New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1964), 4.

³⁹ Konstantyn Kononenko, *Ukraine and Russia: A History of the Economic Relations between Ukraine and Russia (1654-1917)* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1958); Vasyli' Kosarenko-Kosarevych, *Moskovs'kyi sfinks: mit i syla v obrazi Skhodu Evropy* (New York, 1957); F. B. Korchmarchyk, *Dukhovni vplyvy Kyieva na Moskovshchynu v dobu hetmans'koi Ukraïny* [Spiritual Influences of Kyiv on Muscovy in the Era of Hetman Ukraine] (New York: NTSh, 1964); Basil Dmytryshyn, *Moscow and the Ukraine, 1918–1953: A Study of Russian Bolshevik Nationality Policy* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1956); *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974); *Russian Empire: Some Aspects of Tsarist and Soviet Colonial Practices*, ed. Michael S. Pap (Cleveland, OH: John Carroll University and Ukrainian Historical Association, 1986); Petro Holubenko, *Ukraïna i Rosiia u svitli kul'turnykh vzaiemyn* [Ukraine and Russia in Light of Their Cultural Relations] (New York, Paris, and Toronto: Vydavnytstvo “Ukraïns'ke Slovo,” 1987).

Mongol influence on Russian history.⁴⁰ In this, Ukrainian scholars were close to their Polish colleagues. Some of them went even further in attempting to explain the expansionist and authoritarian features of Soviet/Russian imperialism by pointing out its irrational components deeply rooted in the Russian psyche and mentality.

In the words of a subscriber to the journal *Ukrainian Quarterly*: "...among the Muscovites, fear is the basis of love. The subservience of Moscow to Stalin is not only compulsory. There is much more in it than the world thinks, of sincerity, truth, even reverence."⁴¹ Others attributed mass support of the Soviet regime from below to the influence of official propaganda. As another anonymous author remarked in the *Ukrainian Quarterly*, "In case of a world crisis, American boys will not fight against 14 degenerates in the Kremlin, but against the millions of Russians indoctrinated to the fact that Russia must rule over the entire world."⁴²

Ukrainian and Russian émigrés fought fierce battles for the legacy of Kyivan Rus'. If for Russian historians it was either a Russian or a common Russian-Ukrainian phenomenon, then for most Ukrainian authors it belonged to Ukrainian history alone. When Russian historians tried to convince their audience that union with Russia was beneficial for Ukrainians, their Ukrainian colleagues responded with a long list of crimes and repressions committed against Ukrainians by the Russian "wardens" of the imperial "prison of nations."

Speaking of Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainian authors employed the "captive nation" discourse and contributed substantially to its political and intellectual development in the US. Ukraine was presented as the first victim of Russian/Soviet imperialism, a nation occupied by Moscow and subject to colonial exploitation. Victimization in this case went hand in hand with the heroization of national resistance, which included the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) as well as Ukrainian Soviet dissidents. At the same time, most Ukrainian authors denied Russians the status of a captive nation and held the entire Russian nation responsible for the crimes of the Soviet regime.

The new generations of Ukrainian scholars who became active in their profession before the dissolution of the Soviet Union (including, among others, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, George Luckyj, Omeljan Pritsak, George Shevelov, Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak,

⁴⁰ O. Ohloblyn, *Moskovs'ka teoriia III Rymu v XVI-XVII st.* [The Muscovite Theory of the Third Rome in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] (Munich: Church Archeography Commission, 1951); N. Polons'ka-Vasylenko, *Teoriia III Rymu v Rosii protyiahom XVIII ta XIX storich* [The Third Rome Theory in the Course of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries] (Munich: Church Archeography Commission, 1951); B. Krupnyts'kyi, *Teoriia III Rymu i shliakhy rosiis'koï istoriografii* [The Third Rome Theory and Pathways of Russian Historiography] (Munich: Church Archeography Commission, 1952).

⁴¹ I. Zelenko (pseudonym), "Throwing Away Friends," *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1951): 13.

⁴² [Anonymous], "Faith in 'Eternal Russia,'" *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 7, no. 3: 202. See also: Kosarenko-Kosarevych, *Moskovs'kyi sfinks*.

Volodymyr Nahirny, Roman Szporluk) elaborated a more sophisticated approach to Russian history, in particular, one that took into account the complexity of the “Russian” historical phenomenon. Their findings also helped to update the Ukrainian national narrative. Nevertheless, the impact of Ukrainian scholars on the mainstream of Western historical writing remained limited.⁴³

A Dialogue That Failed

Most Ukrainian and Russian émigrés considered any mutual contacts and discussions about their common historical legacy pointless. However, there were Ukrainian activists who tried to establish a Ukrainian-Russian dialogue about the future on the basis of equality and non-intervention. One of them was Mykhailo Demkovych-Dobriansky, a London-based Ukrainian publicist who served as director of the Radio Liberty Ukrainian service from 1956 to 1972. He believed that the whole future of the Ukrainian nation depended on its ability to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian problem and establish a dialogue with the Russians.⁴⁴ In his own words: “In the case of Russia, our people have a neighbor that is three times larger and stronger in many respects. Therefore, as far as the future of our people is concerned, we cannot be indifferent to the issue of what kind of regime rules over Russia. ...Liberation from Russian captivity could be possible only after abolishing Russian imperialism in Moscow.”⁴⁵

Another Ukrainian political activist and publicist, Myroslav Prokop, an active member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and vice president of the Prolog Research Corporation, was close to Demkovych-Dobriansky in his perception of Ukrainian-Russian relations.⁴⁶ Prokop spoke in favor of cooperation with those anti-communist Russians who did not support Russian imperialism and chauvinism.⁴⁷

⁴³ See the brief description of Western historiography of Russia in Kuzio, *Crisis in Russian Studies*, 21–4.

⁴⁴ Mykhailo Demkovych-Dobriansky, *Ukraina i Rosiia: istorychni narysy na temy rosiis'koho imperializmu* [Ukraine and Russia: Historical Essays on Russian Imperialism] (Rome: Ukrainian Catholic University, 1989), 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁶ On the Prolog Corporation, see: Taras Kuzio, “US Support for Ukraine’s Liberation during the Cold War: A Study of Prolog Research and Publishing Corporation,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45, no. 1 (2012): 51–64. On Prokop’s vision of Ukrainian-Russian relations, see: Myroslav Prokop, *Ukraina i ukrains’ka polityka Moskvu* (Munich: Suchasna Ukraina, 1956).

⁴⁷ Myroslav Prokop, “Do pytannia ukrains’ko-rosiis’kykh vzaiemyn” [Concerning the Question of Ukrainian-Russian Relations], *Suchasnist’* 6, no. 1 (1961): 49–61. See also: Simone Attilio Bellezza, “Making Soviet Ukraine Ukrainian: The Debate on Ukrainian Statehood in the Journal *Suchasnist’* (1961–1971),” *Nationalities Papers* 47, no. 3 (2019): 379–93.

There is no doubt that he played an active role in organizing public debates on the issue of Ukrainian-Russian relations held in New York City in 1960–61. The idea was supported by the Ukrainian “Round Table Club,” the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council, and the Prolog Corporation.

The Russian vision for the relations between the two peoples was articulated by the left-wing publicist Boris Nikolaevsky, who advocated a future Russian-Ukrainian federation; in his view, it was dictated by economic ties and would benefit both peoples.⁴⁸ The Ukrainian attitude to the issue was expressed by Mykola Lebed and Myroslav Prokop. They rejected any idea of a federation with Russia and spoke out in favor of the principles of national independence, non-interference, and common struggle against imperialism.

Early attempts at Russian-Ukrainian reconciliation provoked vehement commentary in the émigré press. Indeed, the idea was attacked by radical nationalists from both sides. At the same time, such reaction revealed the existence of a middle ground for future discussions on the issue. Response from the academic community was particularly favorable. Ukrainian historians and political scientists led by Professor Peter J. Potichnyj organized the first conference on Ukrainian-Russian relations, held on October 8–9, 1981 at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada.⁴⁹ It brought together many distinguished Ukrainian (Peter Potichnyj, Omeljan Pritsak, Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and others), Russian (Marc Raeff, Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Gleb Žekulin and others), and American (Edward L. Keenan, John A. Armstrong, James Cracraft and others) scholars.

The Ukrainian organizers of the conference invited Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a recent Nobel laureate and icon of the Russian dissident movement, to participate, but he refused. In his open letter to the organizers, he merely reiterated the main theses of Russian post-war émigrés concerning Soviet, Russian, and Ukrainian problems briefly described above. The Ukrainian community had to accept that the new generation of Russian anti-communist intellectuals in the Soviet Union remained true to the traditional (imperial national) agenda of their predecessors and were not prepared to imagine a Russian future without Ukraine.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ M.V., “Pidsumky dyskusii pro ukrains’ko-rosiis’ki vzaiemyny” [Summary of the Discussion on Ukrainian-Russian Relations], *Suchasnist*, no. 6 (1962): 125–7.

⁴⁹ *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, eds. Peter J. Potichnyj et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992).

⁵⁰ Yaroslav Bilinsky, “Political Relations between Russians and Ukrainians in the USSR: The 1970s and Beyond,” in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, 165–200.

Conclusions

Despite sporadic scholarly contacts, the Ukrainian-Russian dialogue in exile produced no significant consequences. The question arises as to the reasons for such a gloomy situation, one that contrasted with the slow but steady progress of Ukrainian-Polish post-war dialogue.⁵¹ First and foremost, the Ukrainian and Russian historical narratives were too deeply connected to their respective national identities. It was difficult for both sides to overcome the inertia of the historical legacy in which “Russia” was synonymous with the “Russian Empire” and “Ukraine” was represented by “Little Russia.” The Russian discourse of national identity basically remained within the framework of Count Sergei Uvarov’s triune formula of imperial-Orthodox Russianness, including its “Little Russian” (ethnocultural) component. Both the Soviet and the Eurasianist discourses of identity failed to transform the old formula of Russianness into a modern national (“Great Russian”) one. Instead, they contributed to the idea of Russian imperial nationalism and a Russian *Sonderweg*.

Ukrainian nation-building was also obstructed by the “frozen” “Little Russian” discourse, as well as by some local or regional discourses of identity that survived World War II. However, Ukrainian intellectual reidentification appeared to be more dynamic than its Russian counterpart. If the Russian post-World War II diaspora in North America was gradually entering a period of decline,⁵² the Ukrainian community was on the rise. Ukrainian *Rusistika* appeared to be a more modern, polyphonic, and progressive field within the framework of the American academic mainstream than Russian *Ukrainistika*.

Second, all participants in the Ukrainian-Russian dialogue operated with different categories and confused terminology. For the Russians, “Ukraine” remained the good old “Little Russia,” while for the Ukrainians, the idea of national “Russianness” was often confused with the “Great Russian” and “Soviet” imperial categories. As a result, the Russian historical narrative included Ukrainian topics, while the Ukrainian narrative either excluded imperial components from the national narrative or simply “nationalized” them. All this suggests a lack of methodological tools for more nuanced and sophisticated interpretations of historical Ukrainian-Russian relations.

It is no wonder that many American observers remained confused about the nature of Ukrainian-Russian debates: they looked like a dead-end situation.⁵³ In the words of William Edgerton: “On this question, among scholars of Russian and Ukrainian background

⁵¹ Bohumila Berdykhov's'ka, *Prostir svobody. Ukraïna na shpal'takh paryz'koi "Kul'tury"* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2005).

⁵² E.V. Volkov, “Antibol'shevitskaia rossiiskaia ãmigratsiia v SShA: k voprosu o spetsifike diaspori,” *Magistra Vitae: elektronnyi zhurnal po istoricheskim naukam i arkheologii*, no. 1 (2017): 152–62.

⁵³ Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA: Plotting to Free Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 142.

alike, and even among scholars who have no Slavic ethnic heritage at all, dispassionate objectivity is almost as scarce as hens' teeth."⁵⁴ Henry R. Huttenbach came to conclusion that "...the relationship of the Ukraine and Russia is intellectually insoluble to the satisfaction of everyone (even to the uninvolved historian)."⁵⁵

American postwar academia has come a long way in rethinking many concepts and stereotypes concerning the peoples in this part of the world. Nevertheless, the process of its intellectual and institutional emancipation from the past has been full of paradoxes and contradictions. I would like to name just two of them. First, it seems that many American scholars simply ignored the existence of the Russian Federation in the Soviet Union and continuously identified "Russia" with the "Soviet Union." Second, despite open skepticism about the academic respectability of Ukrainian studies, at least some Western scholars somehow assimilated many observations and findings made by their Ukrainian colleagues about the historical continuity between Russia and the Soviet Union, as well as the specifics of Ukrainian and Russian nationalisms.

Reviewing the legacy of Ukrainian postwar émigrés in the US is not one of the tasks of this article. However, I would stress that Ukrainian scholars have contributed substantially to Russian, Soviet, and national studies in the West both theoretically and factually. The study of Ukrainian topics has helped many American scholars to understand the historical complexity and cultural heterogeneity of imperial Soviet and regional East European phenomena. It was not the fault of the Ukrainians that the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's reappearance on the political map took many Western analysts by surprise.

Contemporary anti-Ukrainian discourse in Russia might be considered a reflection of the most reactionary and obscurantist components of the Russian discourse of national identity elaborated by the Russian Orthodox Church, canonized by the imperial authorities, and preserved by Russian émigrés.⁵⁶ The medieval idea of Russianness demonstrates its ability to survive many political upheavals and shut itself off from modernity. The contrast between Ukrainian and Russian nation-state building has become more acute and politically dangerous. Whether a new wave of Russian emigration to the West is capable of rethinking the Russian discourse of identity without "Little Russia" remains an open question.

⁵⁴ William B. Edgerton, "Review of George S. N. Luckyj, *Between Gogol' and Ševčenko: Polarity in the Literary Ukraine: 1798–1847*, by George S. N. Luckyj," *Slavic Review* 34, no. 1 (March 1975): 189.

⁵⁵ Henry R. Huttenbach, "The Ukraine and Muscovite Expansion," in *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 167.

⁵⁶ *Ukrainskii separatizm v Rossii. Ideologija natsional'nogo raskola* (Moscow: Moskva Press, 1998).

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