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## **Rethinking the Meaning of the *Holodomor*: ‘Notes and Materials’ toward a(n) (anti) (post) colonial history of Ukraine<sup>1</sup>**

I offer these reflections on the *holodomor* in the spirit of a conversation that started in Toronto in September and will continue in Cambridge next week. In Toronto, I didn't have the opportunity to offer my own contribution to the "contextualizing;" this is my belated contribution. I will talk about famines and atrocities, but leave discussion of what we have learned specifically about the *holodomor* to other authors and panels. I will also focus on the period of war, revolution, and civil war (1914-1923) when historians have identified the emergence of an anti-colonial critique across the imperial worlds and which included an important site in Ukraine and the broader Russian empire. What I'm offering here is based on teaching, thinking, reading and sometimes writing about the history of empire, nation, and colonialism. In the end it is not based on extensive research in archives, though I have done some of that and that is reflected herein, but above all it is a new spin on some new writing and a lot of old classics that have been viewed in the past from other perspectives from the ones I sketch here briefly.

### **Famines and Colonialism**

“Esquimaux and New Zealanders are more thrifty and industrious than these people who deserve to be left to their fate instead of the hardworking people of England being taxed for their support.”

Quote from Lord Lt of Ireland during Irish famine in 1847<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is inspired by and in gratitude for the work of many of my more “literary” colleagues and a writer or two: Marko Pavlyshyn, from whom I first learned about Yuri Andrukkhovich (with whom I had the honor to drink beer in Warsaw after a reading marking the Polish translation of his latest novel!), Lena Kostenko, Yohan Petrovsky-Shtern, from whom I learned about Moshe Fishbein (who I had the honor to meet), Ivan Dziuba (also had honor of meeting him), Sasha Etkind and Rory Finnin; and my colleagues and former graduate students at Columbia University, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and the late Edward Said, as well as Michael Stanislawski, my first teacher in Jewish history; Adriana Helbig and Maria Sonevytsky in ethnomusicology and Peter Holquist and Amir Weiner in history; by my friends at *Ab Imperio* and *Kritika* journals; also Pavlo Khrystiuk (who I never met, yet have felt some strange connection to and to whom the first part of my subtitle is a tribute), and another Social-Revolutionary from Ukraine, the late Pavel Dotsenko, who waged his struggle for justice in Siberia; and Roman Serbyn, (who I met very appropriately for the first time in Kyiv in the party archives), and who led me to Raphael Lemkin, who, it appears, knew all of this long before most all of us did. Many more sources of inspiration are mentioned in footnotes. In the tradition of the usual caveat, I am responsible for the interpretations of the work of my colleagues, some of whom might not recognize themselves in my versions, though I hope that is a rare case.

On the eve of the famine, known in Irish as the Gorta Mor, Ireland was a “breadbasket of Britain,” and exported sufficient grain to feed the two million people of Britain as well as the population of Ireland. By the 1840s, over two-thirds of the labor force depended on agriculture; a majority of the peasants had no or little land. The *Gorta Mor*, which lasted from 1846-1851, is considered by Irish historians to be a truly “great famine;” one million people perished as a result of the potato failures of the 1840s and another million immigrated. Within the six years of the famine, the Irish population had fallen by 25 percent through a combination of death and emigration. And here an interesting footnote, the memory of the suffering “was taken overseas by thousands of emigrants, many of whom viewed their flight as exile, and the decades that followed the Famine, its remembrance was a painful reminder to nationalists of British misrule. . . . It was not until the 1970s that Ireland’s demographic decline was to reverse.”<sup>3</sup> Accurate records were not kept of those who died and led to accusations that the Whig government was trying to keep the information secret. A Tory politician noted ironically that the British state “was able to provide accurate statistics on the number of pigs and poultry consumed, yet it did not attempt to keep a record of the deaths of its people.”

The controversial Irish singer Sinéad O’Connor questioned the use of the word “famine” in a rap song, arguing that massive quantities of food left Ireland on a daily basis during the famine. She sees the heavy legacy of colonialism in the separating of the Irish people from their history, memory, and cultural identity. Until the 1990s, the Famine was not taught; it was argued that the Famine was not an important event in Irish history; moreover, it was depicted as inevitable and that the British government could have done little more than they did to save lives. And an Irish historian concludes, “The Irish poor did not starve because there was an inadequate supply of food within they country; they starved because political, commercial and individual greed was given priority over the saving of lives in one part of the United Kingdom.” Kinealy sees a paradox in Ireland’s being part of the United Kingdom and British Empire yet was treated as a separate entity when in the midst of a humanitarian catastrophe. She also reminds us that the famine occurred “within the jurisdiction of not only the richest empire in the world, but one of the most advanced parliamentary democracies of the time. At each stage of the Famine, relief policies were discussed and debated both within parliament and within the press. . . .The various relief policies—with the partial exception of the soup kitchens—were inappropriate and inadequate. The defects of policy formulation were compounded by the government’s refusal to intervene at certain key times—to restrict food exports, to curb eviction, to regulate emigration, or to prevent proselytism.”<sup>4</sup>

Attitudes similar to those expressed by the Lord Lieutenant above were widespread. An economist defended the policies that were reducing the Irish

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Christine Kinealy, *The Great Irish Famine: Impact, Ideology and Rebellion* (Palgrave, 2002), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Cormac O Grada, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory* (Princeton, 1999)

<sup>4</sup> Kinealy, 17, 116.

peasants to starvation with the “conviction that overgenerous relief would demoralize the Irish poor and merely postpone the reckoning.” Many in high places took comfort in the thought that the famine was nature’s response to Irish demographic irresponsibility, and “that too much public kindness would obscure that message.” Incidentally, similar attitudes would also constrain famine relief in India, on the advice of Thomas Malthus.<sup>5</sup> A sharp increase in evictions of debt-laden peasants contributed to the misery and the prevalence of lethal diseases. In 1849 the crisis and the evidence of extensive suffering brought a secret appeal from a new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Clarendon, to the Prime Minister, “Surely this is a state of things to justify you asking the House of Commons for an advance, for I don’t think there is another legislature in Europe that would disagree that such suffering as now exists in the west of Ireland, or coldly persist in a policy of extermination.” The government, however, chose not to intervene.<sup>6</sup>

The Duke of Wellington, hero of Waterloo and the defeat of Napoleon, was charged with preparing militarily for a threat from opposition in the wake of the famine and ordered a significant increase in British troops; by the summer of 1848, Dublin was “protected” by 100,000 soldiers. Similar to the Soviet famine of 1932-33, the British famine was experienced with differential suffering. In the Scottish Highlands, for example, the same potato blight led to far fewer fatalities; relief was provided more promptly and with fewer restrictions.<sup>7</sup>

The closest the British have ever come to an apology to the Irish people for the famine was a controversial statement by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1997 that the famine “was a defining event in the history of Ireland and of Britain. That one million people should have died in what was then part of the richest and most powerful nation in the world is something that still causes pain as we reflect on it today. Those who governed in London at the time failed their people through standing by while a crop failure turned into a massive tragedy.”<sup>8</sup> In 1995 a famine genocide committee was established in New York and enlisted the expertise of Notre Dame law professor Charles Rice. The Committee brought a retroactive charge of genocide against the British government.

Some Irish historians go so far as to see the famine as the beginning of modern Irish history in its legacy of “long-standing and deep-rooted hatred of the English connection.. . [thanks to the Irish emigration and its hatred, bitterness and resentment] the Irish question became and remained an international question.” It

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<sup>5</sup> O Grada, pp.

<sup>6</sup> Christine Kinealy, in *Hungry Words: Images of Famine in the Irish Canon*, ed. George Cusack and Sarah Goss (Irish Academic Press, 2006), chapter one, “The stricken land: the Great Hunger in Ireland.”

<sup>7</sup> Kinealy, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Kinealy, p. 1. Even this message was taken to be a tacit apology and Blair was criticized by the Unionist Party for encouraging the “self-pitying nature of Irish nationalism” and that such words would feed the “grievance culture which allows nationalist Ireland to place the blame for all the country’s ills at the door of the Brits, ultimately justifying terrorism.”

led to large-scale support for the Irish revolutionary movement and the violent overthrow of British rule.<sup>9</sup>

A little less than a century later, a British wartime government headed by Winston Churchill made similar decisions about not helping to relieve a famine in colonial India in 1943. That famine resulted in 1.5-4 million deaths; not only did Churchill refuse aid on “strategic grounds”; but the first book to depict the tragedy, *Hungry Bengal*, was banned in 1944 and 5000 copies were seized and destroyed.<sup>10</sup>

In the ongoing discussion about “contextualizing” the *holodomor*, we have often heard about the famine of Communist China during the Cultural Revolution and in communist Cambodia under the dictator Pol Pot. But the experience of empires, and not only European ones, has left a dismal record of atrocities and abuses. One need only think of the scholarship on the Belgian colony of Congo under King Leopold during the late nineteenth century to confirm the cruel treatment of peoples considered to be less than first-class subjects or citizens in these far-flung empires.<sup>11</sup>

## **Wartime Occupations and Colonialism**

### **The Russian Army in World War I**

It should not take too much argument for me to convince this audience that imperial Russia pursued colonial policies during the nineteenth century, the heyday of late European imperialism. Russia had fought a brutal war for most of the century against Muslim tribes in the North Caucasus in the long Caucasian wars of that century—wars which have their modern expression in the recent war of Russia and Chechnya--and wars known for their atrocities and disregard for civilian losses. Some historians have argued that the Russian Army’s response to the revolutions of 1905-07 in the empire, punitive expeditions that were particularly brutal in the empire’s peripheries, were an important change in using such techniques to quell domestic unrest.<sup>12</sup> Peter Holquist asserts that the violence that the Russian army used in 1904-6 to put down the widespread peasant unrest and urban violence during the revolution was in line with the practices of colonial warfare that the army

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<sup>9</sup> F. S. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (Fontana/Collins, 1973), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), pp. 141-154. Collingham compares British and U.S. food policies with those of Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union during World War II. See also Paul R. Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal. The Famine of 1943-1944* (Oxford University Press, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Teodor Shanin, *Russia, 1905-07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth; Volume 2, The Roots of Otherness: Russia’s Turn of Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 64-67, 95, 114; and Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 330-336.

had learned over the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in conscious imitation of French and British imperial practices.<sup>13</sup>

But certainly the behavior of the Russian army after the outbreak of World War I illustrates the harshness of colonial war and wartime occupations in the very first year of campaigns. Alexander Prusin has captured the harshness in what he calls Russia's "military pogroms."<sup>14</sup> In 1914-1915 the Russian army initiated a brutal campaign of persecution and forcible relocation of more than half a million Jews to Russia proper; violent pogroms in Jewish settlement accompanied Russian offensives and retreats (362). For soldiers and the Cossacks violence also became an expedient tool to make up for hardship and supply shortages, . . . In fact, letting troops go on a rampage as reward for capturing a locality has been a traditional practice of many armies since antiquity and is known as the "tax of violence." Therefore, the Russian officers mostly tolerated the predatory habits of their subordinates who ran amok in Jewish residential areas. Time and again, the modus operandi of the pogromists was almost identical: a charge of some "treacherous act," such as allegations of shooting at the troops from Jewish houses or shops, would be followed in quick succession by plunder, rape, and massacre.(369) In October 1914, . . . "wild" violence was substituted by more systematic persecution consistent with the official anti-Jewish restrictions in Russia proper. The second cycle of pogroms began in the spring of 1915, . . . The Russian retreat soon turned into a rout, . . . the Russian High Command initiated a scorched-earth policy, which included the destruction of property along the front line and the forcible evacuation of the population. Conceived as a strategic device, the evacuation soon degenerated into widespread plunder, rape, and murder. Acting upon orders to "clean up" (*ochistit'*) the front-zone, the Cossacks and soldiers burned houses and crops, blew up bridges and mills, demolished railroads, and forced the population eastward. The same orders effectively institutionalized violence, for the Russian details now imbued with the official function of depriving the enemy of potential recruits and helpers hanged Jewish "spies," looted houses, and raped women. (369)

I start with the fate of Jews during the war because the treatment of Jews in the Russian empire and those unfortunate lands that came under Russian occupation during the war comes closest to the racialized organization of colonial administrations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The regulations that governed life in the Pale of Settlement expressed an ideology of othering and legal

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<sup>13</sup>"Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905-21," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian & Eurasian History*, 4: 3(Winter2003): 627-52.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Victor Prusin, "A 'Zone of Violence': The Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Eastern Galicia in 1914-1915 and 1941," in Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds. *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 2013); and also his *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914-1920* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2005).

discrimination that is the clearest example of colonialist thinking and practice. Much of Prusin's evidence comes from the wartime memoir of an important Jewish intellectual, humanitarian, writer and ethnographer, S. An-sky, the pen name for Shloyme Zanvil Rapoport, who recorded his encounters with uprooted Jews and Russian officers during these "pogroms."<sup>15</sup> A recent work on Rapoport's ethnographic expeditions into the prewar Pale is titled "The Jewish Dark Continent" and the author underscores the "racialized language of colonial exploration" in the understanding of both Rapoport and the father of the history of Jews in Eastern Europe, Simon Dubnov.<sup>16</sup>

Other "peoples" and "religions" fell on other places of the spectrum of colonial practices that was meant to organize the populations of the empire along confessional and estate lines, later along class and ethnic ones. Although attitudes of the Russian imperial elites toward the Ukrainian question and Ukrainian culture differed significantly from the framework in which Jews lived and adapted, the behavior of Russian military, political and religious authorities toward Ukrainian culture in occupied Galicia reveals all the hallmarks of a culture war intended to eradicate institutional and cultural presence of an alternate identity to that of the Great Russian nation understood to include Ukrainians and Belarusians. We have vivid descriptions of this culture war from the archives of Andriy Zhuk, a leader of the wartime exile Ukrainian national organization, the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. Zhuk fled with the retreating Habsburg armies and spent much of the war in Vienna, overseeing the publication and organizational work of the Union.

Zhuk describes the Russian army's destruction of Ukrainian institutions and even the extensive changes to the toponymy of occupied Galicia; Polish, Ukrainian, and, of course, German street and place names were replaced with Russian one, like a new Pushkin Street. He described this as "not just a military invasion, but a political-cultural occupation." The war waged on religion and language and extended to the shutting of schools and the bookstore of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. Russian military authorities seized the keys and arrested the manager of store. Among the buildings occupied by *Zemgor* and Red Cross were those of the shutdown societies, museums and credit associations.<sup>17</sup>

He records the arrests of Ukrainian activists associated with the journals *Dnistr* and *Dilo* and the arrival and active work of a whole panoply of the Galician-Russian Philanthropic Society (with branches in St Petersburg, Moscow, Kyiv, Odessa and other cities); and the Slavic Philanthropic Society, Slavic Committees, and church brotherhoods. All these culture-war initiatives were headed by Count

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<sup>15</sup> S. An-sky, *The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I*, ed. and trans. by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. 6-15; also on Rapoport, see Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Zhuk cited an *ukaz* of the governor-general dated 4 October *ukaz* forbidding functioning of all *tovarystva, soiuzy* with fines of 3000 rubles or 3 months prison.

Vladimir Bobrinskii, a relative of the governor-general, Georgii Bobrinskii. After the destruction of the Russian invasion, these Russophile benevolent committees organized aid to peasants. with N. D. Chichachev, another leader of the forces of russification, for special assignments. Zhuk not surprisingly sees the major instrument of Russification as the schools and notes a reverse migration of S. Bendasiuk and Iul. Iavoskii, emigres from Galicia now arriving from Kyiv with the Russian Army.<sup>18</sup> After the Russian retreat of 1915, Zhuk also protested against the Russian Army's destruction of Cholm and Volyn and against Bobrinskii's order of 7 May 1915 on forced evacuation.<sup>19</sup> Much better known is the arrest and deportation of Metropolitan Andriy Sheptytsky by General Alexei Brusilov on orders from the Chief of Staff; also a second Greek Catholic bishop died during the siege of Peremyshl; a third went abroad; thereby the Greek-Catholic church was left without leadership at a critical moment.<sup>20</sup> In general the Ukrainian movement was crushed, with the suspension of the press, a ban on Ukrainian national colors, confiscation of *Kobzar*, and arrests of several hundred persons of Ukrainian intelligentsia.

The spread of the anti-Ukrainian culture war from the front to the rear of the army led to the arrest of another important figure in the Ukrainian national movement, the historian Myhailo Hrushevsky. Hrushevsky was arrested on November 28, 1914, a few days after he arrived in Kyiv via a circuitous route from his summer home in the Austrian Carpathians through Europe; his homes in both Lviv and Kyiv were searched. (Ironically, the Viennese authorities kept him under surveillance while he was there and also issued a warrant for his arrest as a Russophile.)<sup>21</sup>

Similar stories were told about the assault on Polish institutions and Poles under Russian occupation,<sup>22</sup> but they also reveal the lack of consistency in Russian

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<sup>18</sup> Zhuk, vol. 9, file 24, Halychyna i Bukovyna pid rossiiskoiu okupatsiiei; also Ivan Petrovych, *Halychyna pid chas Rossiiskoi okupatsii* (1915); V. Stepankowsky, *The Russian Plot to Seize Galicia* (London, 1914); Osyp Partyka, *Spomyny z chasiv moskovs'kogo naizdu*

<sup>19</sup> Zhuk, vol. 13, file 2.

<sup>20</sup> On Sheptytskyi's arrest and wartime fate, see Andrii Krawchuk, *Christian Social Ethics in Ukraine: The Legacy of Andrei Sheptytsky* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1997), pp. 68-93; and Bohdan Budurowicz, "Sheptytsk'yi and the Ukrainian National Movement after 1914," in *Morality and Reality: the Life and Times of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi*, ed. Paul R. Magosci (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1989): 47-71.

<sup>21</sup> Serhii Plokhyy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Bohdan Janusz, *Dokumenty urzedowe okupacji Rosyjskiej Lwowa* (Lwow, , 1916); also his (Janusz) *293 dni rzadow rosyjskich we Lwowie* (Lwow, 1915); *Lwow po inwazyi Rosyjskiej. Wrzesien-grudzien 1914* (Vienna, n. d.); Feliks Przysiecki, *Rzady Rosyjskie w Galicyi Wschodniej* (Piotrkow, 1915); Stanislaw Rossowski, *Lwow*

policy, as well as the importance of a change in personnel. The first occupation governor, Sergei Sheremet'ev, pursued a Polonophile policy, thereby enraging the Russifiers and their Galician Russophile allies, who organized his defeat and replacement by Bobrinskii, a man closer to their values and politics.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Russian Army's 'Great Retreat' and the Reconquest and Occupation of Galicia and Parts of "Russian" Ukraine by the Central Powers; The 1916 Brusilov and the Second Russian Occupation of Galicia and Bukovyna**

The Central Powers launched a counter-offensive that sent the Russian Army fleeing eastward in retreat and returned to Galicia and formerly "Russian" Poland. They, too, now came to "liberate" oppressed nationalities from the Russians and pursued a sort of Ukrainian Piedmont policy that was designed to demonstrate how Habsburg and German rule were better and more humane and enlightened than the Russians. Of course, allowing the use of local languages in schools and lower-level administration was not a departure from Austro-Hungarian practice in Galicia, but now the Central Powers extended their practices to lands that had been under Russian rule. This inter-imperial anti-colonialism, namely, the support of those "national entrepreneurs" who opposed their enemy empire had the not entirely expected consequence of raising the profile of groups like the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, who now played a role in Austrian occupation similar to that of the Galician Slavic Philanthropic Associations under the Russian occupation.<sup>24</sup>

This state of affairs would last only until the Russian Army reorganized after its retreat and mounted the successful Brusilov offensive, the Army's most decisive and also its last victory. The Russians, too, had learned some lessons from their first disastrous occupation and moderated their policies toward the Ukrainian language and institutions.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Provisional Government and Ukraine: Reluctant and Failed Decolonization**

The political order that followed the fall of the Romanov dynasty and the autocracy did not "resolve" the issues of colonial rule, or, as it was known in the

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*podczas inwazyi* (Lwow, n.d.); Marzell Chlamtacz, *Lembergs politische Physiognomie waehrend der russischen Invasion* (Vienna, 1916)

<sup>23</sup> See more on this in Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2007), ch. 2. For a parallel German occupation to the north of Ukraine, OberOst, see Vejas Liulevicius,

<sup>24</sup> Von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland*, pp. 59-67.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-79; on Russian military authorities' learning from prior and enemy occupations and on the importance of personality, see Peter Holquist, "The Role of Personality in the First (1914-1915) Russian Occupation of Galicia and Bukovina," in *Anti-Jewish violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in European History*, ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 52-73.



Russian empire, the “national question,” but only began their transformation along the lines of popular sovereignty and the clashes of imperial “liberals” and conservatives with socialists. The Ukrainian Central Rada’s conflicts with the Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet were one site of the battle over decolonization, which was seen from Kyiv as the rightful devolution of political and cultural authority from the capital and closer to the “people,” however defined. But we also see a new stage in a joint all-Russian anticolonial movement that had its origins in the prewar meetings of federalists and regionalists, a small cohort of Duma deputies, and which reached its Pyrrhic victory in September 1917 at the Congress of Oppressed Peoples in Kyiv, which elected Myhailo Hrushevsky as its honorary first president.<sup>26</sup> This sense of the need for a pan-national coalition of “oppressed nations” found reflection in the evolution of the Rada Secretariat to include important commissars for Jewish affairs, Polish and Russian affairs.<sup>27</sup> An Army-wide movement for ukrainization, which called for the formation of units made of ethnic Ukrainian soldiers, used the Ukrainian language, and began adopting the military insignia of the Cossack era. This quickly radicalizing soldiers’ movement pushed the more moderate and centrist Central Rada into more to seek greater autonomy from Petrograd; the Army Ministry reluctantly and only partly authorized the formation of Ukrainian units--in part to counter the Bolsheviks’ successes in winning war-weary soldiers to their party’s platform, but the Petrograd Soviet offered more resistance to the national movement, as did the Kiev Military District Commissar, another Social-Revolutionary but also a former imperial officer, Konstantin Oberuchev.<sup>28</sup> Oberuchev’s evolution from a former imperial officer and

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<sup>26</sup> Documents from this congress published in *Revoliutsiia i nastional'nyi vopros. Dokumenty I materialy po istorii nastional'nogo voprosa v Rossii I SSSR v XX veke, vol. 3 1917 (fevral'-oktiabr')*, ed. S. M. Dimanshtein (Moscow, 1930), pp. 443-450; see a more recent study by O. P. Reent and B. I. Andrysyshyn, *Z'izd ponevolenykh narodiv ((21-28 veresnia n. st.))* (Kyiv: NANU, Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 1994).

<sup>27</sup> Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> See Mark von Hagen, “The Russian Imperial Army and the Ukrainian National Movement in 1917, in The Period of the Ukrainian Central Rada,” vol. 54, nos. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1998) of the *Ukrainian Quarterly*; and an earlier essay by L. Shankovsky, “Disintegration of the Imperial Russian Army in 1917,” *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, XIII, 4 (New York, 1957). For the best accounts of the soldiers’ movement in 1917, see Mikhail Frenkin’s *Russkaia armia I revoliutsiia* (Munich: Posev; 1978); and Allan Wildman, *the End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980 and 1987); Frenkin, in particular, highlights the Ukrainian soldiers’ movement in his work; on Oberuchev, see Mark von Hagen, “A Socialist Army Officer Confronts War and Nationalist Politics: Konstantin Oberuchev in Revolutionary Kyiv,” in *Tentorium honorum: Essays Presented to Frank E. Sysyn on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Olga Andrews, Zenon E. Kohut, Serhii Plokhly, and Larry Wolff, Vols. 33-34, *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* (2008-09), pp. 191-97.

revolutionary who thought of himself as friendly to the Ukrainian cause into a fierce opponent of the assertion of Ukrainian soldiers' rights to have their own national, Ukrainian military units to fight for "their" Ukrainian fatherland.

With the overthrow of the moderate-left coalition of the "dual authority" in Petrograd, the socialist-nationalist Rada faced a new regime in Petrograd, and soon Moscow, that also claimed to offer a socialist alternative, but the Rada soon found itself embroiled in the first ever war of two socialist states and with the Bolsheviks and their armed forces exhibiting much of the same anti-Ukrainian animus that had been characteristic of the tsarist army, whose dissolution gave rise to the Red Army, soon the White Army and several Ukrainian armies as well.

### **Bolshevik Occupation and Colonialism: War between Soviet Russia and Ukrainian Central Rada**

Pavlo Khrystiuk, a Ukrainian Social-Revolutionary and activist from the Ukrainian cooperative movement, was an eyewitness to the war, the revolution in 1917 and the first Bolshevik conquest of Ukraine.<sup>29</sup> He sees the Bolsheviks' assault on Ukraine and the bombing of Kyiv as the consequence of Bolshevik agitation among the soldiers against the Ukrainian cause. The success of such agitation was seen in "the savage destruction by Russian troops of Ukrainians (regardless of their convictions); Russian troops shot anyone in Kiev who spoke Ukrainian and considered himself a Ukrainian; of course, all this was done not by communists, but by ordinary "brothers" and "comrades", under the leadership of officers trained in the old school, similar to the policeman [Lt. Colonel] Muravev, who, in his siege of Kyiv, took special delight in bombarding the building of the "separatist" Hrushevsky with heavy artillery, of which he later boasted in public speeches.<sup>30</sup> (Murav'ev was a Russian Social-Revolutionary and was later executed for leading a mutiny of his Red troops on the Volga.)

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<sup>29</sup> Iury Shapoval has reconstructed Khrystiuk's Soviet life from his dossier in the files of the Ukrainian State Police in an article: "Pisar revoliutsii," *Den'*. . . Because Khrystiuk's work, like that of Hrushevsky and his fellow repatriates remained anathema during Soviet times, there remains little in Ukrainian about him; the one study I have located, thanks to Hennadii Onishchenko, is that by V. Kucher and D. Mukha, *Sotsial-revoliutsioner na tli doby: Pavlo Khrystiuk pro sotsial'no-politychni protsessy chasiv Tsentral'noi Rady* (A Social-Revolutionary : Pavlo Khrystiuk on the sociopolitical processes of the era of the Central Rada) (Kyiv: NANU, Kuras Institute, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Khrystiuk, ch. 7a

Khrystiuk recorded the Bolsheviks' justification in their invasion of Ukraine, claiming that they were "liberating" the Ukrainian proletariat from the "bourgeois" Rada; instead "Sov Russia's army's attack on Ukraine had all the earmarks of occupation and national struggle; so we won't pay any more attention to the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee since it played a not positive role; instead war was waged by Commander in Chief of the Soviet Russian army Muravev." He also noted that a "token" Ukrainian Iu Kotsiubynsky was secretary of military affairs in the CEC, but he had no army, no apparatuses and no influence on military events and was "merely a Ukrainian formality on Muravev's bayonet, a screen, a "super-structure" of Soviet Russian policy." Khrystiuk cited Muravev's famous "order no 14" on establishing Soviet power in Ukraine: "We bring this power from the north on the ends of our bayonets and where we establish it, we support it in every way possible with the force of those bayonets." The Russian townsfolk, bourgeois intelligentsia, petty bourgeoisie, even the old tsarist police in Ukraine took advantage of Bolshevik invasion to "take a ferocious vengeance on Ukrainians for their "separatism." Cruel pogroms against Ukrainian intellectuals launched throughout Ukraine. The agitated and enraged Russian army would often kill anyone heard speaking Ukrainian or seen wearing an embroidered shirt or a grey cap; among those murdered; Central Rada former minister of agrarian affairs; Puhach, Bochkovsky; Ukrainian culture destroyed together with Ukrainian intelligentsia; in middle and high schools, and generally in all city schools, old order restored, Russ language and Russian teachers once again occupied their old dominant positions.

The Bolsheviks completely destroyed the fairly large Ukrainian press under the pretext of struggling against the Ukrainian bourgeois press; but the "bourgeois" Ukrainian press was not replaced by proletarian and peasant newspapers, but by the Bolshevik Russian language press, which sometimes, to prove the equality of languages, printed individual small articles or chronicles in Ukrainian; the Ukrainian book was suppressed; likewise the Ukrainian theater fell silent; such was the cultural devastation brought to Ukraine by Russian Bolsheviks. They pursued an entirely occupation policy in Ukraine, intended to restore the dominant Russian nation to its position of managing a colony-Ukraine."

Khrystiuk also cites what he calls his rival Volodymyr Vynnychenko's greatest speech, which he delivered after he had returned for the first time since his flight from Kyiv in February. After Vynnychenko had spent two months in the "Bolshevik paradise," he concluded that a platform of mere autonomy "would guarantee us nothing;" then the Ukrainians had tried federation, but encountered great hostility from non-Ukrainians; only then did the Rada move in the direction toward "our own state." He, too, describes Bolshevik rule in Kyiv, "how they kicked Shevchenko's portrait and drove female Ukrainian teachers from their schools; they still think, as they did last year, that `no Ukraine exists; it is all a German invention.'" Bolshevik Red Guards units had shelled Kyiv for eleven days and then occupied Kyiv, the Rada's capital, for two weeks and subjected the local population to a wave of anti-Ukrainian Bolshevik terror. Russian imperial army officers, Orthodox clergy, and Ukrainian nationalists were terrorized, arrested, and executed. Metropolitan

Vladimir of Kyiv was dragged from his residence and brutally murdered, as were approximately 2,500 Russian officers.<sup>31</sup>

### **Brest Litovsk: German-Austrian Occupation and Colonial Rule (1918)**

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk brought Ukraine's recognition from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire, as well as a reluctant Bolshevik Russia. That same war and the civil war that followed from it also doomed that short experiment in proto-statehood. Ukraine's brief emergence as an internationally recognized state happened as a result of the rival imperial anti-colonial policies pursued by the Central Powers and the Entente states. That all the empires were caught up in these revolutionary policies of promoting anticolonial movements in their rival empires while presenting their "sponsored" exile nationalist activists with the alternative of coming under their, "better" form of colonial rule. The Austrian variant of this was a more tolerant second occupation regime and the behind-the-scenes and sometimes not so behind the scenes scenario of a Habsburg prince assuming the throne as hetman of Ukraine in a new Austrian-protected Ukraine.<sup>32</sup>

Much more attention has been given in both Soviet and Western historiography to the Allied interventions, largely because of the interest by historians in the Great Britain, the United States, and France to recover this early history. But the impact of the Central Power intervention was much larger and vastly more ambitious than what the Allies were able to agree upon. In fact, Mawdsley argues that "the military operations of the Central Powers from February to May 1918 were the most important foreign intervention in the Civil War. Hundreds of thousands of German, Austrian, and Turkish troops were involved; seventeen Russian provinces (as well as Poland) were occupied. Allied intervention in 1919 would be on a comparatively tiny scale."<sup>33</sup>

The German military and political leadership had for some time seen its goal as the permanent weakening of Russia as a rival and obstacle to German great power status. Now that Russia was Bolshevik and claiming a right to support

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<sup>31</sup> A. A. Gol'denveizer, "Iz kievskikh vospominanii" pp. 24-26; and S. Sumskii, "Odinnatstat' perervorotov," pp 98-105; in S. A. Alekseev, ed., *Revoliutsiia na Ukraine* (Moscow/Leningrad: Gorudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1930).

<sup>32</sup> See von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland*, pp. 87-114; recent Austrian publications dealing with many aspects of the occupation. Wolfram Dornik and Stefan Karner, eds., *Die Besatzung der Ukraine 1918: Historischer Kontext—Forschungsstand—wirtschaftliche und soziale Folgen* (Graz/Vienna/Klagenfurt, 2008) and Wolfram Dornik et al. *Die Ukraine zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Fremdherrschaft 1917-1922* (Graz: Leykam, 2011); Timothy Snyder, *The Red Prince: The Secret History of a Habsburg Archduke* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 43; for another story of German occupation in eastern Europe, see Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front. Culture, National identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

national self-determination movements in the surviving empires, the Germans offered their own version of beneficent German colonial rule. The bigger and long-term picture had the “borderlands,” as the Germans saw them, between Germany and Russia transformed into political and economic satellites of Germany. Their own answer to Lenin’s advocacy of national self-determination and to Wilson’s Fourteen Points was their own politics of *Selbstbestimmung*, the German translation of self-determination, and targeted at Finns, Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Belorusans. (They also supported groups of Georgian and Turkic national liberation fighters, to use the modern parlance.) Leading German specialists on Russia shaped a view of the Russian empire as a multinational empire ruled by coercion and repression and they fantasized about the peeling away of the borderland peoples (*Randvoelker*) from the Russian core. During 1918, Ukraine was occupied by 250,000 Habsburg and 400,000 Hohenzollern troops.

The Rada was embarrassed by its obligations to the Central Powers and tried hard to keep the details secret. In response, German Field Marshal Eichhorn took the agricultural economy under his auspices and ordered the seeding of the land in time for planting season and with it a campaign to restore private property. The Rada’s incapacity to deliver the promised grain frustrated the occupiers who looked the other way as a conservative, landowning, former Russian general, Pavlo/Pavel Skoropadsky, overthrew the socialist government and proclaimed himself “hetman” of the “Ukrainian state.” His proclamation would soon put him in a tense relationship with the Austrian archduke who was awaiting being anointed with a similar title, but by his imperial relative in Vienna. Whereas the Germans had best contacts with some of the Ukrainian nationalist parties, the Austrians in the southern occupation zone tried to find common cause with local Russian monarchist and nationalist organizations, organizations that of course had aims diametrically opposed to those of the organizations being curried by the Germans.

The two Central Powers allies ruled over a land and population that had been devastated several times, most recently by the brief Bolshevik reign of terror. The Germans in fact faced determined resistance from the workers’ Red Guards units and front-line Russian soldiers still in the urban areas, but increasingly too from the peasants as they tried to introduce some measures of control in the countryside. The conquest of Ukraine lasted nearly two months. Within weeks the occupation authorities were resorting to extreme measures of repression; for every German soldier killed or wounded, local military authorities were to shoot the first then “Russian” soldiers or inhabitants that were seized. They ordered the death sentence for any disruption of the food supply or violation of other state property. Military censorship was introduced for all newspapers; the first to be closed down was a Russian-language newspaper, the *Kievskaiia mysl* (*Kievan Thought*) that had been Trotsky’s employer for so many years. The newspaper offended the Germans by suggesting that they risked antagonizing the peasantry with their behavior as conquerors. The newspaper was allowed to reopen after it promised not to print articles critical of the Germans. The Germans seized several government and public buildings, began outfitting the city with telegraph and telephone poles. Local inhabitants perceived the wiring they saw everywhere as a material symbol for the

shackling by the new authorities. “*Wir werden Ordnung schaffen,*” we shall create order, was how the Germans explained their mission to the local inhabitants.

How things were anticipated to work in Ukraine is illustrated by the negotiations between Kaiser Wilhelm II and Pavel Skoropadsky. The Kaiser approved Skoropadsky’s candidacy to replace the Rada government if he would agree to “our conditions,” which included: a ban on forming any Ukrainian army, as long as Central Power troops remained stationed in Ukraine; a requirement that occupation field courts try Ukrainians charged with crimes against the occupiers; that all government offices be purged of undesirable elements; and that all restrictions on private trade and property be removed to restore the free circulation of goods and created conditions for the promised grain deliveries.” Eichhorn’s order essentially stripped Ukrainian judicial authorities of the right to try their own citizens. The Germans oversaw the arrest of all the socialist Rada ministers, and Ukrainians understood quickly who held the real power now. The Germans insisted all along that they “had been called by the Ukrainians to create order in the land,” even evoking the call of ancient Rus to the Varangians. And so they banned strikes and subordinated the Ukrainian rail administration to German military law, with the death penalty for any destruction of railroad property.<sup>34</sup>

### **Out of Wars and Anti-colonial Critique in Ukraine**

Pavlo Khrystiuk experienced all these stages of the Ukrainian revolution and, when he sat down to make sense of it all and write a sketch of its history, he articulated a view of the Ukrainian revolution that saw it from a protest against Russian imperialism and the colonial rule under which Ukraine and its inhabitants lived. He saw a Ukrainian version of a liberal-moderate socialist federation with his all-Russian counterparts in the Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet in the experience of the Central Rada face ultimately insurmountable odds, only to have then to witness the predictable (based on experience as early as Drahomanov’s critique of the Russian revolutionaries in exile) but crushingly disappointing behavior of revolutionary Russia’s new Red Guards and their brutal and open hostility to everything Ukrainian and peasant. Khrystiuk himself barely escaped the

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<sup>34</sup> For Skoropadsky’s perspective on his brief rule as hetman, see his *Spohady: kinets’ 1917-hruden’ 1918*, ed. Jaroslaw Pelensky (Kyiv/Philadelphia, 1995); and Mark von Hagen, “I love Russia, and but I want Ukraine,’ or How a Russian Imperial General Became Hetman of the Ukrainian State,” in *Synopsis: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Zenon E. Kohut*, ed. Frank E. Sysyn and Serhii Plokhly (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2005), pp. 115-48; for the view of the German general in charge of the occupation, Wilhelm Groener, see his *Lebenserinnerungen*, ed. Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Repurecht, 1957); and his wartime diaries in Winfried Baumgart, *Von Brest-Litovsk zur deutschen Novemberrevolution* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), pp. 257-451. Winfried Baumgart has also written, “General Groener und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in der Ukraine 1918,” *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 21 (1970): 325-340.

Red Guard assault on Kyiv and escaped to the relative safety of ?. His anticolonial critique of the Russian state and its elites was a part of the revolt of much of the Ukrainian revolution against the eventually triumphant Bolshevik one, but also against the alternative of the Central Powers in their support of Hetman Skoropadsky and his Ukrainian state. Khrystiuk left Ukraine for Vienna before he saw the next “alternate” imperial would-be successor to the Romanov dynasty in the White Army occupation of Anton Denikin.

The Bolsheviks, too, seem to “learn” from the disastrous mistakes of their first attempts to conquer and occupy Ukraine. The second campaign of 1918-1919, however, is marked by new anti-Ukrainian violence, as well as atrocities against Jews and Russians.<sup>35</sup>

### **White Russian occupation and colonial rule**

For the White armies under Generals Denikin and then Petr Wrangel, Ukraine was a space to reclaim their vision of Russia “one and indivisible” from the Bolshevik hordes. For the Kadets and others who advised the White governments, Hetman Skoropadsky, though he came from a similar political and cultural pedigree as most of the White officer corps, was worse than the Bolsheviks in his threat to the integrity of a strong, unified Russia.<sup>36</sup> The Whites had an opportunity to show their understanding of a new Russian nation and who and what it excluded and included in their brief occupation of Ukraine in 1919. (The Volunteer Army occupied Kyiv from August 31 to December 6, 1919, and Kharkiv from June 24 to December 12).<sup>37</sup> Peter Kenez portrays the Whites as treating Ukraine “as an occupied country and regarded the population as a defeated enemy.” He notes that the basic statute concerning administration was titled “policies governing occupied territory.” (65) Correspondingly, Denikin appointed three military governors to administer the country, replicating the tsarist practice of privileging military over civil rule. The political-ideological tone of the White occupation was overseen by the infamous anti-semitic Russian nationalist editor of Kyiv’s most anti-Ukrainian newspaper, *Kievlianin*. (66-67, 173) Not surprisingly, during the horrible years of mass murder of the Civil War, “the Volunteer Army had the largest number of victims. Its pogroms differed from mass killings carried out by its competitors.” (166) Kenez argues that “the Volunteer Army succeeded in murdering as many Jews as all the

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<sup>35</sup> On the second Bolshevik occupation, see A. E. Adams, *Bolsheviks in the Ukraine: The Second Campaign 1918-1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963); J. Borys, *The Sovietization of Ukraine 1917-1923: The Communist Doctrine and Practice of National Self-Determination* (Edmonton, 1980); John S. Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton 1942). Taras Hunczak, ed. *The Ukraine 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

<sup>36</sup> 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 Press, 1995).

<sup>37</sup> Peter Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1919-1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977)

other armies put together” (170) and, moreover, that “the officers of the Volunteer Army were obsessed with anti-Semitism.” (172).<sup>38</sup>

And, as with the Russian army in 1914-15 in Galicia, so, too, the pogroms were accompanied by repression and cultural war against Ukrainians. The Whites attacked the Ukrainian cooperatives and schools; they shut down newspapers (156). Denikin refused to acknowledge the existence of a Ukrainian people or language and insisted that Little Russians were one of the three components that made up the great Russian people. He believed that the Ukrainian movement was an invention of foreign and domestic subversives. He conveyed this politics in a proclamation to the “Little Russian people” in August 1919.<sup>39</sup>

The Don Cossacks also played multiple roles in the revolution and civil war in the Don Territory and both perpetrated and were victims of fierce violence. Peter Holquist has also identified a new, albeit temporary, stage in Bolshevik revolutionary war with the Bolsheviks’ near genocidal campaign to “liquidate” the Cossackry in early 1919. He cites an Orghuro circular of January 24 that called for the “total extermination” of the Cossacks and also mapped out a colonization program to replace the exterminated Cossacks in the region.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Soviet-Polish-Ukrainian War and its occupations**

Indeed, the newly independent Polish state, which faced the legacies of vastly different political, institutional, social and cultural practices from their history as the partitions of Poland, nonetheless embarked on a war of conquest in the name of “recovering” lost, historic lands in space now simultaneously claimed by the national movements of Lithuania, Ukraine, and even Belarus, not to mention White and Red (Bolshevik) Russia.<sup>41</sup> Vasyl Kuchabsky captures this conflict of the also newly independent Ukraine, in his case, the West Ukrainian Republic, caught between a Polish imperialism and Bolshevik internationalism, which appears to those in its way as a new version of Russian imperialism.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Kenez cites N. I. Shtif, *Pogromy na Ukraine (Period Dobrovol'cheskoi armii)* (Berlin: Vostok, 1922)

<sup>39</sup> A. I. Denikin, *Ocherki russkoi smuty*, 5 vols. (Paris and Berlin 1921-1925), V, 142-45. For other accounts of Denikin’s views, see Dmitry V. Lehovich, *White Against Red: The Life of General Anton Denikin* (New York, 1974); for other generals in Denikin’s army, see).

<sup>40</sup> See a translated excerpt from the circular in Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia’s Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 180-81.

<sup>41</sup> Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919-1920* (London, 1972); Jozef Pilsudski, *Year 1920 and Its Climax Battle of Warsaw* (New York, 1924); M.N. Tukhachevskii memoirs in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1964)

<sup>42</sup> Vasyl Kuchabsky, *Western Ukraine in Conflict with Poland and Bolshevism, 1918-1920* (Toronto, Canada: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2009).



Need for something on Polish occupation; and on Red Army campaigns toward Poland, Isaak Babel, *Red Cavalry and Diary*.<sup>43</sup>

I highlight the fates of Jews and Ukrainians under these diverse occupation regimes to suggest that there was considerably consistency in the colonialist attitudes of all Russian and Polish regimes toward these two populations during the war and civil war that followed. It was also during the war and civil war that some of the most determined efforts were made to unite Jewish and Ukrainian institutions and organizations in their joint struggle against the imperialist armies and politicians who made different claims over them. This Ukrainian-Jewish “solidarity” and insistence on a common fate as victims of alien rule was expressed in the fashion of inter-ethnic marriages, among the most notable the union of Volodymyr Vynnychenko and his wife Rozalia (?), but also in efforts by writers, poets and other artists to address common themes in the fates of Ukrainians and Jews.<sup>44</sup> It also manifested itself in the relationship of Volodymyr Zhabotynsky and Semen Petliura. Zhabotynsky was an Odessan Jew who defended the cause of Ukrainian nationalism against Russian liberals in the prewar years and then defended Petliura against charges of anti-semitism and the perpetration by his armies of pogroms.<sup>45</sup> Those occupations were only the most blatant example of the colonial rule and wars that shaped Ukraine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Interwar Soviet Ukraine: From Decolonization to Reconsolidation of Empire**

Soviet nationality policy in the 1920s, above all *korenizatsiia*, or *ukrainiazatsiia*, was an effort at decolonization which amounted in large measure to derussification of public culture, the media and some elites.<sup>46</sup> It included national

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<sup>43</sup> Isaac Babel, *Red Cavalry*, edited by Nathalie Babel, trans. with notes by Peter Constantine (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002) original Russian *Konarmiiia* in 1926; Isaac Babel, *1920 Diary* (

<sup>44</sup> See the fascinating study of several Jewish poets who chose to identify with the Ukrainian language and the Ukrainian people in Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Anti-Imperial Choice: The Making of the Ukrainian Jew* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> On Zhabotynsky and Petliura, see ; on the revolutionary and civil war contexts of Ukrainian-Jewish relations, see Geoff Eley, “Remapping the Nation: War, Revolutionary Upheaval and State Formation in Eastern Europe, 1914-1923,” pp. 205-246; and other essays in *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Peter J. Potichnyi and Howard Aster (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988).

<sup>46</sup> Francine Hirsch, in her groundbreaking book, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005) , argues that the Soviet ethnographers who helped shape nationality policies and the borders, saw themselves as pursuing a “socialist” or enlightened colonialism, in contrast to that practiced by Russia or Britain.

renaissances for both Ukrainian and Yiddish-language Jewish culture; Ukraine (and to a lesser degree Belarus) were the centers of the Yiddish-language “golden age.”<sup>47</sup>This brief interlude of decolonization was followed by a brutal re-russification and reassertion of central power and Russian nationality. Characteristic of those policies was the partial Ukrainization of the Red Army under the leadership of Mikhail Frunze, himself an interesting example of a more “enlightened” Bolshevik colonialism. Frunze, born in Bishkek to a medical orderly (*fel’dsher*) of Moldovan origins and a Russian mother, reportedly grew up speaking Kyrgyz and was viewed as a nationalities expert by the Bolshevik leadership. He was sent to Tashkent during the Civil War to bring order after the atrocities committed by the Social Revolutionary-dominated soviet there (in a reversal from usual SR reputation) and later served as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Ukraine and CRIMEA before succeeding Leon Trotsky as the head of the Red Army for a brief period.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Holodomor and Holocaust as “Highest” Stages of Colonialism<sup>49</sup>**

The famine/holodomor is understandable in this context as a policy of colonial exploitation, perhaps colonialism in one of its “highest stages,” to evoke Lenin’s work on imperialism, though now in the name of Soviet socialism, over the populations of Ukraine. The famine is perpetrated by an “internationalist” party/state/police elite that includes ethnic Poles, Jews, Russians and Ukrainians, and is ruled over by an ethnic Georgian. Their destruction of any Ukrainian resistance or opposition especially strikes at the leftist critics of Soviet rule, those close in ideas to the Ukrainian SRs and SDs, as well as those in the Communist Party itself whose politics was too close to these “class enemies.” Many of the repressed Ukrainian leftist critics of the regime framed their analysis in the language of anti-colonialism. Stalin denied the Soviet policies were colonialist (as in his polemic with Preobrazhensky) while crushing those who thought they were getting closer to socialism by overcoming dominant nation oppression.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> David Shneer, *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet Jewish Culture 1918-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Myroslav Shkandrij, “National Modernism in Post-Revolutionary Society: The Ukrainian Renaissance and Jewish Revival, 1917-1930, in *Shatterzone of Empire*, op. cit, pp. 438-448.

<sup>48</sup> On Frunze’s military reforms in Ukraine, see Mark von Hagen, . and the documents in *Reforma v Krasnoi Armii. Dokumenty I materialy, 1923-1928 gg.*, 2 vols., (Moscow: Letnii sad 2006), vol. 1, documents No. 70, 134, 136, 173, 217. Document #70 is “Doklad zam. Predsedatelia RVS SSSR M.V.Frunze v TsK RKP(b) o piatiletnei programme natsional’nogo stroitel’sтва v RKKKA,” 29 December 1924, pp. 306-310.

<sup>49</sup> Yuri Slezkne, “Imperialism as the Highest Stage of socialism,” *The Russian Review* 59 (April 2000): 227-34.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen Velychenko, “Ukrainian Anti-Colonialist Thought 1911-1923: A Comparative Overview,” (to be published in *Ab Imperio*). See also Velychenko’s larger study of this topic, “Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red: Ukrainian Communists, Russian Communists, and the Ukrainian Revolution (1918-1925). Sultan Galiev is generally thought to be the first Communist to be charged with and

Khrystiuk was one of several former Ukrainian Social Revolutionaries and Social Democrats who returned from exile in Central Europe to a now Soviet Ukraine. He arrived earlier than his mentor, Myhailo Hrushevsky, taking hope from the ukrainization policy of the Soviet leadership. Nearly all of these former revolutionaries articulated some version of the anticolonial critique of Khrystiuk. Nearly all of them would perish in Stalin's arrests and political trials against feigned Ukrainian separatist organizations and parties and against real Ukrainian critics of Stalin's emerging line on nationalities policy.<sup>51</sup> This crushing of the Ukrainian anti-colonialist left accompanied the attacks on Ukrainian priests, party members, and the physical destruction of millions of Ukrainian peasants.

Germany, too, underwent a forced decolonization with regard to the still small overseas empire in the Pacific, Africa and Asia that it had acquired in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial land-grab.<sup>52</sup> Their more recently acquired colonies in eastern Europe, the lands of *OberOst*, Poland and Ukraine, were also "stripped" from the post-Versailles German state after the capitulation of the Germans in November 1918. Likewise, Germany's ambitions in the Ottoman empire, which had included extensive military advisory support for the Ottoman army and plans to build an Orient Express from Berlin to Baghdad, also foundered on the defeat of the Central Powers, including the Turks.<sup>53</sup> One "colonial" population that had made late imperial Germany behave like other contemporary empires toward their minorities was the Poles, against whom Otto von Bismarck had waged a fierce *Kulturkampf* against the

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punished for "bourgeois nationalist deviationism," which translated as a too critical view of Russian nationalist attitudes among Bolsheviks.

<sup>51</sup> On Ukrainian "Sovietophiles," see the article by Christopher Gilley, "The 'Changing Signposts Movement' in the Ukrainian Emigrations: Myhailo Hrushevsky and the Foreign Delegation of the Ukrainian Party of Social Revolutionaries," *Jahrbuecher fuer Geschichte Osteuropas*, B. 54, H.3, (2006): 345-374. See also Gilley's larger study, *The "Change of Signposts" in the Ukrainian Emigration: A Contribution to the History of Sovietophilism in the 1920s* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sarah Lennox, and Susanna Zantop, eds., *The Imperialist Imagination: German colonialism and Its Legacies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Munich: Beck, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> Eric Weitz, "Germany and the Ottoman Borderlands: The Entwining of Imperial Aspirations, Revolution, and Ethnic Violence," in *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, ed. by Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 152-171. Weitz insists that Germany's real colonial mission was in the Middle East. "Notably, the centrality of the Ottoman borderlands (and later, republican Turkey) to German imperial ambitions prevailed through all the various regime and territorial changes that both countries experienced: Imperial, Weimar, and Nazi Germany." (154)

Catholic Church and the Polish language.<sup>54</sup> But the victorious powers at Versailles recognized a new Poland, reborn from the partitions by the Prussian, Austrian and Russian monarchs, and Germany was left to nurse its colonial ambitions until the next world war. In the wake of the Fischer controversy of Germany's war aims in World War I, several German historians and historians of Germany have explored the links between the two world wars.<sup>55</sup>

### **Interwar Poland and the Ukrainian Question**

A parallel and different form of colonialism shaped the fate of Ukrainians who ended up in interwar Poland, thanks to the Treaty of Riga that temporarily "resolved" the border conflicts between a new Poland and a new Soviet Russia. The subjection of Poland to the Minority Treaties of the League of Nations as conditions for their membership in the new organization suggested the international community's anxieties about how a newly independent Poland would treat its minorities. It also represented a transformation of the international legal justifications for imperial intervention in Ottoman affairs from the Congress of Berlin to a new right to intervene in the new states of eastern Europe and the Middle East as part of the minority protection clause.<sup>56</sup> Still, it ought not to be surprising that a nation-state built out of, by and against three empires (German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian) might exhibit what has been recently called an "imperial situation."<sup>57</sup> The authors of this provocative manifesto of the new imperial history insists that "nationalism can serve the role of the imperial hegemonic discourse just as well as any old-time imperial project." (131). The examples they give are "the modern history of Russia, Pakistan, or Georgia," but interwar Poland also exhibited many of the features of this "imperial" situation.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> William Hagen,

<sup>55</sup> See Peter Borowsky, *Deutsche Ukrainepolitik 1918. Unter besonderer Beruecksichtigung der Wirtschaftsfragen* (Luebeck/Hamburg, 1970); Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> Carole Fink,

<sup>57</sup> Ilya Gerasimov, Sergey Glebov, Marina Mogilner, "The Postimperial Meets the Postcolonial: Russian Historical Experience and the Postcolonial Moment," *Ab Imperio* 2/2013: 97-135.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129. The authors define the "imperial situation" as a "shorthand to designate the vision of empire as an irregular assortment of coexisting different regimes of domination, based on incompatible principles of groupness and hierarchies of status, with unequal mutual rates of exchange." This original definition (2004) is now supplemented. "Empire' is a meaningful analytical concept as a context-setting category that frames the historical reconstruction of a historical context, and creates a critical perspective on boundaries and thematization of historical experience, thus ensuring that scholars do not fall prey to the discursive power of totalizing and one-dimensional categories of the modern mindset." (129, reference to Alexander Semyonov, "Empire as a Context-Setting Category," *Ab Imperio*, 2008/1: 199.

Unlike postwar Germany, which in its “decolonization” became much more ethnically homogeneous than the Wilhelmine Reich had been let alone the wartime occupation empire, Poland not only appeared anew on the maps of Europe after more than a century of absence, but emerged in part due to the wartime anti-colonial rivalries on the Eastern Front which had the Russians, the Germans and the Austrians all promising some form of resurrected Polish state combining the parts in the hands of the enemies and, of course, under the protection of the presumed victors in the war. That inter-imperial rivalry was not only about promises for postwar statehood, but also involved the outfitting of Polish legions, out of which came the postwar leader of the newly independent Poland, Jozef Pilsudski. The Soviet-Polish-Ukrainian-Lithuanian wars that settled Poland’s eastern frontier also left Poland with a population that was one-third minority—Ukrainians, Jews, Belarusians, and Lithuanians above all.<sup>59</sup> In the interwar years, the Poles resorted to various resettlement programs to “bolster” their “too ethnically mixed” borderlands. The Poles even referred to those ethnic Polish peasants they sent to their eastern borderlands, the *kresy*, as colonists. In 1934 the Polish government renounced its adherence to the League of Nations Minority Protections sanctions. Moreover, the Polish state placed increasing restrictions on minority political and cultural life; this gave rise to minority nationality opposition groups, some of them advocating terrorist tactics and the violent overthrow of the constitutional state.

Whether Poland can be considered to act toward its minority populations like an empire does toward its colonies in this period is the subject of debate among scholars.<sup>60</sup> Tim Snyder’s book about Henryk Jozewski is a good illustration of the utopian ideology that emerged out of this new interpretation of a multiethnic *Rzeczpospolita* and the contradictions of colonialism that consigned it to failure. Jozewski, an artist who “had been sent to the eastern province of Volhynia in 1928 to stop the spread of communism from the Soviet Union to Poland,” but, “in 1919 and 1920 had directed intelligence operations for a Polish paramilitary organization in Ukraine in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution.” The “Volhynia Experiment’ can be seen as an attempt to hold back the tide of time, to preserve the native Ukrainian-Polish-Jewish social order, while tolerating emerging modern national differences. It can also be understood as a kind of alternative modernity, a multiculturalism *avant la lettre*, in which state policies were designed not to build a single nation, but rather to accommodate the inevitable differences among several.” Snyder sees the failure of this “experiment” due to being “overwhelmed by forces beyond Jozewski’s control,” among which were the Soviet Ukrainian famine, ethnic cleansing of Poles in Soviet Ukraine in 1935-36, and executions of about 100,000 Soviet citizens accusing of spying for Poland in 1937-38. Also key to the end of the experiment was Poland’s move to the right and a new hostility toward the national

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<sup>59</sup> Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Rzeczpospolita wielu narodow* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1985).

<sup>60</sup> A fascinating recent exchange between Roman Szporluk and Andrzej Nowak in *Ab Imperio* focused mostly on interpretations of *Rzeczpospolita* of the era of the Grand Duchy of Poland and Lithuania, but didn’t touch on twentieth century history. See “Conversation between Andrzej Nowak and Roman Szporluk *Was Poland an Empire?*” pp. 23-42.

minorities. Jozewski was forced to resign. Snyder sees “political extremists” from communism and nationalism taking their revenge on this voice of moderation and tolerance.<sup>61</sup> As Snyder would concede, the “Volhynia Experiment” was just that, a single instance of alternative policy, a “colonialism with a (more) human face” than what was the norm for the rest of the Second Republic.<sup>62</sup> Snyder has also uncovered the story of Jozewski’s involvement in Polish Military Organization and its Second Department that “oversaw the secret re-creation of a Ukrainian General Staff (and intelligence service) on Polish soil, and cooperated with Ukrainian agents in missions inside Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s.” He notes that the “designer of the Promethean project which aimed to “draw Ukrainians in the Soviet Union toward Warsaw” was Tadeusz Holowko, “like almost everyone one of this mileu, . . . was a onetime socialist who was born a Russian subject.”<sup>63</sup>

Out of this conjuncture in Polish history emerged a Ukrainian opposition that targeted not only nearly all Polish politicians and officials, but also Ukrainian liberals, and Jewish politicians.<sup>64</sup> Pavlo Khrystiuk’s Ukrainian Social-Revolutionary critique of Russian imperial, liberal, Bolshevik, and Central Power imperialism was not the only response to the revolution and civil war in Ukraine. Out of similar circumstances came also the right-wing response to Russian and Polish imperialism, most notably the writings and career of Dmytro Dontsov and his contributions to later radical right-wing Ukrainian politics in the OUN and UPA. Dontsov devised a nationalist ideology for struggle against Russian Bolsheviks which often imitated certain features of Bolshevism, as it did from Italian fascism.<sup>65</sup> Later, under the leadership of Stepan Bandera and Stetsko, the Ukrainian movement found common cause and solidarity with fascist movements in Croatia, Slovakia, and Italy; eventually the OUN and UPA cast their lots with the Germans as the lesser of two

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<sup>61</sup> Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist’s Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. xii-xv.

<sup>62</sup> Cornelia Schenke, *Nationalstaat und nationale Frage: Polen und die Ukrainer, 1921-1939* (Hamburg: Doelling und Glitz Verlag, 2004); Werner Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik. Staatsmacht und oeffentliche Ordnung in einer Minderheitenregion 1918-1939* (Cologne: Boehlau, 1999). Tarik Amar, in “The Making of Soviet Lviv,” also puts Jozewski “experiment” in context. Jozewski was “equipped with special powers” and “conducted a policy of state assimilation, modernization, and limited authoritarianism to restrict the influence of both Polish and Ukrainian nationalis in Volhynia and create an example of Ukrainians loyal to the Polish state—situated on the Soviet border and thus also directed, in defense as well as possibly offensively, against Soviet nationality policy.” (46n).

<sup>63</sup> Snyder, *Secret War*, pp. xviii-xxi.

<sup>64</sup> Ryszard Torzecki, *Kwestia ukrainska w Polsce w latach 1923-1939* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989).

<sup>65</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919-1929* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1980); and a forthcoming dissertation by Trevor Erlacher at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

imperial evils, but became part of the brutal colonial rule that was the Nazi occupation of Ukraine and Poland.

Dontsov's anti-imperialism did not come with a program of social revolution and also tended to essentialize Ukraine's enemies in a static and monolithic Russian or Polish imperialism and advocated a Ukraine for Ukrainians only that was also characteristic of several postwar (WWI) and interwar nationalist movements (again, see Croatia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and others). The *Ab Imperio* authors cited earlier also warn us against this kind of nationalism that "essentializes and totalizes" empire. In a caution that we shall return to toward the end of this essay, Gerasimov, Glebov, and Mogilner declare that "in order for the true emancipation of postcolonial thinking from the hegemony of the imperial episteme, the very hegemonic and monological status of the latter should be debased through desconstruction." Furthermore, "for as long as the 'imperial situation' is not 'disenchanted' and deconstructed, and for as long as we cannot see it as a mundane reality produced by the interplay of regular social actors and structures instead of the mysterious omnipotent "empire (whether a 'dark force' or a 'benevolent power')." (128)

### **New Wartime Occupations**

For those who survived these assaults on their livelihoods, their language, their religion, their elites, World War II brings a new set of wars and occupations, including the forced annexation of Eastern Galicia as western Ukraine in 1939, the occupation of all of Soviet Ukraine, including the recently annexed and Sovietized western provinces. In these tragic years, Ukraine fell under several murderous occupation regimes, again giving the inhabitants of the lands of historic Ukraine a learning experience in comparative empires: Hitler's Nazi empire (and an auxiliary Romanian occupation in the name of the Axis powers) and serial Soviet occupations. Nazi Germany viewed Ukrainian peasants as *Untermenschen* and treated them accordingly, whether in prisoner-of-war camps, concentration camps, or as *Ostarbeiter*.<sup>66</sup> Nazi treatment of Poles was close to that standard, and, of course, for the Jews, Nazi rule was devastating.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> For authors who make an explicit reference to the Nazi empire and its colonial policies, see Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Allen Lane, 2008); for two classic studies that predate the "imperial turn", see Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944) and Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (New York: Macmillan, 1957); on starvation under Nazi rule in Ukraine, see Karel Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine, 1941-1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2004).

<sup>67</sup> Jan Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); on Jews under German occupation in former Soviet territories, see Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey S.

The Red Army and NKVD executed a conquest and occupation of what had been eastern Poland and, through an orchestrated referendum, became western Ukraine and Belarus.<sup>68</sup> In an eerie repetition of the Russian Army in 1914, the Red Army now invaded Eastern Poland to “liberate” their Ukrainian and Belarusian brothers from the Polish yoke. And also in eerie repetition, Metropolitan Sheptytsky and the revived Greek-Catholic Church priesthood of the interwar period was arrested and deported to Stalinist camps, where most of them perished.<sup>69</sup> Once again the Greek Catholic Church went underground, this time until the Gorbachev reforms that ushered in the perestroika in Ukraine, as throughout the Soviet Union. And so the lands and populations that had witnessed, suffered from, or perpetrated the *holodomor* now became one of the bloodiest sites of the Holocaust; and once again the fates of Jews, Ukrainians, Poles and Russians (as well as many others) were entangled in brutal, fatal and genocidal wars.

Although I was not an admirer of former President Viktor Yushchenko and his politics of historical memory, but, of course, he took on a very difficult task of reconciling the conflicting memories of Ukraine’s 20<sup>th</sup> century. He honored his own father’s memory during one of his visits to Auschwitz, and, together with his efforts to provide greater public acknowledgement of the *holodomor* and its consequences, these official acts illustrated the multiple colonial rules that had as their targets and victims Ukrainians and Jews and often Russians and Poles as well. Stalinist collectivization was an alternate version of this colonial view of large parts of humanity as expendable material in the building of a greater, imperial civilization. Ukrainians perished in the largest numbers, but we also know of the very devastating effects on Kazak society of the sedentarization campaign there that made for a peculiar variation on the all-Union collectivization drives. A left-wing sociologist, Alvin Gouldner, several decades ago described Stalin’s collectivization as a form of inner colonialism.<sup>70</sup>

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Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941-1945* (Armonk, 1993).

<sup>68</sup> Jan Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Tarik Cyril Amar’s Princeton University dissertation on serial occupations of Lvov, “The Making of Soviet Lviv;” further on Vynnytsia under German rule and during Soviet “liberation,” see Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War:: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). On the fate of Jews under Soviet rule, see Dov Levin, *The Lesser of Two Evils. Eastern European Jewry under Soviet Rule, 1939-1941* (Philadelphia, Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995/5755). For other “imperial” comparisons, see Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914-1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State, 1939-1950* (Edmonton, 1996).

<sup>70</sup> See “Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism, *Telos* (Winter 1977-78) 34: 5-48; the editor’s introduction offers Gouldner’s analysis as a much better response to the



This sort of variation in colonial practice, by the way, was not unusual in other historic empires, above all those about which we know the most, the British and the French. British rule in Ireland differed significantly from the Raj in India, and yet again from its policies in Australia or Canada. France's colonial rule was adapted for differences in Indochina and Algeria, to name just two. And so too Stalin's colonial policies, everywhere brutal and exploitative and in most places murderous, varied from region to region and over time.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Evolution of Empire and Anti-Colonialist Thought in Post Stalin Ukraine**

The late war (WWII) and early postwar relaxations of Stalinist propaganda, censorship, and ideology, allowed for a brief revival of anti-colonial writing, a resurgence in the 1960s under Communist Party First Secretary Petro Shelest. Ivan Dziuba's *Internationalism or Russification?*<sup>72</sup> poses the harms of Soviet policies in Ukraine in the 1960s as a legacy of Russian colonialism; again, Dziuba and like-minded critics were repressed while the Soviet and party leadership proclaimed their leadership of the anti-imperialist world against the United States and its imperialist allies. The purge of Ukrainian intellectuals that accompanied the takeover in Kyiv by Shcherbytskyi silenced once again any discussion of the colonialist aspects of Soviet rule in Ukraine. A parallel and related response to the "imperial situation" of the post-Stalin era was the coalition of Petro Grigorenko and the movement of the Crimean Tatars, a reminder of a doubly oppressed minority of Soviet Ukraine. Grigorenko had distinguished himself as an officer of the Soviet Army, occupying a niche that had a long imperial heritage, an ethnic Ukrainian serving the all-Russian fatherland.

Finally, at the very end of this latest chapter of Soviet colonial rule in Ukraine, Ukrainians were called up to fight another colonial war, the Soviet war in Afghanistan. What started as a war with an army still shaped by the legacy of

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publication of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* than "a few half-baked apologies by notorious party hacks such as Althusser." Gouldner also meant to answer Trotsky's critique of Stalinism as the "degeneration of the workers' state." Another scholar who proposed a model of internal colonialism for the British empire and nation is Michael Hechter. See his *Internal Colonialism. The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (London: Routledge, 1975). Late Soviet-era and post-Soviet studies scholars, including Alex Motyl, adapted Hechter's model for Soviet history.

<sup>71</sup> For recent treatments of Stalinism as imperialism and colonialism, see Joerg Baberowski, "Stalinismus als imperiales Phänomen: die islamischen Regionen der SU 1920-41," in Stefan Plaggenborg (ed. *Stalinismus, Neue Forschungen und Konzepte* (Berlin, 1998): 113-150; and Baberowski, "Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit: Kolonialismus und zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und in der Sowjetunion. Kolonialismus also Projekt der Moderne," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47 (1999), H. 4: 482-503.

<sup>72</sup> Original Ukrainian edition, *Internationalizm chy rusyfikatsiia? Sumni storinky istorii* ()

victory in World War II, the Soviet Army fought its last war and, together with the Soviet empire itself, was “nationalized” in ways resembling 1917 as moves toward the decolonization of the USSR. And so, ironically, another war helped to provide the context and conditions for the reemergence of an independent Ukraine and the beginnings of a new chapter in decolonization, both at home and in its relations with Russia and other post-Soviet states.

The other event that helped bring about the end of the Soviet Union was the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, a disaster that devastated large parts of Ukraine and Belarus and have left known and unknown demographic, genetic, radiation, and other legacies. The links between Chernobyl and the Holodomor have been made by many artists and intellectuals, but none perhaps as poignantly as Lena Kostenko.<sup>73</sup> What links these two tragedies is the colonialist attitude of the Soviet regime in Moscow toward the lives and even the natural environments of its subject peoples. And Chernobyl, too, with the continuing health and environmental fallout from the explosion and meltdown, is a legacy of colonialism that contemporary Ukraine must add to a very long list of challenges.

### **Some Preliminary Concluding Reflections**

Colonialism did not cause the holodomor in Ukraine in 1932-33 any more than it did the Irish famine of 1846-52 or the Bengal famine of 1943, but it did provide a context, an ecology, in which ruling elites and their bureaucracies were able to achieve new highest stages—or, more accurately, lowest stages—of colonialism under the party-state dictatorships of Stalin, Hitler, later Mao, and Pol Pot. Hannah Arendt made the connection between the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin and the British concentration camps in South Africa during the Boer War. World War II contributed to the erosion of the distinction between colonial war and “civilized” modern (mostly European) warfare. It was the first conventionally recognized genocide in the Turkish army’s murder of fleeing Armenian subjects in 1915, but this genocidal behavior had its parallels in other borderlands and at later date.

What we know about colonialism, however, does not make it easy to cast blame on strictly national or ethnic markers. Joseph Vissarionovich Dzhugasvili Stalin was not an ethnic Russian, now were key members of his entourage engaged in policy toward Ukraine. Lazar Kaganovich had roots in Ukraine, but like many diaspora nations, identified with the metropolitan center and its culture over the colonial provinces.<sup>74</sup> The Ukrainian Communist Party itself had ethnic Ukrainians, Poles, Russians and Jews, and an occasional Bulgarian, also a ruling pattern not unusual for modern empires. The fact that none of these men were ethnic Russians, however that slippery concept is applied in these settings, does not mean that they incapable of brutal colonialist rule and warfare, including, in the case of the

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<sup>73</sup> And Adriana Petryna,

<sup>74</sup> For some interesting reflections on Stalin’s imperial identity, see Alfred J. Rieber, “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands,” *American Historical Review* 2001 (106): 1651-1691.

*holodomor*, of warfare against civilians of their “own” empire. And we know that what is called “hybridity” of identity by post-colonialist scholars can easily be rendered as collaboration or outright treason by those in the national struggle for liberation and those against whom they struggle.

The self-critical reflections of Memmi in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* await their Ukrainian interpretation.<sup>75</sup>

A recent NYT article outlined the pressures that Russia’s political and business leaders are placing on former Soviet states that are cozying up to possible European Union membership. And so we are reminded that shedding imperial habits and colonial identities has never been easy, and might in fact be an endless process. And in fact, the appeal of Glebov, Mogilner, and Gerasimov is to Russia and Russians, who also experience continued double as colonies, or semi-colonies of the West (and possibly China in the future), and finding new ways and reviving old ones to establish domination in their former imperial realm. Russians, too, need to decolonize together with Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Poles and Jews.

I end with a final consideration of the colonial model not from the British empire, or the Russian and Soviet ones, but from a frustrating example of the United States’ own difficulties in decolonizing, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Annexed by the United States in a colonial war against imperial Spain, the United States finally granted Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship in 19; but without the right to vote in U.S. elections on the mainland, and most importantly, without a right to determine its own status as an island, whether as a state of the U.S., an independent nation, or to continue the current status quo as commonwealth, with all the benefits and deficits that come with that. The Congress of the United States reserves the right to itself to determine the status, despite frequent referendums that were supposed to start a discussion in Washington, D.C. and despite a Republican Puerto Rico Governor Carlos Romero Barcelo bringing the case of Puerto Rico before the United Nations Committee on Decolonization.<sup>76</sup>

Pavlo Khrystiuk saw his own “Notes and Materials Toward a History of the Ukrainian Revolution” as one chapter in a broader story of “intensified efforts on the part of oppressed peoples everywhere to throw off the shameful and heavy yoke of national oppression”, but also the story of the “world-wide struggle of working and exploited classes against the contemporary bourgeois capitalist socio-economic system and for a new socialist society.” (Foreword). So, too, the history of the famines in Ukraine, above all the one in 1932-33, but also the ones in 1921 and 1947, are part of that story the worldwide struggle against oppression. And to return to Raphael Lemkin and his campaign to have the international definition of genocide include social and political groups as possible victims and the open rejection of that expanded definition by the Soviet Union and New Zealand and the

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<sup>76</sup> Jose Trias Monge, *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World* Monge is a distinguished Harvard Law School graduate, constitutional lawyer and the first Puerto Rican appointed to the Puerto Rican Supreme Court in .

tacit rejection of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States,<sup>77</sup> reflected an earlier moment in the history of anti-colonialism, the Wilsonian moment, when the victorious Allied powers imposed their international standard of minority rights protection on the defeated successor states to Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, but rejected any suggestion that conditions in their own colonies might warrant some international scrutiny and possibly monitoring as well.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> See comments and dissertation of Douglas Irvin, Ph. D. candidate, Rutgers University, who is writing a dissertation about the life and career of Raphael Lemkin.

<sup>78</sup> Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia, 2007); see chapter 4, "The Global Moment of the Russo-Japanese War: the Awakening of the East/Equality with the West (1905-1912)," pp. 71-92. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford U Press, 2007), pp. 5-6; see also Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History* 15:1 (2004): 31-63. On East Central Europe, see Victor S. Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe 1914-1918: A Study in Wilsonian Diplomacy and Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).