# 1

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ukraine's long and turbulent history has been marked by devastation, suppression and discontinuity, the absence of any lasting independent statehood, and the division of ethnically Ukrainian lands among foreign conquerors and more powerful neighbours. Located at the former crossroads between Europe and Asia, where the Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim worlds confronted one another, this rich and fertile land was for centuries a magnet for invaders and colonizers, including Tatars, Poles, Turks, Russians and Germans. Over the ages Ukraine's history was rewritten by its foreign rulers in accordance with their own political and imperial interests, thus obscuring the story and aspirations of one of Europe's largest nations. Indeed, having remained a submerged nation for so long, Ukraine's resurgence during the final years of the USSR's existence was to take many by surprise and not only to alter the political geography of Europe but also to challenge the traditional ways of looking at Russia and Eastern Europe.

## *Early history*

The Ukrainians, like the Russians and Belarusians, belong to the eastern branch of the Slavs. All three trace their historical ancestry to the state of Kyivan (Kievan) Rus, which arose in the ninth century and developed into a vast and powerful realm. The centre of this conglomerate of diverse territories and principalities was Kyiv and the area around it, that is, the heartland of present-day Ukraine. Kyivan Rus adopted Christianity from Byzantium in 988, along with Old Church Slavonic, with its Cyrillic script, which became the liturgical and literary language. The Kyivan state's famed 'golden domed' capital flourished as a jewel of East Slavonic culture and its rulers formed dynastic links with many of medieval Europe's royal families as far away as France and Norway.

But hardly had Kyivan Rus reached its apogee in the first half of the eleventh century under Volodymyr (Vladimir in Russian) the Great and Yaroslav the Wise when external and internal factors began to weaken it. Under constant pressure in the south and east from incursions by various nomadic peoples, the state's unity was undermined by feuding among the principalities and internecine struggles for the Kyivan throne. The Kyivan realm was transformed into a loose dynastic confederation and powerful new regional centres began to emerge. Furthermore, the establishment of new international trade routes which bypassed Kyiv brought economic problems and stagnation. By the time that Moscow, the future centre of the Russian Muscovite state, was first mentioned in a chronicle in 1147, the process of political fragmentation was well advanced and Kyiv's primacy was fading. When in 1169, Andrei Bogolyubsky, the ruler of the north-eastern territories of Vladimir-Suzdal (from which the Muscovite principality was to emerge in the fourteenth century) sacked and plundered Kyiv, he spumed the old capital as his seat, preferring to build up a new power centre in Vladimir.

Kyiv did not regain its former importance and in 1240 the city fell to the Mongols. The Mongol invasion destroyed the fragile remnants of Kyivan Rus and precipitated the trend towards separate development among the eastern Slavs. In the western part of present-day Ukraine, however, the principalities of Galicia and Volhynia managed to hold out for another century and kept alive the Kyivan heritage until they were absorbed by Poland and Lithuania. The latter subsequently also extended its rule to Kyiv. After the union of Poland and Lithuania in 1569, virtually all ethnically Ukrainian lands came under Polish rule. During this period, the Ukrainians (and Belarusians) were usually referred to as Ruthenians (derived from the Latin for Rus), and the Russians as Muscovites.

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Ukrainian Orthodox nobility was pressured to adapt to Polish ways and to adopt Catholicism, the peasantry was driven into serfdom, and Ukrainian lands were colonized by Polish or Polonized magnates. In the sixteenth century, though, the Ukrainian Cossacks began to emerge as a significant military force, posing a considerable challenge for the Polish state. Initially composed of runaway peasants and frontiersmen, they established an autonomous stronghold on the lower Dnieper (Dnipro), or Zaporozhya as the area came to be called, in the no-man's land between Poland, the Crimean Tatar Khanate and Muscovy, and developed into a Ukrainian martial brotherhood. The Cossacks acted as a bulwark against the marauding Tatars from the south who treated the Ukrainian areas as a source of plunder and slaves. Unruly and rebellious as they were for the Polish authorities, the Cossacks were legendary warriors and were frequently used by the Polish state in military campaigns and to defend its borders.

In the early part of the seventeenth century, under the leadership of Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny, the Ukrainian Cossacks became the champions of Ukrainian Orthodoxy and culture, both of which began to experience a revival at this time. Kyiv once again became a centre of culture and learning, proud of the Ukrainian Orthodox tradition inherited from Kyivan Rus, but receptive to Western influences. Ironically, this religious and cultural recovery was stimulated by a split in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the religious polemics that followed it. The rupture occurred in 1596 when, as a result of the Union of Brest, some Ukrainian Orthodox leaders entered into a union with Rome to form the Uniate (or Ukrainian Greek Catholic, as it was later known) Church, which was allowed to retain its traditional Orthodox liturgy and Eastern (Greek) rites.

Poland's inconsistent policy towards the Ukrainian Cossacks and reluctance to recognize the rights which they claimed generated numerous revolts and increased the Cossacks' identification with the plight of the peasantry and the Ukrainian Orthodox cause. In 1648, under their elected leader, or *hetman,* Bohdan Khmelnytsky, they launched an uprising against the Poles (the Uniates and Jews were regarded as auxiliaries of the Poles and thus were also targets) that turned into a war of liberation and culminated in the establishment of a quasi-military independent Ukrainian Cossack state. Although Khmelnytsky won a series of impressive military victories, his search for a reliable ally against the Poles led him to conclude a treaty in 1654 in Pereyaslav with the Muscovite state. The hetman acted in the belief that the Orthodox tsar would respect the fullest autonomy of the Ukrainian Cossack state which he had created, but was to die three years later bitterly disappointed. The Muscovites not only broke their word by coming to terms with the Poles and subsequently partitioning Ukraine[1] with them, but also set about reducing Ukrainian self-rule.

Khmelnytsky's successor, Ivan Vyhovsky, reached an accommodation with the Poles in 1658 —the Treaty of Hadyach - which provided for the recognition of an autonomous Ukrainian principality as a third and equal partner in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. But shortly after defeating a Muscovite army that same year at Konotop, Vyhovsky was forced to resign by a rebellion of his officers opposed to the Hadyach compromise. A period known as 'the Ruin' began. The Cossack state split along the Dnieper River into two rival parts, with the pro-Muscovite forces on the left bank and the pro-Polish on the right bank, each with their own hetman. In 1667, the Poles and Russians concluded the Treaty of Andrusovo which formalized the *de facto* partition of Ukraine.

The hetman of Right-Bank Ukraine, Petro Doroshenko, however, sought to reunite Cossack Ukraine with the help of the Ottoman Porte and there followed over a decade of wars, with Ottoman-Ukrainian Cossack armies fighting first against the Poles and then against the Muscovites and Left-Bank Cossacks. After much devastation and loss of life, the attempt to establish a Ukrainian Cossack state under the protection of the Turks ended in failure. Between 1681 and 1686, Ukraine was again divided up among Muscovy, Poland and the Ottoman Empire (which added the southern part of Right-Bank Ukraine to Crimea and the Black Sea coast, which were already under its control).

The last attempt during the Cossack era to establish an independent Ukrainian state occurred at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was made by the hetman of Left-Bank Ukraine, Ivan Mazepa, who was a great patron of Ukrainian religious and cultural institutions. Mazepa provided Peter I with considerable Ukrainian help in his campaigns during the 1690s against the Crimean Tatars and the Turks, but the increasing burden which the tsar's subsequent war against the Swedes for control of the Baltic Sea coast placed on the Ukrainians, as well as the continuing reduction of Ukrainian autonomy, led Mazepa to switch sides. His attempt to throw off Muscovite domination by siding with Sweden's Charles XII during the Great Northern War ended in disaster: Peter the Great's victory over the Swedes and their Ukrainian allies at Poltava in 1709 sealed the fate of Ukraine and marked the emergence of Muscovy — or Russia as it was now to be called — as a major European power.

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[1] The term Ukraine (Ukraina) first appeared in a twelfth-century Kyivan chronicle and meant a 'borderland' or 'country'. In the late sixteenth and during the seventeenth centuries, it was used to denote the middle Dnieper region, which was identified with Ukrainian Cossackdom. By the middle of the seventeenth century it had become a name for all the lands embraced by the Ukrainian Cossack movement.

Ukrainians played no small role in the 'Europeanization' and development of Petrine Russia and the Russian Empire. While representatives of Ukraine's first political emigration, led by Mazepa's former chancellor Pylyp Orlyk, vainly sought international support for the Ukrainian cause, and Ukraine's political and cultural rights were being further reduced (in 1720 Peter I forbade the publication of all books in Ukrainian except those dealing with religious themes), higher clergy, scholars and cultural figures were recruited from Ukraine to serve St Petersburg; they supplied Russia with many of its leading religious and cultural figures, such as Feofan Prokopovych, Stefan Yavorsky, Maksym Berezovsky and Dmytro Bortnyansky. This 'brain drain' was facilitated by the fact that in 1686 the Ukrainian Orthodox Church had been brought under the control of the Muscovite Patriarchate. The Ukrainian Cossacks were also -to play an important role in Catherine H's wars against the Crimean Tatar Khanate and the Turks, which resulted in Russia's annexation of Crimea in 1783 and conquest of the northern coast of the Black Sea.

Gradually, Ukrainian institutions were abolished and replaced by a Russian imperial administration, and the Ukrainian Cossack gentry and clergy were assimilated. The last vestiges of Ukrainian autonomy were eliminated under Catherine II and in 1775 the Zaporozhyan Cossack fortified base, or Sich, was destroyed in a surprise attack by Russian troops returning from the Turkish front. Evidently, now that Russia had defeated the Turks, the Zaporozhyans had outlived their usefulness and St Petersburg regarded their Sich as a potential centre of rebellion and an obstacle to the imperial colonization of the newly acquired Black Sea hinterlands, which were named New Russia (Novorossiya). The Ukrainians were thereby effectively reduced to a peasant nation. Their land was treated as a mere province and was referred to as 'Little Russia' (Malorossiya).

During the eighteenth century in Polish-ruled Right-Bank Ukraine there were numerous popular rebellions, in which the peasantry was led by rebels known as *haidamaky* and Zaporozhyan

Cossacks. The largest of these occurred in 1734, 1750 and in 1768; they were crushed with the assistance of Russian forces. By the end of the eighteenth century, though, with the decline of Poland and the partitioning of its territories among Russia, Prussia and Austria, most Ukrainian lands ended up under Russian rule, with the exception of the Ukrainian parts of Galicia and Bukovyna, which were annexed by Austria. During the first half of the nineteenth century, though, the Polish influence in Right-Bank Ukraine and in Kyiv itself was to remain considerable and in fact Polish insurrectionism led the Russian imperial authorities to step up their efforts to Russify this area.

## *The making of modern Ukraine*

As Russia expanded southward to the shores of the Black Sea, the tsarist state's policies of Russification, centralization and the imposition of serfdom weakened the Ukrainian sense of identity and led to a sharp drop in the level of literacy. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, under the influence of Romanticism, a Ukrainian cultural revival got underway. In 1847 the first modern Ukrainian political organization, the secret Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, which was formed in Kyiv by young, patriotically minded intellectuals espousing Christian democratic ideals and the principle of equality between the Slavic peoples, was uncovered by the tsarist secret police. The promoters of modern Ukrainian nationhood, the most notable of whom was the poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-61), were imprisoned, exiled, or denounced as 'Mazepists' and 'separatists'. The tsarist authorities also continued to issue restrictions that virtually banned the use of the Ukrainian language. The official position was summed up by the Russian Minister of the Interior, Count Petr Valuev, who declared in 1863 that the Ukrainian language 'never existed, does not exist and shall never exist', maintaining that the 'Little Russian dialect' was but 'bad Russian spoilt by Polish influences'.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a new generation of nationally conscious Ukrainian activists appeared who were committed to obtaining political freedom and social justice for their people. In 1900, the first Ukrainian political party - the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party—was formed in Russian-ruled Ukraine in Kharkiv, but had to operate underground. Only after the Russian

Revolution of 1905 was there a brief respite which allowed the burgeoning Ukrainian national movement to surface. Ukrainian newspapers, cultural and educational societies and cooperatives proliferated, and the Ukrainian faction in the Russian parliament, or Duma, unsuccessfully pressed for greater autonomy for Ukraine and the Ukrainization of education. As the post-revolutionary wave of reaction set in, though, Ukrainian political parties were driven underground and the tsarist government renewed its campaign against Ukrainian 'separatism'. Furthermore, the chauvinistic Russian monarchist movement known as the Black Hundreds also established branches in Ukraine and openly pursued its anti-Semitic and anti-Ukrainian activity.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century the shortage of land drove more and more Ukrainians eastward in search of a better life. By 1914 an estimated 2 million Ukrainians had migrated to Siberia and Russian-ruled Central Asia. Of these, about half a million settled in Russia's Far East and 800,000 in Kazakhstan. Another 2 million Ukrainians had settled in the North Caucasus, mainly in the Kuban and Stavropol areas.

Political conditions for the Ukrainians under Austrian rule were more favourable and in the nineteenth century their national consciousness and political activity progressively developed. Here, the Ukrainian Catholic Church played an important role as a custodian and reviver of national identity. In Galicia, however, the Ukrainian national movement was confronted by Poles intent on restoring their state with its former imperial boundaries. As early as 1848, when, during Europe's 'Spring of Nations', Galicia's Ukrainians made their debut as an organized political force at the Slavonic Congress in Prague, they demanded the administrative division of Galicia into a Polish western part and eastern Ukrainian one. Subsequently, there were growing contacts and cooperation between Galician Ukrainians and 'Dnieper' (or Eastern) Ukrainians for whom Galicia served as a sanctuary from tsarist persecution and a base where their works could be published.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Galician Ukrainians stepped up their struggle for territorial autonomy and by the turn of the century some of their new political parties, inspired by the outstanding Eastern Ukrainian political thinker, Mykhailo Drahomanov (who was forced into exile by the tsarist authorities in 1876), were advocating the unification of Ukraine and its political independence. The Austrian-ruled Ukrainian lands, however, were impoverished and the social and economic problems facing the Ukrainian peasantry were acute: consequently, between 1890 and 1913 an estimated 750,000 Austro-Hungarians (from Galicia and Transcarpathia) emigrated to the United States, Canada and Brazil, while tens of thousands sought seasonal work in Germany.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Eastern Galicia, whose capital Lviv was still claimed by both Ukrainians and Poles, was a true Ukrainian Piedmont and when Russia's forces initially captured the region the tsarist regime set about suppressing the Ukrainian movement on this territory. After the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the Galician Ukrainians proclaimed the independent West Ukrainian People's Republic (the ZUNR) and this led to a war with the restored Polish state. After nine months of bitter fighting, Poland eventually managed to impose its rule over Eastern Galicia, or Halychyna, as the Ukrainians called it.

In Russian-ruled Ukraine, the fall of the Romanovs in 1917 found the Ukrainian national movement still relatively weak. After 250 years of Russian rule over large parts of Ukraine, even Russian liberals were often reluctant to recognize a distinct Ukrainian nation, language, culture and history, not to mention the political aspirations that went with them. Indeed, Russian imperial historiography had obfuscated the distinction between Rus and Russia and depicted Kyiv as the 'mother of Russian' cities. For instance, when Russia occupied Eastern Galicia in 1914, the tsarist government referred to it as an 'ancient Russian land' that was being 'reunited for ever with Mother Russia'. Deprived of schools in their own native language, of knowledge about their own history, and of their own cultural and religious institutions, many Ukrainians had come to regard themselves as *malorosy* or Little Russians, in other words as a regional offshoot of the 'Great Russian' people. The problem was exemplified by the case of the Ukrainian Mykola Hohol, who at first intended to dedicate himself to writing a 'history of our beloved, poor Ukraine' (as he put it in a letter in 1833), but who subsequently achieved world fame as the 'Russian' writer Nikolai Gogol.[2] It was thus all the more remarkable that after the overthrow of the tsarist regime the Ukrainian national movement was able to crystallize so

See George S.N. Luckyj, *Between Gogol' and Sevcenko: Polarity in the Literary Ukraine: 1798-1847,* Munich, 1971, pp. 109-14.

rapidly and, after initially demanding little more than the Ukrainization of education, the courts and administration, to launch a struggle to achieve independent statehood. In 1917 and early 1918, the Ukrainian Central *Rada* (Council), headed by the eminent historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, proclaimed first the autonomous and then, as Bolshevik Russia invaded from the north, the independent Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), which was recognized in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk by the Central Powers and reluctantly also by Bolshevik Russia. This socialist and democratic Ukrainian government was replaced in April 1918 for a few months by the conservative German-backed regime of 'Hetman' Pavlo Skoropadsky. Subsequently, former leaders of the Central Rada formed a new government known as the Directory which, under the leadership of Symon Petlyura, kept up the fight for Ukrainian independence until 1920.

During these years, Ukraine was engulfed by strife, anarchy and pogroms as Ukrainians, Russians, Germans and Poles, and the 'Blue and Yellows' (Ukrainian nationalists), Reds, Whites and Anarchists battled it out. Pressed from all sides, the Ukrainians put up a spirited fight but could not hold out and effect Ukraine's unification, which was proclaimed by the UNR and ZUNR on 22 January 1919. The following year, in a last desperate attempt, Petlyura formed an alliance with Poland's leader Jozef Pilsudski against Moscow (to the disgust of the leaders of the ZUNR), but the Soviet-Polish War ended in failure and disappointment for the UNR's forces.

Finally then, after three invasions of Ukraine, the Russian Bolshevik forces emerged victorious and established a Soviet Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). They made Kharkiv, not Kyiv, its capital. The Poles took Eastern Galicia and Volhynia, where over 5 million Ukrainians lived, and the Romanians seized ethnically Ukrainian areas in Bukovyna and Bessarabia, where there were some 750,000 Ukrainians. About 450,000 Carpatho-Ukrainians ended up under Czechoslovak rule.

Further afield, there were of course the large Ukrainian groups which had settled in North and South America, and the new Ukrainian political emigre communities in Prague, Paris and Vienna. In the east, millions of Ukrainians lived in Russia and other parts of the former Russian Empire. In 1917 Ukrainian organizations and newspapers had sprung up in the Russian Far East in Vladivostok and other centres, and subsequently the Ukrainian movement in this region had recognized the UNR. When the Bolsheviks finally established their rule in this region in 1922, they initially suppressed organized Ukrainian life, but later set up a number of Ukrainian 'national districts' where, until the second half of the 1930s, the Ukrainian language was used in schools and administration.

## *Soviet Ukraine*

Although the Ukrainian 'national revolution' of 1917-20 ended in failure, it did not spell the end of the Ukrainian national regeneration. In fact, the armed struggle for national self-determination (some pro-UNR insurgent groups fought on into the 1920s) strengthened the sense of nationhood, something that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were forced to recognize, especially in view of the weakness of their party organization and social base in Ukraine. The Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), which was formally established in July 1918 in Moscow as a regional sub-unit of the Russian Communist Party, initially numbered *less* than 5,000 members of whom the majority were non-Ukrainians. Even in 1922, when the CPU had grown to 56,000, the percentage of Ukrainians was only 23%, compared with 54% of Russians, 14% of Jews and 3% of Poles, and almost half of the membership was in the Red Army. Four years later, the first census conducted under Soviet rule revealed that the size of Soviet Ukraine's population was almost 29 million, and that 81% of the population gave their nationality as Ukrainian and 9.2% as Russian. Only 11% of Ukrainians in 1926, however, lived in the cities. In essence then, the Bolsheviks in Ukraine were an alien and urban movement in a country whose population was overwhelmingly Ukrainian and rural.

But from the very outset there was also a Ukrainian 'national Communist' current within the CPU which had unsuccessfully sought to create a Ukrainian Bolshevik party separate from the Russian one; its adherents promoted the ideas of an independent 'Soviet' Ukrainian state and were opposed to Russification and manifestations within the Bolshevik party apparatus of what they openly denounced as 'Great Russian chauvinism'. Although this 'Ukrainian' tendency was strongly opposed by the 'internationalist' elements within the CPU who wanted to secure the victory of the language and culture of 'proletarian Russia' over what they considered to be the backward and 'bourgeois nationalist' values of 'peasant Ukraine', Lenin and the Moscow leadership acknowledged the need for concessions designed to win over both the peasantry and the non-Russians.

In the early 1920s, when the future form of the Soviet multinational state was being decided, Ukrainian Communists also opposed Moscow's centralism and defended their republic's rights. In March 1922, for instance, Lenin expressed his impatience with their tendency to 'edge away from us'.[3] Soon afterwards, when it came to the actual creation of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainians came out strongly against Stalin's 'autonomization' scheme, whereby the non-Russian republics would be transformed into autonomous republics of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Along with the Georgians, they continued to press for the broadest rights for the republics. After Lenin's personal intervention, the new union took the form of a 'voluntary' federation in which the constituent republics were recognized as sovereign and equal states with the right to secede. In March 1923, that is three months after the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established, Stalin complained that the 'Ukrainian comrades', headed by the Old Bolshevik, Mykola Skrypnyk, wanted to 'obtain in the definition of the Union something midway between a confederation and a federation, with a leaning towards confederation'.[4]

During the relatively liberal 1920s, when Moscow's nationalities policy was aimed at enabling Soviet rule to 'take root' in the non-Russian republics through a combination of cultural concessions, a repudiation of the imperial Russian legacy, placation of the peasantry and the 'indigenization' of the Party and state structures (through the recruitment of native cadres and promotion of the native language), the Ukrainians had a brief chance to get on with the unfinished business of nation-state building. A crucial aspect of this was the de-Russification of Ukraine's cities and the Ukrainization of education (carried out simultaneously with a major drive to eliminate illiteracy) and of public life, and cultural and religious life. Ukrainization extended even to the Red Army and to the regions outside of Ukraine within the USSR with a large compact Ukrainian population — the Kuban, Kazakhstan and the Far East.

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[3] V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Moscow, 1966, vol. 33, p. 298.

[4] J.V. Stalin, *Works,* Moscow, 1953, V, p. 343.

In these more auspicious conditions a vibrant cultural revival began, and in a relatively short time the Ukrainians started to come into their own. While Skrypnyk and other Ukrainian Communist leaders sought to give Soviet Ukraine's sovereignty real meaning and to spur on the process of Ukrainization, Hrushevsky and other scholars returned from exile to Soviet Ukraine and contributed to die renaissance in scholarship, especially in Ukrainian studies. Even the tradition of an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church was revived in the form of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church, which was created in Kyiv in 1921 and by 1924 had thirty bishops, 1,500 priests and millions of adherents.

Disturbed by the national assertiveness of the Ukrainians and the Western, 'European' orientation of their cultural elite, in 1926 Stalin again inveighed against Ukraine's national Communists. This time he singled out the writer Mykola Khvylovy, who had advanced the cultural slogan 'Away from Moscow', and Ukraine's Commissar for Education, Oleksandr Shumsky, who argued for the right of Ukrainian Communists to run the republic without the supervision of Moscow's non-Ukrainian plenipotentiaries, as for example, the first secretary of the CPU at that time, Lazar Kaganovich. This case, the condemnation of other 'national deviationists' such as the economist Mykola Volobuev (who in 1928 argued that under Soviet rule Ukraine remained an economic colony of Russia, just as it had been under the tsars), and the growing official pressure after 1926 on the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, underlined the strictly limited nature of Moscow's concessions.

While Ukrainization continued to make rapid headway, the Soviet Ukrainian government was careful to respect the rights of the republic's national minorities. Apart from having schools and other cultural facilities in their own language, the minorities were allowed to establish their own 'national Soviets' in districts where they formed a majority of the population. Skrypnyk pressed for the similar satisfaction of the national needs of the nearly 8 million Ukrainians who, according to the 1926 Soviet census, lived in other parts of the USSR, mainly in the Russian Federation. He not only criticized the Russian Republic for not doing enough in this respect, but also demanded the transfer to the Ukrainian SSR of those adjacent areas containing Ukrainian majorities.

Beginning in the late 1920s, Stalin abandoned the policy of conciliating the peasantry and, while pursuing his relentless industrialization and collectivization campaigns, also reversed Soviet nationalities policy. While subduing the peasantry, he began purging the non-Russian elites. In Ukraine, a major show trial — the case of the so-called Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) — was staged in 1930, being its aim to discredit those representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia who had supported the UNR. During the next few years, though, it became evident that Stalin was seeking to eliminate the Ukrainians as a political factor. He carried out repeated purges of the Ukrainian cultural and political elite, destroyed the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church, terminated Ukrainization and reverted to Russification. In 1932-3, as if (as many Ukrainians believe) to break the very backbone of their nation, Stalin starved millions of Ukrainian peasants to death as a result of a man-made famine induced by the ruthless imposition of excessive grain quotas on the republic. Skrypnyk and Khvylovy both committed suicide in 1933 as the Soviet Ukraine that they had sought to build was destroyed around them. By 1938, when the young secretary of the Moscow Party organization Nikita Khrushchev was sent to Kyiv (which in 1934 had been made the Ukrainian capital again) to run the decimated CPU, it appeared that Ukraine had once again been reduced to the status of a pacified province.

## *Between Stalin and Hitler*

Meanwhile, during the inter-war period, the Ukrainians in Poland and Romania were denied self-rule and had to endure varying degrees of official intolerance and repression. Nevertheless, Polish-ruled Western Ukraine (the Polish government referred to Eastern Galicia as 'Eastern Little Poland') continued to be a bastion of Ukrainian nationalism. Within the authoritarian limits imposed by the Polish state, the Ukrainians sought to defend their rights and develop their political, cultural, and religious life as best they could through a number of legal Ukrainian political parties, an economic 'self-help' cooperative movement, educational societies, and the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. There was also more militant resistance to the Poles led by the underground Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which adopted an integral nationalist ideology and resorted to terrorist methods. The situation of the Ukrainians in Romania was even more difficult and their cultural, civic and religious life was more restricted. The OUN was also active in Ukrainian areas of Bukovyna.

In August 1939, the two great ideological rivals, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, concluded a non-aggression pact which had a secret additional protocol providing for a division of Eastern Europe into Soviet and German 'spheres of influence'. On the basis of the 'Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact', as it was called, after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, the Red Army 'liberated' the Ukrainian territories in Galicia and Volhynia. The following June, Moscow issued an ultimatum to Romania after which Soviet forces took control of the Ukrainian territories held by Bucharest and also the remainder of Bessarabia, where a Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic was established. In the newly acquired Ukrainian lands, the Soviet authorities combined Ukrainization, designed to win over the bulk of the Ukrainian population, with Sovietization, political repression and mass deportations.

During the inter-war period, the Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia enjoyed more liberal conditions, and here the Ukrainian national movement made considerable headway. In 1938, after the process of Czechoslovakia's dismemberment had begun, Transcarpathia, or Carpatho-Ukraine, received autonomy. Confronted by Hungary's claims to this territory, and unable to join with other parts of Ukraine, the Carpatho-Ukrainian government defiantly proclaimed independence in March 1939. After a secret deal between Hitler and Hungary the tiny would-be state was soon overrun by Hungarian troops.

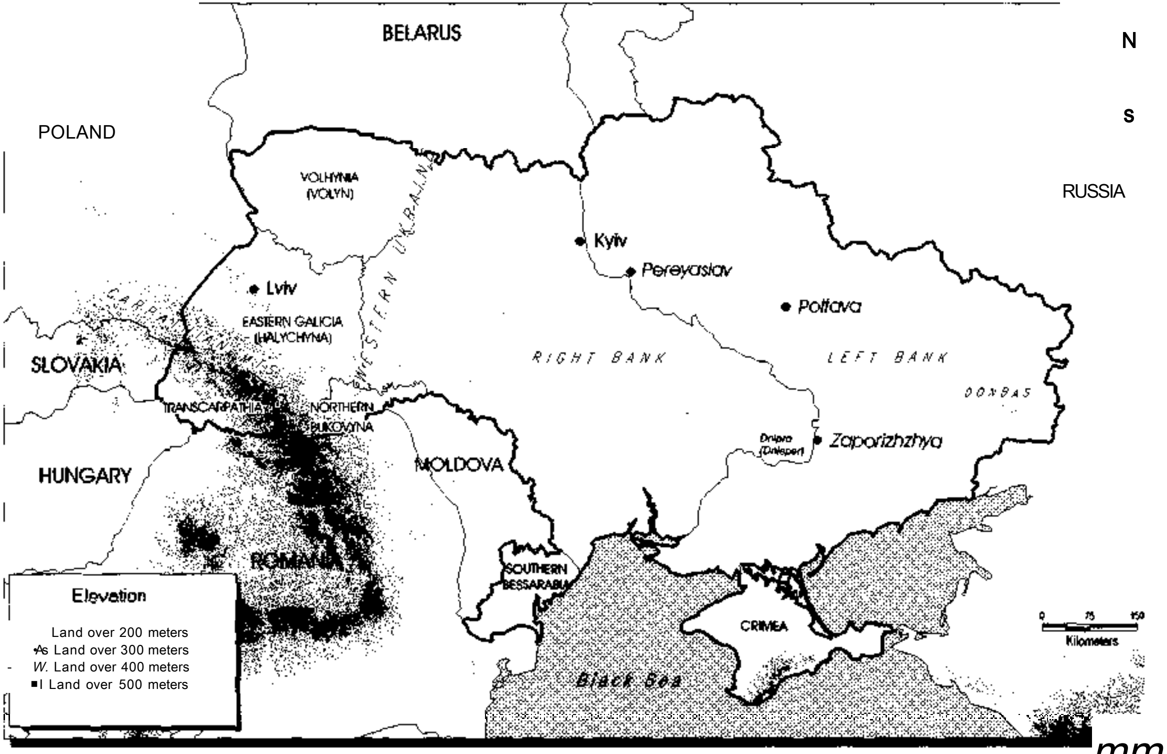
When in June 1941 the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, many Ukrainians naively welcomed them because they hoped for liberation from the Stalinist system. In Lviv, members of the radical faction of the OUN led by Stepan Bandera promptly declared the restoration of Ukraine's statehood only to discover the bitter truth about Nazi intentions in the East. The Nazi invaders imprisoned or shot Ukrainian nationalists and permitted only modest cultural and religious activity; they treated Ukraine as a colony and ruthlessly exploited its resources and population. Over 2 million Ukrainians were deported to Germany$^r$ for forced labour as *Ostarbeiter*; at the same time, some 3.3 million Soviet prisoners of war —of whom about a third were Ukrainians - perished of hunger and cold in German camps. As elsewhere, Ukraine's Jews were targeted for extermination and about 850,000 of them were killed. Meanwhile, in the south-east of Ukraine, Germany's Romanian allies occupied a large area extending to Odesa (which they called Transnistria) in which they, too, sought to suppress the Ukrainian national movement.

Millions of Ukrainians were involved in the Red Army's defence of the Soviet Union and subsequent defeat of Nazi Germany. In order to win the loyalty of the Ukrainians, Stalin permitted a number of concessions to Ukrainian patriotism, but they proved to be only temporary. In north-western Ukraine, however, by the end of 1942 Ukrainian nationalist resistance to the Germans (and Red partisans) assumed the form of guerrilla warfare waged by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Closely linked with the OUN network, the UPA grew in strength and gradually extended its activity throughout and even beyond Western Ukraine. At the height of its strength in early 1944, the UPA may have had as many as 40,000 fighters.

During the war Ukrainian-Polish rivalry persisted and the massacres which were carried out by both Ukrainian and Polish resistance forces in the areas, mainly in Volhynia, which they contested, were one of the ugly features of the struggle behind German lines. This-early example of attempted 'ethnic cleansing' claimed tens of thousands of victims on both sides and was to leave bitter memories among both Poles and Western Ukrainians.

When Soviet forces eventually pushed the Germans out of Ukraine, the UPA and OUN kept up an armed struggle against the reimposition of Soviet rule. This frequently meant that Ukrainians in one uniform fought against their fellow-countrymen wearing a different one, and the Stalinist propaganda machine went all out to depict the insurgents as Nazi henchmen and bandits. The resistance in Western Ukraine was not extinguished until the early 1950s. In order to expedite the Sovietization of this recalcitrant region, as in the Baltic states, the Soviet authorities carried out mass deportations — over 200,000 people were shipped out—and brought in tens of thousands of Russians. In 1946 the Ukrainian Catholic Church was also officially 'liquidated': its hierarchy were imprisoned and some of the terrorized clergy were assembled at the so-called Lviv Sobor (ecclesiastical council) to petition for incorporation into the Russian Orthodox Church. Driven underground, the Ukrainian Catholic Church nevertheless survived as a catacomb church.

In the Second World War, Ukraine lost between 5 to 7 million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TRANSCARPATHIA
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Land over 300 meters
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Land over 500 meters

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORIAL REFERENCES

people (the estimates vary) and suffered immense devastation. Ironically, however, the Soviet victory did bring an essential change — the unification of almost all ethnically Ukrainian lands in one, albeit 'Soviet', Ukrainian state. As a result of the Soviet Union's military might, Poland was forced to cede Eastern Galicia and Volhynia, while Romania again parted with Northern Bukovyna and Southern Bessarabia, and Czechoslovakia gave up Transcarpathia.

From a broader historical perspective, the extrication of Western Ukraine from Poland's control was especially important not only because this territorial consolidation facilitated the completion of the process of Ukrainian nation-building, but also because it essentially marked the resolution of the long-standing Ukrainian-Polish conflict. As part of the territorial settlement with the Poles, over 800,000 Poles were resettled from Ukraine to Poland, and about 500,000 Ukrainians transferred from Poland to Ukraine. As late as April 1947, however, as a part of a punitive military operation codenamed 'Wisla', some 130,000 Ukrainians living on the Polish side of the border in a region where the UPA was still active were suddenly rounded up by Polish troops and dispersed throughout the lands which Poland had newly acquired from Germany.

T-he Soviet victory brought one other significant fillip for Ukraine: for reasons of political expediency, Stalin demanded and obtained a seat for Soviet Ukraine (and Soviet Belarus) in the United Nations. Although in practice this separate membership turned out to be quite fictional, it was the first time since the early 1920s that Ukraine was represented as a state in its own right on the international stage. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian Western diaspora was revitalized and enlarged by the gradual arrival of some 200,000 Ukrainian refugees from the post-war camps for displaced persons in Germany; the vast majority of the Ukrainian *Ostarbeiter* and political refugees who had ended up in Germany and Austria at the end of the war were, however, repatriated to the Soviet Union, where, more often than not, they were punished for their 'betrayal' or 'ideological contamination'.

Any hopes that Ukraine would now be allowed a respite were soon clashed, though, for just as the enormous task of economic reconstruction got under way Stalin launched new campaigns against 'Ukrainian nationalism', and Russification and the extolling of things Russian were stepped up. Between 1946 and 1948 the CPU Central Committee passed no less than eight resolutions concerned with combating 'Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism', the influence of Hrushevsky in the historical sphere being singled out for special attention. In the middle of it all, Stalin sent his veteran troubleshooter Kaganovich to Ukraine to oversee the new witch-hunts, and in 1947 the latter took over for a time from Khrushchev as the Ukrainian Party chief. In July 1951, the general ideological offensive, which by now had made me Jewish intelligentsia a primary target, culminated in *Pravda's* notorious condemnation of Volodymyr Sosyura's war-time poem 'Love Ukraine', indicating how limited the toleration of even 'Soviet' Ukrainian patriotism had become."

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[5] *Pravda,* 2 July 1950.