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JOURNAL FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN  
HISTORY AND POLITICS

## THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY

RUSSIA AND FRAUDS

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ADAEQUATIO REI ET INTELLECTUS

JOURNAL FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN  
HISTORY AND POLITICS

THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY  
Russia and Frauds

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# FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

We bring you the third issue of AREI, the second to be published in 2023. The title of this issue alone gives an idea of what it is about: *The Use and Abuse of History: Russia and Fraud*. So, we are dealing with a highly topical issue: how the Muscovite state, later called Russia, and its propaganda have justified its territorial expansion, its aggression against other states, and its incorporations or annexation of other nations' territories.

Why this is politically topical, a year and a half after the start of Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine, probably needs no explanation. But why is it worth discussing in academia? The answer lies in the fact that not only are many issues objectively poorly researched, but also there are still many historiographical myths associated with them. Moreover, the interpretation of many issues related to the history of Central and Eastern Europe is affected by the "golden mean fallacy" – the psychological tendency to assume that a reasonably objective picture of the region's past is a compromise between different, often radically contradictory positions, with regard to both the facts themselves and the values that should form the basis of historians' opinions.

The issue begins with an in-depth interview with one of Poland's leading experts on Russia, Professor Hieronim Grala, who specializes in its early modern history and the history of relations between the Tsardom of Muscovy and the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Using erudite historical material, Grala explains both the roots of Russia's foreign policy worldview and the history of Western misinterpretation of Russia's foreign policy, thus showing, e.g., how real and false historical titles have been used and misused by Russian diplomacy throughout history.

We then invite you to read texts that illustrate the theme of the title through a wide range of historical material relating to events in the history of Russia's neighbours: Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Finland as well as the countries of the North Caucasus. The last of these are, of course, legally part of the Russian Federation, but culturally, historically

and mentally these countries belong more to Russia's neighbours than to an organic part of Russia.

This issue of AREI also contains a text on the massacre of Mstislaw, a town on the eastern edge of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania whose population was deliberately decimated by the Muscovite army during the war against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1654. You will also learn about the little-known genocide of the Cherkessians, a people who inhabited the eastern coast of the Black Sea in the nineteenth century. Then there is a study of the famous Chisinau pogrom of 1903 and how it was portrayed in the Russian state media, and we take a look at the history of the beginning of the Ukrainian struggle for independence in 1917–1918. We also show how the lies about the shelling of Mainila were used to justify the Soviet Union's treacherous attack on Finland – an aggression for which the country was expelled from the League of Nations in December 1939. Finally, we show how the Kremlin promoted the myth of the reunification of the lands of so-called 'Western Ukraine' and 'Western Belarus' with (Soviet) Ukraine and Belarus to justify its illegal annexation of the eastern part of inter-war Poland in 1939. This myth, it must be said, is deeply rooted in historiography and is revived from time to time by historians who can hardly be accused of sympathizing with the Soviet Union and its propaganda. For more on these issues, see the review of the popular *Global History of Ukraine*, published just before the Russian aggression, by Yaroslav Hrytsak, one of the best-known contemporary Ukrainian historians and intellectuals. The second review is of an extremely interesting book on Ruthenian Vilnius, written by Leonid Tymoshenko, a well-known Ukrainian scholar of the modern era.

Alongside these articles, we also publish an erudite article by the late Ihor Skochylias on the Basilians. It was to be a chapter in a book he was writing with Polish historian Andrzej Gil at the request of the Mieroszewski Centre on the history of the Union Church, now called the Greek Catholic Church. However, the untimely and unexpected death of this eminent Ukrainian scholar in the prime of his life made it impossible to realise these plans.

ŁUKASZ ADAMSKI  
Editor-in-Chief

# Interview with Hieronim Grala RUSSIAN STATE IDEOLOGY HAS BEEN REFERRING TO A SELECTIVELY TREATED PAST SINCE EARLY MODERNITY

HIERONIM GRALA

Expert on Medieval and Modern Eastern Europe, specialist in the history of Russian diplomacy, bureaucracy and culture. Professor at the Faculty of Artes Liberales at the University of Warsaw since 2013. In the years 2000–2009, he was counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the Russian Federation. Prof. Grala has won numerous awards, including the Silver Cross of Merit for the Promotion of Polish Culture (2004), and the Medal of the Commission of National Education (2005).

**Professor Grala, you are one of the top European experts on the ancient history of Russia and Muscovy.**

– Don't print that [laughs]!

**Well, we need some way of presenting you to readers... Let's talk about a subject that is politically topical. By that, I mean questions about whether the atrocities being committed by the Russian army, the occupation forces in Ukraine, as well as other warfare practices, and finally the justification for the war, are something new in the history of Russia? Or do they have a long tradition stretching back to the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries?**

– That's a subject we could talk about for hours...

**So perhaps I'll begin by asking about the ideology that we are observing in the present war. This is characterized on the one hand by a pan-Russian ideology that assumes the national and cultural unity of all Eastern Slavs. On the other hand, we see the security of Russia being called into question, the need to protect the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, or even the defence of pro-Moscow Orthodox Christianity, the "canonical" form in this interpretation. Meanwhile the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government is challenged because of its "revolutionary" nature. Something new, or tradition?**

– Well, I've tried many times to show the extent to which Russian state ideology is immersed in history and historical rhetoric – how strongly it refers to a selectively treated past. It's a kind of revolving cabinet with many drawers which are pulled out when needed, each of which contains pre-prepared cheat sheets, flashcards and notes to be used in the current propaganda.

It's true that the overwhelming majority of slogans, ideas and justifications have been working in Russian state ideology since early modernity. In fact, they've been working since the Muscovite state became a pre-modern state in place of the medieval, sovereign Grand Duchy of Moscow, when it became a state with ambitions to absorb, digest and chew up other entities of Rus'.

**So let's start with the pan-Russian ideology.**

– The problems with the title "Vseja Rusi" and claims to the patrimony of the Rurik dynasty – the so-called testament of Kalita<sup>1</sup> – and so on

<sup>1</sup> Ivan I Kalita (1288–1340): ruler from the Rurikid dynasty, son of Daniel, the first prince of Moscow, from 1325 Muscovite prince, from 1328 Grand Prince of Moscow. In 1328, he also received approval from the Mongol khan Ozbeg to collect taxes for the Golden Horde from the entire territory of Rus', thus receiving the appellation Kalita – pouch.



have been ubiquitous phenomena in the political doctrine of the Muscovite state since the time of Ivan III.<sup>2</sup> Here we are talking about the “of All Rus’” formulation in this title. Following this, such a formulation of a title is the assertion of concrete territorial claims to diverse parts of Western Rus’. After all, if we’re all masters of “All Rus’”, then we have every right to all its parts. And to avoid any doubt, there’s a further clarification that specific provinces are detailed that are regarded as their own. Since that’s Rurik’s heritage, then of course it’s ours, and that’s especially funny because, remember, for a long time in that conflict – at least until the Jagiellonian dynasty died out – on the other side of the border there were rulers who had a considerable portion of the blood of the Rus’ dynasty in their veins, and if the dynastic factor were to play a role here, from the perspective of dynastic law the Jagiellonians<sup>3</sup> have every right to rule the Rus’ lands, not only because they inherited them from their ancestors, but simply because they’re Rurikids too.

To weaken this argument, Moscow questions the legitimacy of the Gediminids and Jagiellonians. It bastardizes them. It insinuates that they are the descendants of stable boys who served the Rurikids in Polatsk, impregnated some Ruthenian princess or married the pregnant wife of their deceased liege, and therefore became the heirs to the capitals of Rus’ lands. These arguments were still being used in the era of Ivan the Terrible. They stopped using them for very mundane reasons: it suddenly turned out at the time that a large section of the Kremlin elite had Lithuanian-Ruthenian roots. But telling them every day that they were bastards wasn’t a...

#### **Political solution, as they say...**

– There’s the classic example of Ivan the Terrible beating aristocrat number one, who’s a close cousin of his kniaz Mstislavsky,<sup>4</sup> a Gediminid, screaming “You old Lithuanian dog! Ruthenian meat has grown on your bones”, etc.

In short, the idea that everything is ours and that there’s one Rus’, indivisible and ours, is very reminiscent of that nasty, difficult phrase from

<sup>2</sup> Ivan III, or Ivan the Great (1440–1505): in 1462–1505 Grand Prince of Moscow. In 1480, he commanded the Muscovite army during the Great Stand on the Ugra River, conventionally seen as the end of the 250-year Mongol yoke. In 1492–94 and 1500–03, he attacked the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, resulting in Muscovy’s conquest of much of the so-called Lithuanian Rus’ (including the Chernihiv and Severia lands and part of the Smolensk region). He introduced the two-headed eagle as the official coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Moscow.

<sup>3</sup> The Polish branch of the Gediminid dynasty, which ruled in Lithuania; derived from the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jogaila, who also became Władysław II Jagiełło, King of Poland. Dynastic connections meant that the Jagiellonians were frequently and closely related to the Rurikids (Jogaila himself was the son of Uliana, Princess of Twer).

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Fëdorovič Mstislavskij: son of a cousin of Ivan IV the Terrible, one of the main leaders of the Muscovite army during the Muscovite–Lithuanian War in 1558–70, as well as a senior court official in the Kremlin during the rule of Ivan the Terrible.

Soviet times: “Nam nužen mir, no želatel’no ves” (we need the peace, but preferably the whole).

**That will be untranslatable into English. Because “mir” means both peace and world.**

– We need both peace and the world, ideally all of it [laughs]. In any case, that approach has been around for a few hundred years. The nineteenth-century ideology, when that was the justification for the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – grabbing the lands of today’s Ukraine and Belarus – didn’t come up with anything new. Solovyov, Klyuchevsky and Karamzin<sup>5</sup> actually worked on material prepared by diaks<sup>6</sup> and knizhniks<sup>7</sup> from the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. I’d also remind you that the scale of this appetite was also nothing new, because even in those distant times they were working out how to make things that weren’t Russian part of Rus’, which must have seemed dubious even to people at the time. So, we take Astrakhan, which had nothing to do with Rus’,<sup>8</sup> but we come up with the idea that, phonetically, Astrakhan actually resembles the Tmutarakan<sup>9</sup> of Old Rus’ and it’s the same. It’s the same.

If a Rurik is a kind of rotating figure because even enemies of Russia can invoke him, we can point to an ancestor Jagiellonians can’t refer to: the Roman trace, Octavian. Because the rulers of Moscow supposedly directly derive from Octavian’s brother Prus, who never actually existed. Prus and Rus are phonetically similar, but it’s also a prospect, God willing, for Prussia...

**Of course...**

– So Prussia can be tacked on too. And so on, and so forth. All these wretched sermons, they’re all stuck onto the historical material in some way.

**I take it that the name Muscovy, which right now many in Ukraine propose to restore, was also a response to those claims of the elites of the time of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state and Poland. Correct?**

– It’s more complicated than that. Firstly, this term appeared in the West at the time when the Muscovite state, the Grand Duchy of Moscow,

<sup>5</sup> Sergej Solov’ëv (1820–1879), Vasilij Kliučevskij (1841–1911), Nikolay Karamzin (1766–1826): Russian historians, each of whom wrote a fundamental work on the past of the Russian state.

<sup>6</sup> Clerical official in the Muscovite and Russian state.

<sup>7</sup> Intellectual in medieval Muscovite Rus’.

<sup>8</sup> A former territory of the Golden Horde, from 1459 an independent state (khanate), conquered by Ivan the Terrible in 1556.

<sup>9</sup> Capital of one of the sovereign Rus’ principalities, extant in 965–1094 (?) in what is now Crimea, previously part of the Kazar Khaganate.

was indeed a Rus' *udel* principality.<sup>10</sup> This did not fully overlap with the concept of Rus' – they needed to be separated. But Muscovy is a technical term. Muscovy was the lands surrounding Moscow. Finally, the problems in Western Europe, even among cartographers, regarding the whereabouts of *Russia Rubra*,<sup>11</sup> *Ruthenia*,<sup>12</sup> or *Ruthenia Alba*,<sup>13</sup> etc., are quite large. Remember that the term *Ruthenia Alba*, i.e., Belarus, was also sometimes used, for example, for Veliky Novgorod. On some cartographical sketches, Halych and Volhynia also suddenly turn out to be *Ruthenia Alba*, which comes as a complete surprise to us.

The whats, hows and whys are a long and complicated discussion. Certainly, in the West for a very long time the concept of *Moscovia* was used as a purely technical concept to precisely define this political entity in the concrete boundaries subject to the authority of the person sitting in the Kremlin.

The perspective of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was indeed somewhat different because, for us, when this Muscovite ruler started giving himself titles such as *Gosudar' Vseja Rusi i velikij knjaz' moskovskij*, the addition of “all Rus'” means that his claims were expanded beyond the borders of his own state. This was dangerous for us, so we responded: “You are not *Vseja Rusi*, you are Muscovy, *Moscovia*, that's it. Because *Russia*, *Ruthenia*, is us”.

**But was this term “Muscovy” the only one used by the ancestors of today's Poles or Ukrainians?**

– No. We have a classic example from political terminology, from Ukraine, that contradicts that. I mean Khmelnytsky's speech to the Cossack elites in Pereiaslav, when he very clearly distinguished the tsar of Russia – he distinguished Russia from Rus' (Ruthenia). That's the most interesting thing. Look, a few times in this fierce speech he said the Russian tsar, the Ruthenian nation. Intellectuals from the Mohyla circle,<sup>14</sup> the Kyiv circle, also made this distinction. So it's not the case that it was always only the concept of Muscovy that was used. What's important is something else. None of them – the Poles, Rusyns and Lithuanians – would use the concept of Rus' for Muscovy, that is Russia. And that's the key. Rus' is us.

<sup>10</sup> “Udel” principalities were states that were independent from the supreme authority of the Grand Duke of Kyiv in the Middle Ages – the early Modern era. States of this type were created under the conditions of the patrimonial monarchy as a result of feudal fragmentation.

<sup>11</sup> Also *Ruthenia Rubra*, Red Rus': historical region in the borderland of modern-day Poland, Ukraine and Belarus.

<sup>12</sup> The Latin name for Rus'.

<sup>13</sup> The Latin name for White Rus' (the eastern part of today's Belarus).

<sup>14</sup> Group of intellectuals from the Kyiv-Mohyla School (Academy), established in 1658 on the basis of the Mohyla College, founded in 1632 by Petro Mohyla, the Orthodox metropolitan of Kyiv (1596–1647).

**I see, and, in that case, what about the other element that is so present in propaganda now, the undermining of the Ukrainian government's legitimacy to hold power, given that it arrived there as a result of a coup, *gosudarstvennyj perevorot*, Majdan. Were arguments challenging the legitimacy to rule also even used with the elective kings, who actually didn't have as many rights as the hereditary tsars of Russia?**

– Of course it was. At a certain point, the Jagiellonians were regarded as bastards. Meanwhile, the competitors in the Baltic zone, the Swedish Vasas, were even seen as people not worthy of rivalry because they were the “descendants of swineherds and pork traders”, to quote a letter from Ivan the Terrible to John III Vasa,<sup>15</sup> the Swedish king and father of Sigismund.<sup>16</sup> We can go further: Stephen Báthory, an elective king, is presented as a Saracen layabout, a Turkish minion, who could not be compared to the natural monarch that the Muscovite ruler was.

The rule of all elective kings is seen as incomplete because it is elected. A very common theme in the correspondence with Vilnius and Krakow in the sixteenth century was the assertion that the king was not a true natural ruler because he depended on his magnates. As he was elected, he wasn't an absolute ruler, except it wasn't really about the elective nature, but something else.

### **What was that? The system of government?**

– Now, in Putin's system, this phenomenon is known by the resonant name “*vertikal' vlasti*”<sup>17</sup>, yet in the Russian version this “column of power” resembles a hydraulic press. There's a ruler, he presses a lever, and that's it. This can be illustrated magnificently by the mentality of the Russian elites even at the beginning of the seventeenth century – I mean the famous discussion between the boyar Golovin and our Maskiewicz,<sup>18</sup> the cavalry captain in Moscow. Golovin, who had a brother in Poland and read Polish books, a liberal and enlightened magnate, said to the Polish nobleman: “For you, your freedom is pleasant; for us, our bondage”. And this wasn't about any characteristics of a slavish soul, as they see here, but about a different understanding of the mechanism of monarchy and state.

<sup>15</sup> John III Vasa (1537–1592): King of Sweden in 1569–92. In 1572–83, fought with Russia for control over Livonia.

<sup>16</sup> Sigismund III Vasa (1566–1632): King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1587–1632, King of Sweden in 1592–99.

<sup>17</sup> *Vertikal' vlasti*, the vertical of power (Rus.) is a political term that means the hierarchical subordination of the executive authorities to each other. It is used as a cliché in modern Russian propaganda as a symbol of positive autocracy and order, allegedly characteristic of Russian reality as an integral feature of Russian political culture.

<sup>18</sup> Vicepalatinus of Novgorod Samuel Maskiewicz (1580–1632) befriended the Muscovite boyar Fyodor Golovin (Fëdor Golovin) (?–1625) during a stay of the Polish garrison in Moscow (1610–12). Upon returning from Russia, Maskiewicz wrote a diary featuring stories from the events of 1594–1621, including his discussions with his brother-in-arms, Golovin.

**So, I assume that the Muscovites and the inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had a different view of what the state is. A different ontology.**

– Either there are authorities and democratic regulators, as we have, or – as in Tsarist autocracy – the only source and guarantor of all laws is the monarch. Everybody serves the monarch. They are all *raby*, whether boyar or peasant. And so this bondage is in fact freedom because it made us equal before the majesty of the ruler. This is tortuous reasoning, of course, but this is a continuum visible from the sixteenth century until today.

This was also why the origins of the Polish kings were questioned. In fact, as long as possible, tsarist candidates were also proposed as being better for the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth because they were justified by the right of blood. Incidentally, that would rebound in an amusing way after the line of the Muscovite Rurikids died out in the late sixteenth century, when the Vasas began explaining that they were actually an offshoot of the dynasty, together with the Rurikids (as descendants of the Jagiellons, so of the Rurikids on the distaff side), and now the throne was rightfully theirs. But that's another story entirely.

**In that case, could we say that, for example, Catherine the Great's propaganda against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which pointed out that there'd been revolution there and that the Constitution of 3 May<sup>19</sup> was a toppling of the social order under the influence of dangerous French ideas – that all this propaganda that we know from the late eighteenth century was not purely instrumental? Was it partly simply an actual reflection of the beliefs of the elites of the time that the kind of Republican order they had in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was something abnormal, and dangerous for Russia?**

– Certainly. As an aside, again this is reflected in the present day. I remember a discussion on this subject in Russian media, in the press – a discussion on the legitimacy of quelling insurrections and the Third Partition from 1795. Speaking in defence of the torn-up Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the late Valeriya Novodvorskaya,<sup>20</sup> who took a terrible beating as she was told that in fact Europe, and especially the Holy See, should be grateful to Russia, and Catherine in particular, for preventing the transfer of godless Jacobin ideas<sup>21</sup> and atheist nihilism to Eastern

<sup>19</sup> Government law from 3 May: Poland's first constitution, passed by the Sejm on 3 May 1791. In 1792, Russia declared war on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the basis of the supposedly illegal nature of the constitution and persecutions of Orthodox Christians. Defeat in the war resulted in the Second Partition of the Commonwealth (1793).

<sup>20</sup> Valeriya Novodvorskaya (1950–2014): a Russian dissident.

<sup>21</sup> In this context, revolutionary liberal ideas and propaganda encouraging a coup d'état.

Europe, which thus became a bastion of fundamental Christian values. They also noted that Moscow deserved credit previously because it alone had recognized the dissolution of the Jesuit order. And, of course, the Jesuits were the elite of the Church.

This exaggeration of the radicalism and revolutionary nature of the postulates of the constitution and the uprising<sup>22</sup> is extremely characteristic. That all started a little earlier, of course, at the time of the Targowica Confederation,<sup>23</sup> because already then there were slogans presenting the constitution as threatening the social order. But after Targowica and the Second Partition – when a huge socio-political revival began among the elites, especially among Crown Poles, and there was a plethora of Jacobin clubs, etc. – of course those Jacobins had about as much in common with French Jacobinism as a pruning knife with a guillotine. Remember the caricature depicting Polish Jacobins preparing for revolution and kissing the royal hand? In the times when the skulls of Dantonists and then Robespierrians were falling, this picture did not, of course, suggest far-reaching political radicalism, yet still this Jacobin bogeyman played a colossal role. In fact, I think it was also used quite skilfully in Polish circles because it weakened the national unity.

We know that then, for instance, relations between Russia and Prussia could be so tense that Catherine and the Prussian king threatened each other with who would release Kościuszko from jail, and who would release Madaliński, right?<sup>24</sup> But they had one thing in common: preventing revolution, because at any moment the Prussians would join the struggle in revolutionary France, and Russia would guarantee that no democratic unrest would break out here. So, of course, that motif had an effect, sure. It would also have an effect later, during the November Uprising.<sup>25</sup> The representatives of the Russian authorities would tell the conservative section of the French public that the Polish insurgents were transgressors – foreigners disrupting the existing, fixed and time-honoured European order, just as they would try to persuade the Holy See that in fact a curse should be put on the rebels because they had broken a vow. What else was Mickiewicz's dispute with the pope about, if not that?

<sup>22</sup> The insurrection of 1794 against Russia and Prussia, responsible in 1793 for the Second Partition of Poland. Named the Kościuszko Uprising after its leader, Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746–1817).

<sup>23</sup> The Targowica Confederation: a confederation of opponents of the Constitution of 3 May, organized in 1792 and supported by Russia. In Poland it became synonymous with treason.

<sup>24</sup> Antoni Józef Madaliński (1739–1804): one of the Polish leaders in the Kościuszko Uprising.

<sup>25</sup> November Uprising: war between Congress Poland, the small Polish state established at the Congress of Vienna in a union with the Russian Empire, and Russia in 1830–31.

**I take it that these words of Mickiewicz's – "Ah, French and Germans! Just you you're your turn! / Soon tsarist *ukases* your ears will burn; / When on your napes you feel the scourge's blow / And behold your cities in the lurid glow [...] Then, I reckon, you'll be at a loss for words"<sup>26</sup> – are to some degree a reflection of the polemic?**

– That is disillusionment, great disillusionment, because in Mickiewicz's *Ordon's Redoubt*<sup>27</sup> we have "when a Parisian messenger licks your feet?", right? This poem also addressed the tsar: "Warsaw alone defies your power, raises a hand to you and pulls off your crown". But there's more of this in Polish literature, this disillusionment, because as I say about Horace Sébastiani,<sup>28</sup> our combatant who camped in the same tent as Polish generals, etc., and he accepted that – told the French that "there is order in Warsaw"... What were the words? "Oh Frenchmen! Are our wounds of no value for you? At Marengo, Wagram, Jena, Dresden, Leipzig, and Waterloo. The world betrayed you, but we stood firm. In death or victory, we stand by you! Oh brothers, we gave blood for you. Today you give us nothing but tears."<sup>29</sup>

**I must admit I wasn't familiar with that verse of *La Varsoviennne*.**

– As an aside, that last sentence fits perfectly with what was going on a year ago when Western governments were discussing what the scale of aid for Ukraine should be, those German helmets, first-aid kits and so on – I remember how moved Prof. Jan Kieniewicz<sup>30</sup> plucked out that very quotation in one university body.

**I'll go back a little to earlier times. From the sixteenth century, public opinion in Western Europe was affected by very critical reports about the reality in the Muscovite state. I think Sigismund von Herberstein was the author of the first such work, which then entered the canon of those seen as unfavourable to Russia. Information also certainly got through about Ivan the Terrible's oprichnina,<sup>31</sup> the Massacre of Novgorod.<sup>32</sup> In 1654, the Massacre of Mstsislaw<sup>33</sup> took place, and a year later the Sacking of**

<sup>26</sup> A translation from Adam Mickiewicz's poem "Forefather's eve".

<sup>27</sup> *Ordon's Redoubt*: a poem of the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz from 1832 on the storming of Warsaw by the Russian army during the November Uprising.

<sup>28</sup> Horace François Bastien Sébastiani (1772–1851): a Napoleonic general, participant in the expedition to Moscow, French minister of foreign affairs in 1830–32.

<sup>29</sup> Extract from *La Varsoviennne* (*Warszawianka*), a patriotic song from 1831. The lyrics were written by the French poet Jean-François Casimir Delavigne (1793–1843), influenced by the November Uprising.

<sup>30</sup> Jan Oskar Kieniewicz (born 1938): a Polish historian.

<sup>31</sup> Term for Ivan the Terrible's terror in 1565–72 against the boyars. The word comes from the Old Russian *oprich*, meaning "separately" (the organizational basis for the machine of terror was a distinct unit of the state).

<sup>32</sup> The Massacre of Novgorod in 1570: Ivan the Terrible planned the murder of the inhabitants of this merchant city, which the tsar suspected of disloyalty. At least several thousand, and perhaps more than ten thousand, people were killed.

<sup>33</sup> A massacre in Mstsislaw, a town on the eastern fringes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, committed on 22 July 1654 by the Russian army under the command of Kniaz Aleksey Trubetskoy (1600–1680). Over ten thousand townspeople were killed.

**Vilnius.<sup>34</sup> And then, in the eighteenth century, the Massacre of Praga took place – an atrocity that even today for the Polish national memory is more or less the same as the Bucha Massacre is becoming for Ukrainians. How did the Russian, Muscovite state react to the information about these acts of barbarity? Was there any sense of a need to explain themselves, or not?**

– I'd just like to go back briefly to your previous questions and make it clear that – alongside the factor of dreamed-up ethnic unity and liberation of the supposed Rus' confraternity from Polish oppression – the problem of the Orthodox religion was also very much stressed. It was advanced as an aspect of saving the true faith with a certain civilisational dimension. Remember that for two centuries this allowed the Russian state to harness an ideology that had actually been vanishing in Europe since the end of the Middle Ages, apart from the Turkish front perhaps – that of the Crusades. Ivan the Terrible marched to Polotsk, to Ruthenian lands, to one of the capitals of Rus' Orthodoxy, accompanied by clergy and blessed by the hierarchs.<sup>35</sup> He went to rescue Christian temples from the hands of "heathen Lutherans and deceitful Latinists". He attacked Livonia, which of course was never actually Russian, invoking on the one hand the imagined legacy of Yaroslav the Wise, meaning a source in a Rus' chronicle from 1030 about the construction of a fortress in the territory of the invaded Chuds.<sup>36</sup> On 30 September 2022, Vladimir Putin did the same thing when he publicly cited the legacy in Livonia.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Of Alexander Nevsky?**

– Earlier. He cited the *Primary Chronicle (Tale of Bygone Years)*. So, Yuryev, not Dorpat, not Tartu,<sup>38</sup> just the Old Russian fort of Yuryev. Full stop. And the same thing would be cited by Alexei Mikhailovich while marching on Vilnius and also aiming for Warsaw and Krakow. When the tsar set off for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after accepting the tribute of the Zaporizhian Cossacks,<sup>39</sup> Patriarch Nikon<sup>40</sup> blessed the banners because they belonged to Crusaders! They were going to liberate the Orthodox Christians, fight for their rights, and if the Orthodox

<sup>34</sup> The burning of the Lithuanian capital by the Muscovite army in August 1655, combined with pillaging the city and murdering its inhabitants.

<sup>35</sup> Ivan's Polotsk Campaign during the war with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1577–82) for rule over Livonia.

<sup>36</sup> In the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, Livonia was described as a land of Rus'.

<sup>37</sup> Speech by Putin at a meeting with young businesspeople and scholars marking the 350th anniversary of the birth of Peter the Great (9 June 2022) <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68606>> [accessed 12 September 2023].

<sup>38</sup> Yuryev, Jur'jev: Slavic name for Tartu from the *Primary Chronicle*; Dorpat was the German name.

<sup>39</sup> A reference to the events of 1654, when the Zaporizhian Cossacks along with the lands they controlled accepted the protection of the tsar. This resulted in the outbreak of war between Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

<sup>40</sup> Nikon (1605–1681): Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus' in 1652–66.



Christians didn't want this, that was another matter. Clearly they hadn't come round yet, but when we did liberate them, they would realize how lucky they'd been.

These slogans were still alive in the eighteenth century. After all, the First Partition was presented in the context of defence of dissidents' interests and rights. It was at this point that the tsar, or in fact the tsarina, became an advocate of the Orthodox ranks of subjects of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the supposedly oppressed Orthodox Christians, but also Protestants, whose Christianity had previously been questioned. Finally, this denominational moment was again used by Russia, this time Bolshevik, in the 1920s. At home, we shoot bishops, again we're delegating the patriarchy, etc., but we do not accept the autocephaly of the Polish Church<sup>41</sup> because the Orthodox Church in Poland is to be subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchy and that's that. It's an identical mechanism.

Returning to your second question: there were indeed many atrocities, but I'd divide the early modern era into two periods.

### Which?

– Up to the mid-sixteenth century and before. The fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth is a period when Muscovy was still exotic, little known, and only being recognized. This was also the reason for Herberstein's<sup>42</sup> compendium – after all, he wasn't particularly spiteful in his explanations but just wrote what he saw. Most importantly, while in the late sixteenth century Muscovy read that and gnashed its teeth and said they were ancient fairy tales, we thought it was practically an anti-Muscovite pasquill, and that was why Báthory sent it as a present to Ivan the Terrible. But when it was produced, it was received almost as an ethnographic interview, a description of customs in Moscovia. The contented Vasili III hung the famous sable fur on Sigismund von Herberstein, who he had himself portrayed in gravure for his work. So, he was rewarded for the description. His Muscovite interlocutors were not at all surprised.

But then everything started to change. Paradoxically, we changed too, because that's a good indicator. We sent Herberstein's book to Ivan the Terrible as a record, a catalogue of certain insults and accusations. However, Herberstein had previously been accused in Poland of being a Muscovite *jurgieltnik*,<sup>43</sup> and when he was riding in Krakow he had a brick

<sup>41</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church did not recognize the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland, which it received from the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1924.

<sup>42</sup> Siegmund (Sigismund) von Herberstein (1486–1566): an Austrian diplomat. Herberstein twice stayed in Muscovy, in 1517 and 1526, and in 1549 he wrote *Rerum moscoviticarum commentarii*, in which he described the history of Muscovite Rus' from ancient times until the rule of Vasili III, the Grand Prince of Moscow in 1505–33. Herberstein gave information about the country's religion, politics, economy and customs.

<sup>43</sup> An Old Polish term for corrupt officials and politicians who took a wage from foreign states.

thrown at him from a roof. So everything went awry. Why? Muscovy ceased to be as exotic as it had been under Vasili III or Ivan III. There were Dutchmen, the English company,<sup>44</sup> increasingly frequent emissaries, a growing range of diplomatic contacts – you went to Muscovy and Muscovy went too. In addition, it's worth remembering that a large number of Muscovite fugitives were enlightening European opinion. But it started from the Latskys,<sup>45</sup> and only then did the generation of the Kurbskys<sup>46</sup> describe those strange things. Descriptions also started to appear from those who served the tsars or were forced to. We have Staden,<sup>47</sup> but above all Schlichting,<sup>48</sup> who was an excellent source because being the translator of the tsar's physician for so many years meant being in the Kremlin and seeing everything from inside. Actually, he saw too much and scurried away at the first opportunity. We have the first mercenaries in the Muscovite service, who also then brought news. Admittedly, at first, service as a mercenary was quite awkward because it was a "one-way ticket", because they'd go and sign up for service without realizing that it was damn hard to return, but some managed to, including the famous Taube and Cruse.<sup>49</sup> Cruse even served in the oprichnina and served overseeing Muscovy's clients in Livonia, for example Magnus of Denmark.<sup>50</sup> But then they resisted in Vilnius, so they began to trot out pasquils on Muscovy, of course. Before that they offered – and this was an important moment – their pens to the Muscovite tsars, offered to write for Europe how things really were, that is an apologia for Muscovy and a pasquill against the Jagiellonians, our state.

So people had to come to Muscovy from the West to convince the Muscovite elite that lots of bad things were being written about them in the world. Muscovy didn't read that before, and there were two reasons for this. Firstly, not many people were able to read it. And if somebody was able, he often did not risk informing the tsar because, of course, it's easier to torture the messenger than his paymaster.

<sup>44</sup> The Moscow trading companies in the sixteenth century; the main trading partners at the time were Holland and England.

<sup>45</sup> Ivan Latsky (?–after 1552): Muscovite boyar and diplomat. In 1534 he crossed to the Lithuanian side, leaving notes about life in Muscovite Rus' and cartographical commentaries.

<sup>46</sup> Andrej Kurbskij (1528–1583): Russian aristocrat from the Rurikid dynasty, commander of the Russian army during the rule of Ivan the Terrible, essayist and religious writer. In 1564, he defected to Lithuania. In correspondence from 1564–1579, he polemicized with the tsar on political and religious topics, and in his works he described Russia's history and customs.

<sup>47</sup> Heinrich von Staden (1542–1579): German burgher, adventurer, supposed oprichnik of Ivan the Terrible, author of several reports on the Russians and Russia itself, where he lived in 1564–76.

<sup>48</sup> Albert Schlichting (?–?): German from Pomerania, the author of two pamphlets about Russia written in the mid-sixteenth century. Schlichting was taken into Russian bondage in 1564 and later served as a translator and servant of the tsar's doctor in 1568–70. In 1570, he fled to Lithuania, where he wrote accounts of his stay in Moscow.

<sup>49</sup> Johann Taube (?–?) and Elert (Eilhardt) Kruse (?–1587): Livonian adventurers, authors of a report (pamphlet) on the rule of Ivan IV. Initially prisoners of Muscovy, then servants and counsellors of the tsar. Through Taube and Kruse, Ivan the Terrible negotiated with Duke Magnus of Livonia. In 1570, Taube and Kruse fled, before defecting to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

<sup>50</sup> Magnus of Livonia (1540–1583): Danish duke, "King of Livonia" in 1570–77. During the First Northern War (1563–70), he was actively supported by Ivan the Terrible, who created the Livonian duchy for Magnus.

They also didn't realize the power of the printed word. I once wrote about the phenomenon of Orsha propaganda: that Konstanty Ostrogski's victory over Chelyadnin's army at Orsha,<sup>51</sup> apart from stabilizing the front and preventing further Muscovite annexations in Ruthenia after the fall of Smolensk, had one more dimension – propaganda purposes. The Jagiellonian court made excellent use of the printed word in the form of countless ephemeral prints, occasional literature, theatre shows, publications in your Romes, Lübecks, Viennas and Venices. And, finally, even a kind of touring circus, exhibiting living witnesses of the triumph, meaning Muscovite prisoners, who, transported there in their natural costumes, were as exotic as arrivals from distant Africa.

That was all a huge propaganda victory. Muscovy couldn't oppose it with anything in the European diplomatic market and was able to limit the effects of defeat domestically by adapting various reports in Rus' chronicles, etc. But it had no response to confrontation with Jagiellonian propaganda. But even that is insignificant compared to what happened when Ivan the Terrible attacked Livonia, because an attack on Livonia was an attack on the German world – not just some Poles and Ruthenians and Lithuanians. It was an attack on the German world, on the Hanseatic cities. This marked the beginning of gigantic production of pamphlets in the German language showing the cruelties and crimes of the Russian army. Those stories of maidens blowing up fortresses so as not to fall into the hands of Muscovite rapists. Gravures showing women hung from trees by their hair, with Muscovite-Tatars shooting arrows at them. All this shocked public opinion. It was discussed by the Imperial Diet.

The Livonian Confederation didn't withstand the Muscovite attack, ultimately accepting the Jagiellonians' protection and becoming a fiefdom of Sigismund Augustus. That reduced the Holy Roman Empire's interest, but the initial reaction was very aggressive towards Russia.

### **In that case, when did Muscovy start to realize the importance of propaganda?**

– At this point, because it was also associated with one more phenomenon. There was increasing knowledge of foreign languages in Muscovy, and the *posolskij prikaz*<sup>52</sup> gained a new function: preparing government bulletins. Actually, extracts of what was being written around the world were prepared for the purposes of the tsar and his advisers. These started

<sup>51</sup> Battle of Orsha of 1514: battle during the Lithuanian-Muscovite War (1512–22) between the Lithuanian-Polish army commanded by Hetman Konstanty Ostrogski (1460–1530) and the Muscovite army commanded by Boyar Ivan Chel'adnin (?–1521).

<sup>52</sup> Equivalent of the ministry of foreign affairs in the Muscovite state. The *posolskij prikaz* was also responsible for intelligence, international trade and post.

to be shown, in fact later, in the seventeenth century, and this would be an enormous change that is crucial for our discussion, when the so-called *Vesti-Kuranty* began in Moscow, when the ambassadorial office began to collect newspapers and ephemera from Europe and immediately translate them for the use of the tsar and his closest advisors. The Muscovite elite also changed because they began to know languages. In the second half of the seventeenth century, when we say proudly that the unexploited Polonisation of Muscovy took place, it wasn't just about Polonisation. Polonisation is part of Occidentalisation, which is largely related to the seizure of Ukrainian lands, including Kyiv, i.e., an educational centre of a magnitude that did not exist in Russia, and to the cadres that were subsequently deported from there.

As for material culture, customs, costumes, art, etc., we forget about the “trophies” taken like in 1944 or 1945. After all, in the war with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,<sup>53</sup> the lands of Crown Ruthenia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were pillaged enormously. Łukasz, you know Moscow well, you've walked around there and your Russian friends have shown you the pride of seventeenth-century Muscovite art, the Krutitsky Court, the fired tiles and so on. But where do they come from? That's not Russian, Muscovite art. These are craftsmen taken away with their entire workshops from Mstsislaw, Vitebsk, Orsha, etc. We'll talk about the massacre, the Mstsislaw Massacre. Who was spared? Qualified craftsmen. They were taken away. We speak of how they began to look at European art. Yes, they did. They even brought exhibits over for themselves. Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich ordered that as many as five cupolas be taken down from the Radvilas Palace in Vilnius after it was captured<sup>54</sup> because there were no such cupolas in the whole of Russia, while the columns were ripped out with ropes from the porticoes, loaded onto carts and transported to Moscow, because there was not a single ancient Renaissance portico in Moscow. That was not cultural transfer, but material transfer, which only began to play its culture-forming role through imitation.

**OK, so I'll play the devil's advocate. In Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, terrible things were being done too. Sweden even today, contrary to the resolutions of the peace treaty from 1660,<sup>55</sup> still holds some of the Polish cultural goods plundered during the Deluge.**

<sup>53</sup> A reference to the war of 1654–67.

<sup>54</sup> The Radvilas (Radziwiłł) Palace was destroyed in 1655 during the Muscovite invasion of Lithuania.

<sup>55</sup> Treaty of Oliva: a peace treaty between Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth signed in 1660. It resolved that Sweden was obliged to return plundered artworks, archives and libraries, which it did not do.

– That’s true, but there’s an important turning point. Still, the terrible stories about sixteenth-century atrocities must have resonated less than those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, because Europe wasn’t all sweetness and light either. The Massacre of Novogorod, which was known about in Europe, wasn’t qualitatively different from either the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre or the Sack of Antwerp, was it? But for Europe a certain important turning point was undoubtedly the Thirty Years’ War, which was still cruel. Just think of the massacre and sacking of Magdeburg.<sup>56</sup> Still cruel, but culminating in the Peace of Westphalia, which essentially also legally regulated the nature of warfare – the nature of conflicts in Europe. And, suddenly, it turned out that although wars were going on in Europe, we no longer had reports of such mass atrocities and crimes. That was over. Indeed, it ended there. There were individual cases that were spoken and written about and punished. In Eastern Europe it went on a little longer – for instance, the Cossack wars were rife with atrocities on both sides. The Battles of Batoh,<sup>57</sup> Stavishche,<sup>58</sup> and Polonne,<sup>59</sup> etc., but that was different. The norm hadn’t yet been established.

It also seems that a civil war has a different status than international conflicts. A civil war, unfortunately, by definition permits greater atrocities because it stays in the family. So, for example, the Massacre of Uman<sup>60</sup> had some resonance in Europe, but just a distant echo because in fact it wasn’t clear who, how, with whom and what for. Whereas, almost at the same time, the Siege of Izmail by Suvorov<sup>61</sup> – without any special efforts of Turkish diplomacy, which was also highly advanced in terms of the art of printing and use of publications, almost like the Muscovite diplomacy – still resonated widely.

We also need to remember one more thing: for a very long time Russia couldn’t take part in the circulation of information because it didn’t have printing. And even when those *Vesti-Kuranty*<sup>62</sup> were made, when they made 20 copies by hand for the tsar and boyars that were later multiplied somewhere in a corner. But that’s a completely different object of information to hundreds and thousands of papers, isn’t it? The press market didn’t exist because there was no press. Besides which, how could there

<sup>56</sup> The Massacre of Magdeburg took place in 1631. The majority of the residents of this 25,000-strong city were killed by fires or murdered by the Imperial Troops.

<sup>57</sup> The murder of several thousand Polish prisoners taken into captivity on the orders of the Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky after the Battle of Batoh in 1652.

<sup>58</sup> Massacre in 1664 and 1665 of the townspeople of Stavishche in the Kyiv region by Crown Polish units commanded by Stefan Czarniecki.

<sup>59</sup> Massacre of the townspeople of Polonne in 1648, perpetrated by the Cossack army commanded by Maksym Kryvonis.

<sup>60</sup> The events of 1768. The Haydamaks, peasant rebels, after capturing Uman murdered its residents: burghers, Jews, and also the local nobility, who were seeking refuge in the town.

<sup>61</sup> The extermination of the residents of the Turkish city of Izmail in 1790 during the Russo-Turkish War (1787–92) by the Russian army under the command of General Alexander Suvorov (1729–1800).

<sup>62</sup> *Kuranty o vsjakich vestjach* or *All Current News* (1621–1702): the first handwritten Russian newspaper, read by the tsar and boyars.

be a press market and prints when there wasn't a single printer? For a very long time. The Sacco di Vilna<sup>63</sup> was something, a paroxysm of these... Muscovite atrocities, which, by the way, even today the Russians won't admit to, just as they won't admit to the Mstsislaw Massacre, which must have been awful. Since the survivors soon came to be known as the "unscythed" (nedoseki in Russian), which is what those who had survived the Mstsislaw Massacre were called in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. News of it was terrible. Everyone heard about it, and today we have absolutely phenomenal reactions from Russian historians. Not long ago, our mutual acquaintance wrote that it was a natural reaction of an army to a fortress not wanting to surrender. I'd just point out that this *modus operandi* had previously been used very effectively, but by Genghis Khan.

**Undoubtedly.**

– Really. But really, after the Thirty Years' War, fortresses in the Netherlands and the Rhineland also fell that didn't want to surrender, and yet no one slaughtered the entire civilian population.

**Of course, that's also a sign of a certain delayed civilisational development.**

– In Russia now a certain characteristic two-stage line of defence is used. First, nothing like that took place. And second, it was justified by the nature of the time. And both reasons might be given in one breath, although...

**They logically cancel each other out.**

– And here, as an aside, we could also venture another assertion. European opinion in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was quite happy to use the instrument of spreading guilt. Particularly the eastern contingents were blamed – the Tatars, Bashkirs, Cossacks, Circassians. Pointing the finger – "it was them". I think that the current pontifex would like that very much because Pope Francis also diversified in that way, expressing his astonishment at the idea that it could be the Russians.

This approach would suggest that the Vilnius and Mstsislaw massacres gathered some colonial contingents, but this was done by Trubetskoy's all-Russian army, with the so-called mercenary regiments of the new outfit and so on. The second observation is very sad for Russia: from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, I don't know a single case of European commanders and monarchs participating in military atrocities against a civilian population. But in Russia it was a different story.

<sup>63</sup> An allusion to the Massacre of Rome of 1531 (*Sacco di Roma*).

Let me remind you of the murder of four Basilian clerics in Polotsk<sup>64</sup> by Peter the Great, accompanied by his staff officers and his favourite, Menshikov – a holy place for Rus', the ancient Cathedral of Holy Wisdom in Polotsk. This demonstrated a whole array of soldiers' vices. The "Christian monarch" demanded access to the tabernacle and to the relics of Jozafat Kuncewicz.<sup>65</sup> When he was denied, when the Basilian superior refused, apparently he cut his ears off and certainly murdered him. The door to the tabernacle was torn off. The tsar personally trampled on the host. He wanted to profane the relics, and the resistant Basilians were drowned in the river. As for the prior, one story is that the tsar personally ran him through with a sword, assisted by Menshikov. This was a crime perpetrated by the supreme commander of an army – and an ally at that, an allied army. Peter I was in Polotsk as an ally of the Polish king, the great Lithuanian duke Augustus II the Strong.<sup>66</sup> That's a shocking crime, isn't it?

The arguments used by the Russians concerning various later events, especially the Massacre of Praga, are also telling. Firstly, the murdered burghers, including women and children, were victims of the storming. Secondly, Suvorov personally endeavoured to subdue it and saved them. Thirdly, everything is exaggerated. Warsaw was actually grateful for being saved, because after the massacre the municipality of Warsaw supposedly handed a snuffbox with an inscription to its saviour, namely Suvorov. And generally the fact is that – as it says on Russian Wikipedia, for instance – under the influence of Polish historians, this highly biased interpretation of Suvorov's action in Warsaw during the storming of Polish capital gained popularity in French and English literature. Well, I'm not sure if, for example, Baron Engelgart,<sup>67</sup> a cousin of the tsar's family and officer of Suvorov's army, who described the atrocity, was a Polish historian. I'm not sure if the hero and guerrilla leader in the Napoleonic Wars, Denis Davydov,<sup>68</sup> who wrote about it, was a Polish historian. Certainly, the English ambassador, Gardiner,<sup>69</sup> who described what he saw with disgust, was not a Polish historian. I don't know what influence the memory of Jewish *kahals* in the Polish lands, preserved for centuries, might have had on English historians. In the museum in Zamość, you can see an illuminated manuscript showing the participation of Jews in the defence of Praga, and the Massacre of Praga perpetrated by the Muscovites.

<sup>64</sup> In 1705, during Russia's war with Sweden, which also took place on the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

<sup>65</sup> Josaphat Kuntsevič (1580–1623): the Uniate Archbishop of Polotsk, murdered by Orthodox Christian burghers in 1623, a saint of the Catholic Church.

<sup>66</sup> Augustus II the Strong (1670–1733): King of Poland in 1697–1733, also ruler of Saxony; as Saxon elector he was an ally of Peter I in the Swedish War.

<sup>67</sup> Lev Engelhardt (1766–1836): general in the Russian army, diarist. Served in several campaigns under the command of Alexander Suvorov.

<sup>68</sup> Denis Davydov (1784–1839): general of the Russian army, diarist, Russian war hero from 1812.

<sup>69</sup> William Neville Gardiner (1748–1806): British diplomat and army officer, diarist.

**But Suvorov did not deny committing the massacre?**

– No, he didn't. His conduct during the storming consisted of running with two turkeys along the rampart and shouting, "At least let these two poor birds survive the slaughter", and at the same time, after blowing up bridges so the people couldn't flee, enabling illegal crossing, to be shared by... The Russian command gained material benefits; this is confirmed in sources. This was, if I remember correctly, told to Denisov by the hero of the Caucasian Wars, Yermolov. There's an awful lot of evidence, and it makes no sense to pretend it didn't happen. But the most tortuous argument is that it was a massacre which was a response and revenge for the slaughter of the Russian garrison during the Warsaw Insurrection.<sup>70</sup>

So let's consider how legitimate this was. Firstly, shortly beforehand there had been a massacre of survivors on the battlefield at Maciejowice,<sup>71</sup> bayoneting the wounded with cries of "For Warsaw!" So how many times can you get vengeance? Secondly, there was no massacre of a Russian garrison, which in the Russian narrative, incidentally, came from who knows where. It wasn't an Intourist excursion, after all, but an occupation corps (around 12,000 soldiers, not including Cossacks). Why was the building on Miodowa Street, the Russian embassy, turned into a fortress? It was more like revenge for the ignominious retreat of the Russian army, where a mob armed with sticks and axes defeated the Polish garrison of Warsaw, despite being outnumbered three to one. The Russian garrison was made up of battle-seasoned soldiers, Suvorov and Kakhovsky's<sup>72</sup> soldiers remembering the victory over Turkey. That was a terrible disgrace. Even the Prussians, who endeavoured to meet them and allow the incursion through the Krasiński Garden, described how extremely inept the Russian actions had been and that they had in fact simply retreated in a stampede, leaving up to 4000 dead and 1500 to 2000 prisoners. And then there's one more classic issue that I really like to pester my Russian interlocutors with. What happened? Sleeping garrisons were slaughtered? How did the Warsaw Insurrection begin? With the ringing of all the bells for the Easter service. Compare what time bells ring in Catholic Warsaw, and what time according to the rules of service in a garrison should soldiers be washed, shaved and at arms? In fact, at 5 a.m. the Russian army attacked the Arsenal (the operation had been planned earlier to nip any revolt in the bud)

<sup>70</sup> The events of 17–19 April 1794. The Polish army, supported by the residents of Warsaw, attacked the Russian occupation forces stationed in the city. As a result of the fighting, the Russian Warsaw garrison was taken into captivity, killed, or fled the city.

<sup>71</sup> The Battle of Maciejowice was waged on 10 October 1794 between Polish forces commanded by Tadeusz Kościuszko and Russian forces commanded by Fyodor Denisov. It ended in defeat for the Polish army and Kościuszko's capture.

<sup>72</sup> Michail Kachovskij (1734–1800): Russian army general. Among the forces he commanded those that attacked the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the war of 1792.



– presumably not while asleep, and that was the signal for a popular uprising against the Muscovites.

**They were drunk...**

– Or, lastly, something from the Massacre of Praga, when they say that Suvorov's order to destroy the bridges was not because he wanted to slaughter everybody. Just taking into account the state of the army – drunk on blood but also liquor – he was afraid that they might be hit by a counterattack of the still quite numerous Polish forces from the other bank of the Vistula. Because, as Davydov relates, the jaegers were so drunk that, for example, grenadiers from the Phanagoria regiment were unable to clean their weapons and hired soldiers from other regiments to do it. I know that's a rather awful, terrible story, but it's true. The sources are unequivocal.

Let's remember that, in the shadow of the Massacre of Praga, in our national "roll call" of tragedies and wartime atrocities there is also the famous massacre in Ashmyany in the Vilnius region, now in Belarus. From the November Uprising, when in April 1831 Colonel Vershalin's corps slaughtered the town's population for fraternizing with the insurgents, also not sparing churches, slaughtering the population that took refuge there, murdering the clergy and desecrating the shrine. That resonated quite widely in Europe. But this revived notions especially among the Germans and French about these savage Russian atrocities, as in Suvorov's time. It's interesting that this was what resurrected a certain idea that had died out during the Napoleonic Warsaw. Because you have to hand it to Alexander I that he so much wanted to be the arbiter of Europe and its angel of peace that the fact is that, for example, his entry to Paris was conducted not only in exemplary fashion, but with iron discipline. There were no excesses. There were a few in the provinces, especially by the Cossack detachments, but the existing studies show that they were relatively sparing, which incidentally can be explained by the nature of the political manoeuvres. We are bringing peace. We are returning the French throne to our ally. We are in an allied country.

These experiences of the November Uprising, and then also the January Uprising, were very much shaken up by Alexander's actions. The wars going on in the Caucasus at the same time were not so significant. Essentially, although the English observed that conflict and there were Polish volunteers there, essentially it was seen as just a colonial conflict. The Russian state was bringing order to savage peoples within its frontiers, and Russia's colonial rhetoric was completely understandable and acceptable to colonial French or English rhetoric.

It was a slightly different case with Russia's later operations in the Balkans. But there again, entering the Balkans in an effort to construct this "Russkij mir" in the Balkans in the war for the liberation of Bulgaria, there was an attempt to demonstrate leniency and goodwill to civilians as a Christian Slavic population. Interestingly, after the Napoleonic Wars the role of the European bogeyman was assumed by Turkey with the Chios Massacre<sup>73</sup> and the pacification of Greece. But then came the November Uprising, and Russia returned to the place of satrap and brute, which was why when the Crimean War came, we in Europe were now fighting against bloodthirsty beasts, weren't we?<sup>74</sup> There was pacification, but then also the January Uprising and so on.

**I'd like to touch upon what I think is another important subject – the question of whether Russia understood treaties in the same way as Western European countries or the culture of Latin Europe. Was there a conviction that a treaty should be signed in good faith?**

– I think that when signing treaties, Russia was usually operating in the way shown in a cult scene from the film *Our Folks*: a court is all well and good, but justice must be on our side.<sup>75</sup> Again, I'll point to the complete divergence in the early modern era of Russian norms and European norms, late medieval norms and early modern norms. Both the articulated reasons for the war and justification of claims varied widely. There was a key moment in the Polish-Muscovite negotiations during the Deluge, in the negotiations at Nemėžis (Nemieža).<sup>76</sup> On the one hand, the Muscovite boyars, all those Trubetskoy<sup>77</sup> and Odoyevskys<sup>78</sup> accompanied by diaks, the whole time were operating within the old Muscovite narrative. Territorialism, the sacrosanct, inalienable rights of the whole of Rus' but also the tsar could break the previous perpetual peace<sup>79</sup> because he had acted to defend his name against all your untruths, because by printing various texts in your countries you insulted him and wrote contemptuously about him. He gave you a chance, sent a delegation to you with a list of culprits to be executed, their hands cut off, books burnt, forbidden! And what did you do? The criminals who offended the tsar still walk God's Earth. You thought we'd be fooled when you

<sup>73</sup> A massacre of the Greek population of the island of Chios by Turkish forces in 1822.

<sup>74</sup> It's about the fact that Russia, after the bloody suppression of the November Uprising and the repression of the Poles, was once again recognized as a threatening force for Europeans, a fear-inducing state. For this reason, England and France decided to get involved on the Turkish side in the war against Russia during the Crimean War.

<sup>75</sup> *Sami swoi*: a cult Polish comedy from 1967, directed by Sylwester Chęciński.

<sup>76</sup> Negotiations before the signing of the Treaty of Niemieža (Nemėžis in present-day Lithuania) between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia in 1656.

<sup>77</sup> Aleksej Trubeckoj (1600–1680): Russian kniaz, diplomat; took part in the Niemieža negotiations.

<sup>78</sup> Nikita Odoyevskij (1600–1689): Russian kniaz, diplomat; in 1676–82, he headed the foreign policy of the Muscovite state. A participant in the Niemieža negotiations.

<sup>79</sup> Peace signed in Polyanovka in Russia between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy in 1634, ending the Smolensk War of 1632–34.

publicly burned a couple of pages torn out of books.<sup>80</sup> But the books can still be bought. You're dishonest, and that's why God punished you. On the other hand, there was a delegation made up of diplomats trained in negotiations with Western partners, unfortunately mostly Crown Poles, and they didn't understand anything about what Muscovy was.

**The Lithuanians did better.**

– Yes, they did. And the Crown Poles, not a clue, although Warszewicki<sup>81</sup> wrote a work in which – after his experiences from the negotiations in Yam-Zapolski – he explained explicitly that the position in Muscovy required a great deal of resilience because Muscovy was stubborn, repeating the same lines over and over, obdurate and incapable of negotiating. He described them very pointedly. But our diplomats didn't take advantage of that afterwards, probably because they weren't professional. They didn't make use of the amassed experience, and the people who travelled were often not well versed in negotiations with Muscovy.

So the Poles went to Niemieża armed with what? With legal literature and moral arguments. Moral arguments only amused the Muscovite clerics. After all, our tsar won, right? He captured everything. That means that Providence was on our side. Long live the "Imperija"! And it doesn't matter if... So what if we broke the treaty? But fate proved that we were right, because we beat you, and not you us.

**That sounds familiar.**

– No, in fact it's decisive. No legal concerns. The funny thing there was that the arbiters in those negotiations were supposed to be Habsburg mediators – as foolish as ours. They had no clue about it all. They went there and made a big effort, convinced that they were important diplomats, but they were swiftly called to order. And what did they hear in Moscow? If you don't like it, there's the door. They also wrote these reports saying that something strange was going on. There was no dialogue.

During the Deluge, we were helped by the fact that we had one asset that Muscovy had never had in its hands: an expectative to the throne after the childless John Casimir. And this somewhat evasive offer that the tsarevich or tsar might become the future Polish king meant that again Muscovy was taken in. We had some experience in this because we fooled Ivan the Terrible at one point too. I mean the Lithuanians did because

<sup>80</sup> In 1650, Tsar Alexis demanded that Poland hand over the author of a book critical of him and supposedly insulting the majesty of the tsar. The Polish refusal became a pretext for breaking the perpetual peace signed in 1634.

<sup>81</sup> Krzysztof Warszewicki (1543–1603): Polish historian, writer and diplomat. A participant in the negotiations held during the war with Muscovy of 1577–82; wrote several speeches on cultural and political issues and a treatise on diplomacy based on these experiences.

the Crown Poles didn't have much of a clue and thought it was treason and that the Lithuanians were conducting private negotiations.

Going back to the starting point, we can see there, in the mid-seventeenth century, a clash of two ways of negotiating – two completely disparate diplomatic methodologies. Up to then, the Muscovite diplomacy had operated exactly as it did in the time of Ivan IV, Vasili III, etc. The wide entry, meaning the gains from the Truce of Andrusovo,<sup>82</sup> but also the involvement of the Ottoman Porte in the war in Ukraine in the 1660s, would attract Europe's attention to Muscovy as a potential participant in the Holy League and would very much increase contacts with the European world. And here, in fact, Muscovy would have different instruments because it would have the intellectuals from the Kyiv circle and limitless translators. After all, the first Russo-Chinese treaty has a Latin variant.

What's extremely interesting about all this is the fact that the Kyiv-Mohyla circle, but also the Belarusian one, played a role in creating that intellectual base. The Golitsyns<sup>83</sup> started speaking Polish, and Artamon Matveyev<sup>84</sup> started speaking Polish and learned Latin. The head of Muscovite diplomacy in Alexei Mikhailovich's time, Ordin-Nashchokin,<sup>85</sup> wrote letters in Polish to Polish magnates and knew Latin. Everything changes, everything changes. Basically, everything Peter I would later agree to, even encourage, and apply to the Russian elite – that is travelling to study, which had previously been forbidden or very much limited – would become absolutely self-evident. Because from now on they'd be prepared differently. While the negotiations conducted in Alexei Mikhailovich's time would take place *po starinie*, the diplomacy of Peter the Reformer – not yet Peter from the time of Karlowitz – was becoming European diplomacy, adopting European instruments and using European literature and European legal norms, when that suited, of course.

### **So should we take it that Russian diplomacy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was now European?**

– I'd say rather that the European instruments were an added value because, when necessary, they dusted off the old norms and convictions. This attitude to the European arsenal is easiest to express with the concept of a consumer attitude to Western innovations. Consumer, utilitarian. Peter understood that, and then his successors did, especially Catherine and Alexander. It was an effort to raise an audience abroad. An effort to

<sup>82</sup> Truce of Andrusovo: truce signed in 1667 in Andrusovo in Russia, resulting in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth losing the Smolensk region, Left-bank Ukraine and Kyiv.

<sup>83</sup> The Golitsyns (Golicyny): Russian knyaz family of Lithuanian origin, branch of the Gediminid dynasty.

<sup>84</sup> Artamon Matveyev (1625–1682): Russian aristocrat, politician, head of the posol'sky prikaz in 1671–76.

<sup>85</sup> Afanasij Ordin-Naščokin (1605–1680): Russian aristocrat, politician, head of the posol'sky prikaz in 1667–71.

create milieus that would act in the interests of the Russian *raison d'état* and the Russian narrative and reproduce Russian propaganda. And indeed, that's a fantastic qualitative leap. From propaganda that was unwritten, calculated for the domestic market, and inept when confronted with such inventions of humankind as printing, to propaganda that hires pens, buys authorities, buys works justifying its aggression. And drip, drip, drip.

**So that was how Catherine became the Semiramis of the North, was it?**

– Ah! Catherine is... fascinating! Where did so much talent come from in this provincial representative, raised in the Stettin garrison, of what was after all a flagging German dynasty? Gigantic determination, enormous talents, but presumably this Western background, that was... Note that this was the first Russian monarch who saw the West from within and had grown up there. She was well read; she saw how propaganda worked, knew what popular literature was, knew how to create. Yet the growth of popular literature, even literature, even fiction in political service during the War of the Bavarian Succession, during the Seven Years' War, was enormous. She knew that and endeavoured to bring that to Saint Petersburg. Hence her literary efforts, because there was a group of court writers. It was very poor literature, but it was there. She endeavoured to give it a European lightness and reflection. She wrote some historical plays because history was becoming a state weapon. Literature served the state. And this gave rise to all those dramas about Rurikids and so on, staged in the court theatre, written under a pseudonym, accidentally public and so on and so forth. Literary polemics. We form the mirage of an enlightened court. We teach men of letters how important it is in the state interest to use art, i.e., literature, historical topics – we reach wholesale for art.

Previously in Russia, political manifestos had been expressed through votive buildings because the connection between religion and the state was strong. Votive buildings and cults of saints. And then Peter engaged in the state cult of Alexander Nevsky and construction of the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra, etc. With Catherine it was completely different – secular buildings, secular festivities. Her advisers and magnates followed her example. We always pride ourselves here in the fact that the first Russian anthem was a polonaise written by a soldier, a traveller, Kozłowski,<sup>86</sup> etc. We completely forget that it was a work originally commissioned by Potemkin<sup>87</sup> for a feast in honour of Suvorov – as it happens, right after a war crime, the slaughter of Izmail.

<sup>86</sup> Józef Kozłowski (1757–1831): Polish composer living in Saint Petersburg, author of the song *Let the Thunder of Victory Rumble* – one of the anthems of Russia.

<sup>87</sup> Grigorij Potëmkin (1739–1791): one of Catherine II's favourites, the head commander in the Russo-Turkish War in 1787–92.

**So one more question. In the history of thirteen wars between Poland and Russia, I don't think Poland ever violated a peace treaty – if anything, in one case, it violated a truce. In other words, Russia was the aggressor. How was the breaking of treaties justified? Was it considered important? Were treaties generally signed in good faith, or was it reckoned that their validity depended on how long abiding by them would be beneficial for Russia? Was there even a common understanding of the words “law” or “treaty”?**

– The concept of law essentially only appeared at the end of the seventeenth century. Law was not a norm but a certain catalogue of natural laws including, for example, Russia's rights to the entire area of Rus'. But the concept of law as a certain system of values didn't exist. Moreover, there was also a peculiar understanding of the obligations that result from signing a treaty. For example, I'd point out that, more than once, Muscovy was terribly concerned when a monarch of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth died and a truce was in force. They then hastily dispatched a delegation to extend the truce. Of course, it didn't require extension because it had been signed, but Muscovy had a different understanding – pacts die together with the signatories.

**That's a lack of understanding of the state's legal personality. Rather a concept of the state as the property of the monarch.**

– The state at this point was not a legal entity and not a guarantor of fulfilment of a treaty – the guarantor was the monarch. Muscovy was measuring its legal and systemic norm against our reality, so it didn't quite understand what the big deal was. And that's quite important, because indeed another question is that of implementing treaty resolutions. There were always problems with that. For example, when there were obligations – the regularity of border congresses and delimitations enshrined in the truces, up to the Treaty of Polyanovka, the biggest attempt at pacification of relations between Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – they never worked out.

There were also problems with ratification, as you remember very well, actually even with ratification of such fundamental acts as the Treaty of Perpetual Peace. Supposedly Sobieski vowed perpetual peace on the Market Square in Lviv, recognizing Grzymułtowski's treaty,<sup>88</sup> but in fact the General Sejm didn't ratify it. And, until the partitions, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in colloquial terms, played dumb, and the treaty both existed and didn't exist.

<sup>88</sup> The Treaty of Perpetual Peace: treaty signed in 1686 in Moscow between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia, perpetuating the conditions of the Truce of Andrusovo of 1667.

**Muscovy agreed to that?**

– For Muscovy, if the monarch had sworn an oath, it was ratified. Again, the clash of two worlds. The king was everything, the Sejm nothing.

**But do I remember rightly that when the Sejm finally ratified Grzymułtowski's treaty at the beginning of Stanisław August's reign, it didn't ratify the cession of Kyiv to Muscovy?**

– Yes, yes. That was also... A lot of different strange things were going on there because it was a question of titles. A question of monarchical titles. But the titles remained from before Andrusovo.

The Polish king didn't renounce his titles, those of Duke of Chernihiv, Severia, Smolensk, etc. Moreover, remember that there was a hierarchy in place the whole time for the lost lands. Of land offices and senators' offices in the Sejm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the Senate. The lands were gone, but the offices existed, well, *in partibus infidelium*. In the terminology of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, those areas were called "avulsures": lost lands which, God willing, it would be possible to recover. They were not lost forever.

So these acts simply looked different on the two sides of the border. Poles under-interpreted them, and Muscovy overinterpreted, right? But the real politics was in its hands, not ours, and that strikes me as an interesting topic.

**Since Moscow invested in propaganda in the eighteenth century, it used the services of "influencers". We know that Voltaire served Catherine, that he was commissioned to extol her rule.**

– Not just him. There were attempts to contact Diderot, for example. But the funniest thing is that, after all, the work which backfired terribly in Moscow, or rather Russia, namely Astolphe de Custine's account,<sup>89</sup> was originally intended as an apologia. After all, the French writer received an invitation and safe conduct because he was supposed to write how things really were – good, that is. He was supposed to show foolish Europe how marvellous Russia was: ruled by an enlightened monarch, enlightened absolutism and so on and so forth. But unfortunately, he came, he saw and he wrote. They cured him there and then. I have the sense that this otherwise intelligent guy had no idea what a terrible blow he was aiming at his hosts when writing this book because he just described it as he saw it without thinking about the whole interpretation. When they began reading it in the West, they reached slightly broader conclusions than he did,

<sup>89</sup> Astolphe de Custine (1790–1857): French aristocrat, writer and traveller, author of *La Russie en 1839*.

especially as it was him that stuffed himself on caviar, drank champagne, nibbled on beluga and walked around in Russian sables, and they had to read that codswallop.

And I'd say that this technique of the Russian authorities remains unchanged. After all, what did things look like in Soviet Russia? What was the aim of those famous delegations of Polish writers,<sup>90</sup> inviting your Wańkowicz, <sup>91</sup> Słonimski, <sup>92</sup> etc.? They were meant to write good things; they were shown everything that could be shown, except the reality as it really was. Screeching. And then there's Bertrand Russell, <sup>93</sup> right? There's Arnold Toynbee's <sup>94</sup> marvellous expedition. When I first read that description, I cried with laughter because that was exactly what the adventures of my generation on Soviet rail looked like.

### **How do Russians now react to the critics of bygone Russia?**

– We've talked about Suvorov and the Massacre of Praga. So, the whitewashing of Suvorov is still going on. Once... *Zvezda*, the channel of the Russian army, made a series of educational, journalistic films about Suvorov, and they did an interview with me asking me to show what Suvorov looked like from a Polish perspective. They hadn't heard much about the Massacre of Praga, but I committed a worse abomination because I said that, regardless of that peaceful Suvorov who saved Warsaw, there were greater abuses and greater distortions in his legend. They were very surprised. They asked which ones, and I said, for example, your Russian myth that this was a commander who was almost the only one in human history to never lose a battle. And that's not true. Not only did he lose, he got an absolute thrashing from the Bar Confederates at Tyniec, <sup>95</sup> literally on the eve of his victory over them at Lanckorona. <sup>96</sup> The recording at my house was quite long, 45 minutes of material. Then they didn't release a single second. Suvorov is simply sacred. He's inviolably sacred, despite being a sociopath, butcher, and in fact a primitive man, with the biggest, quite monumental proof of that being the edition of his correspondence

<sup>90</sup> A reference to the invitation of Polish cultural activists to Moscow in the interwar period. Some of them, e.g., Melchior Wańkowicz and Antoni Słonimski, later published reports on their travels to Russia.

<sup>91</sup> Melchior Wańkowicz (1892–1974): Polish writer and journalist.

<sup>92</sup> Antoni Słonimski (1895–1976): Polish poet and playwright.

<sup>93</sup> Bertrand Russell (1872–1970): British philosopher, mathematician and social activist. In 1920, as part of a Labour Party delegation, he travelled to Moscow, where he met with Lenin.

<sup>94</sup> Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975): British historian, philosopher; he conceived the idea of Russia as a separate civilisation, hostile to the West.

<sup>95</sup> The Bar Confederation (1768–1772): a union of Polish nobility formed in 1768 in Bar against King Stanisław August Poniatowski and the Russian forces supporting him. The confederation's objectives were to abolish the Russian protectorate of Poland and repeal Stanisław August's reforms.

<sup>96</sup> The Battle of Lanckorona took place on 23 May 1771; the unsuccessful storming of Tyniec occurred on the night of 20/21 May.



published by the Academy of Science.<sup>97</sup> In my opinion, the editors didn't read that correspondence, because if they had...

**They wouldn't have published it?**

– They would have censored it.

Suvorov was without doubt a very talented commander: a typical commander of the Russian school; a commander as a spiritual father like your Zhukovs, just a “*lobovyy udar*”, no manoeuvres, just “bayonet charge”, bleeding the opponent and yourself and so on. He was perhaps the fullest manifestation of that. The later ones... all those Paskeviches,<sup>98</sup> etc., were much cleverer. After that there was one operating in a similar way, albeit not on the same scale, who would also become the idol of the Russian public...

**Who?**

– Mikhail Skobelev,<sup>99</sup> who, if he'd been allowed to go on storming Pleven<sup>100</sup> as he wanted to, then the Turks would probably have had their Bakhmut. But an old German, the defender of Sevastopol, Count Tottleben,<sup>101</sup> came along and said it was unacceptable and that he'd capture Pleven with a method of small means and small costs. Because, he said, “General, we came to storm the fortress and not to allow you to cavort on a white horse at the cost of soldiers' lives”. And he captured it. Meanwhile, Skobelev became a hero.

The next idol is Zhukov, a commander who eclipsed Rokossovsky. And yet people wept that they had to serve under Zhukov and everyone tried to follow Rokossovsky, because then they had a chance of survival. I was told this in an open text by the son of Rokossovsky's and Zhukov's translator, who entered Rokossovsky's command from 1941.

So this was the creation of some kind of expert myths, even though in the West Zhukov is known as the conqueror of Berlin, the model of an eminent Soviet commander, even though after all we have the generally available recording of his talks with the great commanders of the Allied armies: his talks with Eisenhower about the mortality of soldiers, etc., which caused consternation among Western commanders.

<sup>97</sup> A.V. Suvorov, *Pis'ma*, izd. podgot. B.C. Lopatino, otv. red. A.M. Samsonov (Moskva: Nauka, 1986); it is also worth looking at *Duch Velikogo Suvorova, ili Anekdoty podlinnye o knjaze italijskom, grafe Aleksandre Vasil'eviče Suvorove*, (Sankt Peterburg: Imperatorskaja Akademija Nauk, 1808).

<sup>98</sup> Ivan Paskevič (1782–1856): Russian field marshal, governor of the Kingdom of Poland in 1832–56.

<sup>99</sup> Mikhail Skobelev (1843–1882): Russian general, participant in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78.

<sup>100</sup> Battle of Pleven: battle between the Turkish army and a combined Russian and Romanian army during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78.

<sup>101</sup> Eduard Tottleben (1818–1884): Russian general. During the Crimean War of 1853–56, he participated in the defence of Sevastopol against the combined French, English, Turkish, and Sardinian armies.

**What mattered was success. The support of the Russian state, promotion of certain figures.**

– I think one important topic has been missing from our conversation: the divergence that took place between Europe and Russia. Europe, which from the Thirty Years' War onwards began to standardize all laws, the laws of war, prisoners' rights and so on. Russia has been very selective in its history about abiding by that and respecting it. It also comes down to two different traditions of warfare. Indeed, far be it from me to use the clichéd, calqued question of Mongol heritage and so on, but I would point out that a good number of the wars waged by Russia over the centuries were wars waged in the East according to Eastern rules, and they were wars waged by Eastern contingents. Heaven forbid, I'm not saying that the Russians didn't slaughter and pillage, because they did, but they had an excellent model, an excellent justification. And it's absolutely obvious that this was the norm. That was how they fought in Khiva, in Bukhara, in Samarkand. And so what? Then they brought those experiences here. We all remember the terrible experience described – long questioned by the Russians – in the book *Berlin* 45. A million rapes, etc. Do you remember Melchior Wańkowicz's book *On the Trail of the Smętek*?<sup>102</sup>

**Yes, very well.**

– You remember one short description. There's a description of a village of Old Believers. There's also a short description of the arrival of the Russian army in East Prussia.

**I didn't notice that. Was it Wojnowo?**<sup>103</sup>

– Yes, because it went unnoticed, but the description is characteristic. Those columns of soldiers, shouting, "solovej, solovej, ptaśički". And drunk. And those... running, bloody, in a woman's torn clothes. The pre-war censors didn't guess what it was about... Very odd. They let it through. And the Polish communist censors didn't react? They didn't notice. Or they decided it was the tsarist army.

**Right.**

– Imperialist wars. But it's one to one. Savages invading Eastern Prussia, like in the film *Rose*, right?

<sup>102</sup> *Na tropach Smętki*: reportage by Melchior Wańkowicz, published in 1936, describing the situation in East Prussia before the Second World War, particularly the process of its Germanisation and the fight for Polishness.

<sup>103</sup> *Wojnowo*: village in Poland, before the war in East Prussia, partly inhabited by the descendants of Russian Old Believers.

**Of course.**

– That’s it exactly, mass rapes, etc. When my Russian colleagues tell me that these are Western inventions, I say, “Hang on...”. And *Prussian Nights* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn,<sup>104</sup> who described that? And the cries from behind the wall, right? I’m a Polish woman, I’m a Polish woman.

My own aunts survived it... These aunts survived in Ostróda at the station only because the railwaymen burnt the staircase and there was no entry to the second floor. Polish railwaymen on German railways.

**My grandmother, who lived in Sępólno Krajeńskie at the end of the Second World War... that was in Poland then but a dozen or so kilometres from the pre-war German border, smeared tar on herself and would tell us that her sisters did the same to look worse.**

– But what’s the most important thing here? That we’re talking about acceptance and encouragement. Because there’s the rhetoric about defeating the beast in its lair, that this is Prussia, the cradle of Nazism, etc. At the same time there’s encouragement to take revenge. And it doesn’t matter that much of that population isn’t German. So, where’s Stalin’s statement that the Red Army marches on, beats the Germans and liberates us, and you’re taking pity on the women, you wouldn’t even let him have them.

As an aside, as they said, looting, looting as an instrument of war. How surprised we are at this terrible looting in Ukraine. Tearing out toilets and so on. We experienced all that here in ’45. And Vilnius experienced it from Alexei Mikhailovich.

**So in 1655 it was the same as in 1945?**

– They took stoves away because they didn’t know what that kind of European stove looked like, for example. They took away the sewage framework, because they took everything. Remember that technologically... In Moscow at the time, it was actually technologically impossible to cover a roof with sheet metal. So they rolled and ripped off the roof sheathing. That was all there. And then the looting of cultural goods. Starting from the start, there wouldn’t have been the first Russian library, there would be no public library without the Załuski Library.<sup>105</sup>

Looting in enemy territory, trophies of war. All understandable. Besides which, saving cultural goods, as my Russian colleagues explain. And

<sup>104</sup> *Prussian Nights*: autobiographical poem written in 1950 by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008), telling of the occupation of Prussia by the Red Army during the Second World War.

<sup>105</sup> The Załuski Library: the first public library in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, opened in Warsaw in 1747. In 1780, its collection was moved to Russia after the fall of the Kościuszko Uprising, where it became the basis of the Imperial Public Library, opened in 1814 in Saint Petersburg. Many items were stolen on the way.

then bang, we have a description of the Bashkirs and Cossacks having the duty of loading the books into trunks, but they didn't fit, so they cut them with sabres. Those disgusting Frenchmen. That Napoleon stole so much, you know? And they took it all off to Paris. I wonder how the Italian medieval city archives arrived in Saint Petersburg, for example, from Cremona, an ally. They plundered whatever they could.

**And they still haven't returned it. In that case, this is an excellent contribution to the discussion on the continuation of Russian methods of warfare.**

– A continuation, not a straight line. Because we have something like a sine wave. There are some periods when Russia tries, for propaganda or ideological reasons, to resemble the rest of the world. Sure, the Seven Years' War: we went into Königsberg and behaved decently, admittedly because Königsberg was to be annexed, but we went into Berlin. We behaved calmly there too. The contributions just add up terribly. But then we have the excesses of the Polish and Turkish wars of Catherine's era. Next come the Napoleonic Wars. Alexander took great care of his army's good name, demonstrating a veritably Roman *clementia*, accepting surrender and so on and so forth. That makes an impression. The Kingdom of Poland is at stake, Alexander is to be the future monarch, an idol. And word goes around that this is a civilized army now. And then bang! The Massacre of Ashmyany. The Pacification of Lithuania. And the image of Russians as Barbarians.

This sine wave depends on two things: how the Russians behave and to what extent the ruling milieus in the West are interested in publicizing or hushing up what's really happening there. After all, it's not as if the world didn't know what was happening in Germany under the Russians. But, firstly, we know how the Allies behaved in the Rhineland, and they behaved badly. And especially we know, and every intelligent person in Europe knew, how the Allies behaved in Italy.

And the final topic everyone is very sensitive to: the murder of prisoners on the battlefield. If you went to the museum of the Battle of Friedland<sup>106</sup> in the Kaliningrad Oblast, the favourite theme for showing the crimes of the West is that in the Battle of Friedland during the storming, French soldiers bayoneted a Russian general who was being carried off the battlefield by his soldiers. That indeed happened. But when I was shown that I just asked how the indignation related to the killing of prisoners at Maciejowice. Or to cutting off prisoners' right hands after the Massacre of Praga? Come on, gents, you can't have it both ways.

<sup>106</sup> A battle at Friedland in East Prussia on 14 June 1807 between French and Russian forces; one of the most important battles of the Napoleonic Wars, culminating in victory for France.

It would even be humorous were it not tragic that in the Russian narrative they try to whitewash and justify everything. In the same way, wars of aggression are traditionally presented as rescuing the object of the invasion. And I don't even mean Ukraine, but Poland earlier. You know what was the most wonderful idea of Putin's propaganda, almost simultaneously with the annexation of Crimea?

**What?**

– Minister Medinsky came up with “pre-Katyn”, associated with the Napoleonic era, a supposed crime of Polish soldiers near Gzhatsk.<sup>107</sup> A monument was built, a sign put up.

There's also something that defies any attempts at logical analysis: the famous trip to France of activists of the military history society and the French funding of memorials on the battlefields of Napoleon and the coalition in 1814. Remember that Russian nomenclature even now talks about a war of liberation of Europe from the Napoleonic regime, and at best it's called the “zapadnyj pochod Russkoj Armii” – they came up with the idea of putting monuments up for the poor French.

**To the gratitude of the French nation.**

– Yes, yes! And the French were supposed to chip in for the monument in Fère-Champenoise, where Russian cavalymen slaughtered three squares of the French National Guard. They thought to themselves that they'd put up monuments of gratitude for liberating France from Napoleon. That's genuine – Russian Military Historical Society delegations travelled to France specifically for that purpose...

**It only goes to show the Russian elites' enormous problems with understanding Europe and knowledge of Western Europe.**

– Today's elite uses history and historical narrative as a flail, hammer or piledriver and sees it as an operational game, a tactical manoeuvre, just like operational games of espionage. They don't treat it as a process governed by rules stemming from certain norms.

**And if the facts contradict that, then too bad for the facts.**

– No, they've gone up a level. If the facts contradict it, they don't exist. Facts are annihilated.

<sup>107</sup> The former Russian culture minister Vladimir Medinski (born 1970), known for instrumentalization of history and accused of plagiarism, claims that, in 1812 near Gzhatsk, Polish troops serving in Napoleon's Grande Armée murdered Russian prisoners. This information has not been confirmed, at least not yet, by academic research.

**I think that we could actually finish on that note.**  
– It's a brutal punchline, unfortunately, but a true one.

**Many, many thanks for a fascinating discussion!**

Interview was conducted by ŁUKASZ ADAMSKI

# Henadž Sahanovič

## THE TRUBECKOJ MASSACRE IN MSCISLAŨ – CENTURIES LATER\*

### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to an episode in the 1654–1667 war between Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: the capture of Mscislaŭ by the Tsarist army, accompanied by the mass murder of its defenders and inhabitants. On the basis of published sources and literature on the subject, the author has tried to trace the functioning of the tragic events in the memory of the local population, as well as show how the Trubeckoj Massacre is represented in the historiography of Belarus and Russia. The author disagrees with the thesis of some Russian historians regarding the complete conformity of the massacre with the “laws of war” that were generally accepted in early modern Europe and believes that in Russian interpretations of the events one can see the desire to justify the Tsar’s policy and the unwillingness to admit inconvenient facts.

### KEYWORDS:

Rzeczpospolita, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Aleksej Trubeckoj, Mscislaŭ, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Tsardom of Moscow, Belarus

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The events in question took place in the east of present-day Belarus at the beginning of the 1654–1667 war, which was waged by Moscow against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For the attack on the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as GDL), the government of Tsar Aleksej Michajlovič assembled an army of about 70,000 men, which was huge by the standards of that time. Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who had sworn allegiance to the Tsar under the terms of Pereiaslav Agreement, sent 20,000 Ukrainian Cossacks, headed by Ivan Zolotarevko. These forces were to be opposed by Hetman Janusz Radziwiłł with an army of less than 10,000 soldiers, the majority of which was made up by districts' military units and the Noble Host [Polish: *pospolite ruszenie*].<sup>1</sup> The overwhelming superiority of the Muscovite forces undoubtedly decided the outcome of the campaigns at the outset of the war and the fate of many towns, including Mscislaŭ. In what follows, we will first try to draw a picture of the events in the town, relying mainly on published sources and literature on the subject, without claiming to provide a comprehensive factual study of the events; we then trace their function in the memory of the population and in historiography, especially in the alternative visions of Belarusian and Russian historiographies.

\* \* \*

When the southeastern grouping of the Tsarist army of Voivode Prince Aleksej Trubeckoj, which numbered 15,000 to 17,000 soldiers, moved from Brjansk to the territory of present-day Belarus at the beginning of summer 1654, there were no forces to stop them. For the inhabitants of the eastern fringes of the GDL, who had already had the bitter experience of war, the lack of defences meant that they could only save their lives by throwing themselves on the mercy of the Tsar.<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, the border town of Roslaŭ surrendered immediately. The next town to stand in the way of Trubeckoj's army was Mscislaŭ, the centre of the voivodeship, which was fortified with a palisade, a fairly strong castle on the Vichra River, and earthen ramparts with wooden towers above them.<sup>3</sup> The population of the town, which was predominantly Orthodox, could be estimated at about 10,000 people.<sup>4</sup> However, by that time many people from

- <sup>1</sup> For more details on the forces of both sides at the beginning of the war, see Konrad Bobiatyński, *Od Smoleńska do Wilna. Wojna Rzeczypospolitej z Moskwą 1654–1655* (Zabrze: Wydawnictwo INFORT EDITIONS, Witold Grzelak, 2004), pp. 35–38, 47–48; Andrzej Rachuba, 'Wysięk mobilizacyjny Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w latach 1654–1667', *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, XLIII (2007), 43–44.
- <sup>2</sup> For more on the initial phase of the war and the attitudes of the population towards the army, see Bobiatyński, *Od Smoleńska do Wilna*, 42–51; id., 'Adnosiny žycharou VKL da maskoŭskaha vojska ŭ 1654–1655 h.', *Belarusian Historical Review*, 14 (2007), pp. 54–80; Piotr Kröll, 'Belaruskaja kampanija 1654 h. (da bitwy pad Šapjalevičami)', *Belarusian Historical Review*, 6 (1999), pp. 7–31.
- <sup>3</sup> Andrzej Mjaceł'ski, *Mscislaŭskae knjastva i vajawodstva ŭ XII–XVIII stst.* (Minsk: Belaruskaja navuka), pp. 295–97. Cf. Michail Tkačev, *Zamki Belarusi* (Minsk: Polymja, 1987), p. 92.
- <sup>4</sup> Mjaceł'ski, *Mscislaŭskae knjastva*, pp. 312–13.



the surrounding villages and even other districts had already rushed to the town. Having learned of the approach of Muscovian troops, they sought refuge in the shelter of the town walls. Those who fled took with them what they could of their movable property, as well as property documents and other valuables.

Faced with the threat of an imminent clash with the enemy, the nobles of Mscislaŭ Voivodeship, together with the borough and land offices, held a joint assembly, the “Rada and Namova”. The assembly adopted a “fraternal resolution” not to retreat but to defend the town together, “so that all brothers do not retreat from the fortress of the King’s grace”.<sup>5</sup>

The Muscovian army reached Mscislaŭ on 18 July, whereupon it besieged the town and began to storm it. The defence of the town was led by the Mscislaŭ town governor, Jan Stankevič, who had the nobility and burghers under his command. Apparently, the nobility gathered there in considerable numbers, but the sources do not give any precise information about this. From some reports it can be concluded that, shortly before the arrival of the enemy, five noble units left the town.<sup>6</sup> Reinforcements in the form of part of the Noble Host did not arrive as they were defeated on the outskirts of Mscislaŭ.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the main defending force of the town seems to have been the burghers themselves.

After the siege began, the unprotected settlement outside a walled-in fortress was quickly overrun and set on fire by the enemy, but the outer town and the castle stubbornly resisted. The defenders still hoped for help and refused the offers of surrender, for which they were promised “great gifts and liberties”.<sup>8</sup> In an attempt to help the besieged, Hetman Janusz Radziwill left his main force in a camp at Orša and marched to Mscislaŭ with a 3000-man cavalry force, but he was too late. One of the participants in this advance wrote: “We could do nothing, because the enemy had already knocked down and burned [the town] while we were on our way with help. Because of the poor river crossings, we could not attack the enemy as quickly as we wanted to”.<sup>9</sup>

The situation of the defenders of Mscislaŭ, who were without support, was aggravated by the fact that the wooden walls of the castle and the buildings were burning, making them unable to withstand the artillery fire for long. As a result of the third attack, the castle was taken “by storm

<sup>5</sup> *Istoriko-juridičeskie materialy izvlečennnye iz aktovy gubernij Vitebskoj i Mogilevskoj* (hereinafter: IJuM), vol. 25 (Vitebsk: Tipografija G. Malkina, 1894), pp. 469–70.

<sup>6</sup> Ambroży Grabowski, *Oczyste spominki w pismach do dziejów dawnej Polski*, vol. 1 (Kraków: J. Cypcer, 1845), p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> Lavrentij Abecedarskij, *Belorussija i Rossija: Očerki russko-belorusskich svjazej vtoroj poloviny XVI–XVII v.* (Minsk: Vyššejšaja škola, 1978), p. 152.

<sup>8</sup> *Akty, izdavaemye Vilenskoj komissieju dlja razbora drevnich aktov* (hereinafter: AVAK), vol. 34 (Viłna, 1909), pp. 157–58.

<sup>9</sup> Bobiatyński, *Od Smoleńska do Wilna*, p. 51.

with great strength and perseverance” on 22 July 1654. What followed is described in many sources as a veritable mass murder – a massacre of the conquered. One of the descriptions states that the victors “massacred various noblemen, burghers and Jews, as well as common people, and then found living corpses and brought them to Moscow as prisoners; and having collected everything of value, they burned down the castle and all the fortifications, razing it to the ground”.<sup>10</sup> Hetman Janusz Radziwill, who had not managed to reach the town in time, reported only briefly to Vilnius that Mscislaŭ had been “robbed, knocked down and burned” by the enemy.<sup>11</sup>

Much more about the events of that fateful day for the town is learned from the accounts of the surviving witnesses who had stayed in the besieged castle, and who later – after the expulsion of the Muscovian army from the eastern territories of Belarus – applied to the court, complaining that as a result of the capture of Mscislaŭ they had lost their estate documents as well as various movable assets they had brought into the castle. About a hundred such applications, filed by representatives of the petty nobility (land owners) to the Mscislaŭ borough and land courts mainly in 1663 and 1664, were published in archaeological editions in the Tsarist period.<sup>12</sup> These hundreds of published petitions allow us to clarify several circumstances that are important to understand what happened on that tragic day, when, as the local Orthodox priest Stepan Volčaski put it, “Mscislaŭ Castle was seized by a tyrannical hand that flooded it with torrents of human blood of faithful sons of the Fatherland”.<sup>13</sup>

Let us first clarify who was in the besieged city. From the testimonies of the victims, it is clear that the fortifications housed people of different social status: noblemen and “common people”, i.e., burghers and peasants (“Volost inhabitants”, “low people”), as well as Jews.<sup>14</sup> As already mentioned, these were not only inhabitants of Mscislaŭ and its surroundings, but also people who had fled the enemy invasion from neighbouring districts. There is no evidence regarding the number of civilians who took refuge behind the city walls, but they were many times more numerous than the units of the nobles who had gathered there.

What happened to the besieged? As is evident from the accounts of numerous witnesses, their mass deaths took place after the capture of the fortified town and castle, not during the siege and bombardment. This is confirmed by a number of direct references to the murder of specific individuals in captured Mscislaŭ, as reported by their surviving relatives,

<sup>10</sup> AVAK, vol. p. 34, 349.

<sup>11</sup> Grabowski, *Ojczyste spominki*, p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> Many of these statements are published in volumes 24 and 25 of *IjuM* and also in volume 34 of AVAK.

<sup>13</sup> AVAK, vol. 34, p. 339.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *IjuM*, vol. 25, pp. 449, 450, 453, 453, 456, 457, 470, 473, 484, 488, 490, 495, 501; AVAK, vol. 34, pp. 281, 284, 290, 302, 313, 317, 326, 349, etc. On the Jews see: AVAK, vol. 34, pp. 157–59; *IjuM*, vol. 25, p. 497.

who distinguish the deaths during the siege of the castle from the killings after the capture. The sources clearly speak of the “execution of people” in the already captured castle and town, i.e., after the successful attack: first “by storm”, then “by the sword”.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary witnesses repeatedly note the same cruelty of the Muscovite troops to women and children: they killed “without regard to small children and women”.<sup>16</sup>

How many people could have died in Mscislaŭ in July 1654? We will probably never know because the necessary sources are missing. One thing is clear, however: the number could be in the thousands. Although in the papers of the nobleman Denis Turgenev and the government official Yakov Portomoin, both of whom were sent to Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the relevant records stated that the Tsar’s boyars and Voivodes “seized Mscislaŭ and wiped out everyone in Mscislaŭ”;<sup>17</sup> the word “everyone” here was, of course, just a figure of speech. Nevertheless, the mass killings of people is also confirmed by other documents of Moscow origin. Thus, while the register of military orders randomly states that the town was “stormed and wiped out”,<sup>18</sup> other official documents speak of “more than ten thousand” dead, and the report on the victory of the Tsarist army in the war against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth estimates their number at 15,000: “The Voivode Prince Aleksej Nikitič Trubeckoj and his companions captured the town of Mscislaŭ, burned it out, and killed more than fifteen thousand in it”.<sup>19</sup>

The sources of the opposite side contain even less concrete information about the number of victims. One lament mentions “several tens” of thousands,<sup>20</sup> but this is more of a rhetorical figure, as is the word “everyone”, which sometimes appears in the statements of the nobility. Of course, the total extermination of those gathered in the castle is out of the question. First, some of them were simply lucky to escape from the conquered town.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, some of the people trapped in Mscislaŭ were taken prisoner by the victors and deported to the Tsardom of Moscow, as was repeatedly reported by those who later returned from captivity.<sup>22</sup> Third and finally, some of the inhabitants, mainly burghers, remained in the town after July 1654 and swore allegiance to the new power.

More than three centuries later, archaeologists discovered terrible traces of these tragic events for Mscislaŭ: during excavations at the castle

<sup>15</sup> IJuM, vol. 25, pp. 446, 450, 453, 470, 476, 477, 487–89, 497; vol. 25, p. 445; AVAK, vol. 34, pp. 158, 284, 317, 318, 349.

<sup>16</sup> IJuM, vol. 24, pp. 421–22; AVAK, vol. 34, p. 158.

<sup>17</sup> *Akty, odnosjaščiesja k istorii Južnoj i Zapadnoj Rossii*, vol. 14: *Prisoedinenie Belorussii, 1654–1655* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1889), pp. 87, 108.

<sup>18</sup> *Dvorcovye razrjady*, vol. 3: *S 1645 po 1676 g.* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1852), p. 435.

<sup>19</sup> *Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekach i archivach Rossijskoj imperii*, vol. 4: *1645–1700*, (Sankt-Peterburg, 1836), p. 128.

<sup>20</sup> IJuM, vol. 25, p. 488.

<sup>21</sup> IJuM, vol. 25, pp. 438, 502.

<sup>22</sup> See: IJuM, vol. 25, pp. 438, 446, 447, 450, 452, 456, 457, 467, 470, 473, 476, 477, 484, 488, 480, 497, 501, 502, etc.; AVAK, vol. 34, p. 277 ff.

and in the town, they came across layers of major fires from the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>23</sup> Experts believe that the population of Mscislaŭ catastrophically shrank as a result of losses from the Thirteen Years' War, during which the town changed hands several times: instead of the 10,000 who lived there in the middle of the seventeenth century, by 1667 there were only 1500–1800 inhabitants.<sup>24</sup> After the devastation in the mid-seventeenth century, life in the town seemed to stop; it seemed to cease to exist for a while and changed from an important centre into a retreat.<sup>25</sup>

Let us try to place the massacre in Mscislaŭ in the larger context of the war. Was it a rare or even exceptional case of ruthless treatment of civilians by the Muscovian army, or can it rather be seen as the widespread treatment of town inhabitants during military conflicts of that era?

At the outbreak of the war in 1654–1667, there were other cases in which towns were destroyed and their inhabitants punished by force. In the process, the conquerors repeatedly violated the terms of surrender that formed the basis for the termination of resistance. In general, the Muscovian authorities dealt harshly with the populations of all the resistant towns in Belarus. At the beginning of the war, for example, the small town of Druja in northwestern Belarus also suffered greatly after its capture. As the Voivode Vasilij Šeremet'ev reported to the Tsar, in Druja, which he had captured in a battle, “soldiers and other people sitting in the town were beaten, and the town, churches and houses were burned without a trace”. And when, in autumn of 1654, after several months of desperate defence, the defenders of Dubroŭna situated on the Dnepr nevertheless agreed to surrender the town, Aleksej Michajlovič ordered the best nobles to be sent to him, while the rest were to be taken to Tula: “townspeople and district people along with their families were to be given to the soldiers, and the town of Dubroŭna was to be burned”. The same fate befell the small town of Hory, which surrendered in September of the same year after stubborn defence: by order of the Tsar, the commoners and nobility were taken “with their wives and children” to the Moscow state. As historians who have studied the Thirteen Years' War explain, the conquerors hoped to teach other towns a lesson by this cruel punishment, so that they would not dare resist.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Leonid Alekseev, *Po Zapadnoj Dvine i Dnepr v Belorussii* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1974), pp. 116–117.

<sup>24</sup> Mjaceł'ski, *Mscislaŭskie knjastva*, pp. 312–13. See also: *Metryka Litewska. Rejestry podymnego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Województwo mściławskie 1667 r.*, ed. by Andrzej Rachuba (Warszawa: DiG, 2008), p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> Alekseev, *Po Zapadnoj Dvine*, p. 119; id., ‘Detinec Mstislavlja v XIV–XVII vv.’, *Rossijskaja archeologija*, 2 (2000), 107.

<sup>26</sup> Michas' Tkačoŭ, *Zamki i ljudzi* (Minsk: Navuka i Tèchnika, 1991), p. 94. As early as in the Soviet epoch, the Russian researcher A. Mal'cev explained the removal of all burghers from Dubroŭna and the destruction of its fortifications by the desire of the Moscow authorities to punish the population for their resistance, and as a punishment for other Belarusian towns. See Aleksandr Mal'cev, *Rossija i Belorussija v seredine XVII veka* (Moskva: MGU, 1974), p. 49.

It is noteworthy that, even in the following year of the war, there were numerous examples of unjustified brutal treatment of the population by the Muscovian army in the still-unconquered territories of Belarus that were sanctioned by the Tsar himself. The same Voivode Prince Aleksej Trubeckoj was ordered “by order of the ruler” to move from Sluck to Slonim, “to burn, beat, enslave and destroy people without a trace” on both sides of the road. And, in order to increase the area of destruction, the Tsar ordered the troops to return via a new, “unconquered” road and do the same.<sup>27</sup> When Alexey Michajlovič learned that his soldiers had conquered many towns, “and these towns and villages in the districts were burned, and the people beaten and completely devastated”, the happy Tsar encouraged his Voivode and “praised Trubeckoj kindly”.<sup>28</sup> In the context of the conquerors’ attitude towards the Belarusian population in the first years of the war, it is not difficult to consider the events in Mscislaŭ as something completely unexpected on their part, even if all other cases cannot be compared with the slaughter in the town on the Vichra River.

The bloody massacre of Mscislaŭ was not without reason dubbed the “Trubeckoj Massacre” after the Voivode who led the siege and storming of the town. So few of the surviving inhabitants of Mscislaŭ remained that the population of the district began to refer to them as “nedoseki” (“those who were not finished off”),<sup>29</sup> i.e., those who barely escaped annihilation. We do not know exactly when this definition came into use, but it most probably began after the war or soon after the events described. In any case, this word lived on for centuries in the language of the locals: the dictionary of the language of Eastern Belarusians that was compiled in the middle of the nineteenth century recorded the lexeme “nedoseka” in exactly this meaning – as the nickname for a native of the town of Mscislaŭ.<sup>30</sup> The collective memory of the events of 1654 was supported by two murals on the walls of the Church of St Mary, built in Mscislaŭ in the monastery of the Carmelite Order. Researchers assume that this church already existed in the town in the first decades of the seventeenth century but was initially made of wood and then burned down during the conquest of the town by the Muscovian army. The construction of the stone church in place of the wooden one started only in 1717–21, while its towers appeared even later as a result of reconstruction carried out by Vilnius architect Johann Christoph Glaubitz in 1756–68.<sup>31</sup> This final stage of the church

<sup>27</sup> *Akty Moskovskogo gosudarstva* (hereinafter: AMG), ed. by N.A. Popova, vol. 2: *Razrjadnyj prikaz: Moskovskij stol, 1635–1659* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1894), pp. 437–39.

<sup>28</sup> AMG, vol. 2, p. 439.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Michas’ Tkačou, Aleh Trusaŭ, *Staražytny Mscislaŭ* (Minsk: Polymja, 1992), p. 24.

<sup>30</sup> Ivan Nosovič, *Slovar’ belorusskogo narečija* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1870), p. 330.

<sup>31</sup> Tkačou, Trusaŭ, *Staražytny Mscislaŭ*, p. 51; Aljaksandr Jaraševič, ‘Mscislaŭski kljaštar karmelitaŭ’, in *Encykłapedyja historyi Belarusi*, vol. 5 (Minsk: BelEn, 1999), p. 228; Anatol’ Kulahin, *Katolickija chramy na Belarusi* (Minsk: Belaruskaja encykłapedyja, 2001), p. 104.

construction is attributed by experts to the appearance of historical frescoes<sup>32</sup> referring to the events of 1654. About 20 murals were created, of which two are the most important: “The capture of Mscislaŭ Castle by the Muscovian army” and “Murder of priests”. The first depicts the siege of the castle by Trubeckoj’s army; the second the massacre of the Catholic population of the town after the capture.

Memory of the events known as the “Trubeckoj Massacre” did not fade in the local population even under the rule of the Russian Empire, to which Mscislaŭ already belonged in 1772 as a result of the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the nineteenth century, this fact was confirmed by the authors of several historical works who were familiar with the antiquities of Mscislaŭ. In particular, the Russian history lover Michail Bez-Kornilovič, who served as a military topographer in the western provinces of the Empire in the 1830s to 1840s, wrote a work on the past of Belarus in which he recalled the tragic days of Mscislaŭ. His book states that Prince Trubeckoj took the town by storm and “the inhabitants were beaten without distinction of sex or age”. For this, the historian continued, the Tsar’s Voivode was nicknamed “cruel”, the massacre itself was referred to in folk legends as the “Trubeckoj Massacre”, “and the descendants of the citizens who survived it are called ‘nedoseki’ by the inhabitants”.<sup>33</sup> The author also recalled the historical paintings in the local church. Another historian, Iosif Turčinovič, who came from a noble family from the Mahilëŭ region, also paid attention to the events of 1654. In his first summary overview of the history of Belarus, he informed his readers that the citizens of Mscislaŭ at that time were “almost all exterminated by Trubeckoj’s troop soldiers”, which is why “the dwellers of Mscislaŭ are still called *nedoseki*”.<sup>34</sup> The mention of the Muscovite troops’ harsh treatment of the population of the subjugated territories in Tsarist Russia did not contradict the official imperial account at the time. In books on the reign of Aleksej Michajlovič, published in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, among the glorifications of the triumphant successes of the Tsarist army in the territories of historic Lithuania, one could read, for example, that the Tsar had “ordered Vicebsk to be cut down” for its resistance,<sup>35</sup> etc.

After the suppression of the January Uprising of 1863–64, however, attitudes towards the history of the Russian empire’s western provinces

<sup>32</sup> Maria Kałamajska-Saeed, *Rosyjskie pomiary klasztorów skasowanych w roku 1832*, t. 2 (Warszawa: “Polonika”, 2021), p. 655.

<sup>33</sup> Michail O. Bez-Kornilovič, *Istoričeskie svedenija o primečatel’nejšich mestach v Belorussii prisovokupleniem i drugich svedenij k nej že odnosjaščichsja* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1855), p. 190.

<sup>34</sup> Iosif Turčinovič, *Obozrenie istorii Belorussii s drevnejšich vremenii* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1857), p. 211.

<sup>35</sup> See Vasilij Berch, *Carstvovanie carja Alekseja Michajloviča* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1831), pp. 66–67; Petr Medovikov, *Istoričeskoe značenie carstvovanija Alekseja Michajloviča* (Moskva, 1854), pp. 74–75.

changed considerably. The leading positions in official historiography were taken by representatives of the so-called “Westrus’ian” school, which asserted the thesis that “Western Russia” (Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine) and “Great Russia” were parts of Russia. The ideological leader of “Westrus’ian” historiography, Michail Kojalovič, who was very active in underpinning this idea, offered simplified pro-Russian interpretations of events in his lectures on local history, which critics noted were informed by his “anti-Polish irritation”. Speaking about Russia’s war against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the actions of Trubeckoj’s army, he explained that “in Belarus, cities surrendered one by one”, because – in his interpretation – “the whole of Western Russia was in the process of overthrowing the Polish yoke and restoring its state unity with Eastern Russia”.<sup>36</sup> Pompei Batjuškov’s publication, which was intended to underpin the “original Russianness” of the western provinces of the empire, echoed this: the authors claimed that the detachments of Princes Trubeckoj and Čerkasskij took many Belarusian towns, including Mscislaŭ, with ease, as “one town after another surrendered”.<sup>37</sup> The interpretation of the war with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as the “liberation of Western Russia from the Poles” became the defining discourse of Russian historiography, regardless of school. The authoritative Russian historian Sergej Solov’ev, who held balanced views, also argued in his multi-volume work that the Muscovite army occupied towns in the lands of Belarus “with the Tsar’s grace and salary”, which is why there “not only the common people, but also the nobility willingly swore an oath to the Tsar”.<sup>38</sup> When recounting the events of 1654, he mentioned the “surrender of Mscislaŭ” only in the context of congratulating the Tsar on the complete surrender of the towns of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

However, in addition to government publications that expressed the official view of the region’s past, an alternative explanation of history remained available to the public in the western provinces of the empire. When dealing with the events of local history, unofficial publications often portrayed the actions of the Russian authorities and troops in a very unflattering light. For example, despite censorship, the author of a multi-volume geographical dictionary published in Warsaw reported on the “terrible massacre” of the inhabitants of Mscislaŭ perpetrated by Trubeckoj’s army, also mentioning *nedoseki* as “the name of the descendants of the surviving

<sup>36</sup> Michail O. Kojalovič, *Čtenija po istorii Zapadnoj Rossii*, izd. 4 (Sankt-Peterburg, 1884), pp. 244, 250.

<sup>37</sup> *Belorussija i Litva: istoričeskie sud’by Severo-Zapadnogo kraja*, ed. by P.N. Batjuškovym (Sankt-Peterburg, 1890), pp. 254–55.

<sup>38</sup> Sergej M. Solov’ev, *Sočinenija: v 18 kn.*, kn. 5: *Istorija Rossii s drevnejšich vremeni*, vols 9–10 (Moskva: Mysl’, 1990), p. 603.

burghers” of the border town.<sup>39</sup> He was also well aware of the existence of a mural painting in the local church that was connected with the events of the mid-seventeenth century.

The longevity of the memory of the historical massacre of the population of eastern Belarus in the early twentieth century was convincingly illustrated by Vladimir Krasnjanskij in his historical essay on Mscislaŭ. A Russian historian who came from Novgorod province, he taught in various towns in the northwestern region. When he was the director of the men’s gymnasium in Mscislaŭ in 1906–11, he studied the local antiquities and devoted an essay to the history of the town, reporting on the tragic days of 1654. According to Krasnjanskij, Prince Trubeckoj “dealt ruthlessly with the defenders of Mscislaŭ castle, leaving them to the sword and fire; of those taken prisoner, only a few were released”.<sup>40</sup> The historian also affirmed that those who survived the mass murder were called *nedoseki* by the local population, and the slaughter in Mscislaŭ, he claimed, “is remembered to this day as the Trubeckoj Massacre”. According to Krasnjanskij, the nobility in Mscislaŭ still retained the nickname ‘nedoseki’ even in his time, and pictures of scenes from those distant events remain on the interior walls of the local church.

Finally, in 1912, in his journal “Litwa i Ruś” (formerly “Kwartalnik Litewski”), the first publication of photographs of the Mscislaŭ frescoes was issued by the Polish historian Jan Obst,<sup>41</sup> who had moved from St Petersburg to Vilnius. There he met the Belarusian historian Dzmitry Daŭhi-alla, then a member of the Vilnius Archaeographical Commission, who provided his Polish colleague with his photographs of the frescoes. In his description of the frescoes, Jan Obst suggested that they could have been painted as early as the seventeenth century, and only the rococo frame was added later during the renovation of the church under King Augustus III. The author suggested that the paintings might have been made by a foreign master, possibly from Holland, and that they might be based on living oral tradition – the accounts of witnesses to the battle in the town.<sup>42</sup> Jan Obst described the events of 1654 as “the most tragic in the entire bloody history of Mscislaŭ” and noted that they were known to both Russian and Polish historians as the “Trubeckoj Massacre”. At the same time, he subtly remarked that the “fierceness” of the Muscovian warriors against the town’s population is difficult to explain, given the constant assertions that Mscislaŭ “is and was ‘eternally Russian’”.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Krz. J., ‘Mścislaw!’, *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, ed. bys F. Sulimierski, B. Chlebowski, J. Krzywicki, and W. Walewski, vol. 6 (Warszawa: Nakł. Władysława Walewskiego, 1885), p. 775.

<sup>40</sup> Vladimir Krasnjanskij, *Gorod Mstislav! (Mogilevskoj gubernii) (Vil’na, 1912)*, p. 80.

<sup>41</sup> J. O. [Jan Obst], ‘Freski w kościele Mścislawskim’, *Litwa i Ruś*, 2:1 (1912), 28–33.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.



After the collapse of the Russian Empire, at the beginning of the Soviet epoch, the old scheme of history, which presented the past of Belarusians and Ukrainians as branches of the “threefold people of Rus”, was discarded by the Marxist historiography of Michail Pokrovskij’s school. In the 1920s, it was time for Minsk to establish its own school of Belarusian historiography that would assert the historical and cultural autonomy of Belarusians. Naturally, at that time there was quite a lot of talk about the past wars with Russia, but we did not manage to find any examples of the “Trubeckoj Massacre” in the Belarusian publications of those years. In the 1930s, with the onset of political repression and the reorientation of Soviet historiography to justify Russia’s great power, any criticism of the policies of Muscovian rulers became politically risky.

After the end of World War II, coverage of the history of the Soviet republics was directly subordinated to a scheme designed to prove the historical justification of their incorporation into Russia and the progressive role of the Russian people in their destinies. The introduction of the concept of the “Old Rus’ nationality” as the single root of the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples in 1954 demanded that Belarus’s centuries-long past be viewed only through the prism of the Belarusians’ aspirations for “reunification with Russia”. Any mention of Muscovy’s wars of aggression was excluded. In Minsk, one of the main representatives of the official position of Soviet historiography was Lavrentij Abecedarski, who became a notorious “enemy of apoliticism”. He advocated the unity of the East Slavic peoples and the Belarusians’ longing to be Russian;<sup>44</sup> he also declared any example of enmity between them in the past to be falsification and hastened to refute every statement about the inhuman attitude of the Muscovite troops towards the Belarusians.

In the conditions of the popularization of the heroes of Russian history and the active Russification of culture in the BSSR, the historical frescoes commemorating the “Trubeckoj Massacre” irritated local Soviet officials, who tried to get rid of the dilapidated church in Mscislaŭ. In 1959, they made such a proposal to Moscow and the party authorities of the Mahilëŭ region, saying not only that the preserved murals were “not of historical and artistic value to the Belarusian people” but also that their content was “anti-patriotic and insulting”. According to their explanation, the Battle of Trubeckoj was a struggle for the “liberation of Mscislaŭ from foreign invaders”, and Polish historians had attributed “distorted, false and

<sup>44</sup> Laŭrėnci Abėcėdarski, *Barac’ha ũkrainskaha i belaruskaha narodaŭ za ũz’jadnanne z Rasijaj u sjarėdzine XVII v.* (Minsk: Džjaržaŭnae vydavectva BSSR, 1954); id., *Bor’ba belorusskogo naroda za soedınenie s Rossiej (vtoraja polovina XVI–XVII v.)* (Minsk, 1965).

hostile” meaning to it.<sup>45</sup> When the first petition to the centre had no effect, the Soviet and party apparatchiks from Mscislaŭ sent another petition to the higher authorities in 1961. It contained a request to remove the church building from the register of cultural monuments of the BSSR and to stop its restoration because, they said, the “Trubeckoj Massacre” mural depicted Russian soldiers who had come “to liberate the Belarusian people from the Polish noble yoke” in a distorted manner as murderers and robbers and was “an insult to the Russian and Belarusian brotherly peoples”.<sup>46</sup>

The church miraculously survived. It was saved by the development of cooperation between USSR and the Polish People’s Republic, which began during Nikita Khrushchev’s Thaw: the visits of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, Władysław Gomułka’s visits to Minsk and Moscow in 1958 and 1959, and later the participation of the Polish delegation in the XXII Congress of the USSR Communist Party in 1961. The Soviet government gave this delegation the opportunity to visit Mscislaŭ with its monuments of “Polish” heritage,<sup>47</sup> thanks to which the church was saved.

Although the frescoes were preserved, people in Soviet Belarus could only talk about the “Trubeckoj Massacre” behind closed doors, because the fact of the bloody capture of the town by the Russian army radically contradicted the notion of the Belarusian people’s aspiration for “reunification” with Russia as the central thesis of the BSSR’s official historiography. With the only aim of discrediting the slaughter of 1654 as “an invention of the bourgeois nationalists”, the party authorities in Minsk allowed only the aforementioned official historian Lavrentij Abecedarski to raise this uncomfortable topic publicly. In a monograph on Belarus’s ties with Russia, he explicitly criticized what he called “the legend of the annihilation of all the inhabitants of Mscislaŭ by Trubeckoj’s army”.<sup>48</sup> Such an approach was flawed from the outset since no one in the literature on the subject insisted on the destruction of “all”. Then, this party historian resorted to an even more blatant manipulation. First, referring to one single document – the testimony of the noblewoman Raina Kurovič – he questioned the very fact of the storming of the castle, thus contradicting the testimonies of a hundred other witnesses who had described the events. According to Abecedarski, this noblewoman was also in the besieged castle and she allegedly reported that “the noblemen themselves surrendered Mscislaŭ castle to Trubeckoj’s army”.<sup>49</sup> In reality, there is nothing of the sort

<sup>45</sup> Ihar Puškin, ‘Antyrehliijnaja palityka i ‘pol’ski faktor’ u histori Mscislaŭskaha kascēla karmelitaŭ (1950–1960-ja hh.)’, in *Mscislaŭ i Mscislaŭski kraj*, ed. by Mjaceł’ski (Minsk: Belaruskaja navuka, 2019), pp. 355–57.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358–59.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360.

<sup>48</sup> Abecedarskij, *Belorussija i Rossija*, pp. 150–53.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

in Kurovič's statement. She said quite clearly that she was sent by her husband from Mscislaŭ to another "Hospodar" castle, which she did not specify. The enemy **approached this castle after** [emphasis mine – H.S.] the capture of Mscislaŭ by storm, and it was her castle, not Mscislaŭ's, that was surrendered to the enemy because of a lack of provisions, gunpowder and men to defend it.<sup>50</sup> An analysis of the available material suggests that Kurovič's report refers to the castle of neighbouring Kryčau, a town in the same Voivodeship that surrendered in the autumn of 1654.

Further, to refute the assertion of the "total extermination" of the town's inhabitants, Abecedarski referred to the Tsar's charter that had been issued to the remaining burghers of Mstislaŭ in May 1655 to protect them from insults by Muscovian warriors. His final argument was the well-known fact that captive noblemen from Mscislaŭ were brought to the Muscovian State. On the basis of these arguments, Abecedarski concluded that all talk about the "Trubeckoj Massacre" was a lie because the commoners remained in Mscislaŭ after the attack, and the nobles lived, so all remained unharmed. According to his explanation, the Tsarist power in Belarus allegedly treated the nobility "very mildly" and forbade killing the common people at all. Using his own version of the "surrender" as proven fact, Abecedarski concluded that the rumours about the "total" extermination of the inhabitants of Mscislaŭ were "invented" and spread by the nobles themselves, who thus "tried to justify the surrender of Mscislaŭ castle to the Russian army before the authorities of the Commonwealth" and "to obtain confirmation documents for their former possessions".<sup>51</sup> The party historian of the BSSR concluded his failed "debunking" by stating that only bourgeois nationalists spread this legend after the victory of Soviet power.

Apart from this case, the authorities of the BSSR did not allow any further recollections of the events of 1654 in official discourse until the end of the Soviet era. Even in popular publications about the history and culture of Mscislaŭ itself, the topic had to be carefully avoided.<sup>52</sup> The fate of a journalistic essay on Mscislaŭ written by the popular Belarusian writer Uladzimir Karatkevič in 1982 is indicative in this respect. In the original version, the author gently and without invective against the Russians recounted the tragic days of 1654, mentioning both Voivode Trubeckoj and the "Trubeckoj Massacre", as well as the word "nedoseka", and referring to the work of Nosovich for reassurance. But the censors carefully removed all of this: in the published version of the work, all that remained was

<sup>50</sup> AVAK, vol. 34, p. 290.

<sup>51</sup> Abecedarskij, *Belorussija i Rossija*, p. 153.

<sup>52</sup> As an example, see: Aleh Trusaŭ, *Rascislaŭ Baravy, Pomniki staraŭtynaha Mscislava: da 850-hoddzja horada*, (Minsk: Belarus', 1985).

a mention of the war of 1654–67, in which Mscislaŭ was “as in the furnace”.<sup>53</sup> The extracted fragments were only reinserted into Karatkevič’s popular work after the collapse of the Soviet system.

It is strange that the “Trubeckoj Massacre”, which was hushed up for decades, did not attract more attention on the part of Belarusian historians and history popularizers after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In any case, it was definitely not included in the catalogue of events used by Belarusian historiography to awaken national patriotism, and it plays no role in the “place of memory” (*lieu de mémoire*) of Belarus after 1991. A rare case of emotional treatment of this topic in the pages of a state journal was a publication dedicated to the historical fate of Mscislaŭ castle,<sup>54</sup> in which the author recounted that the conquerors killed thousands of inhabitants there and took many captives, calling the massacre at the castle its “apocalypse”. On the other hand, in a modern monograph on the history of the Mscislaŭ region, the events of 1654 are mentioned only very briefly as an ordinary episode of the war.<sup>55</sup> According to the author, the unusual number of casualties in the capture of the town is explained by the large gathering of citizens from the entire Voivodeship who sought shelter in the castle. Such reticence in the publications of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus could be related to the official politics of history under Lukašenka; however, even in popular literature, which does not look back at the position of the authorities, the events of 1654 were rarely and rather quietly discussed. In popular history books published by non-state publishers, for example, the capture of Mscislaŭ by the Muscovite army appeared only as an example of “the hardest fate” among Belarusian towns during the war of 1654–67;<sup>56</sup> however, the term “Trubeckoj Massacre” was not used because these authors clearly tried to avoid politicizing their interpretations of the events.

A completely different interpretation of the events that interest us is offered by the Russian historical narrative. It has already been mentioned that in the Tsarist era these events were included in the official legend of the “liberation of Western Russia from the Poles”. In Soviet times, the difference between Moscow’s and Minsk’s evaluations of the actions of the Muscovite rulers, together with the nationally oriented historians in Belarus, were eliminated as a result of Stalin’s policy. It is not surprising that the special works of Russian-Soviet authors, when they wrote something about the Tsarist wars in the territories of Belarus, presented them

<sup>53</sup> Uladzimir Karatkevič, *Mscislaŭ: èsè pra historyju i ljudzej adnoj zjamli* (Minsk: Belarus’, 1985).

<sup>54</sup> Raman Abramčuk, ‘Apakalipsis mjascovaha značennja: žyccé i smerc’ Mscislaŭskaha zamka (1135–1660)’, *Architektura i stroitel’sтво*, 1 (2013), 54–57.

<sup>55</sup> Mjaceł’ski, *Mscislaŭskae knjastva*, p. 241.

<sup>56</sup> Uladzimir Arloŭ, Zmicer Herasimovič, *Kraina Belarus’: iljustravanaja historyja* (London: Angloproject Corporation, 2003), p. 184.

in the context of Moscow's struggle for East Slavic unity. The prominent Russian expert on the history of the war of 1654–67, Aleksandr Mal'cev, hardly touched on the circumstances of the capture of Mscislaŭ; he only indicated that, right at the beginning of the campaign, the Russian army "took the town by storm after a fierce battle" and continued to advance.<sup>57</sup> This author interpreted the events strictly in line with Soviet politics of history, arguing that the Muscovite army "liberated" the towns and villages of Belarus from "Polish rule" and that in Belarus the overwhelming mass of the population suffered from brutal exploitation and national-religious oppression and therefore accommodated and supported the Russian "liberators".<sup>58</sup>

If the subordination of explanations of the past to official ideology was common practice in Soviet times and not surprising, then the fidelity of Russian historiography to one of the main theses of Soviet politics of history after the collapse of the USSR cannot fail to impress. Indeed, in contemporary Russian historiography, just as in the era of the CPSU Congresses, the Muscovite state's wars with its western neighbours are presented as a struggle to restore the broken "East Slavic unity" – the proverbial "reunification". In educational literature, the destructive war in the mid-seventeenth century is presented as a just and liberating war for the peoples of Belarus and Ukraine, who "suffered under a triple oppression – serfdom, nationality and religion" in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>59</sup> And with regard to events in Belarus, some Russian historians repeat like magic the thesis that "the Belarusians opened the gates of their towns before the Tsarist regiments"; they even claim that their submission to the power of Tsar Aleksej Michajlovič was "the realization of the dream of the Orthodox Russians" in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.<sup>60</sup> The authors of such publications do not seem to realize that the Orthodox citizens in Belarus at that time constituted a minority, but even they – although the rights of the Orthodox were really violated – were by no means eager to submit to the authority of the Tsar and become "Russians". This can be seen in a series of uprisings against Muscovite garrisons in the Belarusian towns that had experienced the Tsarist regime, as well as in the development of guerrilla warfare by the local population against the "liberators" during the Thirteen Years' War.

<sup>57</sup> See: *Očerki istorii SSSR: Period feodalizma, XVII v.*, ed. by A.A. Novosel'ski, V.N. Ustjugova (Moskva: AN SSSR, 1955), p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> Aleksandr N. Mal'cev, 'Vojna za Belorussiju i osvoboždenie Smolenska v 1654 g.', *Istoričeskie zapiski*, 37 (1951), pp. 133; id., *Rossija i Belorussija v seredine XVII veka*, pp. 63–65, ff.

<sup>59</sup> *Istorija Rossii: učebnik*, ed. by Aleksandr S. Orlov et al. (Moskva: MGU, 2015), p. 162.

<sup>60</sup> Andrej P. Bogdanov, 'Zapadnaja Rus' i stanovlenie velikorusskogo stichosloženiija pri Moskovskom dvore', in *Rossijskaja real'nost' konca XVI – pervoj poloviny XIX veka: ekonomika, obščestvennyj stroj, kul'tura: sb. statej* (Moskva: RAN, 2007), p. 146.

A certain adherence to the doctrine of ‘liberation’ is also readily apparent in the works of today’s Russian scholars who deal specifically with the history of the wars of Tsarist Russia. It is noteworthy that they usually do not address the issue of the Tsarist army’s treatment of the population of the occupied territories. For example, in his summary of the events of the 1654–67 war, Aleksandr Malov presents them as a “victorious march of the Russian army” in the Belarusian territories, during which it “took” one town after another, without mentioning any cases of resistance.<sup>61</sup> A similar attitude can be observed in Oleg Kurbatov, who deals with the military history of Russia in the seventeenth century. In his summary monograph on the same war, he focuses only on the military campaigns and successes of the “Russians” against the “Poles” and “Lithuanians” in the territories of Belarus and Ukraine. In his account, the army of the Tsar’s voivodes in Belarus takes one town after another as if there was no resistance anywhere. Mscislaŭ, as the book says, “was taken by storm without a long siege” by the Trubeckoj army; then, “the garrison of Dubroŭna surrendered”, and then “the burghers of Vicebsk capitulated”.<sup>62</sup> In all the aforementioned towns, the inhabitants stubbornly resisted the Tsarist army, but they are put on a par with other settlements that quickly surrendered. In the consistent omission of the circumstances of the conquest of Mscislaŭ, Dubroŭna, Vicebsk and some other towns, it is difficult not to see the intentionality. The fact that Kurbatov focuses only on the military campaigns does not explain everything, for when he describes the actions of the enemy, i.e., the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth troops, he repeatedly speaks of their cruel treatment of the local population: thus, the campaign of Col. J. K. Lisovski through Belarus at the end of 1655 was accompanied by “pogroms against the peaceful population”, and Stefan Czarnecki “exterminated all the inhabitants there” in 1665 after conquering the town of Stavišče,<sup>63</sup> etc.

But by far the most striking example of this biased approach to explaining the events of the 1654–67 war in Belarus is provided by Aleksej Lobin. In 2007, in response to my popular scientific book on the said war<sup>64</sup> and to the journalism of Belarusian history buffs, he devoted a special essay to defending the Russian troops against the “Belarusian nationalist school”<sup>65</sup> that reproached them for ruining the towns of the GDL. Let us leave aside the accuracy of the accusations against the opponents, who, according to Lobin, only “juggle facts” and have no idea about

<sup>61</sup> Aleksandr Malov, *Russko-pol'skaja vojna 1654–1667 gg.* (Moskva: Cejchgauz, 2006), pp. 16–20.

<sup>62</sup> Oleg Kurbatov, *Russko-pol'skaja vojna 1654–1667 gg.* (Moskva: Runivers, 2019), pp. 21, 27.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 297.

<sup>64</sup> Henadz' Sahanovič, *Nevjadomaja vajna: 1654–1667* (Minsk: Navuka i tšehnika, 1995).

<sup>65</sup> Aleksej Lobin, *Neizvestnaja vojna 1654–1667 gg.*, <[https://scepstis.net/library/id\\_1104.html](https://scepstis.net/library/id_1104.html)> [accessed 6 January 2023].

the “methodology of historical research”. The issue here is not the method of his polemics but the explanation of what happened in Mscilaŭ. After all, it completely contradicted Lobin’s false claims regarding the Tsar’s humane policy towards the population, which supposedly forbade the military to harm the inhabitants of towns and villages. His explanation for the Mscislaŭ case appeared to be very simple: the author justified the cruelty of Trubeckoj’s army with the “laws of war”. Because the garrison and the inhabitants put up stubborn resistance, “the Voivode could not guarantee their welfare according to the Tsar’s order”. Therefore, when the town was taken by storm, “its inhabitants were killed or taken prisoner”, according to this Russian author. In his interpretation, if a town stubbornly resisted, then “according to the **rules of military science** [emphasis mine – H.S.] of the time” the siege was followed by “brutal killing and massacre in the town”. This was how “without exception, all troops acted on enemy territory”, Lobin summed up.

Igor Babulin’s book on the events of the first year of the war can be considered the most thorough and balanced work of Russian historians on this subject to date; it contains a separate section devoted to a sensitive topic – the capture of Mscislaŭ.<sup>66</sup> Unlike others, he tried to find out what happened in this town in the summer of 1654. This author relied on the testimonies of several nobles who described the storming of the town;<sup>67</sup> then, he offered his own analysis and evaluation of the events. Unfortunately, using Abecedarski’s far-fetched argument, Babulin also tries to question the cited testimonies about the bloody capture of Mscislaŭ. Let me remind you that Abecedarski referred to the testimony of just one noblewoman, as if he were speaking of a voluntary surrender of the castle. Although, as we have shown above, this statement referred to another castle, Babulin also called it the testimony of a person who was in besieged Mscislaŭ.<sup>68</sup> Just like Abecedarski, he undertook to challenge the statement “about the total extermination of the defenders of the city”, which was just a figure of speech that was also used, by the way, in sources of Russian origin. In the scientific publications of Belarusian historians and writers, there was not even an attempt to claim something similar.

Although Babulin eventually conceded that the reports of the nobility proved “the death of a considerable part of the civilian population”, he related this to the storming of the town and rejected all accusations of excessive cruelty on the part of the Tsarist troops, disagreeing with the definition of these events as “massacres”. He attributes the very subject

<sup>66</sup> Igor’ Babulin, *Smolenskij pochod i bitva pri Šepelevičach 1654 goda* (Moskva: Russkie vitjazi, 2018), pp. 71–80.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–76.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

of the “Trubeckoj Massacre” only to the “Polish tradition”. In describing the paintings on the walls of the Carmelite Church, he again refers to L. Abecedarski, who claims that the “Trubeckoj Massacre” is a legend created by nobles, who created the paintings on the church walls to support the legend.<sup>69</sup> The historian also insists on the need to distinguish between “unavoidable casualties during a brutal attack” on the one hand, and the “killing of defenceless people”, i.e., the “massacre” after the capture of the city. “There is no credible evidence that the Russians organized the deliberate killing of prisoners after the capture of the city”, he asserts. In his opinion, “only the Catholic priests, who were not treated squeamishly at that time” could have been the victims of the “massacre”. It turns out that if there is no concrete information in the Russian sources about the killing of civilians, the evidence of the other side does not count. This obvious tendency of Babulin’s explanation of the events of 1654 in Mscislaŭ has been rightly pointed out by a Polish historian of the same war, Konrad Bobiatynski.<sup>70</sup> It is indicative that Babulin’s conclusion shifts the entire responsibility for what happened to the inhabitants of Mscislaŭ themselves, who dared to offer armed resistance: they knew the rules of war and “were well aware of the consequences of their actions”. The notorious “rules of war” appear again, as if they justified the mass slaughter in the capture of the city. Did such generally accepted and understood “rules of war” really exist at that time?

It is well known that military science and warfare practices underwent remarkable changes during this period. The tendency to strengthen discipline and reduce the negative impact of the army on society was already evident in various parts of Europe from the 16th century onwards. To this end, the so-called “Articles of War” and other legal documents regulating the relationship between the army and the civilian population were introduced. In the Articles introduced by King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden, for example, which served as the basis for similar codes in other countries, more than half of the rules provided for the death penalty for breaches of discipline, including violence against civilians and robbery.<sup>71</sup> The same tendencies then gripped the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where German and especially Swedish models had a clear influence on the codification of military law.<sup>72</sup> The “Articles of War” introduced

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>70</sup> Konrad Bobiatynski, review of ‘Igor’ Babulin, *Smolenskiy pochod i bitva pri Šepelevičach 1654 goda*, Moskva, 2018’, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 126:2 (2019), 405.

<sup>71</sup> Leslie C. Green, ‘The Law of War in Historical Perspective’, *International Law Studies*, 72 (1998), 49–50; Frank Tallett, *War and Society in Early Modern Europe, 1495–1715* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 122–124; cf. Florin N. Ardelean, ‘Military Justice, Regulations and Discipline in Early Modern Transylvanian Armies (XVI–XVII c.)’, *Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis. Series Historica*, 8 (2011), 183–89.

<sup>72</sup> See the seminal work on military discipline in the Polish Crown and the GDL: Karol Łopatecki, “*Disciplina militaris*” w wojskach Rzeczypospolitej do połowy XVII wieku (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, 2012).



by the Hetmans during the campaigns, the special constitutions adopted by the Sejm that referred to military discipline, as well as the norms of the Statute of the GDL (in the territories of today's Lithuania and Belarus) affirmed, among other things, a more humane attitude of troops towards the populations of both their own country and other countries. In this can be seen the impact of Renaissance humanism on military affairs. A good example of its manifestation is Duke Albrecht of Prussia's Treatise on the Rules of War (*Kriegsordnung*), completed in 1555, whose Polish translation became known among the elites of the GDL. What is important for us here is that this military manual contained an incantatory call to "have pity on those who do not defend themselves", on children, women and the elderly, and "not to shed the blood of an innocent".<sup>73</sup> A similar approach is found in Hugo Grotius' famous work "On the Law of War and Peace". Yes, it prescribes the soldier's harsh right to kill and take spoils of war in the enemy's lands in a just war, but it is further restricted by key clarifications. In particular, Grotius speaks of the need to avoid killing innocent people; he then separately calls for sparing children, women and the elderly, as well as church officials, peasants and merchants.<sup>74</sup> In other words, to justify the massacre of civilians indiscriminately with a general rule of war is to oversimplify things.

Naturally, the practice of war differed greatly from the preached norms, and it is true that in Europe at that time many inhabitants used to be killed when towns and castles were stormed. The victors were not obliged to distinguish the soldiers of the enemy garrison from the common people, so the latter were at high risk of violent death. Nevertheless, their mass murder could not be described as the rule. Civilians were comparatively rarely the target of deliberate attack by soldiers during military conflicts. It is known from the literature on the subject that the deliberate killing of civilians after the capture of fortifications usually took place in search of loot,<sup>75</sup> and this did not lead to mass casualties. Even if there was nothing to protect the civilian population from the invading army, women, children and clergy, as mentioned above, were included in the category to be spared under military law.<sup>76</sup> It was different with the rest. But for us it is important to note that in the history of early modern European wars one can find many examples of how the forcible

<sup>73</sup> *Die Kriegsordnung des Markgrafen zu Brandenburg Ansbach und Herzogs zu Preußen Albrecht des Älteren – Königsberg 1555*, ed. by H.-J. Bömelburg, B. Chiari, and M. Thomae (Braunschweig: Archiv Verlag, 2006), pp. 51, 172.

<sup>74</sup> Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace*, ed. by Stephen C. Neff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 390–91.

<sup>75</sup> Peter H. Wilson, 'Was the Thirty Years War a 'Total War'?', in *Civilians and War in Europe, 1618–1815*, ed. by Erica Charters, Eva Rosenhaft, and Hannah Smith, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 32.

<sup>76</sup> Cf.: Green, 'The Law of War in Historical Perspective', p. 52.

capture of a castle after a siege did not result in many civilian victims.<sup>77</sup> The capture of Prague by the Franco-Bavarian army of Charles Albrecht and the Corps of Count Moritz of Saxony in 1741 did not result in any killings or looting at all.<sup>78</sup>

In the most famous cases where many lives were lost in the storming of towns in early modern Europe, experts note that factors such as the religious character of these conflicts or the desire to restore lawful order played an important role in the suppression of those who had rebelled against the ruler. The bloody capture of Mechelen in 1572, for example, was a Spanish massacre of a rebellious Belgian town.<sup>79</sup> In the German lands of the Thirty Years' War, a particularly gruesome event<sup>80</sup> was the capture of Magdeburg by Catholic League troops in 1631, in which thousands of the city's inhabitants perished. The brutality there was strongly motivated by religious opposition: Magdeburg was considered a symbol of Protestantism in Germany, which is why the Catholic warriors so mercilessly stormed this town. The same motive fuelled hostility when Oliver Cromwell's troops stormed Drogheda in Ireland in 1649 and massacred many inhabitants: the commander-in-chief himself explained the brutality of his soldiers with the rhetoric of religious opposition, calling those trapped in the town "barbarians".<sup>81</sup>

In the history of our town, however, there could have been nothing of the sort. After all, the population was predominantly Orthodox, and Tsar Aleksej Michajlovič, in his letters to the inhabitants of the GDL, described the aim of the war as the liberation of "oppressed Orthodoxy". He directed the same rhetoric to his army sent against the "Poles" as "ravagers of the Holy Eastern Church of Greek law".<sup>82</sup> Does it look like the Tsar had a poor grasp of the real state of affairs beyond the western border of his Tsardom? Or did Trubeckoj's warriors, in the frenzy of military success, not care about the creed of the town's defenders and ordinary citizens? Or could it be that the only thing that motivated them in conquered Mscislaŭ was their lust for profit and the urge to kill?

<sup>77</sup> Tallett, *War and Society*, pp. 153, 163; Samuel Pufendorf, *Siedem ksiąg o czynach Karola Gustawa króla Szwecji*, ed. by Wojciech Krawczuk (Warszawa: DiG, 2013), p. 336.

<sup>78</sup> Sven Peterson, *Die belagerte Stadt. Alltag und Gewalt im Österreichischen Erbfolgekrieg (1740–1748)* (New York: Campus Verlag, 2019), pp. 69–72.

<sup>79</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *Empire, War and Faith in Early Modern Europe* (London: The Penguin Press, 2002), pp. 156–57.

<sup>80</sup> For more details, see Hans Medick, 'Historische Ereignis und zeitgenössische Erfahrung: Die Eroberung und Zerstörung Magdeburgs 1631', in *Zwischen Alltag und Katastrophe. Der Dreißigjährige Krieg aus der Nähe*, ed. by Benigna von Krusenstjern, Hans Medick (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), pp. 379–407; Michael Kaiser, 'Excidium Magdeburgense. Beobachtungen zur Wahrnehmung und Darstellung von Gewalt im Dreißigjährigen Krieg', in *Ein Schauplatz herber Angst. Wahrnehmung und Darstellung von Gewalt im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Markus Meumann and Dirk Niefanger (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1997), pp. 43–64.

<sup>81</sup> Parker, *Empire*, pp. 158–59.

<sup>82</sup> Solov'ev, *Sočinenija* kn. 5, vols 9–10, pp. 601–02.

These and similar questions must be confronted by historians who try to understand the “Trubeckoj Massacre”. It seems that contemporary Russian historiography lacks sufficient critical reflection and the desire to listen to the other side in order to at least distance itself from the not very valorous actions of the Russian army in the past. Some authors even deny inconvenient facts in order to justify the Tsar’s policy and the actions of his troops. We must admit that during the Russian Empire many historians explained the past of the annexed countries more objectively than some of our Russian colleagues today. The interpretation of the tragic events in Belarusian town of Mscislaŭ is a good example of this.

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# Cem Kumuk

## A RECOGNITION QUESTION OF A GENOCIDE: RUSSIAN ATROCITIES IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

### ABSTRACT

Throughout history, violence has been an indispensable part of the Russian state tradition. Not only non-Russian subjects but also ethnic Russians have experienced their share of this tradition. In many cases, this tradition has turned into genocidal practices against non-Russian subjects. Due to the current political bottlenecks of the international community, this article focuses on the difficulties experienced in the recognition of these crimes against humanity and examines the genocidal practices of the Russian state in the North Caucasus, especially the Circassian Genocide in the nineteenth century. For more than two centuries, Russian state politics has been trying to erase the term “the Caucasus” as a geographical term in international public opinion and to make this region part of Southern Russia by cleansing or assimilating the indigenous North Caucasian nations. While the article focuses on the ‘velikorus’ (Great Russian) practices in the Tsarist and Soviet periods, it draws attention to the fact that there have been similar examples in the first thirty years of the so-called Russian federal state.

### KEYWORDS:

North Caucasus, Circassia, Chechnya, Russia, Genocide, Deportation, United Nations

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Genocide is a phenomenon that scientists, lawyers, politicians, commentators, and activists use to refer to various socio-historical phenomena. The concept of genocide was part of human life centuries before Raphael Lemkin named it.<sup>1</sup> Neither Lemkin's naming of this phenomenon in 1944, nor the year 1948, when the UN Genocide Convention entered into force, are decisive factors in the criminalization of various genocide practices in history. Moreover, the legal dimension of this convention is limited to the actions of individuals and does not cover cases in which genocide is practiced as state terror. Therefore, rather than a legal term, it is more of a descriptive term, which makes the conscientious aspect of this phenomenon even more important. Lemkin's definition of genocide is briefly as follows:

- A Killing members of a group;
- B Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group;
- C Deliberately creating living conditions that are predicted to lead to the physical destruction of a group in whole or in part;
- D Taking measures to prevent births within a group;
- E Forcibly transferring the children of one group to another.

If the definition of genocide means any acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group (as Lemkin defined it), this does not mean that such acts were natural norms before Lemkin coined this definition.

As a matter of fact, the event that motivated Lemkin to focus on this issue was related to war crimes alleged to have been committed a quarter of a century previously. Moreover, Lemkin's definition of genocide has become insufficient in today's norms. Apart from the physical acts described by Lemkin, today it is possible to destroy national, ethnic, racial, religious, and class groups with spiritual, cultural, and several other indirect methods.

Today, many states accept the UN Genocide Convention in order to avoid genocide they committed before 1948 being recognized as such. However, making United Nations' approval a prerequisite for recognizing as genocide the forced and en masse expulsion of a nation from their native lands, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes committed during this exile, puts the issue in a stalemate from the very beginning.

<sup>1</sup> Raphaël Lemkin (1900–1959), a Polish lawyer who is best known for coining the term “genocide” and initiating the Genocide Convention; his interest was spurred after he learned about the Armenian genocide and found that no international laws existed to prosecute the Ottoman leaders. Lemkin coined the term “genocide” in 1943 or 1944. It comes from the Greek word “genos”, meaning family, clan, tribe, race, stock, kinn, and the Latin suffix “-cide”, meaning killing. See Douglas Irvin-Erickson, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2017), pp. 27–28.



Violence has always been one of the most important features and primary methods of the operations of the Russian state regarding non-Russian elements of the state. The rulers did not hesitate to commit ethnic and cultural genocide in the areas they conquered and governed during the reigns of The Tsardom of Russia (1547–1721), the Russian Empire (1721–1917), Soviet Russia (1917–91), and the Russian Federation (1991–). It can be observed that Russian state terror has targeted certain religious or national groups, regardless of age and gender, in lands occupied by Russian armies. Tens or hundreds of thousands of people were murdered in these massacres, such as the Siege of Kazan (1552), the Novgorod Massacre (1570), the Massacres in Kazan (1571–72), the Razin Revolt (1670–71), the Bashkir rebellions (1705, 1735, 1755), the Khiva Massacre (1881), the Polish Operation of NKVD (1937–38), and the Katyn Massacre (1940). Additionally, in events such as the World Wars, the Russian Civil War (1917–20), and the Stalinist Purges, when the state terror also included Russian ethnicities, great massacres were carried out on some specific ethnic groups by taking advantage of the chaotic environment.<sup>2</sup>

During the last two centuries, the North Caucasus has also become one of the primary war arenas for Russia. While mentioning all striking examples of genocidal performances committed by Russia in the North Caucasus, the article will mainly focus on the Circassian<sup>3</sup> experience, as the national existence of the Circassians is currently under threat of extinction. Despite all the credible proof, the international community is hesitant to recognize the experiences of the Circassians as genocide due to its political and economic ties with the Russian Federation. If one agrees that the Circassians' experiences conform to Lemkin's definition of genocide, then the following facts should not be ignored.

The massacre and forced deportation of Circassians in the nineteenth century is some of the most barbaric violence that humanity has ever witnessed. Looking at the crimes against humanity that were committed in the same period by other colonial powers in different parts of the world, especially in Africa, the Far East, and America, and claiming that Russia's crimes against the Circassians in the nineteenth century could be considered within the norms of the period is simply an effort to cover up this crime. It must be noted that even Lemkin himself was inspired by events from the past when he coined the term "genocide".

<sup>2</sup> Micheal Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts, A Statistical Encyclopedia of Casualty and Other Figures, 1492–2015*, 4th edn (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2017), pp. 22, 57–58, 91, 215, 387–434, 452, 526–28; Karol Karski, 'The Crime of Genocide Committed against the Poles by the USSR before and during World War II: An International Legal Study', *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 45 (2013), 703–60 (here: 706–12).

<sup>3</sup> The term "Circassian" in this article collectively represents Adyge, Ubykh, and Abaza ethnonyms.

This is an undisputable genocide, as proven by legitimate documents and proof. The length of this study does not permit us to examine all scientific publications on this genocide in detail; however, to make the reality more visible, some documents and publications prepared by official Russian institutions and personalities will be shared with the reader as legitimate pieces of evidence. Tbilisi has hosted some these documents for the last two centuries as it used to be the administrative centre of the Caucasus Military District of the Tsar's government. Duplicates of these documents also exist in Moscow and St Petersburg. However, the Russian state does not allow researchers to access these documents. After the Russian-Georgian War in 2008, the Georgian president of the time made these documents accessible to researchers. The documents, which consist of thousands of pages preserved in funds number 2 and 416 in the Georgian State Archives, are irrefutable evidence of the crimes of the Tsarist era of Russian statehood. As a matter of fact, long before this archival discovery, there was also very striking proof of genocide in the very well-known twelve-volume documents extracted from the archive of the Main Directorate of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, compiled by The Caucasian Archaeographic Commission in the years 1866–1904.<sup>4</sup>

During the transition from tsardom to the empire, the existence of Russian army generals was purely dependent on these endless wars, and they expended great efforts to keep Russia in such a constant state of war. Extensive Russian invasions began with Peter I and continued during the whole Romanov dynasty. The wars in the Caucasus, which had ordinary, religious, national, or feudal motives, underwent a serious change in 1816 with the appointment of General Alexey Yermolov to the command post, and a period of great terror began. In a message to Tsar Alexander I, Yermolov said, "I desire that the terror of my name shall guard our frontiers more potently than chains or fortresses".<sup>5</sup> Yermolov adopted terrorizing names for the fortresses that he built in the Caucasus, such as *Groznaya* (terrible) and *Vnezapnaya* (surprise).<sup>6</sup> With the terror that he spread among the Mountaineers<sup>7</sup>, he forced innocent civilians to move from the plains to the mountains in search of shelter. He aimed to drive

<sup>4</sup> Akty, *sobrannyye Kavkazskoy arkhograficheskoy komissiyey* (hereinafter: Akty), ed. by Dmitry Kobayakov, 12 vols (Tbilisi, 1866–1904), XII (1904), pp. 693–1025.

<sup>5</sup> John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, 1908), p. 97; Lesley Blanch, *The Sabres of Paradise* 5th rev. edn (London: Bookblast ePublishing, 2015), p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest*, pp. 106–07.

<sup>7</sup> The word "Mountaineers" is sometimes associated with the condescending attitude in some Russian sources towards the native population of the North Caucasus. However, in this article the capitalized term "Mountaineers" is a proper noun in the form of the special noun or name used for a specific person, place, company, or other thing. Proper nouns are always capitalized. So, the term "North Caucasian Mountaineers" becomes a proper noun defining a specific group of people which defines a national designation of the North Caucasians in association with their common state-building project. If this were not the case, North Caucasian politicians would not use this term for their political organizations and state entity. Also, thousands of scientific monographs, articles, and approved academic dissertations which use the term "North Caucasian Mountaineers" should not be neglected.

them from the arable lands in order to starve them to death. Yermolov's order to his officers was as follows: "Let the standing corn be destroyed each autumn as it ripens, and in five years they will be starved into submission."<sup>8</sup> After the construction of the second Caucasian fortification line was completed, the punitive attacks of Yermolov – aiming to destroy all the Mountaineers, without distinction of men, women, and children – became an ordinary act.<sup>9</sup>

Contrary to what many monographic clichés claim, the Caucasian Highlanders were not an obstacle to Russia's imperial strategic plans to move to the warm seas and seize control of the Indian trade route. So, the war that they conducted in the North Caucasus was not in the vital interests of Russia. As early as 1561, kinship had already been established between the Circassian aristocracy and the Russian Tsardom with the marriage of Ivan the Terrible to Goshenay, the daughter of Kabardian Prince Temruk.<sup>10</sup> Muslim Goshenay was baptized, converted to Christianity, and named Maria Temryukovna. This marriage paved the way for many Kabardian Circassians to enter the court of the Romanov dynasty, and this was projected by the Russian Imperial Court as the voluntary annexation of Kabardia to the Russian Empire.<sup>11</sup> Russia completed the construction of the Georgian Military Road in 1769 and conquered Georgia in 1801.<sup>12</sup> The boundaries of imperial Russia were extended to the Transcaucasus by going beyond the Daryal Pass and dividing the Caucasus down the middle with a demarcation line. So, the Caucasus was no longer an obstacle to Russia's absolute goal of new invasions in the south. Likewise, Shamkhalate of Tarki, Kazikumukh lands, and the lands on the Caspian Sea's coastline fall completely under Russian control in 1793 to 1823.<sup>13</sup> The following map of the Caucasus, printed by Archibald Fullarton in England in 1872, based on the travel notes of the German ethnographer Karl Koch between 1836 and 1838, reveals this situation strikingly.<sup>14</sup> The white zones marked with pink boundaries show the lands that were under the control of the free Mountaineers in the late 1830s; the territories marked with yellow boundaries define the Russian suzerainty. So, it is evident that Caucasian Mountaineers did not represent a threat against Russian imperial interests.

<sup>8</sup> Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest*, pp. 121–22.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130–32.

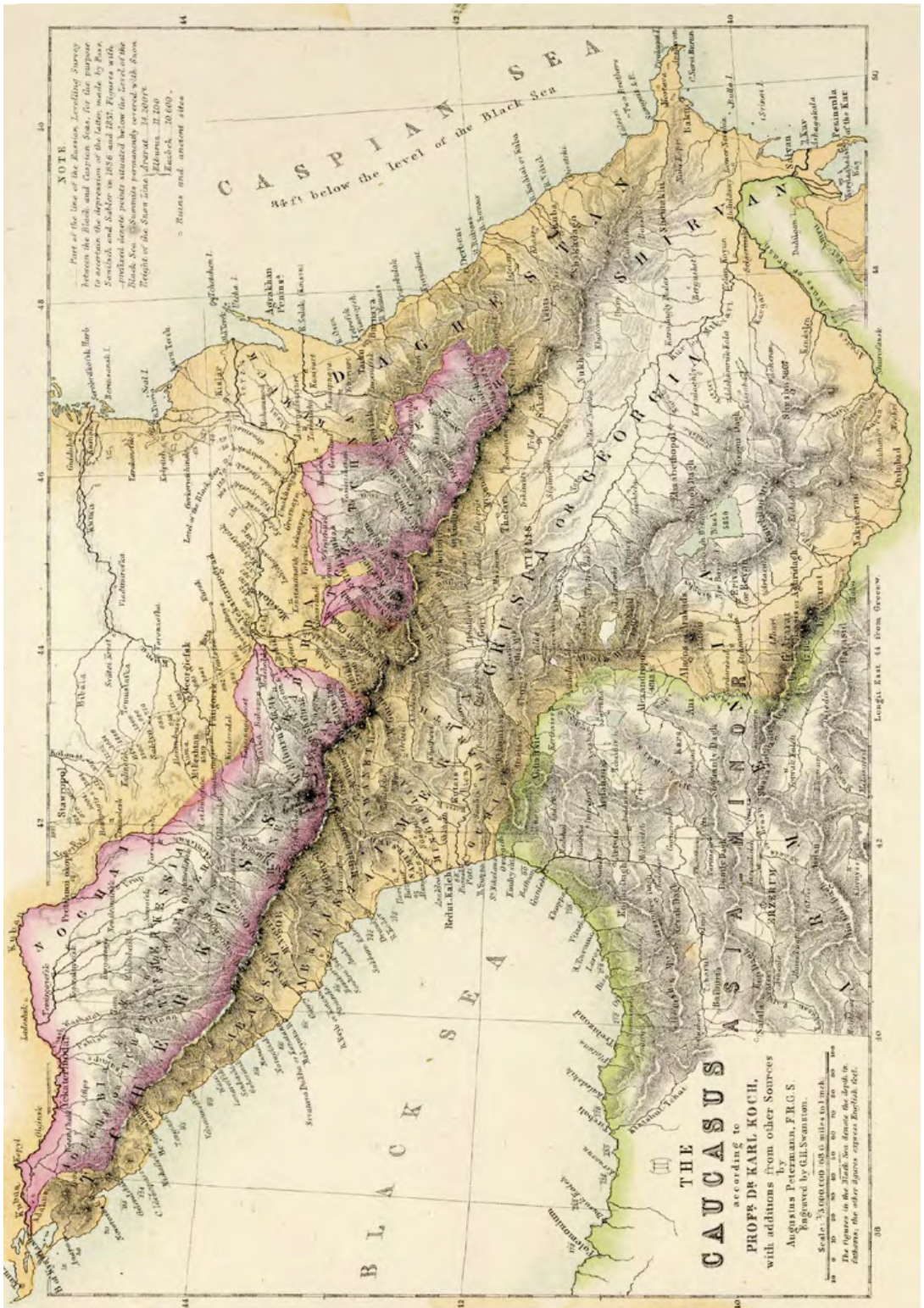
<sup>10</sup> Sergej Nečaeŭ, *Ivan Groznyj. Ženy i naložnicy "Sinej Borody"* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo AST, 2010), p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Aytek Namitok, 'The Voluntary Adherence Of Kabarda to Russia', *Caucasian Review*, 2 (1956), 17–33.

<sup>12</sup> Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar. Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest*, pp. 73–91, 135–52.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Koch, *Reise durch Russland nach dem kaukasischen Isthmus in den Jahren 1836, 1837 und 1838*, 2 vols (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Cotta 1842).



The Caucasus with the Black & Caspian Seas, according to Prof. Dr. Karl Koch, with additions from other sources by Augustus Petermann, F.R.G.S. Engraved by G.H. Swanston. A. Fullarton & Co. London, Edinburgh & Dublin. (1872)

Salt was one of the most vital commodities of the era. Circassians, Ubykhs, and Abazas living by the Black Sea's coastline obtained this material from Russia's political and military rivals, especially from Ottoman merchants. The German scientist Julius von Klaproth, who was assigned by the Russian imperial administration to perform scientific research in the Caucasus, established salt trade centres in some places in the region to develop the Mountaineers' commerce with the Russians in peace and good neighbourly relations.<sup>15</sup> Klaproth's initiative was also welcomed by the Russian Government, and the Barter Regulation, issued on 6 July 1810, was the first step toward the fulfilment of the plan.<sup>16</sup> Genoese merchant Rafael Scassi was appointed as the head of the office established for this purpose in 1811. Scassi made great efforts to improve relations with the Mountaineers and to change their feelings and thoughts about Russia.<sup>17</sup> However, Scassi's efforts were subverted each time by General Yermolov. In a message he sent to the Foreign Minister, Count Nesselrode, Yermolov stated that such a strategy would weaken the Ottoman influence over the Mountaineers and enlighten these semi-savage tribes. On the other hand, he added that such a strategy could not be applied among a people who were opposed to enlightenment and under the influence of a foreign enemy led by an ignorant Muslim government.<sup>18</sup> In 1821, Yermolov left the command of the army to Mikhail Vlasov, whose sole job was to burn villages and massacre civilians. His acts of intimidation and atrocity against the civilian population were reflected in official correspondence in 1827, as follows: "The innocent Circassians have been deprived of their property and have become animated by vengeance. [...] The actions of our troops under the command of General Vlasov have incited hatred toward the Russians among the mountaineers in various ways. [...] But this admittedly rare devotion to us did not save the Natukhays from a terrible disaster that befell them last year, at the beginning of 1826, when a large squadron of Black Sea Cossacks, led by General Vlasov, unexpectedly burst into their homes, and specifically into the auls of Natukhay Prince Saghat-Girey, and destroyed everything and stole whatever remained. This prince and his relatives have always been an example of continuous loyalty to Russia, living for many years right along our border".<sup>19</sup>

With the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, the Ottoman Empire abandoned the Black Sea coasts of the Caucasus (where she never had any

<sup>15</sup> Julius von Klaproth, *Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien Unternommen in den Jahren 1807 und 1808*, 2 vols (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1812–1814), 1 (1812), pp. 480–83.

<sup>16</sup> Ali Kasumov, and Hasan Kasumov, *Çerkes Soykırımı* (Ankara: Kafkas Derneği, 1995), pp. 98–99.

<sup>17</sup> Anatolij Fadeev, *Rossija i Kavkaz* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), pp. 63–65.

<sup>18</sup> Adolf Berzhe, *Akty*, 2 (1875), VI, pp. 451, 485.

<sup>19</sup> Georgian State Archive (hereinafter: GSA), fond 2, op. 1, doc. 2000, Letter from Kodinets to Ivan Pashkevich, 22 May (OS) 1827, ll. 8–12.

sovereignty) to Russia, and the other great rival in this colonial hustle, the British Empire, was also paralyzed. Thus, the Caucasus was besieged by Russians from all sides.<sup>20</sup> General Pozzo Di Borgo, who was the Tsar's ambassador to France and Britain at that time, summarized this situation by saying, "Public opinion has already sacrificed to us the fortresses and the Asiatic littoral of the Black Sea". In a way, he was saying that the Ottoman Empire and the West had transferred their non-existing rights in Circassia to Russia. Entering into an endless war in Circassia would weaken Russia. This was in the interest of both the Ottomans and the British.<sup>21</sup> Although it is a matter of controversy even today who motivated the Russian generals who dragged the Romanov dynasty into this war, it was an undoubted fact that what motivated them was that they would cement their position with these wars and boost their wealth. The Caucasus was chosen as the most suitable arena for such a scenario of 'The Wolf and the Lamb' game, the most ferocious actors of which were gathered there. The popularity of the names of General Nikolai Velyaminov and General Grigori Zass had begun to increase in the 1830s. The cruelty of these two Russian officers had overshadowed Yermolov's fame as they were known as skull collectors.<sup>22</sup> These two generals not only claimed that the Circassians were barbaric and semi-savage, but they also did not even consider them worthy of being called humans. Despite mentioning the burned villages, houses, and plantations in the military reports drawn up in the operation areas, the Russian officers were very careful not to mention what they were doing with the Circassians inhabiting these villages.<sup>23</sup>

Between 1853 and 1856, even the Crimean war, which aimed to bring Russia to its knees, could not dissuade these generals from going to war in the Caucasus because the results of the Crimean War, which seemed like a victory for the Allies, were actually nothing but an image of shame for them. In the war, which cost the allies more than 100,000 souls and 200 million pounds, excluding the losses of the Ottoman state, the Russians did not use even a single warship. Whereas just two Russian cruisers could be a nightmare for the Circassians, the allies did not push the Russians to put their naval forces to use during this war. The ground forces of the Russian army, which numbered 68,000 soldiers, had lost approximately 20,000 of them in clashes on various fronts, which represented only 20% of the losses of the British, French, and Sardinians. Moreover,

<sup>20</sup> David Urquhart, 'Correspondence', *The Portfolio, A Collection of State Papers*, 5 vols (London: James Ridgway and Sons, 1836), VI, p. 524.

<sup>21</sup> David Urquhart, *The Secret of Russia in the Caspian and Euxine, The Circassian War as affecting the Insurrection in Poland* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1863), p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Grigorij Filipson, *Vospominaniya* (Moskva: V Universitetskoy tipografii, M. Katkov, 1885), pp. 126–27.

<sup>23</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 2, doc. 24, From Velyaminov, 31 October (OS) 1836, pp. 112–26 (docs. 24, 17, 48, 117, 118).

Russia had voluntarily ended the war by promising to sign the Treaty of Paris, declaring that they would accept defeat in exchange for the Allies' evacuation of Crimea from Sevastopol. In the Treaty of Paris, which was signed after the war with such embarrassing results, there was not even a single article about the Caucasian Mountaineers. In fact, as understood from the official correspondence of the British government, the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829 was, in a sense, confirmed by the 30th article of the Treaty of Paris.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the Caucasian Mountaineers were left alone with an incompatible power. The atrocious military force that Russia brought down on these isolated peoples with the blockade of the 400-mile coastline on the east and west of the Black Sea had deprived them of all resources and vital commodities. Russia placed a permanent force of 200,000 men to conduct military operations on the two demarcation lines in the south and north of the Caucasus chain, which stretches at least 1400 miles in the northwest and southeast directions. When necessary, Russia increased the number by 50,000 to 100,000 men during these operations. Although the war in the Caucasus was depleting all resources of the Russian Empire, the Russian generals had no intention of giving up this war.<sup>25</sup>

However, the plans of the Russian generals were all ruined by Shamil's ending of the war on 7 September 1859. When the Gazavat movement was wedged into a narrow area in the mountainous Chechen and Avar lands, Shamil understood that the civilians would suffer if he continued resisting.<sup>26</sup> Although Shamil's surrender temporarily saved the peoples in the east from the fate of the Circassians in the west, Chechens and Dagh-estani peoples too would wait for a few years to get their share of Russia's 'subdue or destroy' tradition. After Shamil surrendered, he sent a letter to his regent Muhammed Amin in Circassia. In this letter, which the Naib received on 27 November 1859, Shamil stated that he had no other choice but to surrender and that the Naib could choose the same if he wanted.<sup>27</sup> Muhammed Amin announced that he had also stopped fighting after meeting with General Philipson on 20 November 1859. Marshal Bariatinski continued his attacks against the Circassians, albeit with the death of another prominent Circassian leader, Seferbiy Zanuqo in January 1860. In March 1860, in his message to Tsar Alexander II, Bariatinski admitted,

<sup>24</sup> Foreign Affairs Committee, 'The Right of Englishmen to Trade with Circassia (1876)', in *The British Government the enemy of Turkey during seventy years. To His Excellency Edhem Pasha, Grand Vizier of Turkey* (London: Diplomatic Review Office, 1877), p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Urquhart, *The Secret of Russia*, pp. 8–9; Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> Gadži-Ali Čochskij, 'Skazanie očevidca o Šamile', *Sbornik svedenij o kavkazskich gorcach*, 10 vols (Tbilisi, 1868–1881), VII (1873), 1–76

<sup>27</sup> Kobayakov, *Akti*, XII, p. 827.



“My goal right now is to put the Abadzekhs to sleep, but also to continue the operation against the Shapsug with a ceaseless energy...”<sup>28</sup>

Signs of the preparation for ethnic cleansing became clearly visible in the autumn of 1857. Dmitry Milyutin’s proposal to deport the Mountaineers aroused great interest in the Russian command. The Minister of War suggested that the conquest could be achieved by two methods. The first of these was to allow the Mountaineers to stay in the occupied lands; the second was to place the invaders in the Mountaineers’ lands by expelling them from their homeland. In the case of the Circassians, he said, the first option was not possible because the Circassians would always be an unreliable element. Therefore, by placing the Cossacks on these lands, maintaining Russian control over the region would be possible. Milyutin answered questions about the possible problems during the practice phase; “The mountaineers’ deep affection for their homeland [...], it is not to be doubted that they would prefer death to settlement on the steppes [...] and one can definitely say that not only whole tribes but also individual families would not choose to submit under these conditions and that this would lead not to submission but to their extermination.”<sup>29</sup> Milyutin also admitted this in his memoirs by emphasizing that Russia planned to complete their historical task in the Caucasus by an expulsion plan for the Kuban which was outlined in 1860. The plan was based on finally clearing the mountain strip of its original population and forcing the Mountaineers to choose one of the two options: either move to the indicated places on the plain and completely submit to Russian control, or completely leave their homeland and go to Turkey.<sup>30</sup>

Russian General Melentij Olshevsky admitted in his memoirs that General Yevdokimov’s strategy in the Western Caucasus was “clean and hold”.<sup>31</sup> Olshevsky also stated that, immediately after Yevdokimov’s arrival, many new Cossack Stanitsas were established on the left bank of the Laba River, and 34,000 Abaza and Besleney people were forcibly expelled to the Ottoman Empire. In another operation carried out just after Yevdokimov’s arrival, a group of approximately 15,000 people, consisting of Circassians from the Chemguy, Yegerkuay, and Makhosh tribes, was forcibly sent to the Ottoman Empire. Olshevsky’s memoirs were an explicit manifestation that partial deportations in smaller groups had begun long before

<sup>28</sup> Amirchan Magomeddadaev, *Muchammad-Amin i narodno-osvoboditel'noe dviženie narodov Severo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza v 40-60-eh gg. XIX v. (Sbornik dokumentov i materialov)* (Machačkala: In-t IAĖ DNC RAN, 1998), p. 38

<sup>29</sup> Dmitriij Miljutin, “Zapiska voennago ministra, gen.-adj’ut. Miljutina, po proektu o zaselenii predgorij Zapadnago Kavkaza Russkim” elementom”, ot 3-go aprélja 1862 goda, № 360, in *Akty*, XII (1904), pp. 981–87; Irma Kreiten, “A colonial experiment in cleansing: the Russian conquest of Western Caucasus, 1856–65”, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 11 (2009), 213–41 (here: 217).

<sup>30</sup> Dmitriij Miljutin, *Vospominanija. 1860–1862* (Moskva: Rossijskij Archiv, 1999), p. 118

<sup>31</sup> Melentij Ol’shevskij, “Zapiski M. Ja. Ol’shevskogo. Kavkaz s 1841 po 1866 g.”, *Russkaja Starina*, 83 (1895), 179–89.



the mass expulsions had started.<sup>32</sup> A protocol was adopted in the autumn of 1861 for the return of Circassians who had gone to Ottoman lands for Hajj and other reasons. This protocol was another sign of ethnic cleansing. Those who were determined to obtain Ottoman citizenship, or whose passports had expired abroad, or who did not have a personal passport but were registered in a family passport would not be allowed to return to their homes. These people were to be sent immediately to the inner parts of Russia or Siberia.<sup>33</sup>

After the Russians had occupied the south of Kuban with all their might in 1861, they moved further south and reached the territory of Abadzekh at the beginning of 1862. Circassian resistance was squeezed into a very narrow area between the Natukhay and Ubykh lands under the command of Karzech Shirikhuqo and Giranduqo Berzedj in the mountainous parts of the coastal section of the Black Sea. Circassian representatives who visited England to seek support in the last quarter of 1862 realized how they had been tragically duped by their so-called allies. The statements of David Urquhart, who greeted them on their arrival in England, demonstrated how hopeless the situation was for the Circassians:

Your arrival fills me with horror. You have come here either because you cannot stand of yourselves, or else, being able to stand, you have come here for help. If you cannot stand, all is over; if being able to stand, you seek aid from England, all is over. You will go back to carry despair by the refusal. If you obtain any help, it will only afford the means of betraying you by bringing you into communication with individuals who, having their own selfish interests to serve, must fall into the hands of Russia. If help is to be given to you, it can only be by Turkey; but then you have to make Turkey perceive her duties. That is your work. Turkey is like an old man supported by a stick which the rats are gnawing away. Circassia is the stick, the Russians are the rats, and they have with them all Europe.<sup>34</sup>

In the meantime, the chief of staff of the Russian army, Alexander Kartsov – as if renouncing the ordinary statements of Russian historiography, which claims that new settlements were offered to the Circassians in the Kuban plains – said that:

<sup>32</sup> Melentij Ol'sevskij, 'Zapiski M. Ja. Ol'sevskogo. Kavkaz s 1854 po 1866 gg. Čast' V. GL. III–VII', *Russkaja Starina*, 84 (1895), 105–17, 129–66 (here: 106, 131–32).

<sup>33</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 140, From Valuev to Mikhail Nikolaevich, 20 February (OS) 1863, l. 1.

<sup>34</sup> David Urquhart, *The Expedition of The Chesapeake to Circassia* (London: Free Press Office, 1861), p. 9.

Everything is very clear now... No matter the conditions, the mountain people accept surrender; this surrender will only continue as long as they want it. The first bullet that can be fired in the Black Sea, even a fake letter signed by the Sultan or the appearance of someone calling himself Pasha, can start a war. Even if we filled the mountains with a chain of fortifications and connected them with roads, we would always have to keep an enormous number of troops in the mountains, and there would be no peace even for a single moment.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, Yevdokimov, in his message to Kartsov on 19 September 1863, while advocating the limitless expulsion of Circassians to Turkey, also pointed out that Russia could have placed the Circassians by force in any place in Russia, but that they would not give up their old way of life there and would easily believe in the provocations of the Ottomans. He therefore suggested that the Circassians should be exiled anyway, emphasizing that they would have to outlay great effort and money to keep the Circassians under control.<sup>36</sup> These statements were strong indications that the Russian military administration did not want the Circassians in the Caucasus.

Acting in line with General Yevdokimov's operation plan, General Geyman and General Grabbe moved from different directions, slaughtered everything on their way, and met in the Kbaada valley on 21 May 1864, at 11 am. Today the Russians celebrate this date as the accomplishment of the conquest of the Caucasus, whereas the Circassians commemorate it as a day of mourning this genocide.<sup>37</sup> The exile that had started with individual and smaller groups in 1858 became massive in 1862 due to General Yevdokimov's project. The Russians established a special commission on May 10 1862 to speed up the expulsion of the Circassians. Negotiations with privately owned Russian transport ships regarding the eviction of deportees were also conducted by the state. Three commissions were set up in Anapa, Konstantinovsky, and Taman to manage the whole process.<sup>38</sup> While the Russian consulate in Trebizond refused to issue travel visas to Ottoman citizens, they gave privileges to those who were going to take a role in the transportation of the exiles on their ships, who were granted visas quickly.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 140, From Kartsov to Novikov, 23 August (OS) 1863, l. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., From Yevdokimov to Kartsov, 19 September (OS) 1863, ll. 2–3.

<sup>37</sup> Semen Ėsadze, *Pokorenie Zapadnogo Kavkaza i okončanie Kavkazskoj vojny* (Tbilisi: Tipografija Štaba Kavkazskogo voennogo okruga, 1914), pp. 152–89.

<sup>38</sup> Tugan Kumukov, *Vyselenie Adygov v Turciju-Posledstvie Kavkazskoj Vojny* (Nalchik: Ėl'brus, 1994), p. 12.

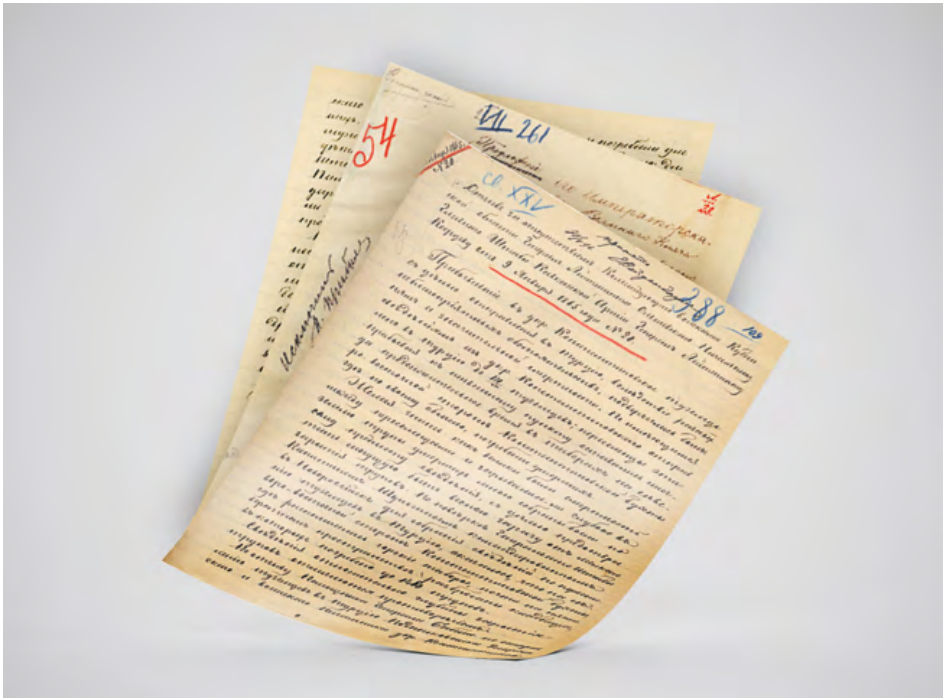
<sup>39</sup> Kemal Karpat, 'The status of the Muslim under European rule: the eviction and settlement of the Çerkes', *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 1:2 (1979), 7–27 (here: 17).

Even groups that were not in conflict with the Russians experienced their share of genocide. For example, the groups affiliated with Sultan Khan-Girey, who was well-known for being pro-Russian, could not escape Yevdokimov's pursuit. These groups did not even have a chance to harvest their crops and tried to flee to the mountains. However, towards the end of the summer of 1863, Yevdokimov's troops uprooted them from there and dragged them to the coastline. It is not known exactly how many villages were burned and how many people were killed by Yevdokimov's troops. While Yevdokimov carefully avoided giving exact numbers, using expressions such as "quite a high number" in his field notes, he did not hesitate to give clues that the extermination operation was on a massive scale.<sup>40</sup>

According to various statistics, the number of Mountaineers who were forced to leave their homeland, especially in the 1862–70 period, is estimated to be two million. A century of uninterrupted warfare before the start of the systematic genocide and deportations makes it difficult to pinpoint the exact number of Mountaineers. These people, who were exposed to continuous Russian assault during the exile, started to suffer great losses even before they reached the shores of embarkation, most of which were natural coastal areas that did not have harbour features for ships. The refugees were transported by small boats to ships, which were waiting at some distance from the shore. Greedy merchants overloaded the small boats with passengers, and many Circassians perished before they could board the ships. No records were kept while passengers boarded the ships. Due to the Russian's haste, the ship owners crammed the passengers into the ships.

Therefore, estimates of the number of exiles could only be made on the basis of departure records from known places with port facilities. The deaths caused by disease and infirmity during the journey, not to mention the unfavourable living conditions in the refugee shelters at the destination, must also be taken into consideration. After a while, the Russians stopped the evacuation of the Circassians on these state-owned ships due to disease and transferred the job entirely to Turks, Russian private ship owners, and even a few independent British steamers, but no records were kept of these transports either. Casualties at the shores of the destination were also not recorded; neither were the people who died during the voyage and were thrown into the sea. The bodies were immediately buried to prevent odour and disease. The registration of the refugees who managed to reach the resettlement points in the Ottoman lands was also extremely unsystematic. Information was compiled by tracking the correspondence of

<sup>40</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, General Yevdokimov's field notes, June–December 1863, doc. 1177, ll. 100–199.



Genocide evidence on the papers of the Russian Commanders (Georgian State Archive – Tbilisi)

the Russian, British and French Consulates in Trebizond, the columns of newspapers such as *The Times* and *Invalide Russe*, and the available data in the Ottoman archives.<sup>41</sup> In principle, these evacuations should have only been through the ports of Novorossiysk, Anapa, Taman, and Sochi. However, during the spring and summer of 1864, the entire coastline was crowded with refugees.<sup>42</sup> The funds allocated by the Tsar's government for the rapid execution of the expulsion leaked into the pockets of Russian officers. When General Yevdokimov was no longer able to submit satisfactory reports about the expenditures, he found a solution by asking for help from the chief of staff, Kartsov. Saying that he could not follow the correct distribution of the funds, Yevdokimov begged for personnel support from the chief of staff. On that day, all allowances had already been stolen, so there was nothing left.<sup>43</sup> A significant increase was observed in correspondence between the high-level Russian command in that period. Almost all of the correspondence was about the cost of the expulsion process. Russian

<sup>41</sup> The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, London (hereinafter: NA), Foreign Office (hereinafter: FO), 881/1259, no. 1, From Consul Stevens to Earl Russell, Trebizond, 17 February 1864, l. 1; *ibid.*, no. 2, From Consul Dickson to Earl Russell, Sokhunkale, 22 February 1864, ll. 1–2; *ibid.*, no. 3, From Consul Konsolos Bulwer to Earl Russell, Istanbul, 12 April 1864, ll. 2–3; *ibid.*, no. 4, From Consul Dickson to Earl Russell, Sokhunkale, 17 March 1864, l. 4; *ibid.*, no. 5, From Consul Dickson to Earl Russell, Sokhunkale, 13 April 1864, ll. 4–5; *ibid.*, no. 6, From Consul General Murray to Earl Russell, Odessa, 29 April 1864, l. 5; *ibid.*, no. 7, From Consul Bulwer to Earl Russell, Istanbul, 3 May 1864, ll. 5–7; *ibid.*, no. 8, From Consul Bulwer to Earl Russell, Istanbul, 11 May 1864, l. 7; *ibid.*, no. 9, From Earl Cowley to Earl Russell, Paris, 19 May 1864, l. 7; *ibid.*, no. 10, From Consul Lord Napier to Earl Russell, St Petersburg, 17 May 1864, ll. 7–8; *ibid.*, no. 11, From Earl Russell to Consul Bulwer, London, 25 May 1864, l. 8; *ibid.*, no. 12, From Consul Lord Napier to Earl Russell, St. Petersburg, 19 May 1864, ll. 9–11; *The Times*, 24 June 1864, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 149, From Kartsov to Black Sea Fleet Commander, 13 May (OS) 1864, l. 5; *ibid.*, Report from Glazenap, 17 April (OS) 1864, l. 1; *ibid.*, doc. 145, Report to Yevdokimov, 30 April (OS) 1864; *ibid.*, doc. 148, From Zabudsky to Cherkesov, 13 January (OS) 1864; *ibid.*, doc. 160, From Mikhail Nikolaevich to Novikov, 20 September (OS) 1867, l. 2.

<sup>43</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 148, From Yevdokimov to Kartsov, 8 April (OS) 1864, l. 4.

officers tried to put the responsibility for the transportation process on the shoulders of the Ottomans to avoid the expenses. Russian officers aimed to complete the whole exile process before the Ottomans terminated it.<sup>44</sup> When autumn came, the scene of piles of corpses on the beach was tragic.



The lands populated by North-West Caucasian peoples before the forced deportation and genocide in the nineteenth century



The lands populated by the Genocide survivors

<sup>44</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 149, From Commander of Nikolaevskaya Fortress, 17 April (OS) 1864, ll. 1–2.

A Russian officer named Smekalov commented on the death toll, saying, "I don't have any data because it's impossible to collect the bodies."<sup>45</sup>

In his field reports, General Yevdokimov frequently used the term "cleaning" as a means of "genocide".<sup>46</sup> If public opinion does not perceive the term "cleaning" as "laundering", then Yevdokimov's term "cleaning" should be understood as "genocide". The complete expulsion process, which was planned to be completed by October, could not be finalized in time, despite Yevdokimov's efforts. The evacuation of the exiles continued into the winter in the face of adverse weather conditions. Yevdokimov had asked for only two additional weeks; however, when the Russians continued the exile even in late December, the Sublime Porte asked the Russians to stop the process.<sup>47</sup> In light of all these data, it can be assumed that the number of refugees able to reach the Ottoman lands is close to one million. While about 400 thousand refugees landed at coastal points in the Balkans, nearly the same number arrived at the Black Sea ports of Asia Minor. The number of refugees who followed the land route and entered Asia Minor via the eastern border in scattered groups until the 1870s at different time intervals was around 200 thousand.<sup>48</sup>

The genocide that the Russians inflicted on the Caucasian Mountaineers, especially the Circassians, did not end with the conquest of the Caucasus in 1864. The practices of the Russian administrative body in the Sukhum military region caused an uprising in Lykhny in 1866. Tens of thousands of Abkhazians were expelled to the Ottoman lands in another exile wave that started in Lykhny in 1867.<sup>49</sup>

Soon, the Ottoman and Russian empires were again in a battle arena. Circassians and other Caucasian Mountaineers once again became victims of genocidal practices in the Russian-Ottoman War of 1877–78. The Mountaineers who had been settled in the Balkans during the expulsion of the 1860s became one of the most important trump cards of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan theatre of war. On the other hand, many Caucasian Mountaineers who had managed to survive the tragic genocide and were able to stay in their native lands were fighting on the Russian side in this war. In a telegram sent by Gazi Osman Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman armies, to the Sublime Porte during the war, there were dramatic

<sup>45</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 149, From Smekalov, 18 November (OS) 1864, l. 16.

<sup>46</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 1177, General Yevdokimov's field reports, June–December 1863, l. 131.

<sup>47</sup> GSA, fond 416, op. 3, doc. 145, From Mikhail Nikolaevich to Milyutin, l. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Nedim İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), p. 4; Kumukov, *Vyseleniye Adygov*, pp. 15, 17; Karpat, 'The status of the Muslim', p. 11; Mark Pinson, 'Ottoman Colonization of the Circassians in Rumeli After the Crimean War', *Etudes Balkaniques*, 3 (1972), 71–85.

<sup>49</sup> The Turkish Republic Presidential State Archives, Ottoman Archives of Prime Ministry (hereinafter: BOA), Application entitled 'İrade Meclis-i Mahsus 1408', Hijri 24 Zilkade 1283 (29 April 1867); Stanislav Lakoba, 'Thirty years of "guilt" (1877–1907)', *Abkhazworld.com*, 14 March 2013 <<http://abkhazworld.com/aw/history/617-thirty-years-of-guilt-1877-1907-by-stanislav-lakoba>> [accessed 7 July 2022].



Telegraph message stating that the Circassians fighting on the friendly side had encountered another Circassian group at the front. A conversation with the second group made them understood that the second group was on the enemy side.

descriptions of conversations between rival Circassians while they were fighting in opposite trenches. (See the image of the telegram below)

Caucasian Mountaineers were also the driving force of the Ottoman armies in the eastern theatre of the war. Caucasian immigrants saw this war as an opportunity to liberate their homeland, therefore they voluntarily enlisted in the Ottoman army. Musa Kundukhov, who was once a brigadier general in the Russian army, and Gazi Muhammed Pasha, the elder son of Imam Shamil, formed the backbone of the eastern wing of the Ottoman Army in this war.<sup>50</sup> The participation of a considerable number of volunteers from Abkhazia, Chechnya, and Dagestan in Sultan Abdul-Hamid's call for Jihad caused another tragedy at the end of the war.<sup>51</sup> The Circassians in the Balkans had to pay the price for the Ottoman Empire's loss of this war with another expulsion. By adding an article to the Treaty of St Stefano (Edirne) after the war, the Russians ensured that all the Circassians in the Balkans were expelled in a month and sent to Palestine, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean coasts of Asia Minor, Cyprus, and Libya. The exiles were quickly pushed onto the Greek shores and crammed onto the ships, just like in 1864.<sup>52</sup> While writers such as Ravenstein, Bianconi, and Kiepert stated that there were approximately 200 thousand Caucasian Mountaineers in the Balkans in 1876–78, consisting mostly of Circassian, Ubykh, and Abaza peoples, Kemal Karpat claimed that this number was

<sup>50</sup> Alihan Kantemir, 'Bir Kaç Söz', in *General Musa Kundukhov'un Anıları*, ed. by Murat Yağan (Istanbul: Kafkas Kültür Dernekleri Yayını, 1978), pp. 5–13 (here: 12).

<sup>51</sup> BOA, İrade Dahiliyye no. 61009, I. 3; BOA, I, DH, 748/61133-03, Highest order written to Dagestan population to promote Islamic community for a holy war (Hijri 09 c. 1294), 21 June 1877, I. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Europe by Treaty*, 4 vols (London: Butterworths, 1875–1891), IV (1891), pp. 2672, 2776, 2796.



at least 400 thousand.<sup>53</sup> Thousands of Circassians died of starvation and diseases in the holds of the ships during these voyages. One of the most striking examples of this was the tragic death of nearly 700 of the three thousand Circassians expelled through Kavala to Latakia by the steamship "Sphinx". The catastrophe started with forty exiles who fell overboard and drowned, but this was followed by a much worse disaster. Due to fire breaking out on the ship, the captain ordered the hatches to be closed on 5 March 1878. This led to seven hundred refugees burning alive below decks near Famagusta.<sup>54</sup> Thousands of Circassians who were brought to the Ottoman lands via Thrace by road were kept in intermediate stations for a very long time until they were sent to their new settlement places. Due to the terrible conditions of the relocation, many of the exiles were killed by hunger, disease, and cold. These people had no assets other than their clothes. They were given neither a tool with which to cultivate nor a seed to sow in the new lands designated for their habitation.<sup>55</sup> Tens of thousands of Abkhazians, Chechens, and Dagestanis in the eastern theatre of the war, who considered the war as an opportunity to liberate their homeland from Russian occupation, were killed or exiled to Ottoman lands and inner parts of Russia and Siberia. Most of the Abkhaz had to give up Christianity to avoid expulsion. Comparison of the remaining population with the pre-war census reveals that 31,964 Abkhaz were exiled.<sup>56</sup> More than 600 villages were destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of people became refugees in Chechnya and Dagestan. Over a thousand families were deported to Siberia, and over five hundred opinion leaders were executed.<sup>57</sup>

The experiences of the nineteenth century were transferred to Russian historiography exactly by the words in the correspondence of the Russian generals. Nikolai Denilevsky, one of the pioneers of the Pan-Slavist movement, said that Russians should give up all their human feelings towards foreigners and develop a feeling of "hatred against humanity" (*odium generis humani*), and the absolute goal of this movement was to establish a Slavic Federation with its capital in Istanbul (Constantinople). His statements on the issue of the Caucasus were as follows:

<sup>53</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 46; id., 'The status of the Muslim', p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> NA, FO, 424/69–59/3, From Consul Watkins to the Earl of Derby & Report of Captain Ivanics on the loss of the Austrian Lloyd's steamer "Sphinx" under his command, Larnaca, 19 March 1878, ll. 27–29.

<sup>55</sup> NA, FO, 424/106, no. 153, From Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson to Sir. H. Layard, Istanbul, 12 April 1880, ll. 342–43.

<sup>56</sup> Bežan Chorava, *Muchadžirstvo abchazov 1867 goda* (Tbilisi: Artanudži, 2013), pp. 76–79.

<sup>57</sup> Abdullah Saydam, 'Kuzey Kafkasya'da Bağimsızlık Hareketleri', *Avrasya Etüdleri Dergisi*, 2 (1995), 88–125 (here: 105).



'It is true that Russian conquests of the Caucasian Mountaineers have not gone so well. In this case, what perished were independent tribes rather than independent states. [...] Since the partition of Poland, no other action by Russia has aroused such universal indignation and sympathy in Europe as the war against Caucasian Mountaineers, especially just after the subordination of the Caucasus. [...] What is closer to us in the Caucasus we will civilize all by ourselves. That the Caucasus Mountaineers – by their fanatical religion, by their way of life, by their customs, and by the very country in which they settled – are natural robbers and plunderers who have not and cannot leave their neighbours in peace; this we do not take into account. They are fearless, blameless knights, paladins of freedom, and that is that! In the Scottish Hills, a little over a hundred years ago lived some tens or even hundreds of thousands of such knights of Freedom, but they were Christian, a little more civilized, and more even-tempered; the English could not abide their Mountaineer ways, and at an opportune moment scattered them in all four directions. But Russia, unless it wants to be labelled as a persecutor and oppressor of freedom, should put up with many millions of such knights in the impassable overgrown crevices of the Caucasus, hundreds of versts from any peaceful settlement. While waiting to win over these enemies [Circassians], whom in the meantime can be expected to attack at every turn, We [the Russian army] should with no end in sight deploy an army of two hundred thousand to keep watch over all the paths and exits from these robbers' caves. Thus, by this Caucasus Question we can judge the good intentions of Europe towards Russia.'<sup>58</sup>

Another well-known figure of Russian chauvinism, Colonel Pavel Pestel, a famous German Dekambrist, also puts the necessity of exile and genocide against the peoples of the Caucasus concretely down in his work *The Russian Truth*:

Divide all these Caucasian Peoples into two categories: Peaceful and Violent. Leave the former on their dwellings and give them Russian rule and organization; resettle the latter by force into the interior of Russia, smashing them into small quantities throughout all Russian Volosts and Stanitsas. To bring Russian settlements into the Caucasus and distribute the land to the Russian settlers, take all the lands

<sup>58</sup> Nikolai Danilevskii, *Russia and Europe: The Slavic Worlds Political And Cultural Relations With The Germanic-Roman West* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers 2013), pp. 29–30.

from the violent inhabitants to erase all the signs of its former (that is, present) inhabitants, and turn this land into a calm and comfortable Russian land.<sup>59</sup> In his five-volume work on the Russian–Caucasian Wars, Vasili Potto described General Yermolov with the following words to justify the genocide committed by the Russian army in the Caucasus: “He regarded all the tribes, ‘peaceable’ or not, inhabiting the mountains of the Caucasus, as de facto Russian subjects, or destined to be so sooner or later, and in any case demanded from them unconditional submission. And, in his hands, the former system of bribery and subsidies gave place to one of severe punishments, of harsh, even cruel, measures, but always combined with justice and generosity.”<sup>60</sup> Russian General Erckert commented on Yermolov’s performance: “He was at least as cruel as the natives themselves.”<sup>61</sup> Potto could find excuses to expose the activities of General Vlasov, who even attacked peaceful tribes, burned their villages, and killed innocent civilians. Potto claimed that giving stolen goods from the Circassian villages that Vlasov had destroyed to the Cossacks was the right move as it provided care for the orphans of the Cossacks and improved the conditions of the houses they lived in.<sup>62</sup> Rostislav Fadeev joined this caravan of genocidal historians, saying that as long as the Circassians remained in their homeland, those lands could never be united with Russia, that the re-education of such a people was a centuries-long process, and that it would be ridiculous to hope to change the feelings of barbarian people.<sup>63</sup> Another genocide advocate “historian” was Adolf Berzhe, who always spoke highly of Yevdokimov in his works.<sup>64</sup>

While Russian historians of that period wrote under the pressure of the hypocrisy of Russian state policies, westerners such as Teophile Lapinski, Taitbout de Marigny, James Stanislaus Bell, John Longworth, and Laurence Oliphant wrote works that give us a clear image of the events that happened in the Caucasus in those years. In addition to the literal works, the paintings of painters such as Gruzinsky, Gagarin, Horschelt, Roubaud, Preziosi, Simpson, and Ottenfeld, who had witnessed the violence in the Caucasus, also reveal the truth in a very blatant way.

<sup>59</sup> Pavel Pestel, ‘Russkaja Pravda ili Zapovednaja Gosudarstvennaja Gramota...’, in *Russkaja social’no-političeskaja mysl’. Pervaja polovina XIX veka*, ed. by Aleksandr Širinjanec, and Igor’ Demin (Moskva, 2011), pp. 184–301 (p. 224).

<sup>60</sup> Vasilij Potto, *Kavkazskaja vojna v otdel’nych očerkach, èpizodach, legendach i biografijach*, 5 vols (Sankt-Peterburg: Tip. E. Evdokimova, 1887–1889), II (1887), p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest*, p. 97.

<sup>62</sup> Potto, *Kavkazskaja vojna*, II, pp. 329–30.

<sup>63</sup> Rostislav Fadeev, *Kavkazskaja vojna* (Moskva: Èksmo–Algoritm, 2005), pp. 152–53.

<sup>64</sup> Adol’f Berže, *Vyselenie Gorcev Kavkaza* (Nal’čik: Izdatel’stvo Marii i Viktora Kotljarovyč, 2010), pp. 22, 27.

Although there are still many old-fashioned writers among contemporary Russian historians, there are also several reputable historians who can tell the truth. For example, Tamara Polovinkina, author of the book *Čerkessija – Bol' Moya* (Circassia – My Pain), is one of those who made the Russian community confront this shameful page in their history. While describing the war crimes committed by the Russian military, Polovinkina satirically criticizes Russian historians who insist on not using the term “genocide” and try to mitigate the harshness of the crime: “We admit that in this case the wish ‘not to stir up history’ may appear as an argument against the facts of Circassian genocide, especially when it comes to the unseemly role of tsarist Russia in the Caucasus in the nineteenth century, the facts of Circassian genocide.”<sup>65</sup> Using cynical language, Yakov Gordin, a prominent contemporary Russian historian, also explains the crimes committed by the Russian army in his works and comments on the cruelties: “Yermolov himself could be extremely cruel. But he was cruel in the name of enlightenment and prosperity. He shot and hung – sometimes by the feet – in the name of the progress of this region and its population.”<sup>66</sup> Even writers such as Vladimir Tolstoy, who was also an adviser to the Russian President Vladimir Putin, reveal some striking facts about the personalities of the Russian generals of the time, with remarkable expressions. For example, when talking about the characteristics of General Grigori Zass, Tolstoy says: “A Courlander<sup>67</sup> without a sign of education and vision, who had special abilities for armed robberies on a grand scale, and was entrusted with a raid by Velyaminov in cases of need to punish the treachery of any native tribe... The rest of the time this glorious General Velyaminov held Zass, as they say, on the chain...”<sup>68</sup>

Even after the Russian conquest was complete, no single chance was given to peace in the Caucasus. The Russian nationalists, pursuing the *velikoros* ideals, occupied important positions in the bureaucracy and the army as the dominant group and came to an extraordinarily powerful position in politics. Alexander III and Nikolai II had engaged in a policy of Russification, not only for the dominance of the *velikoros* groups but also for their own safety. Besides the systematic Russification processes, the forces that were driven to the first front in the most difficult wars were specially selected from the non-Russian ethnicities. This was also the case in Russia's first military disaster of the twentieth century. The Caucasian Mountaineers were among the first to be called to the Russian-Japanese

<sup>65</sup> Tamara Polovinkina, *Čerkessija - bol' moja. Istoričeskij očerk (drevnejšee vremja – načalo XX veka)* (Majkop: Adygeja, 2001), p. 212.

<sup>66</sup> Jakov Gordin, *Kavkaz: zemlja i krov'. Rossija v Kavkazskoj vojne XIX veka* (Sankt-Peterburg: Zvezda, 2000), p. 115.

<sup>67</sup> A person from Courland in Latvia.

<sup>68</sup> Vladimir Tolstoj, 'Charakteristiki russkich generalov na Kavkaze', *Rossijskij Archiv*, 8 (1996), 202–44.



Pyotr Nikolayevich Gruzinsky, *The Mountaineers' abandonment of an Aul as the Russian troops approached* (1872)



Rudolf Otto Ritter von Ottenfeld, *Fleeing from the Burning Aul* (1890)



Franz Roubaud (1856–1928), *A Tribe in Exile*



Amedeo Preziosi (1816–1882), *Circassian immigrants at the court of an Istanbul Mosque*

War. As soon as the Japanese attacked the Russian ships on 26 January 1904 (OS) and 31 January (OS), the Tsar issued an appeal for the Caucasian Mountaineers to join the war. The following statements were included in the call; “North Caucasians! The emperor, with his endless kindness and love for his loyal subjects, knowing your warrior nature, appreciating the courage of your ancestors in the Caucasian wars and the wars with Turkey, is showing you mercy and bestowing a great honour by inviting you to his service and forming the Caucasian Cavalry Brigade.”<sup>69</sup>

The effects of defeat in the Japanese War were fatal. This defeat gave the revolutionary groups the opportunity they sought for an uprising. While all of Russia was agitated, the Caucasian Mountaineers, who had not yet healed the wounds of the genocide of the nineteenth century, were completely left out of the process. The Mountaineers were mostly rural people and the urban population consisted of Russian settlers. Mountaineers had never been integrated into Russia’s legal and political sphere. For the Mountaineers, who had always been ruled under martial law, nothing had changed in the fifty years following the conquest. The Bolshevik Revolution, with the slogan of freedom and brotherhood of the peoples, promised the Caucasian

<sup>69</sup> Chadži Murad Donogo, *Dagestancy na Rusko-japonskoj vojne 1904-1905 godov* (Machačkala: Èpocha, 2013), pp. i, 20.

Mountaineers hope for self-determination. The following announcement made by Lenin shortly after the revolution was not believed by some of the representatives of the peoples oppressed by the tsars for centuries:

Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirgiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and Caucasian Mountaineers! All you, whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose faith and customs have been violated by the Tsars and oppressors of Russia! Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable! Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the Revolution, by the councils of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies!<sup>70</sup>

Imam Shamil, in an article in the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, was praised as the leader who led the struggle of the Mountaineers of Dagestan and Chechnya against tsarism and colonialism. While Shamil was described as a leader who managed to unite the Mountaineers and subdue the feudal lords of Dagestan, it was stated in the same article that by joining Russia the Mountaineers had contributed to their economic, political, and cultural development.<sup>71</sup> On the one hand, it was emphasized that Shamil was a freedom fighter leader; on the other hand, the *velikorus* ideology that Russians were the apostles of civilization was also emphasized.

It was soon realized that there had been no change in the Russian state tradition and that the Great Soviet Revolution was nothing but another *velikorus* movement. Azerbaijani writer Haydar Husseinov was awarded the Stalin Prize for Literature and Art in 1949 for his work entitled "The History of Social and Philosophical Thought in Nineteenth-Century Azerbaijan". Husseinov's remarks in this study on Muridism and Imam Shamil were reviewed again in May 1950, when it was pointed out that Husseinov's book contained the wrong political ideology and especially distorted the nature of Muridism and Shamil as it presented them as so-called progressive national liberation and democratic phenomena. The award was withdrawn. Moreover, accusing Husseinov of defending the teachings of bourgeois historians, the committee claimed that the book fundamentally distorted the true meaning of a movement that was anti-Marxist,

<sup>70</sup> Sovet Narodnyh Komissarov RSFSR, 'Obraščeniya Soveta Narodnyh Komissarov ko vsem trudjaščimsja musul'manam Rossii i Vostoka ot 24 nojabrja (7 dekabrja) 1917 g.', in *Meždunarodnaja politika novejšego vremeni v dogovorach, notach i deklaracijach, part 2: Ot imperialističeskoj vojny do snjatija blokady s Sovetskoj Rossii*, ed. by Jurij Ključnikov (Moskva: Litizdat NKID, 1926), p. 95.

<sup>71</sup> *Bol'saja Sovetskaja Enciklopedija* (Moskva: Izd. Sovetskaja enciklopedija 1926–1990), LXI (1934).

reactionary, nationalist, and in the service of British capitalism and Turkey.<sup>72</sup> Circassians (whom Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had presented as an example for all the peoples of the world in the fight for freedom) and Imam Shamil (whom they described as the “Great Democrat”) were now referred to as “British and Turkish agents, reactionary and primitive nationalists” by the Russian-dominated Soviet administration.<sup>73</sup>

When the Republic of the Union of the Mountaineers of the North Caucasus was crushed under the boots of the Russian Bolsheviks, tens of thousands of North Caucasians became refugees all around the world. The local Bolsheviks who invited and facilitated the Russian Bolsheviks in the Caucasus were the first to be administratively liquidated and then physically destroyed.<sup>74</sup>

One of the most striking genocide practices of the Stalin era was the mass exile of ethnic groups on charges of collaborating with Nazi Germany. All public records, monuments, and social memory of these peoples was destroyed during the expulsion process. The North Caucasians experienced one of the biggest shares of these practices. At the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944, together with the Crimean Tatars, the Kalmyks and the Volga Germans, the Karachay, the Balkar, the Chechen, and the Ingush were exiled to the Kazakh steppes and Siberia. These deportations, which were named an “operation of intimidation”, were in fact a merciless genocide because ethnic identity was the sole criterion. In this decision, no privilege was given to anyone belonging to these ethnicities. They were summoned not only from their native lands but also from other Soviet Republics. As the bloodiest battles on the European stage of World War II were going on at that time, most of the male population was fighting on different fronts. As soon as the war ended, these ethnicities were first gathered in the Kostroma region of Russia's European territory and then relocated to the death camps of Central Asia.<sup>75</sup> Although we do not have statistical data on the extent of the massacre in terms of loss of life since no records were kept of deaths, it is understood that thousands of people lost their lives in the *Khaibakh massacre* and similar murders at the beginning of the exile.<sup>76</sup> If Stalin had fully achieved his goal, the experiences of these people at that time would not be known today. All structures representing the social memory of the exiled peoples, including cemeteries, were destroyed. Their names were completely erased from maps,

<sup>72</sup> ‘V komitete po Stalinskim premijam. «O knige G. Gusejnova», *Pravda*, 14 May 1950.

<sup>73</sup> Ahmet Nebi Magoma, ‘Komünistlerin İmam Şamil hakkında fikir değiştirmeleri ve onun sebepleri’, *Dergi Mecmuası*, 8 (1957), 26.

<sup>74</sup> Cem Kumuk, *Düvel-i Muazzama'nın Kısılcacında Kafkasya Dağlıları* (İstanbul: Selenge, 2022), pp. 391–508.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 103.

<sup>76</sup> Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule* (London: Hurst and Company, 2006), p. 170.

streets, documents, and public memory. Even asking questions about their fate was forbidden. None of these peoples were mentioned in the USSR encyclopaedia published in October 1947. On the sixtieth page of this encyclopaedia, while the peoples that formed the union were listed according to their nationality, exiled nationalities were included in the population of 2,983,000 people in the category of “other” without mentioning their names.<sup>77</sup> Between 1939 and 1959, despite the harsh conditions of the labour camps, the population of the USSR increased from 170,467,000 to 208,827,000 – an increase of 22.3%. However, the Mountaineers who were deported from the Caucasus did not have the chance to grow their populations at the same rate.<sup>78</sup>

| Population   | 1939           | 1959           | increase %  |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Chechen      | 407.690        | 418.756        | 2,70%       |
| Ingush       | 92.074         | 105.980        | 15%         |
| Karachay     | 75.737         | 81.403         | 7,40%       |
| Balkar       | 42.666         | 42.408         | -1%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>618.167</b> | <b>648.547</b> | <b>4,9%</b> |

Also frequently part of Russia’s genocidal tradition is cultural and demographic genocide, one of the most striking examples of which took place in the historical Circassian lands in 1967. In a significant part of the lands that were cleared of the autochthonous population in the Russian-Caucasian Wars, the public memory was destroyed forever. Krasnodar reservoir, which covered an area of 420 sq. km on the Kuban River to control the flow of the Kuban River and to produce rice in the region wiped 22 historical Circassian villages off the map. Among these villages were important places of memory such as *Lakshukai*, which had a rich history and was the centre of the great Circassian peasant uprising in 1855. There were 46 historical cemeteries and 5 mass graves on 35 thousand hectares of land. 16 thousand hectares of forest were completely cut down. Most of the Circassians, comprising approximately 13,000 souls who had to leave their homes, were resettled in Adygeysk and Tlyustenkhable.<sup>79</sup> It is also

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>78</sup> Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj archiv èkonomiki (RGAÈ RF, formerly CGANCh SSSR), fond 1562, op. 336, nos. 966-1001, Nacional’nyj sostav naselenija po SSSR, respublikam, oblastjam, rajonom, fol. 15A, Development table of the national composition of the population in the USSR, republics, regions, districts;

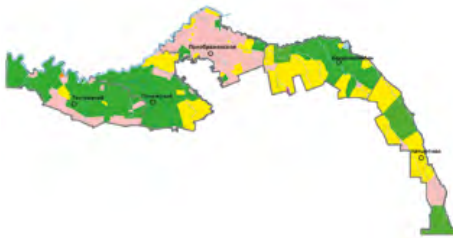
<sup>79</sup> Vitalij Štybin, ‘Uterjannoe nasledie Adygei. Kakoj cennoj postroili Krasnodarskoe vodochranilišče’, *Juga.ru*, 13 July 2018, <<https://www.yuga.ru/articles/society/8470.html>> [accessed 7 July, 2022].



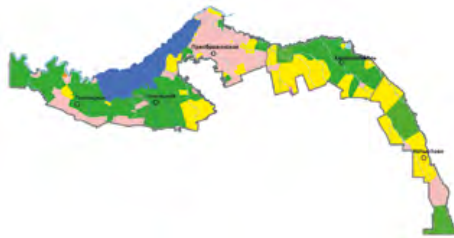
Arthur Tsutsiev, *Atlas of the Ethno-Political History of the Caucasus*, London, 2014, p. 99

remarkable that while the non-native population of the North Caucasus inhabits approximately 85% of the 870 km Kuban river line, the entire 40-km-long reservoir was planned to wipe out only the settlements of the Circassian minority who had survived the genocide of the nineteenth century. Preparations for this operation had started long before 1967; the Maikop Region (rayon), whose total area was 3667 sq. km and only 2% of whose population was Circassian, was included in the Adyge Autonomous Region (oblast) in 1962. The Adyge Autonomous Region, which was established in 1926, had a much smaller area of 3027 sq. km, but 46% of its population was predominantly ethnic Circassians, who were dispersed when 14% of the area was flooded by the reservoir. The total area of the Oblast gradually doubled between 1936 and 1962. The proportion of the Circassian population was reduced to 25% and the decisive role of the Circassians in the decision-making mechanisms was eliminated. According to the artificially and carefully drawn map, it was necessary to exit and re-enter the region many times while traveling from one point to another because this reservoir was placed in the bottleneck of the autonomous region. Nevertheless, the great changes that this reservoir caused in the climate





Borders of the Adyge Autonomous District (1926), and lands populated primarily by Circassians (green areas)



Map showing the lands (blue area) flooded by the Krasnodar Reservoir

of the region would cause many other problems for the people and the environment in the coming years.

Genocide practices in the region in the post-Soviet period must be studied in depth. The collective punishments, violence, and many other human rights violations committed by Russian forces against civilians during the conflicts in 1994–1996 and 1999–2009 in Chechnya are documented in *Human Rights Watch Monitoring Reports*. Disappearances and mass executions became a natural part of daily life in Chechnya in that period.<sup>80</sup>

Today, war crimes and genocide practices committed by states are only recognized as per the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. This Convention was accepted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in December 1948 and entered into force in January 1951. However, the weakest point of this convention is that genocide allegations can only be valid for individuals, not for states, and they can be vetoed by the United Nations Security Council. Since five major states, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, are permanent members of the Security Council, many genocidal crimes they committed in the past can easily be covered up for political and ideological reasons. Although the member states' demands to limit this vetoing right have been on the agenda of the UN General Assembly since 2013, no concrete decision has been taken yet.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the fact that the UN has not been able to take a concrete genocide resolution regarding Russia's actions in the North Caucasus – which started in the nineteenth century and continue until today – cannot be accepted as a criterion that Russia's actions are not genocide.

<sup>80</sup> Russia: *Three Months of War in Chechnya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995), pp. 1–20; Russia: *Russia's War in Chechnya: Victims Speak Out* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995), pp. 2–6; *The "Dirty War" in Chechnya: Forced Disappearances, Torture, And Summary Executions* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2001), pp. 1–41.

<sup>81</sup> United Nations, 'Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, Security Council', *United Nations*, [n.d.], <<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/security-council.shtml>> [accessed 10 June 2022].

Meanwhile, the international community remains silent on these crimes against humanity by accepting the subjective standards of the UN, whose basis for existence has become questionable due to its attitudes and actions in the face of current events. These violations, which are prohibited by international human rights treaties and humanitarian instruments to which Russia has been a party, are clearly defined in the second additional protocol of the 1949 Geneva Convention. Article 4 mandates humane treatment of civilians and explicitly prohibits violence against the life, health, and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular murder, torture, mutilation, or any form of corporal punishment. In addition, this protocol prohibits hostage-taking, collective punishments, insults to personal dignity, looting, and other related threats. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2444 (1968) obliges warring parties to distinguish between combatants and civilians and to protect civilians as much as possible. The UN Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel and Degrading Treatment also prohibits beating, torture, and other ill-treatment in custody.

All humanitarian and moral values, as well as the agreed international standards in this field prove that Russia's practices in the North Caucasus for the last two centuries are overt genocide. Demanding the United Nation's approval as a prerequisite for the recognition of the actual situation is purely an indication of the desperation of global public opinion. The *fait accompli* tradition of Russian state policies, which have not changed for centuries, continues recklessly even today, and world public opinion cannot go beyond weak objections.

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## THE KISHINEV\* POGROM OF 1903 IN THE RUSSIAN SOCIO-POLITICAL NARRATIVE

### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the study of the Russian socio-political narrative regarding the tragedy in Kishinev in 1903. By “narrative” in this study, the author means, first of all, what was expressed in the press by the authorities, public figures, and correspondents whose publications were addressed to the Russian-speaking readership. Among the most frequently discussed topics are the search for the main culprit, the reasons for the pogroms, and the actions of the authorities. The main sources used are periodicals expressing the views of different political forces of the Russian Empire. The author concludes that the boundaries of ideological orientation were blurred in statements about the Kishinev tragedy. The conviction that the pogroms were organized and prepared in advance matured more and more among those who spoke publicly, but not all those who spoke out pointed to the authorities as the main organizer. The Russian socio-political narrative regarding the Kishinev tragedy was supplemented by a “Western” narrative: as a result, confidence in the government’s involvement in Russian society grew stronger.

### KEYWORDS:

Kishinev pogrom, anti-Semitism, narrative, Jewish question, periodicals, public opinion

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\* Now the city is called Chişinău.

The Kishinev pogrom in April 1903 shook the whole world community. This was reflected not only in the numerous rallies that took place in Europe and the United States, but also in the stormy discussion of the tragedy in the press. The predominant attitude of the foreign press in the spring and summer of 1903 was condemnation of the local and central governments, which were seen as the main culprits. Points of contact for foreign and Russian (liberal) socio-political accounts were certain aspects of the heated discussion: the behaviour and reaction of the Russian government, the direct involvement in the tragedy of the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vjačeslav von Plehve, the spontaneity/premeditation of the pogrom, and the role of the press in inciting hatred amongst the local Christian population.

In his study of the Białystok pogrom and public reaction to it, modern Polish historian Artur Markowski noted that the idea that the state was responsible for the pogrom arose among Russian Marxists and liberals who opposed the tsarist regime. This idea was firmly entrenched in both public opinion and historiography and had become, as the scholar put it, a “scientific paradigm”.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that a similar pattern “works” in the context of the Kishinev pogrom. Eventually, the same aspects of the tragedy became central to Russian and foreign scholars throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

To date, there is a fairly extensive historiography of the phenomenon of anti-Jewish violence and aggression in Europe in modern and contemporary times. In particular, these are the works of contemporary historians Helmut Walser-Smith,<sup>2</sup> Werner Bergman and Christhard Hofmann.<sup>3</sup> In these works, the authors reflect on the role of rumours as a pretext for pogroms. There is also a certain tradition in the study of anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire in general and the Kishinev pogrom in particular. This includes works by Edward Judge and Shlomo Lambroza<sup>4</sup> that have already become classics in the world of academic Jewish studies. The goal of many researchers in studying the Kishinev pogrom has been to reconstruct the events and the authorities’ policies by analysing the official documentation, police officials’ correspondence, and court materials. A recent monograph by Steven Zipperstein<sup>5</sup> in the centre of the narrative describes, on one hand, all possible causes and preconditions of the tragedy; on the other hand, it describes the role of the events in Kishinev in the spring of 1903 in

<sup>1</sup> Artur Markowski, *Przemoc antyżydowska i wyobrażenia społeczne. Pogrom białostocki 1906 roku* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> *Exclusionary Violence. Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, ed. by Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut Walser Smith (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Šlomo Lambroza, ‘Pogromy 1903–1906 godov’, in *Pogromy v rossijskoj istorii Novogo vremeni*, ed. by Džon D. Klier and Šlomo Lambroza (Moskva: Knižniki, 2016), pp. 207–53; Ėdvard Džadž, *Pascha v Kišineve. Anatomija pogroma* (Kišinev: Liga, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Steven J. Zipperstein, *Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History* (New York: Liveright, 2018).



the further development of the Jewish diaspora and its collective memory. According to the Zipperstein, the geography of the pogrom played an important role in the further spread of news about it throughout the world: Kishinev was the place of residence of many influential Zionists and was a well-known city in Russia. Methodologically, the closest to our study is the work of the British historian Sam Johnson, who examined the methods of presenting information about the Jewish pogroms from 1881 to 1919 in the English-language press. Compared to the first wave of pogroms, according to her observations, the Kishinev pogrom received more rapid and detailed press coverage with an emphasis on physical brutality.<sup>6</sup> Since the US reaction to the Kishinev tragedy was quite severe, a study on the American public's reaction to it was published a year later.<sup>7</sup>

Even in the extensive historiography on the pogroms, the reaction of Russian society to the event was only of secondary importance. This has led to an incomplete understanding of the behaviour of both the authorities and society. Meanwhile, the press had a fairly strong influence on its readership because, in the absence of legal public order and representative institutions in Russia before 1905, periodicals were considered the sole expression of the feelings of various social groups. A detailed study of the history of press coverage of various ideological currents will make it possible to draw a holistic picture of the contradictions in society and even trace how the authorities behaved towards Russian society. As a result of this special study, we expect to come to a comprehensive and complex understanding of the Russian socio-political narrative regarding the tragedy in Kishinev. By "narrative" in this study, we mean primarily what was expressed in print by the authorities, public figures, and correspondents whose publications were addressed to the Russian-speaking readership.

Publications on the Kishinev tragedy can be divided into several types. Firstly, there were articles containing detailed accounts of events by correspondents from Kishinev. Depending on the author's goals, these had different emphases: descriptions of people's reactions, atrocities and so on. Secondly, some articles gave an overview of the situation in the city after the pogrom: the nervousness of the population, the beginning of the investigation. Thirdly, there were analytical articles – statements by individual authors and attempts to make sense of the pogroms. Often there were also reprints of reports from other publications in special columns. Later, publications describing the judicial investigations also appeared. We pay

<sup>6</sup> Sam Johnson, 'Uses and Abuses: Pogrom in the Anglo-American Imagination 1881–1919', in *Jews in the East European Borderlands: Essays in Honor of John D. Klier*, ed. by Eugene M. Avrutin and Harriet Murav (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), pp. 147–65.

<sup>7</sup> Cyrus Adler, *The voice of America on Kishineff* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1904).

attention to the placement of these articles in newspapers, the frequency of mentions of the pogrom in the press, the moments of activation of attention to the event, the authors' accents and reactions to the news, and the emotional colouring and rhetoric of these texts.

The reaction of Russian society to the pogrom became part of Russian and foreign studies. However, some of them only focused on the reactions of individuals,<sup>8</sup> while others relied on a rather limited list of periodicals.<sup>9</sup> The press organs most frequently cited by historians were *Novoe Vremja*, *Bessarabec*, and *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, probably due to the fact that these were the most prominent representatives of the two opposing ideologies and, accordingly, they held diametrically opposed viewpoints. This study takes a closer look at the statements of individual public figures and cultural figures and attempts to analyse the Russian narrative of the Kishinev pogrom in a wide range of periodicals expressing the views of different social forces in the Russian Empire, including *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik*, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, *Kur'er*, *Russkie Vedomosti*, *Iskra*, *Osvoboždenie*, *Russkoe bogatstvo*, *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, *Pravo*, *Graždanin*, and others. Chronologically, we limit ourselves to June 1903, when mention of the pogrom almost completely disappeared from the press. In other words, we are interested in the initial reaction of Russia's various social forces to the tragedy.

The pogrom in Kishinev took place on 6–7 April 1903. The first official report on the event was published on 10 April in the Internal News section of *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik*.<sup>10</sup> The report was quite brief, was not highlighted by any distinctive headline, and was lost among the other news of the day. The events were described by the authorities as “riots” in which a crowd of workers attacked Jews. The report emphasized that the police had made efforts but were unable to stop the riots. In the following days, exactly this interpretation of the events was adopted in journals of different ideological orientations in the provincial news or correspondent sections: *Sankt-Petersburgskiye Vedomosti*,<sup>11</sup> *Russkie Vedomosti*,<sup>12</sup> *Pravo*,<sup>13</sup> *Novoe Vremja*,<sup>14</sup> *Graždanin*,<sup>15</sup> and many others. In this way, the authorities tried to spread their view of the events as widely as possible.

On the basis of the first publication expressing the official opinion, information spread abroad in the following days. The second article in *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik*, which indirectly referred to the events in Kishinev,

<sup>8</sup> Jumi Nakagava, 'Publicističeskie proizvedenija russkich literatorov o kišinevskom pogrome', *Vestnik RGGU. Serija: Istorija. Filologija. Kul'turologija. Vostokovedenie*, 9 (2007), 223–35.

<sup>9</sup> Džadž, *Pascha v Kišineve*.

<sup>10</sup> *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik*, 82 (1903).

<sup>11</sup> *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 96 (1903).

<sup>12</sup> *Russkie vedomosti*, 100 (1903).

<sup>13</sup> *Pravo*, 16 (1903).

<sup>14</sup> *Novoe vremja*, 9722 (1903).

<sup>15</sup> *Graždanin*, 28–30 (1903).

appeared on 16 April. It announced the situation of increased guarding of Kishinev and the county, but already – as if taken out of context – without mentioning the reason.<sup>16</sup> Only readers who had followed the news in other newspapers had an inkling of the motives behind the need for such protection. While other journals actively discussed the events in Kishinev over the next few months, *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik* remained silent on the subject, citing only occasional small articles that were lost in the general mass of other reports. According to the contemporary American historian Edward Judge, the government held back from interpreting the events for a long time because it had been surprised by them. It is possible, however, that the initial reluctance to publicize the pogrom indicates a desire not to involve the public in the problem. News of the event would also have clashed with the general orientation of *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik* and its editor-in-chief at the time, Platon Kulakovskij; therefore, a positive image of the authorities was maintained and ideas in the spirit of orthodoxy and autocracy were propagated.

Of course, the most active newspaper in terms of frequency of publications on the pogrom was *Bessarabec*. This is due to the location of the event and the increased interest of its editor-in-chief, Pavolakij Kruševan, in the Jewish question and his attempt to support and defend the official position as well as himself against the accusations of inciting hatred among the local population against the Jews that were directed at his newspaper. In articles containing the first information about the tragedy, *Bessarabec* made no mention of either incitement or police inaction, emphasizing the spontaneity of the events. Moreover, while there were discussions about what had happened, articles appeared in the mentioned publications that tried to draw public attention also to the Christian victims of the pogrom.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the Jews themselves were declared the perpetrators of the tragedy. In the opinion of *Bessarabec*, popular anger that had long accumulated under the oppression of “exploiters”<sup>18</sup> had found an outlet in the pogrom. A similar position was taken by the pro-government *Novoe Vremja* of Aleksej. Suvorin, who had long been known for his openly anti-Jewish statements and whose publication was delivered to the Emperor's desk every morning. For these two publications, the pogrom served as an additional excuse to continue the traditional statements on the painful Jewish question. *Novoe Vremja*, for example, was outraged at the fact that as a result of the new law of 10 May, which restricted the ownership of land by Jews outside the settlement line, the landed property in these provinces was in Jewish hands. The rhetoric

<sup>16</sup> *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik*, 87 (1903).

<sup>17</sup> *Novoe vremja*, 9730 (1903).

<sup>18</sup> *Bessarabec*, 96 (1903).

of the text – with the ingrained cliché that “circumventing laws has always been a special talent of the Jews” – is not surprising.<sup>19</sup>

Within a week of the first report in *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik*, articles in other newspapers and magazines began to gain momentum. However, in most publications these articles also got lost in the general mass of information, both in their placement and in the absence of a striking, distinguished or eye-catching title. In mid-April, the attention of the Russian public was riveted on several important events for the Empire: the stay of the Emperor and his family in Moscow, preparations for the celebration of the bicentenary of Saint Petersburg, the transfer of the body of the Russian diplomat Grigorij Ščerbina to Russia, and the Emperor's visit to the grave of Michail Katkov. Many publications even preferred to write about the state of the harvest or minor incidents, occasionally mentioning the situation in Kishinev in columns devoted to domestic news.

Related articles in the Russian press peaked in the middle to second half of April 1903, gradually subsiding by June. The very first articles in the press were filled with detailed coverage of the chronology and topography of the riots, but these were not always accompanied by the personal opinions of the authors. The aim was to get the word out about the fact. They included eyewitness accounts as well as evidence of the pogrom that correspondents had managed to see in Kishinev. After the first information about the pogroms appeared in the press, the attention of articles shifted to the possible causes of the tragedy and the role of the local society in the disturbances. Synchronously with other publications, *Sankt Petersburgskie Vedomosti*, which observed principles of religious tolerance at the time and generally regularly reported on issues related to foreigners and non-Russian beliefs, tried to look into this issue. This newspaper accused the newspaper *Bessarabec* of systematic persecution of Jews, which led to pogroms like the one in Kishinev, without naming<sup>20</sup> and later pointing at Kruševan.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, *Sankt Petersburgskie Vedomosti* directed accusations of inaction at the authorities, police, and intellectuals, who only observed and walked around and “did not lift a finger to stop the riots”.<sup>22</sup> At the end of April, *Sankt Petersburgskie Vedomosti* published an analytical article about the causes of the pogrom that unambiguously identified as the main culprit Kruševan and his newspaper *Bessarabec*, which promoted incitement of hatred among Christians, who had lived peacefully with the Jews for many years. However, the author tried to find the reason for this not just in Kruševan's anti-Semitism, but also

<sup>19</sup> *Novoe vremja*, 9763 (1903).

<sup>20</sup> ‘Zametki’, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 100 (1903).

<sup>21</sup> ‘V dopolnenie k užasajuščim vestjam iz Bessarabii’, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 109 (1903).

<sup>22</sup> ‘Kišinev (ot našego korrespondenta)’, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 100 (1903).

in the economic situation: it was the nobility-landowners who benefited from cooperation with *Bessarabec* due to the economic crisis of the turn of the twentieth century and the strengthening of the trade and industrial stratum, which consisted significantly of Jews.<sup>23</sup> *Sankt Petersburgskie Vedomosti* along with *Russkie Vedomosti* and *Novosti* were among the first to write about the atrocities and physical abuse of the victims during the pogroms, giving a frightening description of how the victims were massacred with various implements, and an overview of the disfigured and mutilated bodies seen by reporters in the mortuary.<sup>24</sup> In this way, they tried to attract the attention of the readership by means of an emotional impact.

Perhaps the most active in covering the events in Kishinev was the liberal newspaper *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, which determinedly raised the most acute and topical problems of society. Headlines such as “Kishinev pogrom”, “Kishinev tragedy”, “Disaster in Kishinev” “shouted” about the event, attracting the reader’s attention by being clearly distinguished from the whole text. For *Novosti*, this tragedy was an additional opportunity to discuss the most interesting issue for the editorial office: the Jewish issue. This newspaper already had quite a lot of experience in covering the Jewish problem and daring controversies with the anti-Semitic press. In the days immediately after the pogrom, almost every issue of *Novosti* published several articles about the Kishinev tragedy under different headings. Unlike other periodicals, however, the editorial board’s main focus was public opinion, and articles in other publications, such as *Kievljanin*, *Južnyj kraj*, *Sankt-Petersburgskie Vedomosti*, *Kur'er*, and *Russkie Vedomosti*. *Novoye Vremja* and *Bessarabec* deserved the most attention from the *Novosti* editors, in whose opinion these two publications were the main perpetrators of anti-Jewish sentiment. The authors of articles in *Novosti* boldly accused both newspapers of “applauding the shameful catastrophe”.<sup>25</sup> Thus, *Bessarabec* was reproached by *Novosti* for incorrect factual data about the pogroms and hypocritical and ostentatious compassion for the victims.<sup>26</sup> For its accusations against *Novoye Vremja* and *Bessarabec*, *Novosti*’s editorial board was even prepared to be punished and showed solidarity in its views on the pogrom with *Kur'er*, *Sankt Petersburgskie Vedomosti*, and *Russkie Vedomosti*. The second main cause of the pogroms, according to *Novosti*, was the ignorance of the population, which easily succumbed to fantastic rumours about Jews.<sup>27</sup>

In April–June 1903, the figure of Kruševan became the most mentioned in liberal public opinion in the Russian press in the light of

<sup>23</sup> ‘K Kišinevskomu pogromu’, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 111 (1903).

<sup>24</sup> ‘Nam pišut iz Kišineva’, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 103 (1903).

<sup>25</sup> ‘K Kišinevskomu pogromu’, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 119 (1903).

<sup>26</sup> *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 100 (1903), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 103 (1903); *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 106 (1903).

the Kishinev tragedy. Even if an article did not mention his name directly, it was Kruševan, editor-in-chief of *Bessarabec*, who was understood by the anti-Semitic press to have fomented the Kishinev riots. Moreover, almost all witnesses during the investigation emphasized Kruševan's role in inciting hatred against the Jews.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, after the pogrom the attention of the Moscow Democratic *Kur'er* was also drawn to the statements of the main culprit in its opinion, namely Kruševan. The newspaper *Kur'er* considered defending the oppressed and persecuted citizens as a possible solution to the problem for "truly cultural Russian people".<sup>29</sup>

From Kruševan and his newspaper's accusation, the moderate opposition *Russkie Vedomosti* leaned more and more towards analysis of the origins of the pogroms. This newspaper saw the event as a clearly planned and systematically prepared action, blaming the police, who were unwilling to stop the riots.<sup>30</sup> The attention of the authors of several articles focused on descriptions of the crowd's atrocities and crying over the disfigured bodies of relatives. According to this publication, if the press was to be seen as the main culprit, then it should have been opposed by the press that fostered the brightest feelings in man-humanity, legality and justice.<sup>31</sup>

The liberal journal *Vestnik Evropy*, a sister publication to *Russkie Vedomosti*, refused to blame the Judeophobic press for the disaster. A historical excursion into the anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia allowed the authors of *Vestnik* to identify a pattern: the pogroms, in their opinion, occurred during a period when restrictive political measures against the Jews became more acute. *Vestnik* noted that the zealous emphasis on specific newspapers' responsibility "overshadows other deeper causes of unfortunate phenomena".<sup>32</sup> A similar position was taken by the sister magazine of *Vestnik*, namely *Russkaja mysl'*.<sup>33</sup>

A periodical, *Pravo*, which expressed the collective opinion of the legal community and was a platform for the political self-organization of liberal lawyers who were interested in the Jewish question only from a legal point of view, often published various controversial cases concerning the legal status of Jews. In April 1903, however, this newspaper stood out with an article by the lawyer and politician Vladimir Nabokov. His article "Kishinevskaja Banja"<sup>34</sup> appeared when many periodicals had already commented on the Kishinev tragedy and was probably another attempt to summarize the views of the Russian liberal public. Nabokov wrote about the enormity of the tragedy that

<sup>28</sup> Klara Žignja, 'Processy po delam o Kišinevskom pogrome 1903 god: vidnye rossijskie advokaty protiv sudebnoj vlasti', *Tiroš. Trudy po iudaike, slavistike, orientalistike*, 5 (1998), 175–210 (here: 199).

<sup>29</sup> *Kur'er*, 60 (1903).

<sup>30</sup> 'Kišinevskij pogrom', *Russkie vedomosti*, 106 (1903); *Russkie vedomosti*, 107 (1903).

<sup>31</sup> *Russkie vedomosti*, 107 (1903).

<sup>32</sup> *Vestnik Evropy*, 6 (1903), p. 826.

<sup>33</sup> *Russkaja mysl'*, 5.9 (1903), p. 218.

<sup>34</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, 'Kišinevskaja krovavaja banja', *Pravo*, 18 (1903).

took place in Kishinev. Acknowledging the preparation of the pogroms in advance and the lack of an attempt to suppress the riots – and also blaming the anti-Semitic press – he went further in his reasoning. The main blame lay, in his words, with the “regime of oppression and disenfranchisement” in which tense relations between the Christian and Jewish populations were maintained; in the idea that a Jew is to blame for being a Jew; and that idea of impunity for oppressing Jews was being promoted.<sup>35</sup> It was for the publication of this article that *Pravo* was first cautioned.<sup>36</sup> Despite this censorship, part of this sensational article by Vladimir Nabokov was quoted in the *Russkaja Pressa* column of the newspaper *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*.<sup>37</sup> Subsequently, *Pravo* seldom published articles about the Kishinev pogrom. It generally displayed a standard set of government-approved messages about the tragedy, including an official denial of the existence of a widely discussed letter from Minister von Plehve to the Bessarabian governor.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to Nabokov's publication, the speeches of some members of the Russian intelligentsia became well-known in society. Three weeks after the pogrom, the writer Lev Tolstoy wrote a letter to the dentist Èmanuil Lineckij of Yelizavetgrad, which was later published in Berlin in a separate pamphlet that included statements regarding the tragedy by progressive representatives of Russian society.<sup>39</sup> In the letter he described his attitude to Jews as being fraternal and based on his Christian outlook. Tolstoy declared the authorities responsible for the tragedy and mentions the preaching of lies and violence by the Russian government as the cause. In circles close to Saint Petersburg and Moscow Imperial universities, the idea emerged of sending a telegram to the mayor of Kishinev protesting against the pogrom. The planned text of the telegram was as follows: “Deeply shocked by the atrocity to which the Jews of Kishinev have fallen victim, we express our horror at what has happened; we feel searing shame for Christian society and immeasurable indignation against the vile instigators of the dark mass”.<sup>40</sup>

Tolstoy edited this collective appeal, which was signed by many academic and cultural figures. Among those who supported the appeal, the philosopher and publicist Sergej Trubetskoj is particularly worth mentioning because he expressed his true opinion about the pogrom in his memoirs, and it clearly differed from the main idea of the protest.<sup>41</sup> Trubetskoj ruled out the idea that there was one main culprit or cause behind the Kishinev tragedy and saw its main cause as the defects of the administrative and

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> *Pravo*, 19 (1903).

<sup>37</sup> *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 115 (1903).

<sup>38</sup> *Pravo*, 21 (1903).

<sup>39</sup> Lev Tolstoj, *Pis'ma po povodu Kišineva* (Berlin: Izdanie Gugo Štejnica, 1904), p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> Cited from: Nakagava, ‘Publicističeskie proizvedenija russkich literatorov o kišinevskom pogrome’, p. 224.

<sup>41</sup> Sergej Trubetskoj, ‘Na rubeže’, in *Trubetskoj S.N. Sobranie sočinenij Kn. Sergeja Nikolaeviča Trubetskogo*, 6 vols (Moskva: Tipografija G. Lissnera i D. Sopko, 1907), I, p. 480.

governor's office, which needed to be reformed. At the end of May, the Russian press published a letter from Tolstoy to David Shor, famous musician and teacher, in which Tolstoy expressed his astonishment at the beastliness of the crowds, the false Christians, and a sense of disgust at the instigators of the riot.<sup>42</sup>

A little later, Tolstoy sent a telegram to American newspapers in which he pointed out that the fault of the government was above all its policy that made Jews a separate caste, as well as the indoctrination of the Russian people into idolatry instead of Christianity.<sup>43</sup> On the whole, however, Tolstoy condemned the discriminatory laws against the Jews.

If Tolstoy was outraged with the government, the writer Maksim Gorky, also famous as a Judophile, blamed the pogrom on the entire cultural society. By the time of the Kishinev pogrom, Gorky already had a long history of fighting against anti-Semitism and the anti-Semitic press. In his article "Protest against Society", Gorky stressed that cultural society had not only failed to act during the pogrom but had also allowed an anti-Jewish narrative to be disseminated for many years. Among the disseminators, he named famous publishers and newspaper employees Aleksej Suvorin, Visarion Komarov, Pavolakij Kruševan, and Sergej Šarapov. After the arrest of the perpetrators of the tragedy, Gorky pointed out that the mob that had smashed the Jews was "a hand" led by people of cultural society.<sup>44</sup>

One of the most high-profile works about the Kishinev pogrom was an essay, 'House No. 13', by the writer and public figure Vladimir Korolenko, who had long defended and had sympathy for the Jews. He wrote this essay a few days after having interviewed eyewitnesses himself, when the consequences of the catastrophe remained in the town and the atmosphere remained tense. He wanted to share with the reader all the horror he had passed through when experiencing this atmosphere. The essay is written in the style of a reportage, with most of it devoted to a description of the pogrom. Korolenko reproduces in some detail the various interactions between the people during the pogrom, but he shifts the focus periodically to the inhumanity of the pogromists. He identifies several categories of perpetrators, calling on them to confess guilt: murderers, instigators, connivers, false accusers against Jews, irresponsible people.<sup>45</sup> Unlike Gorky and Tolstoy, Korolenko does not directly address the instigators; however, he does show the inaction of officials – the policeman and the priest. Korolenko is more interested in human psychology in general, both as a pogromist and as an observer.

<sup>42</sup> *Kur'er*, 88 (1903).

<sup>43</sup> Nakagava, 'Publicističeskie proizvedenija russkich literatorov o kišinevskom pogrome', p. 225.

<sup>44</sup> Tolstoj, *Pis'ma po povodu Kišineva*, p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Korolenko, *Dom № 13* (Berlin, 1904), p. 49.



Despite some differences in views on the causes of the pogroms and the identification of the main culprit, the liberal publications and individual public figures shared several points of common ground. For example, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, *Russkie vedomosti*, *Vestnik Evropy* and other publications referred to the pogrom wave of the 1880s and were convinced that the Kishinev pogrom surpassed all previous ones.<sup>46</sup> What many commentators had in common was the harsh, emotionally coloured and vivid rhetoric of their texts. The events in Kishinev were compared to the bloody events of the Middle Ages and the destruction of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century.

The use of the word “pogrom” in the Russian narrative of the 1903 tragedy is ambiguous. The contemporary British historian Johnson noted that it was a special Russian term which expressed the extraordinary nature of the actions caused by the behaviour of the Tsarist regime against the Jews.<sup>47</sup> However, she stresses that the pogrom was otherwise similar to previous similar events. On the one hand, Johnson’s thoughts confirm the fact that the word “pogrom” was avoided by the authorities, both in public utterances and in official but internal documentation hidden from public view. On the other hand, *Novoe vremja*, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, and other publications were not afraid to use the word “pogrom”. Accordingly, it was most likely not about the meaning of spontaneity, but about the threat to the individual. In their words, the authors conveyed the meaning of pogroms primarily as a natural disaster – probably reflecting all their power and man’s physical powerlessness in the face of danger. Rioters were described as “thugs”, “troublemakers”, “ignorant elements” and “savage mobs of scum”. Comparing the rioters and their behaviour to animals also shines a light on the low cultural level of Russian society.

In this context, among the intelligentsia and the liberal press, a separate line in the Russian narrative about the events in Kishinev is the problem of the ignorance of the masses and the cultural level of humanity, which was able to raise its hand against the same humanity again. *Sankt-Peterburgskiye Vedomosti*, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta* and the largest provincial newspaper in Kharkov, *Južnyj kraj*, noted with regret that this was still possible and that “vile instincts” had taken over. To prevent such a catastrophe in the future, it was proposed to work on raising the spiritual level of the population – to teach about love, mercy, tolerance – and in this the church should play a major role.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> ‘Posle Kišinevskogo pogroma’, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 113 (1903); *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 101 (1903); *Vestnik Evropy*, 6 (1903), p. 827; *Russkie vedomosti*, 107 (1903).

<sup>47</sup> Johnson, ‘Uses and Abuses’, p. 154.

<sup>48</sup> *Južnyj kraj*, 6699 14 April 1903; *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 103 (1903).

Many publications' main emotional reaction to the tragedy was a sense of shame. Even opposing publications such as *Kur'er* pointed to the sense of shame of all honest Russian people.<sup>49</sup> Veselovskij, a writer for *Novosti*, described his feelings in the same way: "If I wanted to define my state of mind in one word, I would say that I am ashamed".<sup>50</sup> The far-from-Judophile newspaper *Kievljanin* also pointed to a sense of shame about the behaviour of Christians.<sup>51</sup>

The last interpretation of the Kishinev tragedy from a conservative position was presented by Prince Meščerskij in his newspaper *Graždanin*. He stated that blaming the government was a vile slander that had been launched in Europe for political purposes and that the government could not be indifferent to the beating of anyone in the streets. As proof of this, he cites the fact that the director of the police department, Lopukhin, had arrived in Kishinev within two days. He calls the riots accidental, born out of popular passions.<sup>52</sup> The originality of his statements lies only in a comparison with the Poltava-Kharkov agrarian peasant disturbances of 1902 and the Andizhan disturbances of 1898. In regards to the latter, the government circles in the capital tried to portray them as not an imperial problem but a local one. Meščerskij notes that the Kishinev tragedy in no way surpassed these events, and in this way he tried to downplay the scale of the tragedy. Given the general thrust of *Graždanin*, which expressed the interests of a conservative section of Russian society, his point of view is quite understandable. Moreover, in the early twentieth century, Prince Meščerskij began to draw closer to the tsar, who resumed the government subsidies to this magazine in 1902. Meščerskij himself was awarded the rank of a real State Councillor.<sup>53</sup>

The Kishinev pogrom provided yet more impetus for an open discussion of the traditional domestic problems of the Russian Empire, in particular those of power. Meščerskij also discussed the nature of Russian gubernatorial power in *Graždanin*. He spoke about the dismissal of the governor von Raaben and notes the special responsibility and complexity of the post of the governor in the empire. He also argued for the strengthening of the governor's power. It is noteworthy that in the discussion regarding the dismissal of the governor there was nothing about the context and reasons for von Raaben's dismissal.<sup>54</sup> What was probably implied was that the reader was well-informed and there was widespread verbal discussion of the event.

<sup>49</sup> *Kur'er*, 60 (1903).

<sup>50</sup> Moisej Sluckij, *V skorbnye dni* (Kišinev: Tipografija M. Averbucha, 1930), p. 71.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> 'Reči konservatora. Pis'mo k evreju', *Graždanin*, 50 (1903), p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Anna Kajl, "'Graždanin" knjazja V.P. Meščerskogo', *Izvestija Saratovskogo universiteta. Novaja serija. Serija: Istorija. Meždunarodnye otnošenija*, 11.1 (2011), 8–15.

<sup>54</sup> 'Dnevnik', *Graždanin*, 37 (1903).

The monarchist *Moskovskie vedomosti* also touched on the problem of power. This newspaper shifted its focus from directly accusing the administration of inaction to a more in-depth analysis of the reasons for this particular behaviour of local officials. According to the editors, there was no strong provincial authority in Kishinev at the time of the tragedy, and it was a mistake to hand it over to the military at the most decisive moment. The problem of national relations in Kishinev was compared to the situation in Finland, where Swedish propaganda had also penetrated, but which was handled by a strong governor, Nikolay Ivanovich Bobrikov, thus preventing an inter-ethnic conflict that had been brewing for a long time.<sup>55</sup> In several articles in *Moskovskie vedomosti*, the authors noted that the local peasants were so electrified by anti-Jewish rumours that only a strong government could have stopped this mob.

The police background of Plehve, who had defeated the terrorist organization *Narodnaja Volja* and established strict censorship, was one reason for the irreconcilable attitude towards him in liberal and opposition circles. The Kishinev events were another opportunity for the revolutionaries to speak out rather sharply against the government. For example, after the pogroms the Kishinev committee of the RSDLP distributed a leaflet around the city which condemned the government. Of course, the basic idea of the leaflet was a call to fight against the autocracy, which had brought the population of the empire to a miserable and dire state and, most importantly, educated a huge mass of ignorant people capable of brutal murder.<sup>56</sup> Several issues of the illegal revolutionary newspaper *Iskra* were devoted to analysis and discussion of the Kishinev tragedy. The first and most elaborate article, called “The Last Map of Tsarism”, was by Georgij Plekhanov. It displayed all the intolerance for the intelligentsia, which Plekhanov called “the scum of humanity”. Both Lenin and Plekhanov had a particular hatred for Plekhanov, whom they had previously referred to as a “cunning police fox”. Like the editors of *Liberation*, Plekhanov compared Plehve to Ignatyev in his anti-Jewish policy. Plekhanov pointed to Plehve as the main culprit of the tragedy; he stressed that the government only pretended to be unable to deal with the pogromists. And, of course, his conclusion as a representative of the revolutionary movement was legitimate: the workers must oppose anti-Semitism, which is specifically propagated “from above”.<sup>57</sup> The following articles emphasize the involvement of the police in organizing the pogroms. Eyewitness accounts are cited as evidence, and the atrocious

<sup>55</sup> ‘Sila razumnoj vlasti’, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 117 (1903).

<sup>56</sup> ‘Listovka Kišinevskogo komiteta RSDRP «Kto vinovnik kišinevskoj reznici?», in *Rabočee dviženie v Moldavii. 1895 – fevral’ 1917*, ed. by V. Žukov and Jurij Ivanov (Kišinev: Štiinca, 1985), p. 72.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Poslednjaja karta carizma’, *Iskra*, 39 (1903).

physical abuse of the victims is emphasized.<sup>58</sup> Anti-Semitism was deliberately and artificially cultivated in the police environment. But the deeper reason is the accumulated dissatisfaction of the masses with the situation in the country, which was only fuelled by the authorities and the police. In Zhytomyr, the crowd rushed on the Chinese, thus it was only a distraction of the population from the real problems, and to the cries of “beat the Jews”, the crowd responded with “beat the police”.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps the strongest anti-government stance could be expressed by the anti-monarchist magazine *Osvoboždenie*, published in Stuttgart under the leadership of Peter Struve. This magazine served as one of the main sources from which the foreign press drew information about Russia. Having learned about the pogrom, Struve was horrified: he perceived the incident as an attempt by Plehve to channel the social contradictions in the least dangerous direction for the authorities.<sup>60</sup> His reaction to the pogrom was the publication of a special anthology by *Osvoboždenie*'s editors that contained eyewitness accounts, official documents and statements by the Russian public. The special feature of this special topical collection was that the information was supported by photos of the victims of the pogroms. The authors repeated the already widespread idea that someone was in charge of organizing the pogroms: “someone’s sinister hands were felt”.<sup>61</sup> The Minister of Internal Affairs was compared to Ignatyev in repeating the sad anti-Jewish policy: “The Minister-Horse Doctor resurrected in the person of Plehve”.<sup>62</sup> Another article explicitly pointed out that the pogrom had definitely been organized in advance, suspecting that the perpetrators were people close to the government.<sup>63</sup> The very presentation of information in the government’s official report on the pogrom gave the impression to the Western press of an admission that the authorities and the police had failed in their tasks.<sup>64</sup>

This collection differs from the rest of the pogrom coverage in perhaps two ways: firstly, the explicit orientation in the articles towards the Western “civilized world” and its assessment of events in “uncivilized” Russia; secondly, the idea that the government saw the Jews primarily as a revolutionary element. Thus, in the preface to the collection, Struve singles out the government, which widely “developed anti-Jewish propaganda and wanted to expose the participation of some of its elements in the revolutionary movement against the Jewry”.<sup>65</sup> For Struve, the pogrom

<sup>58</sup> ‘Kišinevskie sobytija’, *Iskra*, 39 (1903).

<sup>59</sup> ‘Vremena menjajutsja’, *Iskra*, 39 (1903).

<sup>60</sup> Ričard Pajps, *Struve: levij liberal, 1870–1905*, 2 vols (Moskva: Moskovskaja škola političeskikh issledovanij, 2001), I, p. 175.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Divide et Impera!’, in *Kišinevskij pogrom* (Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., 1903), p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Cui prodest?’, in *Kišinevskij pogrom*, p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Kišinevskaja bojnja i obščestvennoe mnenie civilizovannogo mira’, in *Kišinevskij pogrom*, p. 32.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Predislovie’, in *Kišinevskij pogrom*, p. 4.

was probably yet another reason to speak out against the government. He sharply condemned the policy of the government in the Jewish question and compared the situation of the Jews with that of beasts. However, not everything in these statements is obvious. He was a supporter of the assimilation of Jews, and, in his opinion, their resurgent ideas about the nation were only the result of the long restrictive policy of the Russian authorities.

The further behaviour of the government in public opinion, according to the logical conclusions of Edward Judge, was rather sluggish in defending its interpretation of the pogroms. During the second half of April, newspapers published news of the arrival in Kishinev of the director of the Police Department, Aleksej Lopukhin, to investigate what had happened. A few days later, newspapers published the news that Governor von Raaben had assembled and addressed the city's honorary citizens. This speech rather reflected his desire to justify himself: he blamed the disturbances on malevolent persons who had spread rumours about there being permission to beat up Jews, which, he was sure, could not have been granted as all subjects enjoyed the same protection of the state, regardless of their religion.<sup>66</sup> Even a small report on the governor's speech was echoed in several publications. Thus, in *Graždanin* Prince Meščerskij accused the governor of failing to address the public with calls for discipline during the pogroms in order to pacify them.<sup>67</sup> Prince Meščerskij's unexpectedly critical stance towards the local authorities can probably be explained by his close attention to the problem of the governorship and the local administration, which he had been most interested in for many years and in which he saw many shortcomings. This position was echoed by *Russkaja mysl'*, which did not adhere to any clear ideological line and allowed a wide variety of public figures to express themselves on its pages.<sup>68</sup>

Interest in the behaviour of the local authorities was evident in the press in connection with the behaviour of Kishinev City Council. At an emergency meeting of the Duma on 10 April, a proposal by the mayor of Kishinev to allocate funds from the city's savings for the benefit of the Jewish victims was not supported by the town councillors. Moreover, the mayors pointed out that there was a special "basket tax" for this purpose, and if *Novoe vremja* simply stated and retold this fact, then *Novosti* could not but express its opinion on this matter. *Novoe vremja* noted with indignation that the majority of the City Council's members had "failed" to compensate the victims of the pogroms. One article especially singled out a member of the City Council called Lato, who tried to assure the participants of

<sup>66</sup> *Južnyj kraj*, 7711 (1903); *Volyn'*, 92 (1903).

<sup>67</sup> *Graždanin*, 36 (1903).

<sup>68</sup> *Russkaja mysl'*, 5.9 (1903), p. 220.

the Duma session “that most of the Jewish victims would surely recover”.<sup>69</sup> Such behaviour was in line with the general thrust of the policy regarding the victims of the pogroms: it was forbidden to publish announcements in the press about collecting money for Jews.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the obstacles put in place by the authorities, newspaper and magazine editors took part in the creation of a relief fund for the victims of the pogroms. Considerable sums were collected by *Russkoe bogatstvo*, *Novosti*, *Severnyj Kavkaz*, and many other publications.<sup>71</sup> The news of the Kishinev tragedy spread in the provincial Russian press as well.

On 28–29 April, a notice issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs to governors, town governors, and police chiefs outlining the official version of the events of 6–7 April in Kishinev was published in many periodicals. It stated that the riots were caused by “the common people” and that the cause was “the strained relations between Christians and Jews in the Bessarabian province”.<sup>72</sup> The direct cause was the false accusations that the Jews had committed ritual murders, which turned the population against them. Remarkably, the circular was silent on the authorship of the rumours. From the sequence of events explained in this circular, it appears that the main motive was the aggression of a Jew who struck a Christian woman in the street. The authorities thus censured the Jews. The explanation put forward by the authorities for the failure of the police in this circular is also legitimate: there was a lack of normal leadership, and the governor had transferred authority for policing to military chiefs. The emperor had ordered the prevention of violence to be taken under his personal responsibility; various methods of self-defence were prohibited, and the civilian authorities had handed over their duties for restoring order to the military. There was also an attempt at censorial oppression by the authorities: *Pravo* and the Russian-Jewish *Voschod* newspapers were condemned for accusing the government of the tragedy. These censorship decisions alerted readers of many periodicals.<sup>73</sup>

The next significant events regarding the Kishinev tragedy that divided public opinion into “pro” and “contra” were the speeches of the church fathers Father Ioann of Kronstadt<sup>74</sup> and Antonij (Chrapovickij). The main message of both preachers was to pacify the population (the traditional message of this genre) and that the hatred in the Kishinev pogrom was a result

<sup>69</sup> *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 112 (1903).

<sup>70</sup> ‘Ukazanie Direktora Departamenta policii Načal’niku glavnogo upravlenija po delam pečati’, in *Kišinevskij pogrom 1903 goda: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, ed. by Klara Žignja and others (Kišinev: Ruxanda, 2000), p. 85.

<sup>71</sup> Jakov Kopanskij, ‘Vsemirnyj protest protiv Kišinevskogo pogroma 1903 goda (osnovnye aspekty)’, in *Kišinevskij pogrom 1903 goda: vzgljad čerez stoletie. Materialy meždunarodnoj naučnoj konferencii*, ed. by Jakov Kopanskij (Kišinev: Pontos, 2004), pp. 13–26 (p. 19).

<sup>72</sup> *Pravitel’stvennyj vestnik*, 98 28 April 1903.

<sup>73</sup> *Graždjanin*, 35 (1903); *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 7715 (1903).

<sup>74</sup> *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, 8 (1903).

of forgetting the teachings of Christ. A particularly heartfelt sermon was that of Fr. Antony, who urged Christians to learn from the Jews' centuries-long commitment to observing their religious customs and traditions. To try to prevent such a tragedy in the future, the authorities decided to disseminate these sermons throughout Russia, therefore they were published in a separate booklet that the Jewish population helped to distribute. According to the contemporary Russian historian Maksim Khizhyi, these sermons did not appear in the periodicals, which only mentioned them.<sup>75</sup> However, we were able to find several articles in not only central but also provincial publications. In particular, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, *Volyn* and *Južnyj kraj* (Southern Region) fully or partially cited the sermons of Fr. Antony and Father Ioann of Kronstadt.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, the newspaper *Novosti*, which closely monitored the behaviour of the anti-Semitic press, was even indignant that *Novoye Vremja* and *Bessarabec* did not mention the sermons at all.<sup>77</sup> Antony's appeal was published in the church press, in particular in the *Missionary Review*. In general, according to Khizhyi's conclusions, diocesan publications were overwhelmingly silent in their pages about the Kishinev tragedy.<sup>78</sup> This author mentions a sermon by a teacher at Ryazan seminary for his pupils that emphasized the historical fate of the Jewish people. We also managed to find a statement from Archimandrite Nikolaj that was published in the *Grodno diocesan gazette* six months after the tragedy. In his "Edification", this archimandrite essentially repeated the rhetoric of previous authors and priests and speaks of the sense of shame that the pogromists should feel before non-Christians and non-believers, urging the population to "live as Christians". It is noteworthy that he blamed not only ignorant "commoners" but also "educated people" for the negative image of the Jews among the Christian population.<sup>79</sup>

After condemning the pogroms and blaming Christians, Fr. Ioann earned the hatred of conservative circles in Russian society when he received a letter containing the following words: "Father Ioann, Judas. Hitherto respected by the Russian people, you are now the patron saint, servant and lackey of the Jews. You know only to drink the blood of Christians".<sup>80</sup> Such threats probably forced him to soften his initial unequivocal indignation and apologize to the Christians of Kishinev for "unilateralism". A later text by Ioann of Kronshtadt was quoted in the church periodical *Missionerskoe*

<sup>75</sup> Maksim Chižij, 'Archiepiskop Antonij (Chrapovickij) i evrei', in *Trudy po evrejskoj istorii i kul'ture. Materialy XXIII Meždunarodnoj ežegodnoj konferencii po iudaike*, ed. by Viktorija Močalova (Moskva: Centr naučnych rabotnikov i prepodavatelej iudaiki v vuzach "Sēfer", 2017), pp. 321–26 (here: 323).

<sup>76</sup> *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 112 (1903); *Volyn*, 92 2 May 1903; *Južnyj kraj*, 7715 3 May 1903, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 119 (1903); *Kur'er*, 64 (1903).

<sup>77</sup> *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 123 (1903).

<sup>78</sup> Chižij, 'Archiepiskop Antonij (Chrapovickij) i evrei', p. 321.

<sup>79</sup> 'Poučenie po povodu evrejskich pogromov', *Grodnskie eparchial'nye vedomosti*, 43 (1903), col. 429.

<sup>80</sup> Cited from: Nadežda Kicenka, *Svjatoj našego vremeni. Otec Ioann Kronštadtskij i russkij narod* (Moskva: NLO, 2006), p. 231.

*Obozrenie* and secular newspapers such as *Vestnik Evropy*. In this text, he stressed that the pogroms could not be only blamed on Christians as the Jews were also to blame. A few days later, *Missionerskoe Obozrenie* published a text in defence of Fr. Ioann in which the traditional anti-Jewish worldview was vividly expressed. It stated that the primary declaration that Christians were responsible for what had happened was erroneous, and the Jewish rabbis, “who held the dark mass in the age-old chains of the misanthropic Talmud”, were rebuked for using Father Ioann’s sermon and preaching to their own advantage.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, Father Ioann of Kronstadt’s erratic behaviour was condemned by the magazine *Russkoe bogatstvo*, which wrote that he had been easily persuaded by certain eyewitnesses that the Jews were guilty.<sup>82</sup> The newspaper *Vestnik Evropy* noted that there was not only a rapid change in Ioann of Kronstadt’s views but also a shift in the position of the Christians who considered themselves offended, emphasizing that the Jewish victims had already been compensated for their losses. The author resented the Christian view of money as equivalent to life and health.<sup>83</sup>

As the Russian-Jewish historian and social activist Semen Dubnov recalled, *Kishinev* became the battle cry of all social forces in both Russia and abroad.<sup>84</sup> The West’s heightened interest in the events in Kishinev was also linked to their intense anticipation of the Russian government’s reaction. This is due to the different perceptions of Russian and Western statesmen. The American and English authorities assumed that a similar case could not leave the entire Russian government in silence; there were mentions of the event in the Russian government press, and the sluggish reaction of the imperial authorities only convinced the West of the Russian government’s involvement in the tragedy.

An important incident that gave a new boost to the international debate on the Kishinev tragedy was the appearance of another publication that indirectly indicated the authorities as the perpetrator of the tragedy. In mid-May, the *Times of London* quoted a secret circular from Minister of the Interior Plehve to the governor of Bessarabia, von Raaben. From its contents, it follows that the governor had been notified of riots being prepared against the Jews. The Jews were called exploiters of the local population and a recommendation was given not to resort to the use of weapons if disturbances occurred.<sup>85</sup> This news infiltrated foreign public opinion and was reprinted in American, English and other European periodicals. The idea

<sup>81</sup> *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, 3 (1903), p. 1396.

<sup>82</sup> *Russkoe bogatstvo*, 6 (1903), p. 147.

<sup>83</sup> *Vestnik Evropy*, 7 (1903), p. 447.

<sup>84</sup> Semen Dubnov, *Kniga žizni: Vospominanija i razmyšlenija. Materialy dlja istorii moego vremeni* (Sankt-Peterburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 1998), p. 242.

<sup>85</sup> *Pravo*, 21 (1903).



that the Russian authorities had been involved in the pogroms was becoming more and more entrenched abroad. The same can be said of Russian society: gradually the conviction of the government's culpability spread.<sup>86</sup>

In the Russian press, the article in *Pravitel'stvennyj vestnik* which refuted the existence of the authorities' secret circular began to circulate quite widely. It was reprinted in both conservative and liberal publications: *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, *Pravo*, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, *Novoye Vremja*, and *Kur'er*. *Novoye Vremja* defended the government, calling the secret document an apocryphal story that had been concocted to incite the hostile attitude of English society towards the Russian government.<sup>87</sup> The authenticity of this circular was strongly opposed by "Moskovskie Vedomosti", but for Vladimir Gringmut, the author of an article about the Moscow authorities who was known for his very conservative attitude, it rather became a good additional reason for the ideological struggle with Peter Struve. He indicated Struve as the main distributor of this "falsified" document, confidently emphasizing that Russian liberals would not believe him.<sup>88</sup> Only a week later, Gringmut expressed disappointment at the silence of the liberal publications, especially *Novosti*, which had also bowed down to Struve.<sup>89</sup> Meščerskij's reaction to the secret circular was similar to Gringmut's. He noted that Struve had 'migrated to Stuttgart to preach his liberal opposition' but did not really understand Russian life and people.<sup>90</sup> He called the English *Times* newspaper "the organ of the Jews".<sup>91</sup> He generally accused the Jews of spreading slander about the circular in order to arouse the most malignant feelings in the Jewish people towards the Minister of the Interior.<sup>92</sup> *Južnyj kraj* picked up on this sentiment and added that the correspondent would also pay for the slander in his homeland.<sup>93</sup>

Support for this view came quite legitimately from Ol'ga Novikova, a writer close to conservative and government circles who vehemently criticized the *Times* of London. She described it as an empty commercial enterprise, chasing only material gain.<sup>94</sup> The same spirit continued to appear in *Moskovskie vedomosti*: in the dissemination of the secret circular, the authors saw intrigues against Russia which were beneficial to its internal enemies and, among others, the Jews. However, at the same time, the quiet behaviour of the Russian government was emphasized. Accusing Jews of having also picked up the lies of the foreign press, the authors noted that

<sup>86</sup> Sergej Urusov, *Zapiski gubernatora: Kišenev, 1903–1904* (Moskva: Izdanie V.M. Sablina, 1907).

<sup>87</sup> *Novoe vremja*, 21 May 1903.

<sup>88</sup> Vladimir Gringmut, 'Podpol'noe zemstvo', *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 142 (1903).

<sup>89</sup> Vladimir Gringmut, 'Zagraničnye basni o Rossii', *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 148 (1903).

<sup>90</sup> Vladimir Meščerskij, 'Dnevnik', *Graždanin*, 44 (1903), p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Graždanin*, 39 (1903).

<sup>93</sup> *Južnyj kraj*, 7739 (1903).

<sup>94</sup> Ol'ga Novikova, 'Korrespondent Timesa', *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 159 (1903).

“Only Russia’s worst enemies can sympathize with foreign interference in Russia’s internal affairs”.<sup>95</sup> The new Bessarabian governor, Prince Sergej Urusov, emphasized that, in Russia, Jewry in general was attributed great influence in the Western European press.<sup>96</sup>

The newspaper *Iskra* supported the truth of the Minister of the Interior’s secret circular, having the opinion that it was only further evidence of the Russian government’s culpability in the pogroms.<sup>97</sup>

Thereafter, the government expelled the *Times* correspondent Brehem from Russia, which was also reported in the Russian and foreign press. However, information spread in the foreign press about the rather rude treatment of Brehem and the police’s threat to expel him. In relation to this, an official denial was published in several newspapers: it said that the correspondent was being expelled under formalities prescribed by law.<sup>98</sup> *Novoye Vremja* pointed out on this occasion that the Russian government was too kind to foreign correspondents and that Braham’s removal only showed the Russian government’s desire to maintain good relations. Braham, according to this newspaper, was doing everything possible to spoil these relations.<sup>99</sup>

After June 1903, when the May coup in Serbia was all over the newspapers, there was even less mention of the Kishinev tragedy in the press. The only exception was *Novosti*, which in the three months after the pogrom wrote if not about the tragedy itself but about its moral and material consequences for the Jews and the local economy. Thus, at the beginning of May, this newspaper described a month of mourning during which the victims of the pogrom were again mourned, as well as about the situation of those who had fled from pogromists in other provinces.<sup>100</sup> All public attention now shifted to the official punishment and prosecution of the direct participants in the pogrom. *Novoe vremja* expressed dissatisfaction with the results of the investigation in mid-October and particularly lamented the fact that only Christians were in the dock.<sup>101</sup> *Novoe vremja* assured its readers that this mistake, which had transformed the local intelligentsia from defendants into witnesses, had been corrected and that the perpetrators would surely be punished.<sup>102</sup>

The authorities, of course, closely followed articles in various publications. Some of them were of particular concern. An issue of *Novosti*, as well as some other liberal publications, reported on the brutal physical slaughter

<sup>95</sup> ‘Amerikanskij otzvuk kišinevskogo pogroma’, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 169 (1903).

<sup>96</sup> Urusov, *Zapiski gubernatora: Kišenev, 1903–1904*.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Pravda li èto’, *Iskra*, 40 (1903).

<sup>98</sup> *Graždānin*, 45 (1903), p. 9; *Pravo*, 23 (1903), p. 1643.

<sup>99</sup> *Novoe vremja*, 21 May 1903.

<sup>100</sup> ‘K Kišinevskomu pogromu’, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 131 (1903); ‘Vinnica’, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 138 (1903).

<sup>101</sup> ‘Obvinjaemye po kišinevskomu pogromu’, *Novoe vremja*, 9920 (1903).

<sup>102</sup> ‘Iz Kišineva nam pišut’, *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*, 243 (1903).

of the victims by the mob. Apparently, the appearance of this information greatly alarmed the government because a doctor was given the task of examining the mutilated corpses mentioned in *Novosti*. The town doctor, in an official report, denied this and attributed the death of a child that had been mentioned in some articles to accidental suffocation by the mother as a result of confusion.<sup>103</sup> Referring to the article in *Novosti*, the same information about cruelty was repeated in a message from the acting Bessarabian governor Ustrugov to the director of the Department of Police.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, in articles in the Russian press in the spring and early summer of 1903, the Kishinev pogrom was generally not a particularly notable event. This may be due to both strict government censorship and the government's own reaction to the tragedy. The government's behaviour towards Russian society can instead be described as defensive: it responded rather rarely and weakly to accusations thrown by both Russian liberals and the foreign press. The rarest mentions of the pogrom and anything related to it in the official newspaper *Pravitel'stvennyj Vestnik* show the reluctance of the authorities to draw public attention to the pogrom. The Kishinev pogrom was an additional reason for the Russian socio-political forces in Russia and abroad to reflect once again on the sore points of the empire. The more frequently, boldly and vividly the tragedy was covered in the press, the more oppositional opinion was to the government. This was particularly evident in the publications *Osvoboždenie* and *Novosti i Birževaja gazeta*.

Most Russian periodicals agreed that the pogrom surpassed all other such events in terms of their brutality and the number of victims. On the whole, much in the pogrom narrative became common to the various publications. In other words, the boundaries of ideological orientation were blurred in statements about the Kishinev tragedy. Thus, both liberals and some conservatives were united in their condemnation of the nature of power in Russia. The emotional reaction of many activists was shame for certain strata of society: for some, it was the mad ignorant crowd, while for others it was the educated strata of society who had observed the tragedy or even encouraged the mob behind it. The conviction that the pogroms had been organized and prepared in advance grew more and more among those who spoke out publicly, but by no means everyone pointed to the authorities as the main organizer. The Russian socio-political narrative of the Kishinev tragedy was complemented by the "Western" narrative: as a result, confidence in government involvement in Russian society increased.

<sup>103</sup> 'Protokol zasedanija Bessarabskogo gubernskogo pravlenija po vračebnomu otdeleniju. 2 ijunja 1903 g.', in *Kišinevskij pogrom 1903 goda: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, p. 86.

<sup>104</sup> 'Soobščenie i. d. Bessarabskogo gubernatora Direktorju Departamenta policii. 1 ijulja 1903 g.', in *ibid.*, p. 116.

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# Vladyslav Verstiuk

## THE BOLSHEVIK EXPANSION AND OCCUPATION OF UKRAINE (DECEMBER 1917 – FEBRUARY 1918)

### ABSTRACT

The article presents an overview of the background and course of the first of four Russian-Ukrainian wars during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921: the war unleashed by the Russian Bolsheviks in late 1917. The author shares the story of the Bolsheviks' political manipulations which preceded the military invasion; he talks of the Bolsheviks' public hypocrisy, which combined recognition of the right of nations to self-determination with unacceptable demands of Ukrainians. The Bolshevik strategy was to portray the attack on the Ukrainian People's Republic as an internal Ukrainian conflict – the struggle of the “proletariat” against the “bourgeois Central Council”. It examines the process of creating a puppet Soviet government of Ukraine, under the cover of which troops from Russia led the occupation of the republic, with the emphasis put on the theme of “red terror” that was widely used by the Bolsheviks during the war. Then attention is drawn to the similarity of approaches to warfare in contemporary Russia of today and a century ago.

### KEYWORDS:

Ukrainian People's Republic, Bolshevik Russia, Russian–Ukrainian war, red terror

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The war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine in 2022 amplified the issue of Russian-Ukrainian relations manifold. Previously, these relations were presented as friendly and even fraternal. Although one “sister” was older and one was younger, a positive assessment of relationships dominated for the most part, while negative elements were considered exceptions rather than the norm. Not surprisingly, the current war has wiped out such views. Behind congenial talk about friendship of peoples – the great Russian history and culture and its exceptional influence on the history and culture of Ukraine – lurk predatory Russian nationalism, imperialism, and the communism of Soviet times, stained with the blood of peoples who, for various reasons, ended up in the orbit of the Russian authorities. The kind of orbit from which, as if from a prison, it is incredibly difficult and dangerous to escape. Ukrainians have attempted such escapes several times. In the early modern times, hetmans Ivan Vyhovs'kyi and Ivan Mazepa were eager to do just that, while in the twentieth century the call for independence became a symbol of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–21. The revolutionary impulse was so strong that Russia had to wage several wars to reoccupy Ukraine. This article deals with the first of them – the shortest one – which nevertheless crystallized all the deceit of the Russian Bolshevik propaganda: the cynicism of political leaders, who publicly said one thing and did another; their attempts to present blatant aggression as internal struggle within Ukrainian people, or as fraternal assistance to workers in their fight against nationalism; and finally, the incredible brutality of the military operations, mass terror against the civilian population, and complete lack of morality. Contemporary Russia has inherited a big portion of this legacy, which has become its ancestral feature and is being actively used today.

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The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in Petrograd in late October of 1917 opened a new chapter in the history of the revolution. The conflict between the Ukrainian Central Council (Rada) and the Provisional Government was immediately followed by overt armed struggle with the Bolsheviks. The withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the *Mala Rada*,<sup>1</sup> as well as the Central Rada’s condemnation of the uprising in Petrograd, confirmed that these forces followed different trajectories. On 5 November 1917, the organ of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party, the *Workers’ Newspaper*,

<sup>1</sup> *Mala Rada* (Minor Council): a permanent part of the Ukrainian Central Council (*Velyka Rada*, or General Council), which in its entirety met only periodically at General Assemblies (sessions). The *Mala Rada* had the same powers as the *Velyka Rada* and was composed in proportion to the factions of the General Council.



tried to list the differences between the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian revolutionary democracy,

[...] and when we seemed to be marching together against our common enemies, we never merged. We stood for the Ukrainian Democratic Republic and Federation (Union) with other parts of Russia. They [Bolsheviks] were completely opposed to our demand... They are still, if not openly hostile, then completely indifferent to the vital national-cultural and political needs of our proletariat. Our differences have always been significant. But now these political differences stand out powerfully. They are getting on the agenda of the political struggle in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

The national liberation movements, including the Ukrainian variant, were supported by the Bolsheviks only as an accompanying force in the struggle against the Provisional Government. After the Bolshevik Party came to power, these movements were regarded exclusively as bourgeois-nationalist counter-revolution. Despite Marxist-Leninist rhetoric about the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination, it was obvious that the national liberation movement and the Bolsheviks used different ideologies: the former aimed to create a sovereign nation-state and saw a nation subordinated to the unity of political will as the basis of its ideology; on the other hand, the latter recognized only class principles, considered the nation a historical anachronism, and juxtaposed the principle of national sovereignty against the principle of international class unity and the universal proletarian revolution.

The Bolsheviks came to power in Petrograd in the wake of the growing radicalization of society. The weak democratic state institutions of post-Romanov Russia proved incapable of overcoming the giant tangle of unresolved social problems that resulted in the February Revolution. Delaying their solution, including of that of the national issue, led to the fall of the Provisional Government. In 1917 in Russia, socialist and anti-bourgeois sentiments grew and strengthened, and Bolsheviks skilfully combined them with the communist doctrine, anti-war propaganda, and criticism of the government; finally, they used them all when seizing power.

The populism of the first Leninist decrees (on Land, on Peace, on Workers' Control) is obvious. Manipulating the social instincts of soldiers, workers, and peasants contributed to the complete breakdown of the old social system. Soldiers were exempt from the need to comply with military

<sup>2</sup> Mykola Hordijenko, 'Naši i jichni zavdannja', *Robitnyča hazeta*, 177 (1917).

duty; workers, instead on focusing on productive labour, were offered a chance to settle the score with their employers; peasants were given the right to appropriate the property and land of others with impunity. After October 1917, the Revolution took the form of an apocalypse when destructive forces took hold of constructive ones. Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev made a note of this peculiarity of the Russian revolution:

the greatest paradox in the fate of Russia and the Russian Revolution is that liberal ideas, ideas of law, as well as ideas of social reformism, have proved utopian in Russia. Bolshevism turned out to be the least utopian, the most realistic, the most appropriate to the situation as it developed in Russia in 1917, and the most faithful to certain primordial Russian traditions [...] and Russian methods of governance and dominating violence.<sup>3</sup>

After the seizure of power in Petrograd, the Bolshevik leadership considered it a primary task to extend its power to the territory of Russia and Ukraine; furthermore, it perceived the Central Rada as one of the real opponents in the struggle for power. A series of political strikes were directed against the Rada. First of all, ideological war broke out, which aimed to discredit the Rada and prove to the masses the counter-revolutionary and bourgeois nationalism of the Ukrainian authorities. On 26 November, RadNarKom the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars (*Rada Narodnykh Komisariiv, or Radnarkom*) published an appeal to the population reporting on the counter-revolutionary uprising of generals Aleksei Kaledin, Alexander Dutov, and Lavr Kornilov, who were flooded with demagogic accusations in an attempt to disrupt the peace process, take away power from the Soviets, take away land from the peasants, and force soldiers and sailors to shed blood for the profits of Russian and allied capitalists. These “counter-revolutionaries” included the “bourgeois Central Rada of the Ukrainian Republic”, which was accused of waging “a struggle against the Ukrainian Soviets, helping Kaledin to gather troops on the Don, and preventing the Soviet authorities from sending the necessary military forces to the land of the fraternal Ukrainian people to suppress the Kaledin rebellion”.<sup>4</sup> This was the first call, the first threat.

At first, the Bolsheviks counted on the peaceful absorption of Ukraine. Their plan was voiced by Joseph Stalin. On 24 November, he gave an interview dedicated to Ukraine to the Petrograd newspaper *Izvestiia*

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaj Berdjaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* (Moskva: Nauka, 1990), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Sobranie zakononij i rasporyženij pravitel'stva za 1917–1918 gg. Upravlenie delami RadNarKoma SSSR* (Moskva, 1942), pp. 45–46.

VTsIK in which he demanded to hold a referendum in Ukraine on the issue of self-determination. As emphasized by the NarKom (People's Commissar) of the National Affairs in Russia, the *RadNarKom* would reckon only with a government established on the basis of a referendum. Also, the NarKom immediately announced that power in Ukraine should belong to the Councils of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Together with the UTsR (Ukrainian Central Council) – and without it if it refused – the councils should convene the All-Ukrainian Congress of Councils to resolve the issue of power and relations with Russia. According to Stalin, this was the only way to communicate the will of the masses; without it, the *RadNarKom* refused to recognize the power of UTsR as legitimate. This plan did not work out: the Central Rada eventually agreed to hold a congress in Kyiv that – as we know – supported the UTsR. The local Bolsheviks' forces attempt to prepare an armed attack on Kyiv also failed because it was prevented by the actions of the Ukrainian armed forces.

Having accepted that they would achieve nothing in this manner, the Bolshevik leaders placed a bet on overt military aggression and began issuing ultimatums to the Ukrainian authorities.<sup>5</sup> Lenin and Trotsky prepared a Manifesto to the Ukrainian People Containing Ultimatums to the Central Rada, in which they basically repeated the accusations that had already been expressed in the Proclamation from November 26th. The manifesto-ultimatum was sent to Kyiv on 3 December 1917. Its brutal and unacceptable language addressed to Central Rada was obvious, and its rejection was exactly the reaction the *RadNarKom* was expecting. After all, the decision regarding the military intervention in the affairs of Ukraine was approved days before the ultimatum. In his *Notes on the Civil War*, Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko wrote about this quite frankly: “The collision with the Rada seemed absolutely inevitable, and in my presence and at the direction of Smolny, comrade Krylenko sent to Kyiv ...the ultimatum”.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In 1923, Mykola Skrypnyk, a Bolshevik leader, wrote and published *The Historical Outline of the Proletarian Revolution in Ukraine*. Despite all the Bolshevik orthodoxy that permeated this work, he admitted that “the Central Rada and its General Secretariat completely dominated in Kyiv”. It was a laboratory where new military units were formed, which were then sent by the Central Rada to all regions of Ukraine. There, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie “sold” the workers and finished off the workers' leaders with terror, as was done with Leonid Pyatakov and others. From Kyiv, the influence of Ukrainian social patriotism and Ukrainian Central Rada spread to other cities in Kyiv region and Podillia, Volyn', Kremenchuk, and Katerynoslav regions. In Katerynoslav, it was exactly then that the Haidamakas seized power, letting only Cossacks pass through Katerynoslav on their way to the Don. In Odesa, the Bolshevik's *Rumcherod* (Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of the Romanian Front, Black Sea Fleet, and Odesa oblast) was in power; concurrently, there were also military units sympathetic to the Ukrainian Central Rada. In Mykolayiv, where the Bolsheviks constituted an unstable majority, the Menshevik minority hindered the development of the Soviet system and made the advance of Ukrainian nationalists possible. On the southwestern front, the Bolshevik units that constituted the predominant military force, and even the neutral units, were spontaneously discharged and then passed through Kyiv, where the Central Rada disarmed them; and the more the Rada did so, the more spontaneously they walked towards Kyiv, constantly getting into fights and even real battles with military units remaining under the influence of the Central Rada. These were times of enormous confusion and decomposition in the Ukrainian Central Rada, even though almost all of Ukraine, including both villages and cities, was under its actual power”. Mykola Skrypnyk, ‘*Načerck istoriji proletarskoji revoluciji na Ukrajinji*’, *Červonyj šljach*, 2 (1923), 89–117 (here: 84).

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir Antonov-Ovsienko, *Zapiski o graždanskoj vojne*, 4 vols (Moskva: Vyššij voennyj redakcionnyj sovet, 1924–1933), I (1924), p. 48.

The first echelons of Bolshevik troops arrived in Kharkiv on 9 December under the command of Nikolai Khovrin and Rudolf Sivers. They were supposed to transit to the Don to fight general Kaledin's troops – at least, that was the original explanation for their arrival in Kharkiv. The local RevKom (Revolutionary Committee), led by the Bolshevik Artem (Fyodor Sergeiev), instructed the Soviet units not to engage with “any hostile action against the Kharkiv Soviets”. According to Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko, “the local Bolsheviks united forces [with the Kharkiv Soviets] in the RevShtab (Revolutionary Staff) and did not find it possible to come into conflict with Central Rada”.<sup>7</sup> Mykola Chebotariv, who led the Ukrainian armed forces in Kharkiv in late 1917, also mentioned the Ukrainians' cooperation with the Kharkiv Bolsheviks. He wrote that Artem and Moisey Rukhimovich, “the leaders of Kharkiv Bolshevism were willing to talk to us, Ukrainians, and we willingly settled more than one issue”.<sup>8</sup> However, this did not stop Rudolf Sivers, and by his order, in the early morning of 10 December, the Ukrainianized armoured division was disarmed. Mykola Chebotariv mentioned that this was done in secret. After a rally organized by the representatives of the city party organizations to protest against the pogrom behaviour of the Bolshevik army, negotiations began regarding the presence of Bolshevik troops, who upon arrival in Kharkiv initially declared that they would stay there for a short time. “The discussion between the Bolshevik army and the Ukrainians dragged on until late at night, about half past two”, writes Chebotariv. “Suddenly, an assistant commander of the armoured division entered the room where the meeting was taking place. He was white as a sheet... I just glanced at him and realized that a disaster had befallen the armoured division and the developments were not in our favour. He had barely managed to sit down when the sound of machine-gun fire came from the city, followed by cannon blasts. I turned to the representatives of the Antonov army with a question: ‘What is the meaning of this? Have we not decided to wait with any action until 9:00 in the morning?’ And this representative folded his legs and, blowing cigarette smoke, said ‘What’s the point in saying anything now when the machine guns and cannons have spoken’.”<sup>9</sup>

On 11 December, the commander of the Russian Soviet troops, Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko, arrived in Kharkiv. The city had become a springboard for the Russian troops. They were tasked with overseeing strict order in the city. The headquarters of Rudolf Sivers' platoon turned into a place for lynching. Antonov-Ovsienko mentioned a member of

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> *Vyzvol'ni zmahannja očyma kontrrozvidnyka: dokumental'na spadščyna Mykoly Čebotariva*, ed. by Volodymyr Sidak (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2003), pp. 22–23.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

the revolutionary court, a certain sailor Trushin, who “thought that every softie deserved to be killed”. However, the commander himself wrote that the “fantasy of the philistines” led to the extreme exaggeration of the scope of shootings “that were taking place near the seventh kilometre outside the city of Kharkiv”.<sup>10</sup>

Concurrently, a group of delegates who had left the Kyiv Congress of Councils arrived in Kharkiv. Under the protection of the Soviet troops in Kharkiv, an alternative All-Ukrainian Congress of Councils was staged in a hurry on 11–13 December. Eighty-nine councils and military revolutionary committees were represented by 200 delegates. Although there were more than 200 Soviet councils in Ukraine at the time, the legitimacy of the Congress, unlike the Congress of Councils in Kyiv in Kyiv, did not raise doubts. The Congress was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks. Therefore, it welcomed the uprising in Petrograd and the policy of the RadNarKom; it also proclaimed the Soviet Councils’ establishment of power in the UNR and elected the Central Executive Committee (TsVK) of the Soviet Councils of Ukraine, which in turn created the People’s Secretariat – the Soviet Government of Ukraine. Some problems arose during the establishment of the government. One of its members, Vasyl’ Shakhrai, observed with irony that no surnames of the people’s secretaries were known in Ukraine, although they were selected based on the principle of “if possible, [those] with Ukrainian surnames”.<sup>11</sup>

Volodymyr Zatons’kyi mentioned that:

the people’s secretaries called themselves the government, but their attitude to it was a bit humorous. And really, what kind of a government was it without an army, practically without territory, since even the Kharkiv Council did not recognize us? There was no apparatus, we needed to do everything from scratch. At the time there was a great simplicity of customs, and confusion with understanding certain things was also evident. For example, we were not able to separate the functions of the people’s secretary of finance from the duties of a cashier. In general, everyone had a complete commissariat – or a secretariat, as it was called back then – in their pocket. I arrived when the government had already been formed. It was decided not to elect the Head of the Government. And so, we lived without the head.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Vladyslav Verstjuk, *Ukrajins’ka Central’na Rada: Navčal’nyj posibnyk* (Kyjiv: Zapovit, 1997), p. 228.

<sup>12</sup> Volodymyr Zatons’kyj, ‘Uryvky z spohadiv pro Ukrajins’ku revoljuciju’, *Litopys revoljuciji*, 4 (1929), 139–72 (here: 159).

Even the Kharkiv Bolshevik Committee and the Kharkiv Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were unwilling to recognize the authority of the "government". Interesting details about this fact were left by Yevgenia Bosch: "The lack of active support from Kharkiv's leading comrades made the work of the Soviet government in Kharkiv very difficult. Had there been a different attitude from the top party administration in Donets'k-Kryvyi Rih oblast, there would have been no interruptions in the work of the TsVK, since it wouldn't have been necessary to move to Kyiv immediately after the fall of the Central Rada, and in the future it won't be necessary for the TsVK and the People's Secretariat to roam around, moving from one city to another".<sup>13</sup>

Other councils in Ukraine were not in a hurry to recognize the TsVK and the People's Secretariat, while in Petrograd they were welcomed as a formation of a "true people's Soviet power in Ukraine" and a "genuine Government of the people's Ukrainian Republic"<sup>14</sup>. The demands for

<sup>13</sup> Evgenija Boš, *God bor'by* (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1925), p. 166.

<sup>14</sup> This seems to have been the first case of formation of a fictitious government by the Bolsheviks; later on, however, they actively used similar practices. In late November of 1918 in their territory in Kursk, they created the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Ukraine, which they used as a cover to launch a new attempt at seizing Ukraine. Somewhat later, in early December of 1918, following a decision approved by Moscow, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Lithuania was established as part of the Red Army convoy. On 16 December, this Government published a manifesto regarding the establishment of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic. In late December, following the same scenario, the Belorussian Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government emerged. On 1 January 1919, it proclaimed the formation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Belorussia. The Lithuanian and Belorussian republics existed for only a brief period of time and were later "reformatted" by the Bolsheviks into the united Lithuanian-Belorussian Soviet Republic, which, in turn, being an artificial entity, could not survive for long. In a confidential letter dated November 29th, 1918, addressed to the commander of the Red Army, Jukums Vācietis, Lenin explained the actual purpose of forming such governments as follows: "With the advance of our troops to the West and toward Ukraine, regional provisional Soviet governments are being created; they are designed to strengthen the councils on the ground. The circumstances are good in the sense that they deprive the chauvinists in Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estland of the ability to consider the movement of our units an occupation and create a favourable atmosphere for further advance of our troops. Otherwise, our troops would find themselves in an impossible situation throughout the occupied regions, and the population would not meet them as liberators. In view of this, we ask you to instruct the officers of the relevant military units to ensure that our troops fully support the provisional Soviet governments of Latvia, Estland, Ukraine, and Lithuania. Of course, [this should apply to] only Soviet governments" (Vladimir Lenin, *Voennaja perepiska. 1917–1922 gg.* [Moskva: Ogiz Gospolitizdat, 1987], pp. 102–03). Clearly, within a narrow circle of close comrades, Lenin called things by their proper names, that is, he recognized the fact of the occupation of Ukraine by Russian troops. For a while, the Government was located in the city of Sudzha; it moved to Kharkiv only in January, when Sudzha was occupied by the Bolsheviks. The Kremlin-appointed head of the Government, Ch. Rakovsky, did not hide the nature of the Government and the purpose of its establishment, or the purpose of the Soviet Army's presence in Ukraine. Upon his arrival in Kharkiv, he prepared and distributed the following document for internal use: "1. The Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Ukraine was established by the resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (TsK RKP); the Government represents the RKP and unconditionally carries out its orders, as well as the orders of the TsK RKP. 2. The Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Ukraine does not constitute an independent entity; nor has it established or intends to establish its own independent command; it calls the Revolutionary Military Council of the Kursk Direction group the "Revolutionary Military Council of the Ukrainian Soviet Army" solely for the purpose of referring to the Soviet Army of Ukraine, and not to the offensive of the Russian troops, that is, to continue the policy which was initiated by the formation of the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Ukraine. This renaming did not and does not entail any change in substance, especially since the personnel of said Revolutionary Military Council is determined not by us but by the central institution of the RSFSR; tacitly, it is understood to be the same Revolutionary Military Council of the group of troops on the Kursk line, only with a different slogan for Ukraine" (Vladyslav Verstjuk, 'Novyj etap revoljucijno-vojennoho protyborstva v Ukrajinii', in *Revoljucija v Ukrajinii: polityko-deržavni modeli ta realiji (1917–1920)*. *Polityčna istorija Ukrajinii XX stolittja*, ed. by Valerij Soldatenko and Vladyslav Verstjuk, 6 vols [Kyjiv: Heneza, 2002–2003], II [2002], p. 328). In late 1919, when the Bolsheviks invaded Ukraine for the third time, they created *VseUkrRevKom*, which acted as the supreme authority. In the summer of 1920, *GalRevKom* was created in Kyiv; this organization proclaimed the establishment of Soviet power in the territories of Eastern Galicia and appointed itself the supreme body of power. (Mykola Lytvyn, 'ZUNR i Halyc'ka SRR u heostrategiji bil'sovyc'koji Rosiji', *Ukrajinna: kul'turna spadščyna, nacional'na svidomist', deržavnist'*, 18 [2009], 101–18). In the same summer of 1920, during the Soviet-Polish War, the Bolsheviks established the Provisional Revolutionary Polish Committee in Smolensk, at the rear of the frontline. The task of this Committee was to "to build the foundation for the Polish Soviet Republic".

a referendum dissipated like smoke – they were simply forgotten. RadNarKom promised “the new government of the fraternal republic full support of all kinds in its struggle for peace, as well as in terms of the transfer of all lands, factories, plants, and banks to the working people of Ukraine”.<sup>15</sup> This help did not last long. The commander of the Russian Soviet troops, Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko, established contact with and actively took care of the TsVK and the People’s Secretariat. His troops helped to requisition the premises of the newspaper Yuzhny Krai, which housed the TsVK and the People’s Secretariat.

There is no doubt that the TsVK and the People’s Secretariat were puppet formations of Red Petrograd. Thanks to them, the RadNarKom managed to formally distance itself from the events in Ukraine, presenting them as an internal conflict between the Councils of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies and the Central Rada. On 17 December, the TsVK of the Councils of Ukraine published a manifesto declaring the overthrow of the Central Rada and General Secretariat; the next day, it created a regional committee to combat the counter-revolution. The Ukrainian-Bolshevik conflict was rapidly shifting from the ideological and political spheres to the level of overt military actions.

In accordance with Lenin’s ultimatum, Soviet Russia and the UNR had been in a state of war since 6 December 1917. However, the ultimatum failed to provoke the kind of public support expected by its creators, Lenin and Trotsky; on the contrary, it raised a tidal wave of protests in both Ukraine and Russia. On 4 December 1917, the Second All-Russian Congress of the Councils of Peasant Deputies, which had taken place in Petrograd in late November to early December 1917, split for political reasons into left and right factions. The right-wing section adopted a special resolution concerning the ultimatum, in which it was noted that “the declaration of war on the domestic Russian front is criminal and shameful hypocrisy generated by the Council of People’s Commissars”. The Congress unanimously expressed its indignation to the RadNarKom, demanded that an immediate end be put to the fraternal bloodshed, and urged the soldiers and sailors to refuse to advance toward the self-determined borders of Ukraine. The Congress also warned the RadNarKom that by causing the massacre it [the RadNarKom] would bear responsibility to the people and the Constituent Assembly. The Congress sent greetings to the “Ukrainian Council and the Ukrainian Congress of the Councils of Peasants’, Workers’ and Military Deputies, which defended the integrity of the rights of the free

<sup>15</sup> Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov, ‘Privetstvie raboče-krest’janskomu pravitel’stvu Ukrainy ot Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov RSFSR. 16 dekabnja 1917 g.’, *Izvestija CIK i Petrogradskogo Soveta rabočich i soldatskich deputatov*, 254 (1917).

Ukrainian people”.<sup>16</sup> The left-wing section of the Congress was concerned about the situation in Ukraine and formed a special group of delegates for negotiations with the Ukrainian Central Rada via telegraph, “for the purpose of [gathering] preliminary information and immediate cessation of possible bloodshed”. On 8 December, Congress sent a special delegation headed by the left-wing representative of the Socialist Revolutionary Party (Esers), Prosh Proshyan, to Kyiv, in hope of reaching a mutual understanding with the leaders of UNR.

On 14 December, the All-Ukrainian Central Election Commission (VTsVK), whose leadership was already in the hands of the Bolsheviks, examined the issue of relations with Ukraine. Without discussion, it approved the measures proposed by the RadNarKom by a majority vote; however, at the meeting the Menshevik, Boris Moiseyev introduced the following resolution: “To declare illegal the actions of the People’s Commissars, who arbitrarily declared war on Ukraine, bypassing the VTsVK, and did not report it to the VTsVK upon entering the state of war”.

At that time, when the country was looking forward to the opening of the Constituent Assembly, and the Bolsheviks desperately needed the support of the All-Russian Congress of the Councils of Peasants’ Deputies to expand the social base of their power, they did not dare to cause immediate escalation of the conflict with Ukraine. An interview with Stalin, who was the person responsible for the national affairs within the Bolshevik leadership, appeared in Petrograd newspapers. In it, Stalin attempted to convince the public that there was no conflict between the Ukrainians and the Russians, and it was hard to find anything to challenge that; instead, in his opinion, there was a conflict between the Councils of Workers’, Peasants’, and Soldiers’ Deputies on one hand, and the General Secretariat on the other. In fact, Stalin gave a new ultimatum, this time not to the Central Rada but to the Ukrainian people, who were asked to “call to order their General Secretariat or re-elect it in the interest of finding a peaceful solution to a dangerous conflict”. Stalin did not hide [his intentions] and even threatened that if the changes desired by the Bolsheviks did not take place and everything remained as it was, the blood of the fraternal peoples would be shed.<sup>17</sup> It is worth noting that in mid-November 1917, when speaking at the Congress of the Finnish Social-Democratic Workers’ Party, Stalin advocated for full freedom in terms of self-determination by the Finnish and other peoples of Russia. “No guardianship, no supervision of the Finnish people! Such

<sup>16</sup> *Ukrajins’ka Central’na Rada. Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, and others, 2 vols (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1996–1997), II (1997), p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> Iosif Stalin, ‘Otvēt tovariščam ukraincam v tylu i na fronte’, *Pravda*, 213 (1917).



are the guiding principles of the Council of People's Commissars policy", he assured. In the case of Ukraine, however, custody and supervision were still needed.

Thus, according to Stalin, the problem was not the aggressiveness of the RadNarKom but the counter-revolutionary nature of the Ukrainian government. He developed the same thought in the article "What is the Ukrainian Council", published in *Pravda* on 15 December. Stalin accused the Central Rada of all possible sins: alliance with Aleksei Kaledin and the French military mission, disruption of peace, betrayal of Socialism, and deception of the masses and bourgeoisie. While Stalin was creating a propaganda smokescreen in the media, Lenin, in his secret directives, explained the real reason behind the Bolsheviks' interest in Ukraine. Here is his telegram to Kharkiv, addressed to Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko and Sergo Ordzhonikidze: "For God's sake, take the most energetic and revolutionary measures to send bread, bread, and bread!!! Otherwise, Petrograd might 'kick the bucket'. Special trains and squads. Collect and gather. You should convoy trains. Notify on a daily basis. For God's sake!"<sup>18</sup>

Upon the return of the delegation of the All-Russian Congress of Councils from Kyiv, where the delegates held conversations with Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, Mykola Porsh and other political figures, the Council of People's Commissars was forced to recognize that it was "advisable to open business negotiations with the Council" in Vitebsk or Smolensk.

The RadNarKom's proposal was examined by the General Secretariat on 22 December. The review uncovered a certain divergence of opinions among the secretaries. Volodymyr Yeshchenko believed that the proposal of the Council of the People's Commissars was nothing more than a manoeuvre to buy time for the organization of the Council's troops.<sup>19</sup> Mykola Porsh's position was close to Volodymyr Yeshchenko's. Oleksandr Shul'hyn, Mykhailo Tkachenko, and Mykola Shapoval formulated requirements that, in Porsh's opinion, should be set as prerequisites for the negotiations. Finally, it was decided to charge Volodymyr Vynnychenko with conveying an official answer. On 24 December, the reply was sent to Petrograd.

<sup>18</sup> Lenin, *Voennaja perepiska*, pp. 32–33.

<sup>19</sup> Volodymyr Yeshchenko was absolutely right. The Council of the People's Commissars made every effort to consolidate troops against the UNR. Take, for instance, a telegram from Lenin to Nikolai Krylenko, dated December 11th, 1917, and published for the first time only in 1970: "... convey the order to the most energetic people so that they organize, as soon as possible, a big number of completely reliable troops in Kharkiv, and so that there is forward movement without any obstacles or other considerations. We are extremely concerned about the not sufficiently energetic movement of troops from the front to Kharkiv. Take all measures, including the most revolutionary, for the most vigorous movement of troops, and a large number of them, to Kharkiv" (*ibid.*, p. 25).

The General Secretariat agreed to send its representatives to Vitebsk, provided that the Russian side fulfilled the following requirements:

- Immediate cessation of the military operations and withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territory of the UNR;
- official recognition of the Council of the People's Commissars of the UNR and a statement of non-interference in its internal affairs;
- establishment of a federal connection between Ukraine and Great Russia through the mutual understanding of self-determined republics;
- the struggle against the counter-revolution in one of the republics, which threatens the rest of the republics, must be conducted with the consent of the states concerned;
- the inadmissibility for any republic to interpret the counter-revolutionary tendencies of the other.<sup>20</sup>

On December 30th, 1917, without publishing the response of the General Secretariat, Pravda informed its readers that the RadNarKom “deems the Rada’s response vague” and “assigns all responsibility for the continuation of the civil war to the Rada”. It was hardly possible, even if one so desired, to characterize the position of the Ukrainian Central Rada as vague, but RadNarKom could get away with it, since it had – at last – finalized its own position. On 13 January 1918, it was Stalin again who announced this position in Pravda: “1. The Council of People’s Commissars has not been negotiating with the Kyiv Rada and is not going to negotiate; 2. The Kyiv Rada has got itself mixed up with general Kaledin and is negotiating treacherously with the Austro-German imperialists behind the back of the peoples of Russia. The Council of People’s Commissars considers it permissible to carry on a merciless fight with this Rada until the complete victory of the Soviet Councils of Ukraine”.

It would not be fair to say that the Ukrainian government did nothing to stop the aggression. Within historian circles, it is widely believed that one of the prominent mistakes of the Central Rada was its unwillingness to create its own army because Mykhailo Hrushevsky and Volodymyr Vynnychenko presumably did not understand the importance of having an army. This point of view is not entirely correct. It would be more accurate to say that Hrushevsky and Vynnychenko did not foresee that an army would have to be used on the internal front, especially against the ideologically related left-wing political forces to which the Bolsheviks belonged.

<sup>20</sup> *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada*, p. 67.

This turn of events really caught them by surprise. Under these conditions, the Central Rada approved the law of the “Free Cossacks”. As early as 22 November, Symon Petliura signed an order to form multiple Haydamats'ki kureni, or three battalion-size units in the cities of Yelisavethrad, Oleksandrivs'k, Kherson, Birzula, Kryvyi Rih, and Tiraspol, on the basis of the disbanded regiments of the old Russian army.

On 15 December, the General Secretariat formed a Special Defence Committee of Ukraine (Mykola Porsh, Symon Petliura, Volodymyr Yeshchenko). On 18 December, it appointed Colonel Yuriy Kapkan as the Commander of the entire Ukrainian army to fight the Bolsheviks. On 26 December, the General Secretariat approved a resolution establishing the UNR army on the basis of voluntary and paid service. Ukrainian troops carried out a number of preventive measures to disarm especially dangerous Bolshevik-minded units, starting with the Second Guards Corps. In addition, the All-Ukrainian Revolutionary Committee on the South-Western and Romanian fronts was liquidated. No matter how much the Bolsheviks sought to undermine the Central Rada, these fronts did not pose a direct threat toward the end of 1917; at the same time, they did not provide substantial support either.

Thus, some efforts to master the military apparatus had taken place, but they clearly turned out to be insufficient. Without liquidating the Kharkiv “Government”, without banning the Bolshevik party that acted quite legally and played the role of a fifth column, the Ukrainian Central Rada put itself and the Ukrainian People’s Republic in an extremely precarious position.

By the end of December, up to 20,000 sailors, soldiers, and Red Guards had been sent from Russia to Ukraine, mainly to Kharkiv. These were the squads of Nikolai Khovrin, Rudolf Sivers, Aleksandr Yegorov, Anatolii Zheleznyakov, Reinholds Bērziņš, and Yurii Sablin; all of them were under the command of Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko. On 13 December, Bolshevik troops seized the station of Lozova; on the 18th they seized Pavlohrad, and Synel'nykovo on the 21st. For some time until the end of December, the Russian Bolshevik troops were wary of carrying out active offensives. Their commander explained this by the absence of “any Ukrainian troops at the disposal of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities”.<sup>21</sup> Vasyl' Shakhrai, who headed the military Soviet Secretariat, was

<sup>21</sup> Vladyslav Hrynevych, and Ljudmyla Hrynevych, *Slidča sprava M.A. Muravjova: dokumentovana istorija* (Kyjiv: Instytut istoriji Ukrajin, 2001), p. 216.

of a similar opinion.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the idea of creating Red Cossacks units to counter the Free Cossacks (the former ones headed by the Bolshevik Vitaliy Prymakov) was hastily implemented. In early January 1918, the Red Cossacks counted only 700 fighters and could not carry out any independent operations; however, the existence of these units gave the People's Secretariat the grounds to present them as an army supported by the Secretariat.

On 25 December, Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko ordered a general offensive by the Bolshevik troops against the UNR, with the aim of capturing Kyiv. The plan was to simultaneously attack from different directions: from Bryansk and Kursk to Vorozhba-Konotop; from Gomel to Bakhmach, and from Novozybkov to Novhorod-Sivers'kyi. The main attack was supposed to come from Kharkiv, first toward Katerynoslav, and then through Poltava toward Romodan. At first, the Bolshevik forces did not have a substantial advantage, but the majority of the Ukrainianized units within the old army turned out to be demoralized and not ready for combat. As the Bolshevik units approached, the Ukrainianized units declared their neutrality. That is why, having realized that the old but Ukrainianized army was not capable of active combat, the Ukrainian authorities tried to find an alternative by creating a new army comprised of volunteers and Free Cossacks.

After Kharkiv, the first city to fall to the Bolsheviks was Katerynoslav. Ahead of the battle, the city prepared an uprising of workers and units that supported the Bolsheviks, which were joined by the Ukrainianized Pylyp Orlyk Regiment. Only the 134th Theodosian Regiment (1000 soldiers), which remained loyal to the Central Rada, and Ukrainian volunteer formations (the Katerynoslav Haydamats'kyi kurin' and Katerynoslav kurin' of the Free Cossacks) were able to oppose the rebels.<sup>23</sup> Toward the evening of 26 December, they managed to get the situation in the city under control; however, the next day the Bolshevik units led by Pavel Yegorov entered Katerynoslav. The Ukrainians were forced to leave the city. The Katerynoslav kurin' of the Free Cossacks, headed by Havrylo Horobec', left for Kyiv, where its members joined the local Free Cossacks, who were destined to resist the armed offensive initiated by the Bolsheviks in mid-January. Katerynoslav was followed by Oleksandrivsk (on 2 January) and Poltava (on 6 January).

<sup>22</sup> "What kind of 'Ukrainian Minister of War' am I when I have to disarm all the Ukrainianized units in Kharkiv because they do not want to join me in defence of the Soviet authorities? The only military prop in our fight is the army that Antonov brought to Ukraine from Russia, and that army considers everything Ukrainian to be hostile and counter-revolutionary". This is how Heorhiy Lapchyn'skyi related Shakhrai's words in his memoirs. See Heorhiy Lapchyn'skyi, 'Peršyj period Radjanskoji vlady na Ukrajinii', *Litopys revoljuciji*, 1 (1928), 159–75 (here: 171).

<sup>23</sup> Isaak Mazepa, *Central'na Rada-Het'manščyna-Dyrektorija. Ukrajinna v ohni j buri revoljuciji, 1917–1921*, 2 vols (Praha: Probojem, 1942), I, p. 39.

On 13 January, an armed Bolshevik uprising broke out in Odesa. Squads of Bolshevik-sympathizing soldiers, sailors, and Red Guards captured the district headquarters, railway station, telephone station, post office, telegraph, and treasury. On the same day, however, the Haydamaks, under the command of Viktor Poplavko, recaptured the headquarters of the district from the Bolsheviks. In response, following the orders of the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee, the cruisers Symon and Rostyslav and the mine carrier Almaz opened cannon fire on the city. Rumcherod<sup>24</sup> proclaimed itself the supreme authority on the Romanian front and in the Odesa region. In the early morning of 16 January, the Bolshevik forces began a new offensive. From the Romanian front, a battalion of the 657th Infantry Regiment arrived to help the rebels. Because of the fierce battles and heavy losses on the part of Ukrainian forces, the Haydamaks were forced to send a delegation to the City Council with a request for mediation in negotiations with the Bolsheviks. As a result of the agreements reached, 200 first sergeants and junkers were captured by the Bolsheviks. The Ukrainian formations were disarmed and the power in the city passed into the hands of the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee. In such a manner, Soviet power was established in Odesa.<sup>25</sup>

The Ukrainians courageously fought in uneven rear-guard battles, defending the railroad tracks along which the Russians advanced, as long as they [Ukrainians] had enough forces. On 14 January 1918, after several days of fighting between the units of the Petro Doroshenko Regiment and the Smert' (Death) kurin' on one hand, and Bolshevik units led by Reinholds Bērziņš and Mikhail Muravyov on the other, Ukrainian forces suffered significant losses and were forced to leave Bakhmach station. The commander of the Petro Doroshenko Regiment and the Head of the defence of the Bakhmach railway hub, Kost' Khmilevs'kyi, was killed in this battle. The rest of the Ukrainian units left the city and retreated to the station of Kruty, where a symbolic battle of Ukrainians sacrificing their lives in a struggle for their own state would take place a few days later.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of January, the Left-Bank and the South of Ukraine had fallen into Russian hands. Then Odesa, followed by Kherson, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Bakhmach, and Chernihiv. Gradually, Kyiv found itself under direct threat. While still in Bakhmach, Mikhail Muravyov gave an order to attack Kyiv, urging his troops to “ruthlessly eliminate all officers and

<sup>24</sup> Rumcherod was the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of the Romanian Front, the Black Sea Fleet and the Odesa Region (Kherson and Taurida provinces).

<sup>25</sup> Viktor Holubko, *Armija Ukrajin's'koji Narodnoji Respubliki 1917–1918. Utvorennja ta borot'ba za deržavu* (L'viv: Kal'varija, 1997), p. 164.

<sup>26</sup> Jaroslav Tynčenko, *Ukrajin's'ki zbrojni syly berezen' 1917 – lystopad 1918 rr. – orhanizacija, čysel'nist', bojovi diji* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2009), p. 77.

students of the military academies, Haydamaks, monarchists, and all enemies of the revolution in Kyiv".<sup>27</sup>

On 29 December in his report presented at a meeting of the General Secretariat on martial law in Ukraine, Mykola Porsh noted that the Kyiv garrison, some of which supported the Bolsheviks, some of which assumed a neutral position, and some of which remained loyal to the Ukrainian Central Rada, was in a miserable state and was "very tired and, at the moment, ill-suited to active work".<sup>28</sup> The report suggested that the most reliable and capable was the workers' regiment of the Free Cossacks under the leadership of Mykhailo Kovenko.<sup>29</sup> Naturally, the hopes of the General Secretariat were pinned on the Free Cossacks. Concerned about the likely threat of the Bolshevik uprising in Kyiv, the Government instructed Kovenko to disarm the Red Guards and 'unload' the city of 'elements' that were hostile to the authorities. In the early morning of 5 January 1918, units of Free Cossacks and military units loyal to the Central Rada raided several dozen enterprises, seizing a large number of weapons and arresting about 200 people.<sup>30</sup> The next day, in his comments on the operation at the meeting of the Mala Rada, Mykola Porsh noted that "the regular army in our country, as well as in Russia, is now in a state of complete decay, therefore all hopes are now pinned on the revolutionary organizations – the partisan units. These units are ready to march out to the defence of Ukraine".<sup>31</sup> He then further reported that, with the help of the Free Cossacks from the Arsenal, "20 cannons, thousands of guns, and millions of rounds had been seized".<sup>32</sup> On 15 January, Mykhailo Kovenko was appointed commandant of Kyiv, and on the same evening he and a group of Free Cossacks arrested seven left-wing Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries who were suspected of colluding with the representatives of the Kharkiv People's Secretariat and planning to seize power.

The preventive measures carried out by Mykhailo Kovenko did not stop the Bolsheviks; on the morning of 16 January, they staged a rebellion in Kyiv that was opposed by military units loyal to the Central Rada, including the Free Cossacks. Meanwhile, these brigades of workers were not particularly familiar with military affairs and had never taken part in military action; according to Volodymyr Kedrovskiy's account, they were people of "different ages, from children to the old, wearing different attire,

<sup>27</sup> Mark von Hagen, 'Skladnyj zachidnyj front ta formuvannja Ukrajinjskoji deržavy: zabutyj myr, zabuta vijna ta narodžennja naciji', *Ukrajina dyplomatyčna*, 19 (2018), 45–59 (p. 46).

<sup>28</sup> The forces of the Central Council in Kyiv and its environs, according to the calculations of the historian Yaroslav Tynčenko, counted at the end of 1917 about 27 thousand bayonets and sabres, but their fighting capacity was low // Jaroslav Tynčenko, *Perša ukrajins'ko-bil'sovyc'ka vijna (bruden' 1917– berezen' 1918 r.)*, pp. 40–1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada*, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> Valerij Soldatenko, *Ukrajins'ka revoljucija. Istoryčnyj narys* (Kyjiv: Lybid', 1999), p. 407.

<sup>31</sup> *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada*, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> *Ukrajins'ka Central'na Rada*, p. 94.

armed in different ways”.<sup>33</sup> In their subsequent memoirs, the Ukrainian military figures were rather critical of Kovenko’s performance as the organizer of Kyiv’s defence. He was a civilian engineer by profession, therefore military affairs were not his forte; he had neither a concept nor a defence plan, and his Cossacks had no experience of combat. That is why it took a week to suppress the uprising. Only on 22 January, when the units of the Haydamats’kyi kish<sup>34</sup> of Sloboda Ukraine under the command of Symon Petliura entered Kyiv, was the rebellion suppressed. However, the initiative had already passed to the Bolsheviks.

For the most part, Soviet military units that were formed in Russia behaved as conquerors in Ukraine in accordance with the revolutionary legal consciousness, which replaced law and regulations, while their rifles and machine guns opened wide opportunities for looting, massacres, and shootings. Their own commanders set an example. In Kharkiv, Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko forced several manufacturers – under threat of reprisals – to pay a million roubles of contribution, which even led to a protest by the local Bolsheviks; at the same time, Lenin admired this approach and hastened to support the commander in his letter dated 29 December, saying, “I particularly approve and welcome the arrest of millionaire-saboteurs... I advise you to send them to the mines for forced labour, for six months”.<sup>35</sup> Mikhail Muravyov, a left-wing Social-Revolutionary and Antonov-Ovsienko’s subordinate, also kept up with his superior. During the capture of Poltava, he reported to the commander, “...I’d rather ruin the whole town, to the very last building, than retreat. Give orders to mercilessly massacre all defenders of the local bourgeoisie”.<sup>36</sup> Muravyov’s conflict with the Poltava Council of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies also turned out to be curious. When the Council’s representatives asked Muravyov, together with the army, to leave the city, referring to the neutrality of the Poltava Council in the conflict between the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian Central Rada as the reason, Muravyov replied that he and his army “came here to restore the trampled Soviet power in Ukraine, particularly in Poltava”, and added that he would not leave there until the “genuine People’s Kharkiv Council” is recognized.

It is worth noting that Antonov’s headquarters paid so little attention to the “Kharkiv Rada” (the TsVK and the People’s Secretariat) that Lenin had to mentor his subordinate, convincing him, “... For God’s sake, make every effort to eliminate all friction with the TsVK (Kharkiv). This

<sup>33</sup> Archiv Vil’noji Ukrajins’koji Akademiji Nauk u N’ju-Jorku (hereinafter: Uvan), fond V. Kedrovs’koho, Verstka spomyniv.

<sup>34</sup> Original name – Hajdamac’kyj kiš Slobids’koji Ukrajiny.

<sup>35</sup> Lenin, *Voennaja perepiska*, p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o graždanskoj vojne*, p. 135.

is extremely important in terms of our state. For God's sake, make peace with them and recognize their sovereignty on all levels. I kindly request you to remove the commissioners you have appointed".<sup>37</sup>

If the commanders found it possible to behave this way, it is only natural that their subordinates allowed all kinds of liberties. Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko repeatedly admitted instances of looting, drinking, and non-compliance with orders, which went hand in hand with the actions of revolutionary troops: "In Kharkiv itself, with the help of Muravyov, I managed to stop unauthorized requisitions, searches, and arrests. The requisitions were carried out through the local Military Revolutionary Committees, and only through them were searches and arrests carried out (these committees were well aware of this). The units that arrived, as well as the local ones, largely turned out to be undisciplined, refused to go to the front, drank and looted".<sup>38</sup>

Ukrainian Central Rada responded to the offensive of the Russian troops by way of political measures, declaring the UNR an independent, sovereign state. This decision was formalized as the Fourth Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada. Its historical significance is obvious. It completed the complex, controversial development of the Ukrainian national liberation movement, which finally broke away from the ideas of autonomy and federalism. However, this apex in the history of the state formation of Ukraine did not coincide with the period of the highest exaltation of the Ukrainian national movement. Moreover, it took place at the time of the greatest aggravation of the socio-economic crisis.

While describing the state of Ukrainian society at that time, Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi had to acknowledge the following,

Bolshevik campaigning had its effect. In the army and in the rear alike, they looted and plundered property, threw the rest to death, and spontaneously dispersed, at times also looting and dismantling what was scattered along the road. In the villages, one could see more and more anarchist cells, which attracted the weaker parts of the peasantry and terrorized even those that were the most resistant. Looting and destruction of noblemen's estates, factories and plants became more widespread. The wealth of the land was lost – its productive forces were cut down.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>38</sup> Hrynevych, and Hrynevych, *Slidča sprava M.A. Muravyova*, p. 215.

<sup>39</sup> Mychajlo Hrushevs'kyj, *Iljustravana istorija Ukrajinny* (N'ju-Jork: Vidavnicтво Čartorijs'kih, 1967), p. 543.



The virus of demoralization penetrated Ukraine and dominated its society, which had been undergoing some strange and rapid metamorphoses. It is as if there had been no large-scale demonstrations and congresses just a few months ago, no political passions boiling and pouring into the numerous declarations and resolutions. All of this seemed half-forgotten, like a poorly remembered lesson. As Mykola Halahan recalled,

Until recently, Ukrainian soldiers declared and manifested their willingness to 'lay down soul and body for our freedom', but when the time came to prove it in deed, it turned out that there were very few descendants of the 'Cossack kin' who were at the disposal of Central Rada. Maybe someday researchers of the Ukrainian liberation movement will highlight the real reasons behind what happened: whether the general fatigue of the soldiers, caused by the World War, was to blame, or the lack of national consciousness, or perhaps it was the fault of the Central Rada and its failed policy.<sup>40</sup>

In this context, the courage of several hundred university and gymnasium students from Kyiv who were part of the newly created voluntary Ukrainian formations is worth being honoured and remembered by future generations. On 16 January, they entered an unequal battle with the predominant forces of the enemy near the station of Kruty. The majority of them were killed. About thirty were captured and then slaughtered in beastly fashion with bayonets. The heroism of the students who defended Kruty and sacrificed their lives to delay the advance of the enemy, thereby providing an opportunity for the Ukrainian military forces near Kyiv to regroup, has become one of the most important components of Ukrainian modern historical memory.

In fact, the victory of the Bolsheviks in the battle of Kruty opened a route for them to close on Kyiv. On 21 January, the Bolshevik units from the Left Bank [of the Dnieper] approached Darnytsia and seized an artillery battery in Slobidka, from where they began the barbaric shelling of the city centre, firing some 15 thousand artillery shells. From the Right Bank, Kyiv was shelled by an armoured train. As a result, the city was engulfed by fires and suffered immense damage. Among the shelled properties was the house of Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi on Pankivs'ka Street. His large library and archive perished in the ruins of the house; Hrushevs'kyi's mother was seriously injured and died shortly after. On 26 January, in order not to

<sup>40</sup> Mykola Halahan, *Z mojih spomyniv (1880-ti-1920 r.)* (Kyjiv: Tempora, 2005), p. 326.

subject the capital to even greater destruction, the Ukrainian authorities and the army decided to leave Kyiv.

A few days earlier, when the assault on Kyiv had just begun, Mikhail Muravyov had telegraphed Petrograd to inform the authorities that the city had been taken. The Bolsheviks perceived this as an outstanding triumph, and the Moscow *Izvestia* ran a piece on this subject which was signed by Lenin under the title “To All, To All, To All”. According to this piece, the Soviet army entered Kyiv on 22 January (in fact, it happened on 26 January); the Kyiv City Council headed by Volodymyr Vynnychenko was toppled, and the TsVK of Ukraine with its People’s Secretariat in Kharkiv was recognized (by whom?) as the highest authority in Ukraine. The federal connection with Russia was renewed, as well as complete unity – in terms of domestic and foreign policy – with the Council of People’s Commissars. Hence the conclusion: Ukraine was once again in Russian, albeit communist, hands. But Lenin, who from time to time recognized the right of Ukrainians to self-determination, was very reluctant to speak about the occupation directly; therefore, from the very beginning he emphasized that the Soviet army was not led by Volodymyr Antonov-Ovsienko or Mikhail Muravyov, but by Yuriy Kotsiubyns'kyi, the son of Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi.

Mykola Skrypnyk hastened to inform Leon Trotsky. In a telegram sent to Brest, where peace talks with representatives of the Quadruple Alliance were taking place, he reported,

our artillery bombed the central quarters, where counter-revolutionaries were holding on in the midst of fires. The City Council attempted to act as an intermediary, but our representatives demanded the unconditional surrender of weapons and extradition of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary rebellion. Step by step, our forces drove out the supporters of the Rada with artillery and bayonets, and at last Kyiv was taken... the entire city is in the hands of the Soviet army, the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, becomes red Kyiv.<sup>41</sup>

Obviously, when writing about “red Kyiv”, Skrypnyk resorted to a metaphor, but within three days the city was flooded with rivers of blood. In his next order, Mikhail Muravyov gave permission for three days of terror and looting. People were grabbed right on the streets and led to execution; it was enough to have in one’s possession documents

<sup>41</sup> Tynčenko, *Perša ukrajins'ko-bil'sovyc'ka vijna*, p. 52.

written in Ukrainian, an officer's rank, or a priestly cassock. The murder of Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv caused a great resonance in the city. His cell was robbed and he was taken outside the walls of the Lavra and shot. Muravyov tried to give excuses, insisting that it was the work of provocateurs, who he promised to find and severely punish. Of course, no one found these murderers, or the murderers of generals Viktor Gavrillov, B. Bilchyns'kyi, Illia Volkovyts'kyi, Vladimir Dankvart, A. Rydzevs'kyi, Kostjantyn Krakovetskyi, Fedir Dems'kyi, a number of officers, including Prince Mychajlo Golitsyn, Prince Petro Kochubey, Baron Korf, and Georgiy Rodzianko, the son of the former Head of the State Duma, Michail Rodzianko.

In the garden of the Mariinsky Palace, where the headquarters of the Red Army were located, Bolshevik Sergij Mojsjejev, who witnessed the events, recalled

a lot of people were shot for no reason. The shootings were left to the discretion of the Red Guards themselves; soldiers who left the hospital and did not have identification documents were also shot... All the corpses were undressed, and all belongings were immediately distributed among those who were shooting, right in front of the crowd. When [Mikhail] Muravyov came to the location of the shootings and realized that he was surrounded by a crowd of savage Red Guards holding on to looted property, he did not say anything regarding the lootings; on the contrary, he urged them to continue with the shootings, saying that first and foremost one had to be merciless.<sup>42</sup>

Another place of mass shootings was the City Opera House, where former officers were summoned for document verification and registration, but it was actually a cynical massacre.<sup>43</sup>

While in Odesa, Muravyov himself related, very eloquently, his Kyiv "escapades":

We come with fire and sword, we established Soviet power [...] I took the city, I attacked palaces and churches, priests, monks, I showed no mercy! On January 28th, the oboroncheskaia Duma asked for a truce. In response, I ordered to attack with asphyxiating chemical gases. Hundreds, maybe even thousands of generals were killed

<sup>42</sup> Memorial Vseukrajins'ka pravozachysna orhanizacija Memorial imeni Vasylja Stusa, '8 ljutoho 1918 - zachopyvšy Kyjiv...' (Facebook post, 8 February 2021), <<https://www.facebook.com/memorial.ukraine/posts/3875441999172691>> [accessed 11 September 2022].

<sup>43</sup> Sergej Mel'gunov, *Krasnyj terror v Rossii 1918–1922* (Berlin: Vataga, 1924), p. 75.

mercilessly. That is how we took revenge. We would have been able to contain the explosion of revenge, but there was no need for that because our slogan was to be merciless.<sup>44</sup>

According to conservative estimates, 2576 officers were killed on the streets. Dmytro Doroshenko claims that some 3000 people were killed on the first day of the occupation, while the total number of victims and prisoners amounted to more than 10,000.<sup>45</sup> The figures provided are possibly substantially inflated (historians struggle to determine the number of victims in Kyiv)<sup>46</sup>; however, that does not call into question the fact of the tragedy caused by the Bolshevik troops in the city.

There is not much documentary evidence regarding the Kyiv massacre that has survived until now; therefore, I want to use Serhiy Yefremov's literary journalism works to the fullest. The newspaper *Nova rada*, which he edited, was closed down by the Bolsheviks but resumed its work on 4 February 1918. On the same day, Yefremov published in this newspaper four articles describing his eyewitness account of the Bolshevik siege and occupation of the city. Yefremov was certain that Kyiv had not suffered such a massacre since the times of the Mongol invasion. The shelling of this city of one million people had catastrophic consequences: the centre suffered huge damage, and a significant number of civilians was affected. The retreat of the UNR units did not deter the attackers, "On 26 January, all of Kyiv was already in the hands of the Bolsheviks; the arriving army, the Red Guard, and the new Soviet power took over", testifies Serhiy Yefremov as a journalist and eyewitness.<sup>47</sup> "The cannonade subsided, but occasional shots were still heard for a couple of days, especially near the former Royal Palace and in Mariins'ky Park: the conquerors triumphed and turned to mob law and execution of random victims... and those last days claimed even more victims than the previous days of the ardent battle".<sup>48</sup> Residents of Kyiv became the first victims of massive red terror. The shootings and the bacchanalia experienced by Kyiv led Yefremov to publicly appeal, through the newspaper, to a Bolshevik high-ranking official, the People's Secretary of Military Affairs Yuriy Kotsiubyns'kyi. The article, *The Letter Missing an Envelope*, had a humanistic outlook, deep morality, and spiritual courage – all the characteristics that do not allow one to remain silent even in the face of deadly danger. Even though Yefremov addressed the letter to

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>45</sup> Hagen, 'Skladnyj zachidnyj front', p. 46.

<sup>46</sup> Andriy Zdorov, 'Červonyj teror u kyjevi na počatku 1918 r.: mify ta realiji', *Historians.in.ua*, 25 December 2015, <<https://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/dyskusiyia/1729-andrii-zdorov-červonyi-teror-u-kyievi-na-počatku-1918-r-mify-ta-realii>> [accessed 11 September 2022]; Olena Betlij, 'Bilšovyč'kyj teror u Kyjevi u sični-ljutomu 1918 r.: žertvy i pam 'jat'', *Krajeznavstvo*, 3 (2018), 178–95.

<sup>47</sup> 'Podij v Kyjevi (23–26)', *Nova rada*, 14 (1918).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

a particular person, he also accused Bolshevism as a political movement, “There is an abyss between us, an unsurmountable chasm that distances a Bolshevik from an old Socialist, who has repeatedly experienced the tsar’s prison and the gendarmes-scorpions. And yet, I do not envy your power, nor will I trade it for my lack of such”.<sup>49</sup>

Serhij Yefremov was conscious of the fact that ephemeral future socialist happiness is by no means an excuse for the destruction of a city and its population. He rejects as hypocritical the statement claiming that the executed people were counter-revolutionary and bourgeois:

You would say, “This blood belongs to the bourgeois”. How do you know that, I’ll ask. During those ten cursed days, was not even more proletarian blood shed? Actually, it does not matter to me because bourgeois blood is as red as proletarian blood, and it is just as much fun for it to flow through the veins than drip on the sand in Mariins’ky Park, and just as much it intoxicates the people who can swim in it. And naked, robbed, undressed corpses, which were driven through the streets in sheaves – they are a mute testimony to the fact that people, drunk on vodka and blood, do not set limits to their predatory instincts.<sup>50</sup>

The Ukrainian theme plays an equally important role in *The Letter Missing an Envelope* since it is addressed to the eldest son of a prominent Ukrainian writer and public figure, the late Mykhailo Kotsiubyns’kyi, who devoted his entire life to the national cause and up until his death had faith that Ukraine would have a bright future. At the time when this future started to be actualized, when “freedom has already started shining under the Ukrainian sky [...], the degenerate son of the famous father” arrived as the leader of those who “again put this freedom in the coffin and nail down the heavy lid with weights”. Knowing the tragic fate of Yuriy Kotsiubyns’ky, who was purged by the Stalinist regime in the mid-1930s, I would like to pay attention to the prophetic nature of the Letter. Yefremov did not believe in the power of good imposed by force, so he concluded with a warning:

You too should know that the seeds that you sowed in your native land will not bring forth what you expected. Not equality and fraternity, but only knives on both sides, hatred, and blood... Clean work requires clean hands, whereas dirty hands soil, stain, and contam-

<sup>49</sup> Serhij Yefremov, ‘Lyst bez konverta’, *Nova rada*, 15 (1918).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

inate the cleanest work. Even if you wash them in ten buckets of water, you won't wash away the shame and disgrace wherewith you have covered yourselves and your work.<sup>51</sup>

We should note that the brutal behaviour of the Bolshevik troops, including the shootings, plundering, drinking, and debauchery (known from the materials provided by Mikhail Muravyov's legal case), was an everyday phenomenon that accompanied the Bolshevik units throughout their entire stay in Ukraine. These were the first manifestations of the "Red terror", not yet declared as an official policy of the Bolsheviks. These atrocities made a significant impact on the attitude of the population, which initially, under the influence of propaganda, was sympathetic to the Bolsheviks' cause but was later struck by this turn of affairs and started to resist. This opinion has been expressed by the historian Liudmyla Garcheva, whose investigation focused specifically on the causes and course of the First Bolshevik-Ukrainian War. She believes that the population's anti-Bolshevik protests were due to the brutality of the Bolshevik regime, which fully manifested itself in the first few weeks of the war and occupation.<sup>52</sup>

Numerous testimonies to the participation of the Free Cossack units in the struggle against the Bolshevik aggression in the winter of 1917–1918, throughout entire Ukraine (Bakhmach, Vinnytsia, Zolotonosha, Katerynoslav, Konotop, Kremenchuk, Odesa, Rivne), have been preserved within memoirs and archival sources. For the most part, the resistance took the form of local partisan movements. For instance, the Free Cossacks of the Novomoskovsk county in Katerynoslav province, led by a member of the UNR, Fedir Storubel, waged a rail war by dismantling the railway tracks in order to slow down the movement of the Bolshevik units. In general, the power of the Bolsheviks did not extend beyond provincial and county towns, which were encircled by garrisons. Villages located within the narrow strips near railways suffered from raids for provisions, but the Free Cossacks successfully repelled these raids.

In February 1918, the Free Cossacks of Zvenyhorodka county and those around it carried out successful large-scale actions. In early February, Yuriy Tiutiunyk was elected the kish otaman (of the Zvenyhorodka Cossack kish). A little later, Mykola Shynkar arrived in Zvenyhorodka. An eyewitness, Volodymyr Kedrovs'kyi, recalled,

<sup>51</sup> Jefremov, 'Lyst bez konverta'.

<sup>52</sup> Ljudmyla Harčeva, 'Zbrojni syly Central'noji Rady u ljutomu – kvitni 1918 roku', *Vijs'ko Ukrainy*, 8 (1993), p. 107.

Only a few other officers who made up the initial personnel of the so-called regular Free Cossack units in Zvenyhorodka came here with them. Thanks to this, Zvenyhorodka was tightly surrounded by Ukrainian forces, and for quite some time, until the arrival of the Germans and the return of the Central Rada to Kyiv, it remained (together with most of the county) a stronghold of national dedication among the waves of the Bolshevik “sea” overflowing Ukraine. Had we had similar folks in other counties of Ukraine, the Bolsheviks would have seen Ukraine as well as their own ears”.<sup>53</sup>

The partisan Cossack resistance to the Bolshevik offensive was a glorious page of Ukrainian military history, but it failed to determine the main course of this military campaign. The situation became such that only external military assistance could save the UNR from final defeat by the Bolsheviks. By signing the peace treaty with the countries of the Quadruple Alliance on February 9th (January 26th), 1918, the UNR received powerful military assistance in the struggle against the Bolsheviks. On February 14th, under the pressure of Ukrainian formations and German troops, the Soviet People’s Secretariat left Kyiv for Poltava. As Serhiy Yefremov wrote, they “fled. Shamefully, secretly, in the middle of the night – truly, ‘like a thief in the night’, one by one. Kharkiv’s ‘people’s secretaries’ disappeared. [They did so] having plundered the city, having bred anarchy, having led it to hunger and extreme decline”.<sup>54</sup>

The war with the Bolsheviks lasted several years, with brief interruptions, and is reminiscent of what we today call hybrid war. On paper, the Bolsheviks recognized the right of nations to self-determination, but in reality they were not particularly concerned about this. At the centre of their policy was the principle of dictatorship of the proletariat. To spread this dictatorship, they created their own pocket “Soviet governments of Ukraine”, which were assisted by the armed forces; in the underground, they organized armed rebellions and conducted subversive work among Ukrainian politicians with the help of leftist elements and their secret services. A brutal occupation regime was established in the seized Ukrainian territories. This regime was based on the “Red terror” and entailed dictatorship of the proletariat, a one-party political system, severe restrictions of human rights and freedoms, and the economic exploitation of Ukraine.

<sup>53</sup> Ukrajins’ka Vil’na Akademija Nauk, fond V.Kedrovs’koho, Verstka spomyniv.

<sup>54</sup> Serhiy Jefremov, *Publicystyka revolucijnoji doby, 1917–1920 rr.*, 2 vols (Kyjiv: Duch i Litera, 2013), I, p. 482.

The course of the revolution, which was closely connected to the Ukrainian-Bolshevik war, provides certain paradigmatic clues that bring light to the nature of the Bolshevik regime. Forcefully imposing communist ideas, the regime used ideology to occupy Ukraine. It was this occupation, as well as liberation from it, that became an important component of the history of Ukraine in the twentieth century. In fact, while constantly identifying itself with the idea of internationalism, Bolshevism turned out to be a kind of Russian messianism, centralism, and nationalism – all three being extremely aggressive and everlasting. These ideas did not disappear in twentieth century revolutionary Russia; instead, they were successfully sublimated into the ideas of dictatorship of the proletariat, struggle against bourgeois nationalism, assimilation of minor ethnicities, and rebuffing of Western civilization.

In recent decades, this terrible ideological mishmash has become the state ideology of Russia, and today it attempts to prove the viability of this ideology with its blatant aggression against Ukraine, as well as threats to the world. Only the absolute unity of the democratic world, our belief in inevitable victory, as well as the courage with which we fight for our native land can bury these efforts. In conclusion, let us recall the words of Serhiy Yefremov, which were written at the time of the Bolshevik occupation of Kyiv in February 1918 and are filled with deep faith,

We sail through a sea of darkness. As in the past, it is not hope that shines ahead but an unshakeable certainty that we will get to our shores and enter our promised land. Travel adventures, however terrible and bloody they might have been, are just episodes, and we should not allow these fleeting episodes to knock us off the path in front of us. In front of us, not behind us...<sup>55</sup>

These wise words, filled with faith and invincible optimism in the historical fate of Ukraine, provide not only evidence of past hardships but also a roadmap to overcoming them today.

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Ibid., 476.



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## “I ONLY DO IT TO STAY ALIVE”: DEVELOPMENT OF THE NARRATIVE OF “UNIFICATION OF THE WESTERN LANDS OF UKRAINE AND BELARUS WITH THE UKRAINIAN AND BELARUSIAN SOVIET REPUBLICS” IN SOVIET HISTORICAL PROPAGANDA\*

### ABSTRACT

The article analyses selected aspects of the formation of the historical propaganda narrative of the unification of the lands of Western Ukraine with the Ukrainian SSR and of Western Belarus with the Belarusian SSR as well as the participation of individual historians deliberately involved or for various reasons forced to take part in developing the academic justification for the change in borders. The knowledge and authority of scholars often originating from the pre-revolutionary school were necessary for creating a historical narrative legitimizing the change in policy and reinforcing the propaganda message.

### KEYWORDS:

Soviet historiography, Vladimir Picheta, Western Belarus, Western Ukraine, propaganda

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In Bolshevik propaganda, it would be a truism to say that war – and, more broadly, the ideological preparation of Soviet society for the inexorable clash with “all sorts of enemies” surrounding a country ruled by “workers and peasants” – was an essential feature of the indoctrination system. By creating an atmosphere of constant threat, the Soviet propaganda machine not only succeeded in stoking patriotic feelings; it also contributed to the development of an array of devices, phrases and propaganda slogans that took hold in the lexicon of propaganda concepts that have experienced a renaissance in the twenty-first century. A separate phenomenon was attaching new political significance and meaning to concepts and their derivatives that had hitherto been used in a neutral sense.

It is, in fact, an impossible task to make even a cursory analysis of selected aspects of the workings of Soviet propaganda using the examples of press, radio, cinema, and art in one article, yet both Russian and foreign scholars have attempted it. Even a list of just the essential subject literature would not fit into one footnote and would require a separate supplement. Those who have researched the Soviet propaganda apparatus and its mechanisms include Western Sovietologists such as Peter Kenez, Stephen F. Cohen, David Brandenberger, Ewa M. Thompson and Serhii Plokhly. Yet the most important works on the events preceding the outbreak of the Second World War and during the war itself are those by the Russian scholar Vladimir Nevezhin, who stood out as a consummate researcher and expert on the mechanisms of the Soviet propaganda machine.<sup>1</sup> As well as examining the nature and content of the propaganda, Nevezhin also critically analysed the activity of the “machine and cogs”,<sup>2</sup> meaning the institutions and the role of individual decision makers in launching and conducting propaganda campaigns, including the “march of liberation of the Red Army” in September 1939.

Scholars agree that preparations for the “liberation of the Ukrainian and Belarusian half-brothers” began with Germany’s aggression against Poland and were pursued simultaneously in the military, economic and propaganda-political fields. In the last of these domains, they have analysed press materials published in publications and documentation produced by government institutions, military organizations, and, to a lesser extent, memoir literature.<sup>3</sup> We will therefore not revisit well-known issues and conclusions that have long operated in the historiographical circulation.

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Nevezhin, *Sindrom nastupatel'noj vojny. Sovetskaja propaganda v preddverii "svjaščennykh boev", 1939–1941 gg.* (Moskva: AIRO-XX, 1997); id., “Esli zavtra v pochod...”: podgotovka k vojne i ideologičeskaja propaganda v 30-h-40-h godach (Moskva: Eksmo, 2007); id., *Tajne plany Stalina: propaganda soviecka w przededniu wojny z Trzecią Rzeszą 1939–1941*, trans. by Jan J. Bruski, (Kraków: Arcana, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> The above paraphrase refers to the work of the Russian historian and dissident Mikhail Heller; see the first Russian edition published in London: Michail Geller, *Mašina i vintiki. Istorija formirovanija sovetkogo čeloveka* (London: Overseas Publications Interchange Ltd, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> Nevezhin is among those who analyse these preparations in detail. See: Niewieżyń, *Tajne plany Stalina*, pp. 79–94. See also: Natalija Lebedeva, ‘Sentjabr’ 1939 g: Pol’sa meźdu Germaniej i SSSR’, *Vestnik MGIMO-Universiteta*, 4 (2009), 231–50.

What seems to be a less researched aspect is the activity of academic institutions and the role of individual scholars deliberately involved or forced, for various reasons, to participate in developing the academic justification for the territorial conquests and changes to the borders of the USSR. I will attempt to determine which factors affected the academic and ideological positions of scholars caught up in the gears of great politics. I will be particularly interested in the role of individual scholars and the expert assistance they provided to various propaganda institutions in their campaigns designed to construct specific ideas and public moods. The knowledge and authority of “old-school” scholars, often hailing from the pre-revolutionary tradition, were essential for developing the historical narrative, legitimizing the policy turn, and reinforcing the propaganda message.

#### INSTITUTIONS OF THE “IDEOLOGICAL FRONT”

The late 1930s marked a clear watershed that finalized the process of building the propaganda and ideological apparatus in the Soviet Union. Centralized and extensive propaganda and organizational structures were built that encompassed all echelons: top-level (the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (AUCP(b) Propaganda and Agitation Administration, the Red Army Political Administration, the Central Literature and Publications Bureau,<sup>4</sup> and political bureaus in people’s commissariats (ministries); medium-level (AUCP(b) propaganda and agitation administrations at Soviet republic level, political administrations at military district level, various political education departments (*politprosveshcheniye*)<sup>5</sup>; and lower-level (propaganda divisions of AUCP(b) district and regional committees, political schools for AUCP(b) and Komsomol members, etc.

Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the unquestioned authority in the formation of historical ideology in the USSR was the then general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin. Stalin’s ideological opponents vanished from the political scene while he directly participated in the writing of the canonical version of the history of the AUCP(b), which was also an interpretation of Russia’s general history since the end of the nineteenth century. The “leader of the working masses of the world”, along with his retinue in the form of Andrei Zhdanov, Lev Mekhlis and other party dignitaries, personally inspired and set the guidelines for propaganda and oversaw its implementation. Other,

<sup>4</sup> PURKKA – Politicheskoe upravlenie Raboče-Krest’janskoj Krasnoj Armii; Glavlit – Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatel’stv.

<sup>5</sup> Politprosveshchenie – political education system encompassing knowledge on the foundations of Marxism-Leninism, the history of the AUCP(b) and current politics.

lower-status “cogs” played the role of the transmission belt that relayed the leader’s orders. Of course, the Soviet dictator had to make use of analytical material supplied by various agencies. He did so using an extensively developed state and party apparatus and institutions of the ideological front, largely pursuing propaganda activities and expert support from scholars, journalists and academic institutions.

In matters of information policy and international propaganda, in particular regarding Polish issues, apart from the NKID<sup>6</sup> (e.g., the Information and Press Department), an important role was also played by numerous Komintern structures,<sup>7</sup> and in the early 1930s by the AUCP(b) Central Committee’s Bureau of International Information. A particular role was played by Soviet intelligence agencies: the IV (Intelligence) Administration of the Red Army Headquarters, and after organizational changes the Information/Statistics and Intelligence Administration, as well as the Foreign Department of the OGPU<sup>8</sup> and then the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD.

The AUCP(b) CC’s Bureau of International Information, established on Stalin’s initiative in spring 1932 with Karl Radek at the helm, in addition to supplying objective analytical information without ideological adjustment, was to concentrate its efforts on realizing political and strategic military tasks in the Moscow–Warsaw–Berlin triangle.<sup>9</sup> The bureau collected information and canvassed moods using the services of agents operating in the West in the guise of diplomats and journalists. One example was Stefan Jan Nejman (Rajewski), who served as adviser to the USSR embassy in Berlin; he was also a representative of the TASS press agency in Paris and head of the government newspaper *Izvestia*’s foreign department.

Following this brief outline of the propaganda structures and institutions of the ideological front, let us turn to the fundamental research problem of this study, which is the role of individual scholars and academic institutions in creating and reinforcing the historical propaganda message, with a particular focus on Polish issues.

<sup>6</sup> NKID – Narodnyj komissariat inostrannykh del (People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs).

<sup>7</sup> For more on this subject see: Grant Adibekov, Eleonora Sachnazarova, and Kirill Širinja, *Organizatsionnaja struktura Komintern, 1919–1943* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 1997); Piotr Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza. Droga do władzy 1941–1944* (Warszawa: Fronda PL, 2003), pp. 33–38; Natalia Lebediewa, “Komintern i Polska w latach 1919–1943”, in *W drodze do władzy. Struktury komunistyczne realizujące politykę Rosji sowieckiej i ZSRS wobec Polski (1917–1945)*, ed. by Elżbieta Kowalczyk, and Konrad Rokicki (Warszawa: IPN, 2019), pp. 163–210. Komintern’s effective activity in the Soviet–Polish propaganda war is also discussed by the Polish scholar Aleksandra J. Leinwand, “Z dziejów eksportu propagandy: Komintern w wojnie z Polska w 1920 roku”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 111:4 (2004), 83–107.

<sup>8</sup> INO OGPU – Inostrannyj otdel Ob’edinenennogo Gosudarstvennogo Političeskogo Upravlenija – Foreign Department of the Joint State Political Directorate.

<sup>9</sup> Oleg Ken, “Karl Radek i Bjuro międzynarodowej informacji CK VKP(b), 1932–1934 gg.”, *Cabiers du Monde russe*, 44 (2003), 135–77. The Russian scholar, an expert on the history of Polish–Soviet bilateral relations in the interwar period, suggests that Radek exploited his status as Stalin’s special envoy and then head of the foreign department of the influential newspaper *Izvestia*, seeking to weaken the influences of the anti-Polish party in the top political level of the Kremlin. Cited in Ken, “Karl Radek”, p. 173. In notes to Stalin, Radek argued that there were no imperial plans regarding the Soviets in Poland and favoured improving Warsaw–Moscow relations by softening anti-Polish themes in Soviet propaganda, establishing a Polish–Soviet cultural cooperation society or joint publication of documents on Polish uprisings. See: “Nr 6. 1933 grudzień 3, Moskwa – Załącznik do informacji Karola Radka skierowanej do Stalina dotyczącej nowego etapu w stosunkach polsko-sowieckich”, in *Geneza paktu Hitler–Stalin. Fakty i propaganda*, ed. by Bogdan Musiał and Jan Szumski (Warszawa: IPN, 2012), pp. 125–30 (here: 128).

## BACK TO THE PAST, OR THE IMPERIAL PARADIGM OF HISTORY

It is worth emphasizing that the history of Poland was studied in the Soviet Union before 1939 primarily from the perspective of research on the history of the workers' movement, seen as an equivalent of the communist movement, at ideological academic institutions such as the Polish Institute of Proletariat Culture in Kyiv and its sister Institute in Minsk.<sup>10</sup> Only in the second half of the 1940s were specialist institutions set up within the Soviet Academy of Sciences, at which, in agreement and close cooperation with the AUCP(b) CC, evaluations and expert reports were produced and concepts of Polish history and positions regarding important historical periods and problems were prepared. In interwar Poland, meanwhile, there were several research centres devoted to Soviet<sup>11</sup> and communist<sup>12</sup> studies.

In the second half of the 1930s, the Stalinist variant of the Marxist-Leninist historiographical concept as a way of understanding the process of history was finally established in Soviet historical research. Following a decision of party and state authorities from 1934–35 concerning the teaching of history, organizational changes were introduced that finalized the process of building a centralized system. In 1936–37, the Institute of History of the Soviet Union and the Institute of History of Material Culture were established at the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The same solutions were implemented in the individual Soviet republics, but local issues were taken in to account. In Soviet Ukraine, where the status of national history was greater than it was in the Byelorussian Soviet Republic, a separate Institute of the History of Ukraine was set up in 1936 as part of the History

<sup>10</sup> An aspect that has scarcely been researched is the activity of party research institutions, which, despite their often-dubious academic merit, held an important place in the research on Polish history that took place in the 1920s and 1930s in the Soviet Union. We can mention here the Polish Party History Commission at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute (IMEL) in Moscow, which in 1926–34 published documents and articles on the Polish workers' movement in the journal *Z pola walki* (From the battlefield).

<sup>11</sup> The history and Soviet studies output of the Eastern Europe Research Institute (INBEW) were examined in a monograph by Marek Kornat: *Polska szkoła sowietologiczna 1930–1939* (Kraków: Arcana, 2003). Henryka Ilgiewicz's book, in addition to the history of the INBEW, also discusses the organizational and personnel situation of the School of Political Sciences (SNP). See: Henryka Ilgiewicz, *Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy Europy Wschodniej oraz Szkoła Nauk Politycznych w Wilnie (1930–1939)* (Warszawa: Scholar, 2019). Paweł Libera's article, meanwhile, focuses on the political aspect of the IBEW and SNP's operation as well as the influence the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Second Department of Polish General Staff exerted on the institutions. See: Paweł Libera, 'Polityczne aspekty funkcjonowania Instytutu Naukowo-Badawczego Europy Wschodniej i Szkoły Nauk Politycznych w Wilnie (1930–1939)', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 53:4 (2021), 67–84. See also: *Polsko-radzieckie stosunki kulturalne 1918–1939. Dokumenty i materiały*, ed. by Wiesław Balcerak (Warszawa: 'Książka i Wiedza', 1977), pp. 699–712. On the beginnings of Sovietology: *Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy Europy Wschodniej w Wilnie (1930–1939). Idee – ludzie – dziedzictwo*, ed. by Jan Malicki and Andrzej Pukszto (Warszawa: WUW, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Among the works discussing Polish social communist studies institutions which examined the ideological and political foundations, and the methods and tools of spreading propaganda by various bodies which were in fact Soviet intelligence agencies (such as International Red Aid (MOPR), we can cite Karol Sacewicz's monograph, and in particular the chapter on the Institute of Scientific Research on Communism (INBK). Karol Sacewicz, *Komunizm i antykomunizm w II Rzeczypospolitej: państwo–społeczeństwo – partie* (Olsztyn: Instytut Historii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warmińskiego-Mazurskiego, 2016), pp. 28–41. On the INBK see also: Jacek Puchalski, 'Instytut Naukowego Badania Komunizmu w Warszawie (1930–1939). Program, organizacja, zbiory prace księgoznawcze', in *Bibliologia polityczna. Praca zbiorowa*, ed. by Dariusz Kuźmina (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SBP, 2011), pp. 214–243.

and Philology Department of the Ukrainian Soviet Academy of Sciences. This Kyiv-based institute also included a section focusing on Western Ukraine. No separate institute of the history of Belarus was set up in Minsk, but the Institute of History of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences (subsequently the Institute of History of the BSRS Academy of Sciences) operated from 1929, with a separate section for research on Western Belarus.<sup>13</sup>

Changes at the political centre brought fundamental transformations in the field of historical research, and the imperial paradigm of history that had been developed by nineteenth-century Russian historiography gradually came back into favour. The school of Mikhail Pokrovsky – an outstanding Bolshevik historian who introduced an entirely new approach to the entirety of Russian history from the perspective of economic materialism based on the idea of class struggle – was denounced, with the atmosphere of a witch hunt forming around the deceased scholar and his students. Among other things, Pokrovsky emphasized the imperialist nature of the policy of Moscow rulers, criticizing the well-established theory in Russian historiography regarding “gathering the lands of Rus” around the Grand Duchy of Moscow.

In addition to establishing dogmas on historical formations and the interlocking discussions about the origins of feudalism, one of the main problems was justifying the multinational character of the Soviet Union. The concept of one big, happy family of “USSR nations” required academic rationalization of the bonds between the community of nations, especially Slavic ones.

Recognizing Kievan Rus’ as the cradle of common statehood was the basis for acknowledging Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians as integral parts of the same nation. Research on the origin of the “Old Ruthenian nation” (Rus: *drevnerusskaya narodnost’*),<sup>14</sup> instigated following a series of decisions by state and party authorities, took place in the context of a multi-volume history of the USSR, chiefly at the Institute of History (IH) of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In 1939, a special research group was set up at the N. Marr Institute of the History of Material Culture (IIMK) to investigate the East Slavic ethnogenesis in conjunction with work on the first volume of the publication *History of the USSR*. Work taking place in Moscow and Leningrad on developing the concept of a common origin of East Slavs, identified and used interchangeably with the “Ruthenian

<sup>13</sup> Rajnèr Lindnèr, *Historyki i ūlada. Nacyjatvorèy pracès i histaryènjaja palityka ū Belarusi XIX–XX st.* (Sankt-Pecjarburh: Neŭski prascjah, 2005), pp. 201, 216.

<sup>14</sup> Terminological issues could form the basis of separate studies, as alongside such concepts as “*drevnerusskiy narod*”, alluding to the paradigm of the “*triyediniy narod*” developed in Tsarist Russia, work on the concept in the 1930s and ‘40s also produced additional terms such as “*drevnerusskaya narodnost’*” and “*obshherusskaya narodnost’*”.



nation”, provided a solid foundation for the notion of one nation in the political sense.<sup>15</sup>

By 1939, an academic framework that conceptualized the common origin of the three brotherly nations – Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians – all traced back to Kievan Rus’ had not only been put in place but had also been consolidated in Soviet historical research and education with the publication of a series of textbooks. As the Ukrainian scholar Natalia Yusova notes, 1939 was known in academic circles at the time as “the year of history textbooks”<sup>16</sup> as it was then that textbooks and teaching materials for higher education institutions were published. Particularly significant was the publication of the first volume of *History of the USSR*, where the origin and territorial expansion of the Russian Empire was integrated into the paradigm of the history of nations of the Soviet Union, connected by strong ties and joined by shared historical fortunes.<sup>17</sup> The Tsarist policy of “gathering lands” was also rehabilitated, along with ideas of “voluntary annexation” and “unification of lands separated by force” with Russia.

To develop new perspectives corresponding to the main premises of the Stalinist variant of Marxist-Leninist theory and tying in with selected elements of imperial Russian historiography, it was essential to find scholars with a high level of knowledge and authority who were capable of developing a historical narrative to legitimize the policy turn. The older generation of scholars born in the mid-nineteenth century and specialists in the history of the former Rus’ (Sergei Platonov) and historical Lithuania (Matvei Lyubavsky) were sentenced under trumped-up charges as part of the so-called Academic Trial, resulting in them being stripped of their titles and degrees and exiled to distant corners of the USSR. Their fate was shared by their younger colleagues Sergey Bakhrushin and Vladimir Picheta, who had obtained their education and academic degrees in the late period of the Russian Empire. Platonov and Lyubavsky died in exile, while Bakhrushin and Picheta were permitted to resume academic work after a few years of exile. Others, such as Boris Grekov, the historian of Kievan Rus’, despite being included as a plotter in the investigation into the Academic Trial, were ultimately freed after questioning and a month’s detention.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> An important role in forming the basis of this concept was played by the leading Russian historians Boris Grekov, Nikolai Derzhavin and Vladimir Mavrodin, as well as the Ukrainians Kost Guslistyj and Fedir Yastrebov.

<sup>16</sup> Natalija Jusova, *Henezys koncepciji davn’orus’koji narodnosti v istoričnij nauči SRSR (1930-ti – perša polovyna 1940-ch rr.)* (Vinnycja: TOV Konsol’, 2005), p. 163.

<sup>17</sup> *Istorija SSSR. S drevnejšich vremen do konca XVIII v.: učebnik dlja istoričeskich fakul’tetov gosudarstvennyh universitetov i pedagogičeskich institutov*, ed. by Vladimir Lebedev, Boris Grekov, and Sergej Bachrušin, 2 vols (Moskva: Socëkgiz, 1939), I.

<sup>18</sup> According to Russian researchers, the question of the scholar’s unexpected release from detention is yet to be satisfactorily explained and leaves many questions unanswered. See: Jurij Krivošeev, ‘Boris Dmitrievič Grekov i ‘Akademičeskoe delo’’, *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta. Istorija*, 4 (2016), 237–58.

## "STICK AND CARROT" POLICY

Using a "stick and carrot" policy, by Stalin's grace a few historians hailing from the pre-revolutionary school were reinstated from exile to academic work with the task of building the academic foundations of Soviet neoimperialism and legitimizing its expansion.<sup>19</sup> The life of the aforementioned historian Vladimir Picheta seems to be an excellent example of harnessing a scholar with a pre-revolutionary background and accepting the Marxist conception of history into the cogs of great politics. Born in Poltava in 1878, Picheta came from a mixed Serbian-Ukrainian family. He received his historical education at the Faculty of History and Philology of Moscow University, where he later taught as a private lecturer (Rus: *privat dotcent*). Picheta's academic interests focused on the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Having steered clear of politics in the tempestuous period of sociopolitical transformation in Russia, he decided to remain in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution and collaborate with the new authorities. This decision had a crucial impact on the rapid development of his professional and academic career.<sup>20</sup>

In 1921, Picheta was appointed rector of the newly opened Belarusian State University in Minsk in Soviet Belarus; he was strongly committed to the popularization of the idea of Belarusianness based on academic foundations. For the next eight years, both in the USSR and abroad, he actively promoted research on the history of the Lithuanian and Ruthenian lands, participating in academic events and congresses in Germany, Norway, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries. He was regarded as the doyen of Belarusian Soviet historical research. At the time he was also keenly interested in the history of Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland and other Slavic states. As a representative of the new progressive Soviet "workers of science", he took part in anti-Polish propagandist campaigns that defended the rights of the Belarusian "working masses" in the Second Polish Republic.<sup>21</sup>

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Picheta's promising career suddenly collapsed. Amid the strict political course and battle against "nationalist deviations", the scholar was dismissed from all his positions, stripped of

<sup>19</sup> Apart from Picheta and Bakhrushin, one of the best-known examples of forced involvement in academic and service activity is the Russian historian Jevgeny Tarle. Arrested as part of the Academic Trial and sentenced to exile in Kazakhstan, after a few years he was pardoned and reinstated. In addition to his fundamental work on Napoleon, on Stalin's commission he planned to write a three-volume book entitled *The Russian nation's fight with aggressors in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Before the Soviet dictator's death, he succeeded in completing the first volume, on the Great Northern War and Swedish invasion.

<sup>20</sup> Jan Szumski, 'Władimir Piczeta i Żanna Kormanowa: przyczynek do polsko-radzieckich relacji naukowych', *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty*, 47 (2010), 129–58 (here: 131).

<sup>21</sup> See *Apel komitetu pisarzy i robotników nauki Białorusi radzieckiej dla obrony Białoruskiej Robotniczo-Włościańskiej Hromady do mas pracujących i inteligencji ZSRR i całego świata protestujący przeciwko represjom władz polskich wobec ludności białoruskiej*, 24 February 1929. Cited in *Dokumenty i materiały do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich. Maj 1926 – grudzień 1932*, ed. by Natalia Gašiorowska-Grabowska and Iwan Chrienow, 12 vols (Warszawa: 'Książka i Wiedza', 1963–1986), V (1966), pp. 406–08.

his titles and degrees, arrested by the OGPU as part of a sham investigation, and sentenced to five years' exile in Vyatka. In 1934, after being moved to Voronezh, he was allowed to teach at the local Pedagogical Institute. A year later he received permission to work in Moscow, where for the next few years he lectured at various Moscow higher education institutions, and in 1937 he became an employee of the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. According to some data, Picheta's acquaintance with the Czechoslovak politician Edvard Beneš played a not insignificant role in his pardoning.<sup>22</sup> He gradually had his former titles and degrees restored, and in 1939 he was elected as a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

The fateful year 1939 brought the next stage in this historian's career, signalling a return to favour. In spring of that year, *Izvestiya*, the press organ of the Central Executive Committee and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, published an article by Picheta in which he argued for the need to research, on the basis of Marxist methodology, the history of Slavic nations in combination with the history of Russia. Knowing how Soviet academia operated at the time and the practice of publishing articles in the central press organs, we can assume with a high degree of certainty that the decision to include this article was made by the so-called "decision-making elements", while this scholar was to use his authority to back this initiative.

A Slavic studies section was established at the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. As the unit's director, while presenting its plans for the next two years to the Academic Council, Picheta mentioned preparing a synthesis of Polish history.<sup>23</sup> It may be a simple coincidence, but it was also at this time that an intensive exchange of correspondence was taking place between Berlin and Moscow regarding the possibility of expanding economic contacts and diplomatic rapprochement.<sup>24</sup>

After the German-Soviet alliance following the pact of 23 August 1939, new orders from Moscow in September that year dictated that the definition of the war in progress should be changed to "imperialist and unjust

<sup>22</sup> The American researcher Elizabeth K. Valkenier argues that Picheta's return to Moscow was made possible by Beneš's patronage. Apparently the then Czechoslovak foreign minister asked about the scholar during an official visit to the USSR. See Elizabeth K. Valkenier, 'Stalinizing Polish Historiography: What Soviet Archives Disclose', *East European Politics and Societies*, 7 (1992), 109–34 (here: 111).

<sup>23</sup> Jan Szumski, *Polityka a historia: ZSRR wobec nauki historycznej w Polsce w latach 1945–1964* (Warszawa: Aspra-Jr, 2016), p. 105.

<sup>24</sup> Bogdan Musiał, "Trudne początki zbliżenia niemiecko-sowieckiego", in *Geneza paktu*, pp. 72–74 (here: 73). Of course, the strategic plan for war in Poland had been prepared and authorized in Berlin as early as April that year, and published Soviet intelligence documents show that Moscow was well informed about the German preparations and the Third Reich's efforts to ensure Soviet neutrality. See: 'Podgotovka germanskogo napadenija na Pol'su: iz Sbornika perevodov agenturnych donesenij po voenno-političeskim voprosam 5 Upravljenija RKKa, 4 ijunja 1939', in *Voennaja razvedka informiruet. Dokumenty Razvedupravljenija Krasnoj Armii. Janvar' 1939–ijun' 1941 g.*, ed. by Viktor Gavrilov (Moskva: Meždunarodnyj fond "Demokratija", 2008), pp. 104–05.

from both sides".<sup>25</sup> This definition was binding more or less throughout the entire Soviet period, where in encyclopaedias one could read that "the Second World War, the consequence of the mutual battle of capitalist states, began as imperialist from both sides – Germany and Japan as well as England and France".<sup>26</sup>

At this point it is worth making a slight digression on the use of the concept of "war" for propaganda purposes in the context of Polish-Soviet relations. The Kremlin's lingering belief in the permanent threat from Poland – reinforced in a period of major events in domestic politics and worsening conflicts in international relations – was often associated with Ukrainian and Belarusian issues. In summer 1926, OGPU chairman Felix Dzerzhinsky wrote in a letter to his successor Genrikh Yagoda that: "Pilsudski's coup, it seems obvious to me at the moment, is a manifestation of nationalist forces in Poland directed against 'Russia', that is us, entirely supported by England [...] The object of the Polish conquest will be Belarus and Ukraine, and respectively Minsk and Kiev as their capitals". A few years later, at the time of the so-called "war alarm" in March 1930,<sup>27</sup> there were quite serious concerns in the Kremlin that the anti-kolkhoz speeches of peasants in the border regions of Belarus and Ukraine could lead to military intervention from Warsaw.

The threat of the supposed aggression of "Polish fascism" was used primarily for intra-party sparring and to create a "siege mentality" to mobilize society. The propaganda and ideological construction of the "proletariat and internationalist war", with its ultimate objective being global revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat, was replaced in the mid-1920s by the slogan of "self-determination of nations until detachment", targeted at national minorities. It is interesting that, in Poland's case, this slogan was only invoked for Upper Silesia and the Lithuanian minority, before being expanded to include Pomerania. The right to "self-determination" was therefore not due to Belarusians and Ukrainians, whose aspirations were defined from above by the Third Congress of the Communist Workers' Party of Poland (KPRP) in January–February 1925. It was at this time

<sup>25</sup> Although anti-Polish slogans had always been an integral part of Bolshevik propaganda, changes in the propaganda line were often so surprising that they caused consternation with the abrupt turn in the situation both within the USSR and in the foreign communist movement. Often cited with regard to Poland is a statement by Stalin from 7 September 1939, recorded in the diary of Georgi Dimitrov, general secretary of the Executive Committee of Comintern: "Historically the Polish state was a nation state. That is why the revolutionaries defended it from partitions and enslavement. Today it is a fascist state which oppresses Ukrainians and Belarusians. Therefore, the destruction of Poland means that there will be one bourgeois fascist state less". This was a real shock for many communist parties, which called in the first days of the war to fight "German fascism" and defend Poland's independence. For more, see: Bernhard H. Bayerlein, *"Der Verräter, Stalin, bist Du!": Vom Ende der linken Solidarität. Komintern und kommunistische Parteien im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939–1941* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> *Istorija vtoroj mirovoj vojny 1939–1945. Zaroždenie vojny. Bor'ba progressivnyh sil za sochranenie mira*, ed. by Grigorij Deborin et al., 12 vols (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1973–1982), 1 (1973), p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> See: Oleg Ken, "Alarm wojenny" wiosną 1930 roku a stosunki sowiecko-polskie, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 35 (2000), 41–74.

that the slogan of annexing “Western Ukraine” and “Western Belarus” to the USSR was first put forward.<sup>28</sup>

This slogan was connected to the anti-Polish propaganda which, depending on the current circumstances and the international situation, the Soviet propaganda machine pursued with varying intensity throughout the interwar period. The culmination of the anti-Polish propaganda campaign came in September 1939 with the emergence of an array of new rhetorical devices and ideological and propaganda phrases. First and foremost, we should mention the categories of the “liberation march” conducted as part of a “just offensive war”.

Anti-Polish propaganda, apart from the well-known slogans about the threat of the supposed aggression of “Polish fascism”, the criminal nature of the Polish state and the moral decline of Polish elites, increasingly emphasized themes of the national and class oppression of Ukrainians and Belarusian, which around mid-September turned into anti-Polish hysteria. Poland was portrayed as the “oppressor” of enslaved nations and a “war-monger”. Ewa Thompson, based on analysis of the leading Soviet periodicals (*Pravda*, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, and *Literaturnaia gazeta*),<sup>29</sup> confirms that the anti-Polish campaign was accompanied and supported by two smaller pro-Belarusian and pro-Ukrainian ones. These were shorter and were more meant to heighten anti-Polish moods in the newly annexed lands than to be an expression of actual support for Ukrainians and Belarusians.<sup>30</sup>

### TROUBADOURS OF THE EMPIRE<sup>31</sup>

The aggression against Poland was presented in propaganda materials as a “just war” with the objective of liberating the honourable blood brethren – the Ukrainians and Belarusians – from the yoke of oppression. It was here that Vladimir Picheta came along with academic succour for the agitators and propagandists. At party headquarters, he was regarded as a specialist in Ukraine and Belarusian history, especially the western territories.<sup>32</sup> Literally a few days after the Soviet aggression against Poland of 17 September 1939, the aforementioned *Izvestiya* published an article by Picheta with

<sup>28</sup> Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>29</sup> Ewa M. Thompson, ‘Nationalist Propaganda in the Soviet Russian Press, 1939–1941’, *Slavic Review*, 50 (1991), 385–99.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

<sup>31</sup> This term is a reference to the Polish title of Ewa M. Thompson’s book published in English as *Imperial Knowledge. Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000). Ewa M. Thompson, *Trubadurzy imperium. Literatura rosyjska i kolonializm*, trans. by Anna Sierszulska (Kraków: Universitas, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> In addition to academic publications made before the revolution and in the 1920s (cf. Vladimir Pičeta, ‘Istoričeskie sud’by Zapadnoj Belorussii’, in *Zapadnaja Belorussija. Sbornik statej: kniga 1* [Minsk: BGI, 1927], pp. 44–90), after arriving in Moscow Picheta also prepared a special subject programme on the history of Belarus and Ukraine for higher education institutions. See Vladimir Pičeta, *Programma special’nogo kursa po istorii Belorussii i Ukrainy* (Moskva: MGU, 1938).

the telling title "Ukrainian brothers and Belarusian brothers". In addition to articles in the central press and that of the Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet republics and academic journals,<sup>33</sup> this historian incessantly spoke at rallies and meetings and on the radio. In summer 1940, 10,000 copies of a pamphlet were published in which he presented his main arguments, which were borrowed from his previous propaganda works.<sup>34</sup>

He begins with an introduction: "Western Ukraine [...] and Western Belarus [...] are eternal lands of Rus', once part of the 'Rurikid empire'. In an ethnic sense, this population used to form one whole with other East Slavic tribes". Historical propaganda articles on Western Ukrainian themes published at this time opened similarly.<sup>35</sup> This kind of narrative was also reproduced in texts published in autumn 1939 by other authorities of Soviet historical research, including Boris Grekov, who indicated the need for in-depth research on the history of the Cherven Cities, treated as a synonym for the concept of the Kingdom of Halych-Volhynia or the Kingdom of Ruthenia.<sup>36</sup>

In the model outlined by Picheta, the history of the Western Ukrainian and Western Belarusian lands began with the Rurikid dynasty, detailing the history of the Kingdom of Halych-Volhynia, then considering them in the context of the history of the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and from the sixteenth century onwards exclusively in the paradigm of the class and national struggle with lordly Poland. Even the partitions of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not change this – it was still the "Polish" lords who were the main oppressors. The final chord of these centuries-long struggles was the liberation of these "blood brothers" from centuries of oppression. And if the presentation of events from the previous periods could be roughly classified as the historian's personal version, Picheta's narrative regarding the outbreak of war on 1 September 1939 repeated the main arguments of the Kremlin's propaganda message as follows: "amid conditions of the collapse of

<sup>33</sup> Vladimir Pičeta, 'Brat'ja-ukraincy i brat'ja-belorusy: (iz istorii narodov Ukrainy i Belorussii)', *Izvestija*, 21 September 1939; id., 'Zapadnaja Belorussija: istoričeskaja spravka', *Moskovskij bol'shevik*, 30 September 1939; id., 'Istoričeskij put' Zapadnoj Belorussii i Zapadnoj Ukrainy', *Molodoj bol'shevik*, 18 (1939), 45–50; id., 'Istoričeskij put' narodov Zapadnoj Ukrainy i Zapadnoj Belorussii', *Oktjabr*, 10/11 (1939), 3–11; id., 'Osnovnye momenty v istoričeskich sud'bach narodov Zapadnoj Ukrainy i Zapadnoj Belorussii', *Istoričeskij put' Zapadnoj Ukrainy i Zapadnoj Belorussii*, Mikrofonnyye materialy Vsesojuznogo radiokomiteta № 114 (Moskva, 1939).

<sup>34</sup> Vladimir Pičeta, *Osnovnye momenty istoričeskogo razvitija Zapadnoj Ukrainy i Zapadnoj Belorussii* (Moskva: Sotcegiz, 1940), p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Traditionally, the introduction would begin with a statement such as "Western Ukraine – the Halych Land and Volhynia – were eternal Ruthenian lands inhabited for time immemorial by Ukrainians and Russians. From the ninth to the eleventh centuries, they were part of the Kievan State. As we know, it was at this time that the Great Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Belarusian nations were formed and the might of the great Russian nation was forged". Cited in Dmitrij Min, *Zapadnaja Ukraina* (Moskva: Gospolitizdat, 1939), p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Boris Grekov, 'Drevnejšie sud'by Zapadnoj Ukrainy', *Novyj mir*, 10–11 (1939), 248–56 (here: 250). See also Marcin Wołoszyn, 'Zaraz po wojnie: z historii badań nad pograniczem polsko-ruskim w latach 1945–1956 (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem grodów czerwieńskich)', *Przegląd Archeologiczny*, 65 (2017), 199–224 (here: 202).

the economy, hunger and oppression of the masses as well as widespread dissatisfaction, the circles ruling Poland began war with Germany [sic].<sup>37</sup>

Picheta's expert knowledge was also used when it came to marking out the administrative border between the Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet republics, taking into account the territories newly annexed by the Soviet Union. In mid-September 1939, Picheta prepared the extensive study "Article on the [history of] the southern border of the BSSR", with a copy being sent to AUCP(b) CC secretary Georgy Malenkov. In a note, the historian rejected the ethnographic criterion for defining borders used in the works of "bourgeois linguists [Alexei] Shakhmatov, [Yefim] Karsky, [Timofey] Florinskiy, [Aleksei] Sobolevski, [Mykhaily] Hrushevsky", and he described Hrushevsky's views as "nationalist-chauvinistic".<sup>38</sup> In Picheta's view, the borders between the Belarusian and Ukrainian Soviet republics should run in line with the "old" administrative boundaries. These "old" boundaries approximately coincided with the line dividing the Polish Crown from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, after the partitions, the Grodno and Minsk governorates on one side and the Volhynian and Kiev ones on the other.

As well as Picheta, who represented the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a study was also prepared by a team of experts from the Belarusian Soviet republic's own academy, comprising Iosif Lochmel (historian), Moisei Grinblat (ethnographer), and Timofei Lomtev (linguist). The contents of this report and, most importantly, the conclusion were identical to the findings from Picheta's expert statement. The report compiled by the Belarusian experts noted that the border between the Belarusian and Ukrainian republics "should run along the southern boundary of the former Grodno and Minsk governorates, or – which essentially amounts to the same thing – with the southern boundary of the Polesia voivodeship of the former Polish state, excluding the Koszyrski district, which was previously part of the Volhynia voivodeship" (emphasis mine – J.Sz.).<sup>39</sup>

According to the memoirs of the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Belarusian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CP(b)B), Panteleimon Ponomarenko, during his visit with Nikita Khrushchev (then first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party) and Stalin on 22 November 1939, discussed the question of the administrative borders between the two

<sup>37</sup> Pičeta, *Osnovnye momenty*, p. 126.

<sup>38</sup> '№ 54, Dokladnaja zapiska V.I. Pičety v rukovodjaščie partijnye organy po voprosu razgraničeniya territorij Belorussii i Ukrainy', in *Gosudarstvennye granicy Belarusi: sbornik dokumentov i materialov (nojabr' 1926 – dekabr' 2010)*, ed. by Vladimir Snapkovskij, Aleksandr Tichomirov, and Aleksandr Šarapo, 2 vols (Minsk: BGU, 2012–2013), II (2013), pp. 83–90.

<sup>39</sup> Tlumachalaya zapiska 'Da pytan'nja ab ustalavannja mjažy pamiž BSSR i USSR na terytoryi Zachodnej Belarusi i Zachodnej Ukrainy' padryhtavanaia supracounnikami AN BSSR, ne paz'nei nizh 20 XI 1939, in *Vyzvalenne i zanjavolenne. Pol'ska-belaruskae pamežža 1939–1941 hb. u dakumentach belaruskich archivaŭ*, ed. by Aljaksandr Smaljančuk (Minsk: Zmicer Kolas, 2021), pp. 96–100 (here: 100). The authors of the note incorrectly include the Koszyrski district in the Volhynia voivodeship, whereas in fact it belonged to the Polesia voivodeship of the Second Polish Republic.

republics. Records of entrances and exits from Stalin's office, however, show that Khrushchev and Ponomarenko visited the leader the following day, 23 November, entering together at 20.55 and leaving at 21.50.<sup>40</sup>

The initial plans entailed inclusion of Brest, Pinsk, Kobryn and most of the Białowieża Forest in the USSR. Ponomarenko claimed that Stalin deemed this division to be an "inappropriate nationality policy" during the audience, claiming that "public opinion will not understand it". As a result, the Soviet dictator drew a border on the map himself that was almost entirely consistent with Ponomarenko's proposals, based on the report by Picheta and the Belarusian Academy of Sciences experts, leaving the Koszyrski district with Kamień Koszyrski on the Ukraine side and a "small incision in the north" in a green part of the map. The reason for this was, apparently, to satisfy at least part of the Ukrainian Soviet republic's demand for wood.<sup>41</sup>

Picheta's expert work encompassed a broader range of assignments. On the request of the Soviet NKID, he was tasked with evaluating whether it was appropriate to return to the Lithuanian Republic archive materials and book collections taken to Minsk and Moscow from Vilnius in October 1939 (March 1940). As part of a commission appointed by the Central Archival Administration of the Soviet NKVD, he also verified around 20 tonnes of archives taken in December 1939 to the Central State Special Archive (June–July 1940) and issued opinions on the worthlessness of the division of exhibits from the Historical Museum in Grodno (October 1940).<sup>42</sup>

Despite this strong engagement in current political affairs as an expert, Picheta's position was still uncertain. In December 1939, the Belarusian NKVD people's commissar Lavrentiy Tsanova submitted several reports on the historian to the first secretary of the republic's party central committee, Ponomarenko. He informed about the scholar's critical evaluations of the Red Army and sympathies for Poland. In his diary in February 1945, Picheta confirms that in autumn 1939 he was accused of Polonophilia, which in those times was practically synonymous with anti-Sovietism.<sup>43</sup>

In the agent's materials, Picheta's comments, as recorded by NKVD informers, are as follows: "I do not agree with the policy of the Soviet authorities and will not agree, I can't stand them. Everywhere there are boors and nobody else. The USSR is a fascist torture chamber, not a socialist

<sup>40</sup> *Na prieme u Stalina: tetradi, žurnaly zapisej lic, prinjatych I. V. Staliny 1924–1953 gg.*, ed. by Anatolij Černobaev (Moskva: Novyj chronograf, 2008), p. 281.

<sup>41</sup> Georgij Kumanev, *Rjadom so Staliny 1924–1953 gg. Otkrovennye svidel'stva: vstreči, besedy, interv'ju, dokumenty* (Moskva: Bylina, 1999), pp. 298–300. Cited in '№ 55. Iz vospominanij byvszego pervogo Sekretarja CK Kompartii Belorussii P. K. Ponomarenko ob ustanovlenii gosudarstvennyh granic meždu BSSR i USSR', in *Gosudarstvennye granicy Belarusi*, pp. 91–94.

<sup>42</sup> Michail Šumejko, 'Naučno-pedagogičeskaja i obščestvennaja dejatel'nost' V.I. Pičety nakanune i v gody Velikoj Otečestvennoj vojny', in *Pičetovskie čtenija – 2020: vojny v istorii čelovečestva. K 75-letiju Pobedy nad fašizmom: materialy meždunarodnoj naučno-prakičeskoj konferencii*, Minsk, 21 okt. 2020 g., ed. by Aleksandr Kochanovskij, Michail Šumejko, and Oleg Janovskij (Minsk: BGU, 2020), pp. 33–45 (here: 37, 39).

<sup>43</sup> Szumski, 'Władimir Piczeta i Żanna Kormanowa', p. 154.



country. Everything they write in newspapers is idolatry and idiocy". Asked why he gave the authorities his support, Picheta answered: "I only do it to stay alive".<sup>44</sup>

Picheta's final entries in his diary soon before his death confirm just what a distorted world the "troubadours of the empire" of the time inhabited: "I worked for the good of the nation in the past, and again I'm working for a future 'socialist paradise' that will never come. This is demagogic delusion of the masses. We are great monks (Rus: molchalniki) who vow silence. We are allowed to sing 'Hallelujah' and 'Hosanna', but God forbid we tell the truth and say what is said in private, when you are certain that no one will inform on you".<sup>45</sup>

In late September and early October 1939, academic sessions were held in Moscow, Kyiv and Minsk at the headquarters of the Soviet, Ukrainian and Belarusian academies of sciences, with the papers being published soon afterwards in academic journals and joint publications.<sup>46</sup> The tone of the campaign was set by the Moscow scholars. Apart from Picheta and Grekov, a Soviet lawyer and full member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Ilya Trainin, contributed a major article, arguing after lengthy deliberations on the legality of the incorporation of the eastern lands of the Second Polish Republic that "the nations liberated by the Red Army joined the common family of Soviet nations, and there is no power today that could break this great voluntary alliance".<sup>47</sup>

The main thrust of the texts produced by Soviet historians from the Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet republics was undisguised distaste towards the Polish state in its various incarnations, from ancient times to the Poland reborn in 1918. They repeated almost word for word the propaganda message about the "bankruptcy of the Polish state", the "monstrous bastard of the Versailles Treaty that existed at the cost of oppressed non-Polish nationalities", and about the war into which "imprudent rulers drove" the Polish people, and so on. They highlighted the artificial and even criminal nature of the former Republic, stressing the class and national oppression of the enslaved nations – the Ukrainians and Belarusians – chaos and anarchy, and lack of capacity for independent existence. The main idea of these works was clearly anti-Polish and anti-Western, with the historians' role reduced to legitimizing the official version of events.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Šumejko, 'Naučno-pedagogičeskaja', p. 35.

<sup>45</sup> Szumski, 'Władimir Piczeta i Żanna Kormanowa', p. 158.

<sup>46</sup> See: Grekov, 'Drevnejšie sud'by Zapadnoj Ukrainy', pp. 248–56; *Zachodnjaja Belarus' pad panskim hmetam i jae vyzvalenne*, ed. by Nikolaj Nikol'ski, and Iosif Ločmel' (Minsk, 1940); *Zachidna Ukrajina*, ed. by Serhij Bjelousov and Oleksandr Ohloblyn (Kyjiv: AN USSR, 1940).

<sup>47</sup> Il'ja Trajnin, 'Nacional'noe i social'noe osvoboždenie Zapadnoj Ukrainy i Zapadnoj Belorussii', *Vestnik Akademii nauk SSSR*, 8–9 (1939), 1–24 (here: 24).

<sup>48</sup> Nikolaj Mezga, 'Vossoedinenie Zapadnoj Belarusi s BSSR i Zapadnoj Ukrainy s USSR v otrazhenii sovetskogo istoriografii 1939–1941 gg.', *Časopis Belaruskaha dzjaržainaha ūniversyteta. Historyja*, 3 (2017), 55–60 (here: 59).

## CONCLUSION

The practice of the operation of the apparatus of power in Soviet Russia and the USSR showed that without the help of "bourgeois specialists" or "poputchiks" the forced modernization of the economy and society could not be achieved. The same was true in research of history. Despite the emergence in the historical field of graduates of the Institute of Red Professors and the Sverdlov Communist University and other institutions with party ties that toed the party line, the new generation of regime historians (Rus. *vydvizhenets*) were unable to ensure lasting academic foundations in accounting for the turn in perception of Russia's imperial heritage and its territorial expansion policy.

The experiences of exile and the awareness of constant threat had a major impact on the attitudes of the products of the old Russian historian school who survived the flames of revolution. The adoption of Marxist methodological tools formally completed the "ideological rebuilding" of the pre-revolutionary scholars, some of whom, incidentally, arrived at Marxism from the positivist and neo-positivist trends.

The paradigm of history that was built alluded in the civilizational dimension to the tradition of "Slavic community" with its roots in the period of Kievan Rus', emphasized the processes of Polonization and conversion to Catholicism, and underlined Ukrainians' and Belarusians' constant aspiration to join with the Great Russian. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania then was a state founded by Lithuanian liege lords as a result of conquest, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a state of Polish nobility and magnates where exploitation and oppression of enslaved nations were rife. The Ukrainians' and Belarusians' centuries of shared history as part of the former Commonwealth were seen as essentially wasted time, viewed solely in terms of national oppression and class struggle with the Polish magnatery. In this paradigm, the partitions of the Commonwealth were entirely justified, and inclusion of Ukrainian and Belarusian lands in the empire of the House of Romanov was a "historically progressive act".<sup>49</sup> Similar arguments were used to justify the Soviet aggression against Poland in September 1939.

<sup>49</sup> In the case of the history of the Ukrainian lands, the Pereiaslav Agreement of 1654 and Khmelnytsky's decision to join Tsarist Russia were treated as symbols of unity and a precursor of the ultimate unification of all Eastern Slavic lands under Moscow's control. The task of Ukrainian historians and ideologues was to present the alliance with Moscow as the culmination of Ukrainian history and reconcile the historical mythology of his nation with the imperial narrative of the centre. Serhij Jekel'čyk, *Imperija pam'jati. Rosijs'ko-ukrajins'ki stosunky v radjans'kij istoričnij ujavi* (Kyjiv: Krytyka, 2008), pp. 69–70.

As one of the scholars dealing with the subject of East Slavic nations, Vladimir Picheta played a prominent role in expanding and elaborating the concept of the single (Rus. *yedynyi*) Ruthenian nation as a common progenitor for Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. The political importance of this construction increased markedly in September 1939, when the Soviet aggression against Poland was treated no longer in terms of export of revolution and bringing help to the global proletariat but as an act of historical justice – combining the missing parts (Western Ukrainian and Western Belarusian) with Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians into one whole.

In the new paradigm of history, the centuries-long common struggle of brethren nations with invaders ended with the unification of all lands within a uniform state organism. Despite continual curbs in the form of being part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or Commonwealth, the entire course of history led to the three nations ultimately coming together into one whole. Kievan Rus', as the genesis of the Soviet Union, was reborn in the strengthened and expanded format of the "nations of the USSR" with a leading role for the Russian nation. History thus came full circle.

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## “IMPUDENT PROVOCATION BY FINNISH WARMONGERS” – THE SHELLING OF MAINILA (1939) IN THE CONTEXT OF SOVIET/RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA AND INFORMATION WARFARE

### ABSTRACT

The shelling of Mainila in November 1939 was used as a pretext by the Soviet Union to start a war against Finland and is often presented in military history as a classic case of a false-flag operation. This article examines this incident in the context of Soviet propaganda, post-Soviet history politics, and contemporary Russian war propaganda and rhetoric. It argues that the same strategies – blaming others for provocation, “accusation in a mirror”, and systematically emphasizing one’s innocence – applied by Soviet newspapers to their reportage of this “provocation” are applied by Russian propagandists in the contemporary domestic and international media environment.

### KEYWORDS:

Soviet Union, Russia, war, propaganda, political uses of history

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## INTRODUCTION

On 26 November 1939, according to the established view, the Red Army shelled the small border village of Mainila. This false flag operation was the starting point for a war between the Soviet Union and Finland and was also the endpoint in the longer process of the former putting pressure on the latter, which was trying to retain its neutrality and integrity in the face of growing international tensions. Before the incident, basing its claims on its need to protect Leningrad, the Soviet Union had tried to persuade Finland to move the border westward, away from Leningrad, as well as to cede certain islands to the Soviet Union and lease Hanko peninsula to be used as a Soviet naval base. Some land in Eastern Karelia was offered in exchange. These requests were part of demands that were presented to Finland from 1938 onwards and were intended to ensure that this country would not become a bridgehead for hostile acts by Germany, Britain or France towards the Soviet Union. Finland refused the deal. Soon, the Soviet Union declared that a Finnish military provocation had taken place in Mainila, claiming the lives of four men and wounding nine.<sup>1</sup>

Based on this claim, on the same day the foreign minister of the Soviet Union, Viachestlav Molotov, sent a note to Finland's envoy in Moscow, Aarno Yrjö-Koskinen. In this note it was announced that basing troops near Leningrad was a hostile act which had now led to an attack and that the Finnish troops should immediately be withdrawn farther from the border. On 27 November, Yrjö-Koskinen conveyed the Finnish government's reply, which noted that explosions had indeed been reported by the Finnish border guard but that all the Finnish artillery was placed too far from the border for any shots to reach the Soviet Union. Also, it was suggested that the case should be investigated in cooperation between Soviet and Finnish border officials and that all troops, both Finnish and Soviet, should be transferred to an equal distance from the border.<sup>2</sup>

Molotov answered that the reply reflected "the deep hostility of Finnish government towards the Soviet Union" and would inevitably lead to extreme escalation of the tensions between these two countries. Further, the note announced that

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939. Sentjabr'-dekabr'*, 2 vols (Moskva: Meždunarodnye otnošenija, 1992), II; Carl van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939-40* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 14-24; Robert Edwards, *The Winter War: Russia's Invasion of Finland, 1939-1940* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008), pp. 76-106; Ohto Manninen, *The Soviet Plans for the North Western Theatre of Operations in 1939-1944* (Helsinki: National Defence College, 2004), pp. 7-11.

<sup>2</sup> Van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939-40*, p. 24. See also Väinö Tanner, *Olin ulkoministerinä talvisodan aikana* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1979), pp. 122-24.



The fact that the Finnish government denies that Finnish troops fired on Soviet troops with artillery fire, causing victims, can only be explained as a means for misleading public opinion and mocking the victims of the attack. Only a lack of a sense of responsibility and a contemptuous attitude towards public opinion can have dictated this attempt to explain this hideous incident as a Soviet artillery drill on the border that was visible to the Finnish troops.<sup>3</sup>

Also, the note concluded that the goal of the Finnish government was to keep Leningrad under threat and that the suggestion of a mutual retreat of troops from the border was unrealistic due to the close proximity of this city.<sup>4</sup> On 29 November, the Soviet Union announced its withdrawal from the nonaggression pact that had been signed in 1932; the next day, Russia invaded Finland and bombed Helsinki without an explicit declaration of war (ultimately, this act led to the expelling of the Soviet Union from the League of Nations). On 1 December, the Soviet Union also announced the foundation of “the People’s Revolutionary Government of Finland” as the official socialist government it was having diplomatic relations with. This puppet government was formed of Soviet citizens and leftist “red” Finns who had escaped to the Soviet Union after the Finnish Civil War in 1918.<sup>5</sup>

The war between the Soviet Union and Finland is known as the Winter War and it ended with the Moscow Peace Treaty in March 1940, after a Soviet breakthrough at the Karelian Isthmus. Finland suffered heavy territorial losses that exceeded the Soviet Union’s pre-war demands. Nevertheless, Finland’s resistance had surprised the Red Army, which also suffered heavy losses.<sup>6</sup> In 1941–44, the hostilities between the Soviet Union and Finland were renewed, with Finland being supported by Germany.

The official Soviet view that Finland had been the aggressor that caused the Winter War did not waver. However, in May 1994, President Boris Yeltsin held a press conference in Moscow together with the President of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, during which he admitted that

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Tanner, *Olin ulkoministerinä talvisodan aikana*, p. 124. See also ‘Telegramma vremennogo poverennogo v delach SSSR v Finljandii M.G. Judanova v Narodnyj komissariat inostrannyh del SSSR, 27 nojabrja 1939’, in *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939*, II, pp. 342–43.

<sup>4</sup> Tanner, *Olin ulkoministerinä talvisodan aikana*, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Soobščenie ob ustanovlenii diplomatičeskich otnošenij meždu SSSR i Finljandskoj Demokratičeskoj Respublikoj’, 2 dekabrja 1939’, in *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939*, II, p. 355; Edwards, *The Winter War*, pp. 107, 114–16.

<sup>6</sup> Edwards, *The Winter War*, pp. 272–82; Pasi Tuunainen, *Finnish Military Effectiveness in the Winter War 1939–1940* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *passim*.

the Winter War was a result of Stalin's aggressive politics.<sup>7</sup> The opening of Russian archives during the 1990s had also revealed that detailed plans to attack Finland had been ready by the end of November 1939, and Andrei Zhdanov, according to his notes, had been active in preparing this (also, in 1985, the Russian historian Igor Bunich had interviewed a retired general who said that his group had been testing a new secret projectile in Mainila and had received precise orders regarding where and how to do this; however, as the general had died in 1986, it was not possible to get more detailed information about this after the dissolution of the Soviet Union).<sup>8</sup> Since then, there has been a kind of silent consensus on the matter.

However, quite recently, the issue of the shelling of Mainila has occasionally been brought forward once again, partly due to the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Winter War in 2019. The innocence of Finland in starting the war was questioned in several Russian articles and blogs in the latter half of the 2010s. These texts were authored by individuals, but in some cases they were connected to state authorities.

In this article, I will first examine the reportage of this incident in the contemporary Soviet media and the means used to justify it when describing the "provocation" and the "response" to it amongst the people. I will leave aside the treatment of the incident in the media outside the Soviet Union, as the focus is on how the Soviet audience was persuaded to accept mobilization using the alleged shelling as a *casus belli*.

However, it should be pointed out that the Soviet diplomats kept a watchful eye on how the escalation of the "Finnish question" was represented abroad, with the intention of influencing the issue and reporting the situation to the commissary of foreign affairs. For instance, in this correspondence, the British and American media were reprehended for their "anti-Soviet" treatment of the event before and especially after the Soviet invasion of Finland as they considered the Soviet government's desire to seize Finnish territory to be the root cause of the events.<sup>9</sup> Also, as part of this contemporary information warfare, Molotov, in his letter to the Secretary-general of the League of Nations, Joseph Avenol, on 4 December 1939,

<sup>7</sup> Despite my efforts, I did not manage to find a report of the press conference. For a secondary reference, see, for instance, Pekka Nevalainen, 'Many Karelias', *Virtual Finland*, November 2001, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20060814015731/http://newsroom.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=25907>> [accessed 29 August 2022].

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Ohto Manninen, *Stalinin kiusa – Himmlerin täi. Sota-ajan pieni Suomi maailman silmissä ja arkistojen kätköissä* (Helsinki: Edita, 2002), pp. 29–33.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, 'Telegramma polnomočnogo predstavitelja SSSR v Velikobritanii I.M. Majskogo narodnomu komissaru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu, 27 nojabrja 1939', in *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939*, II, pp. 340–42; 'Telegramma polnomočnogo predstavitelja SSSR v SŠA K.A. Umanskogo v Narodnyj komissariat inostrannyh del SSSR, 30 nojabrja 1939', *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939*, II, pp. 353–54; 'Telegramma polnomočnogo predstavitelja SSSR v SŠA K. A. Umanskogo v Narodnyj komissariat inostrannyh del SSSR, 2 dekabrja 1939', in *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939*, II, pp. 359–60. See also van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939–40*, pp. 26–27.

emphasized that “the Soviet Union is not in a state of war with Finland and does not threaten the Finnish people with war” (basing his claim on the diplomatic relations with “the People’s Revolutionary Government of Finland”); therefore, according to him, the Finnish diplomat Rudolf Holsti’s attempt to hold the Soviet Union accountable for the attack on Finland was groundless.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, I will look into more recent interpretations of this issue in Russian media in the context of attempts to control representations of history concerning the decisions and activities of the Soviet Union and the Red Army during the Second World War. Finally, I will briefly consider the case of the Mainila shelling in the context of Russian military doctrine, propaganda, and information warfare.

## PREPARING THE GROUND FOR WAR

The early Soviet regime relied on getting its message through to the common consciousness. At first, activities aimed at consolidating Soviet ideology amongst the people and mobilizing them to work for it were called agitation. However, this later developed into propaganda which was distributed openly in diverse forms. During the 1930s, Soviet propaganda took a new turn: stories of contemporary heroes on one hand and sheer patriotism on the other became the basis of the new mass culture.<sup>11</sup> This setting was a fine foundation for war propaganda, even though, in early autumn 1939, the Soviet newspapers reported something else: a military nonaggression pact with Hitler’s Germany. However, tensions were simultaneously growing between the Soviet Union and Finland, and the image of Finland as a vicious and reactionary nation was being reinforced in Soviet media.<sup>12</sup>

Apparently, as Väinö Tanner, the foreign minister of Finland in 1939–40, admits in hindsight in his memoirs, the Finnish politicians had not quite grasped the political significance of Soviet propaganda, thus underestimating and misreading the increasing and intensifying denigration of Finland and its government in Soviet media preceding the Mainila incident. Instead of understanding that the message was primarily aimed at the Soviet audience in order to justify the upcoming war, Finnish politicians considered it as a means to pressure Finland to agree with the demands of the Soviet

<sup>10</sup> ‘Telegramma narodnogo komissara inostrannykh del SSSR V.M. Molotova general’nomu sekretarju Ligi nacij Ž. Avenolju, 4 dekabrija 1939’, in *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR, 1939*, II, pp. 364–65.

<sup>11</sup> Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda During World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 2–4, 7–9.

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, Edwards, *The Winter War*, pp. 98–99.

Union.<sup>13</sup> The coverage given to the "provocation" between 27 and 30 November in the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* indeed indicates the importance of the issue to Soviet propagandists; it was presented as an acute matter concerning the whole Soviet nation, and the first and second pages of these issues were dedicated to it (in general, from the 1930s onwards, Soviet newspapers concentrated on providing building blocks for Soviet identity, and any news of what was going on in other parts of the world was printed on the fifth page).<sup>14</sup>

On 27 November, the day following the alleged incident, both *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* were already reporting it at full blast. *Pravda* published the headline "Impudent provocation by Finnish warmongers", while *Izvestiia's* main headline concerning the issue was "The Soviet people are angered by the impudent provocation by Finnish warmongers". Both newspapers published a short description of how seven artillery shots had been unexpectedly fired from the Finnish side on a Soviet unit near the village of Mainila. Four had died, according to the newspaper, and nine wounded. Colonel Tikhomirov had been called upon to carry out an investigation at the site. The provocation had caused deep anger amongst the locals, the newspaper concluded.<sup>15</sup>

In both *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, the whole text of Molotov's first note to the Finnish government was published, which is a clear indication of the dual purpose of the notes related to the incident: in addition to international communication, they were aimed at preparing public opinion for actual military operations and mobilization.<sup>16</sup> In the case of the Mainila shelling, the "provocation" was indeed immediately used to stir up an angry response amongst the people. What is interesting is that on 27 November, only a day after the alleged incident, the newspapers were already full of reports of workers' meetings and interviews on the issue all over the country, which indeed suggests that a propaganda plan utilizing a "provocation" had already existed well before 26 November, perhaps created by Zhdanov (how the readers interpreted this almost real-time reportage remains unknown).<sup>17</sup>

Numerous alleged announcements by diverse collectives and interviews with Soviet workers from various factories were published in Soviet newspapers. All of these texts were quite homogenic and rhetorically very similar, so summarizing them systematically one by one is not practical for our purpose; instead, some examples will give an adequate idea

<sup>13</sup> Tanner, *Olin ulkoministerinä talvisodan aikana*, pp. 114, 122.

<sup>14</sup> Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Pravda*, 27 November 1939, p. 2; *Izvestija*, 27 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Manninen, *Stalinin kiusa – Himmlerin täi*, p. 30.

of the rhetoric and style. For instance, in *Pravda*, Comrade Egorov from a car factory in Moscow was reported as saying: “Our answer is simple and clear: if the overreactive ‘knaves’ [*voiaki*, a word often used to refer to Finnish soldiers in these articles] do not stop, our Red Army will deliver them a true counterpunch. We will not forgive them shedding the blood of our beloved soldiers and commanders”.<sup>18</sup> An announcement from workers of the same factory reflected the mood the Soviet government wanted to spread: “Down with the warmongers! We all, as one, will defend the socialist fatherland”.<sup>19</sup>

*Izvestiia* was flooded with similar announcements. For instance, in a text titled “Finnish warmongers are playing a dangerous game”, Comrade Nefesov from another factory in Moscow was reported to have said that “the peaceful politics of the Soviet administration are known all over the world”, but any border violations would have consequences:

We accept the demand of the Soviet administration that Finnish troops have to be removed from the border. If needed, by the call of the Party and the administration, we are ready at any minute to protect our beloved native country.<sup>20</sup>

Besides this message, which was repeated in all the announcements by the workers, it was pointed out, for instance, that the Finnish government was incompetent, “had lost its mind”, and that the ministers were mere marionets who had been paid to arrange the provocation, while the Finnish peasants and workers did not want a war.<sup>21</sup>

Similar articles, interviews and announcements were published on 28 November. In both newspapers, two crammed pages were dedicated to the “provocation”. The main headline on the first page of *Pravda* announced that “The note by the Soviet administration is widely supported by the whole nation”, while the second page declared “The provocation of Finnish warmongers aroused the anger and indignation of the whole Soviet people”.<sup>22</sup> *Izvestiia*’s main headlines were, respectively, “The anger of Soviet people grows” and “The workers single-mindedly demand a comprehensive reply to presumptuous Finnish warmongers”.<sup>23</sup> The other headlines in the newspapers declared, for instance, “The terrible anger of Soviet people”, “Let the adventurers blame themselves”, “There is a limit to patience”, “Look out, marionets”, “Restrain the arrogant provocateurs”, “Starters of

<sup>18</sup> *Pravda*, 27 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Izvestija*, 27 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Pravda*, 27 November 1939, p. 2; see also *Izvestija*, 27 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Pravda*, 28 November 1939, pp. 1–2.

<sup>23</sup> *Izvestija*, 28 November 1939, pp. 1–2.

war end up badly" and "Stop the rampage of the bandits!"<sup>24</sup> Some articles already referred to actual military activities as a response to the alleged provocation, informing, for instance, that "The Baltic fleet of the Red Army is ready to crush the enemy".<sup>25</sup> In *Izvestiia*, Comrade Petrushenko, a soldier working at the border, was reported to have said that "We accept comprehensive action by the Soviet administration and assure our readiness to once again show the power of Soviet weapons".<sup>26</sup>

The collective hubris and aggression was reported to be getting stronger: "The pitiful leaders of Finland forgot that the Soviet border is sacred and inviolable. The ridiculous fools of the Finnish administration did not learn any lessons from the sad experiences of Polish landlords", Comrade Sorokin from the "Elektrosila" factory was reported to have said.<sup>27</sup> Workers of another factory announced:

We do not want war, but we are ready for war. The peaceable work of the great Soviet nation is protected by our mighty, invincible Red Army, which is by any minute ready to wipe the warmongers from the face of the earth.<sup>28</sup>

The other interviewees reminded readers that the "Finnish knaves" had forgotten that the Soviet people can "destroy them, crush them like bugs".<sup>29</sup> Finnish leaders were repeatedly called warmongers and accused of imperialism, playing with fire, and humouring their "Western European masters"; they were reminded that the Finnish people do not support them.<sup>30</sup>

On 29 November, both newspapers published the reply to the first Soviet note from the Finnish government – in which the involvement of the Finnish troops was denied and negotiations called for – as well as Molotov's reply, dated 28 November, which was mentioned in the "Introduction" of this article.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting that the Finnish government's polite and somewhat level-headed reply was published together with Molotov's reaction that blamed it for reflecting deep hatred towards the Soviet Union; so, apparently, the publishers had confidence in their readers' ability to interpret the Finnish representation of the matter in the "proper" light after exposure to long-term propaganda concerning the Finnish government and its relations with the Soviet Union.

<sup>24</sup> *Pravda*, 28 November 1939, pp. 1–2; *Izvestija*, 28 November 1939, pp. 1–2.

<sup>25</sup> *Pravda*, 28 November 1939, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Izvestija*, 28 November 1939, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Pravda*, 28 November 1939, pp. 1–2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>31</sup> *Pravda*, 29 November 1939, p. 1; *Izvestija*, 29 November 1939, p. 1.

Two pages in both newspapers were dedicated once again to announcements by diverse collectives, the main headline in *Pravda* announcing: “Solid demand of the Soviet people: give a crushing and destructive blow to the Finnish warmongers!”<sup>32</sup> In *Izvestiia* it was announced that “The false and ruthless note from the Finnish administration aroused an explosion of anger and fury in the Soviet people”.<sup>33</sup> Now the tone was even more aggressive than in the articles published in the previous days, emphasizing imagery of the enemy with headlines such as “The Red Army will destroy the overreaching bandits”, “Wipe the Finnish adventurers off the earth”, “Rabid dogs will be destroyed”, “Destroy the disgusting gang” and “Woe to those who arouse the rage of the Soviet people!”<sup>34</sup>

Finns were threatened by the wrath of the Soviet people in numerous ways and also ridiculed: “Clowns dressed in uniforms of knaves are larking at our borders. The pitiful dwarves, they suggest that the great Socialist country would withdraw the troops of the glorious Red Army and expose the route to Lenin’s city”.<sup>35</sup> Once again, the “West” in the background was brought out; for instance, Comrade Kazantsev, a worker from a factory in Moscow, was reported as saying:

We were too lenient with Finland. How many times has the Soviet Union patiently and persistently suggested to the headstrong Finnish leaders: “Let us live in peace and harmony”. The Finnish political gamblers, encouraged by the West, shouted like cockfighters: “no, we do not want to!”<sup>36</sup>

Also, there was a piece of fresh news entitled “New provocations by Finnish warmongers”, describing how a Russian patrol had been fired on near the border on 28 November by a group of Finnish soldiers, three of whom ended up captives when more Russians arrived for assistance. Shots were reported to have been fired from the Finnish side towards Russia on two separate occasions, the second being followed by an attempt by Finnish soldiers to cross the border to the Russian side.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Pravda*, 29 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Izvestija*, 29 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Pravda*, 29 November 1939, p. 2; *Izvestija*, 29 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Izvestija*, 29 November 1939, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Pravda*, 29 November 1939, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1, see also *Izvestija*, 29 November 1939, p. 1.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE WAR

On 30 November, the newspapers published Molotov's radio address from the previous day. In the address he blamed the Finnish government for "indulging in revolting provocations" and having "an uncompromising and hostile attitude" that was backed by "foreign imperialists who stir up hatred against the Soviet Union". According to Molotov, the Finnish government had shown its inability to "maintain normal relations" and, despite the suspicions expressed in the hostile foreign press, the Soviet Union had never cherished any intentions to annex Finnish territory, claiming anything else was "malicious slander". As nothing was expected from the Finnish government but "fresh insolent provocation", the Soviet Government considered itself released from the Treaty of Non-aggression, which had been "irresponsibly violated by the Finnish government". Also, Soviet diplomats residing in Finland were recalled.<sup>38</sup>

However – as there was no official declaration of war – the other texts continued with the same style as in the issues of the preceding days; however, there were less of them now. Apparently, it was considered that the reportage on Mainila incident had served its propagandistic purpose for preparing the people for the upcoming military conflict. The rhetoric, once again, emphasized that the Soviet administration represented the "voice of the whole nation", that the fury expressed by the people was righteous and even "sacred" (as were the borders of the Soviet Union), and that the army was in full readiness to protect the nation.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, the newspapers kept on emphasizing the essential "otherness" of the enemy; for instance, in *Pravda* there was a title "Finnish pigs must not push their snouts into the Soviet garden".<sup>40</sup>

*Pravda* also published a short article describing the atmosphere in Helsinki, describing the increased military activity in the city and the "anti-Soviet" tone of the newspapers. "In the spirit of the note from the Finnish government, [they] distort all the facts". Also, there was a note on how German newspapers had reported on the "provocation by Finnish warmongers". It was noted that the German press considered the interests of the Soviet Union completely natural and stated that Finland had refused to cooperate with the Soviet Union due to its policy of neutrality. "But here the deceitfulness of the government of Finland could already be seen, as the agreement on cooperation would not have required abandoning the policy of neutrality if that policy had not been used against

<sup>38</sup> *Pravda*, 30 November 1939, p. 1; *Izvestija*, 30 November 1939, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Pravda*, 30 November 1939, pp. 1–2; *Izvestija*, 30 November 1939, pp. 1–2.

<sup>40</sup> *Pravda*, 30 November 1939, p. 2.



the Soviet Union".<sup>41</sup> These statements were aligned with the contemporary political situation between Germany and the Soviet Union, which was sealed for the time being with the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact. Even though the actual threat to the Soviet Union was Germany, this was not explicitly mentioned; also, in *Pravda's* articles the faceless operator of "marionets" – that is, the Finnish leaders – was generalized as the capitalist and imperialist "West".

To sum everything up, several purposes for the dire representation of the "provocation" and the alleged response in the profoundly propagandistic Soviet newspapers can be detected:

1. The widespread publication of news articles regarding the staged incident together with the preceding propaganda concerning Finland provided a proper excuse to start a war because, according to the orthodox socialist world view, aggressive and imperialistic war-waging was out of the question. Presenting the incident as an unquestionable threat aimed at the Soviet people and nation – and especially Leningrad – was the *casus belli* that was needed for action.
2. Emphasizing the workers' response underlined and boosted the collective nature of the upcoming military efforts: essentially, it was the Soviet people as a whole which was threatened by Finland, and the same people as a collective was represented as willing to defend itself and its native country. This attempted mobilization of the people is in line with the war propaganda in Soviet newspapers from 1941 onwards.<sup>42</sup> In light of Soviet protocol, it was crucial that the people was represented as giving its full approval to any action the Soviet administration considered necessary, including military interventions. Bringing forth the alleged unity of the Soviet administration and people also created a contrast to how Finland was represented: its reckless leaders waging war and ignoring the people's interests, and foreign states meddling in the issues of the country in the background. This juxtaposition of order against chaos, unity against disunity, was an effective propagandistic and rhetorical tool.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger*, pp. 9–12.

3. The newspapers were effectively spreading enemy imagery against Finns or, more precisely, against the Finnish government and army, as the Soviet Union wanted to present itself as an ally for the Finnish working people. The dualistic representation of "us" – in this case, the Soviet people, administration and army – in an exclusively positive light and the labelling of "them" with pejorative names and attributes, even denying their humanity, is a typical tool for persuading masses to agree to and participate in a conflict that is perceived, ultimately, as one between good and evil. In the case of reporting the alleged provocation, Finns were called, for instance, warmongers, bandits, criminals, knaves, marionets, clowns, dogs and pigs.<sup>43</sup>

The imagery was also consolidated in pictorial form. In *Pravda*, Finland was represented in political caricatures on the fifth page. A cartoon on 27 November was called "Dangerous game" and depicted the Finnish prime minister as a jester with pictures of Russian emperors hanging on his neck, juggling with bombs and torches and balancing on an exhausted figure labelled "Finances".<sup>44</sup> On 28 November, a cartoon depicted a dog barking at a tank which had a "USSR" label on it, encouraged by headless figures labelled as "provocateurs of war". The text above reminded the reader that the fate of Finnish leaders would be as miserable as that of Polish ones.<sup>45</sup> On 29 November, there was a picture of a dumb-looking soldier jumping on artillery and waving weapons, while in the front of him there was a fellow in tails and a top hat – apparently representing the Finnish government – waving a note announcing that there was no artillery near the border.<sup>46</sup> In the cartoon published on 30 November, a nasty-looking figure bursts through a document entitled "Non-aggression pact between USSR and Finland" and tries to grab Leningrad. A pair of hands with a rifle prepares to prevent it: "We will slap [them] on the hands!"<sup>47</sup>

In the context of the reportage of the "provocation", it was predictable that on 1 December the Soviet Union's attack against Finland in the Karelian isthmus was also represented as the Red Army's defence operation against hostilities by Finnish soldiers (when it comes to how the events

<sup>43</sup> See, for instance, Marja Vuorinen, *Enemy Images in War Propaganda* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 3–5; Vilho Harle, 'On the Concepts of the "Other" and the "Enemy"', *History of European Ideas*, 19 (1994), 27–34.

<sup>44</sup> *Pravda*, 27 November 1939, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Pravda*, 28 November 1939, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Pravda*, 29 November 1939, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> *Pravda*, 30 November 1939, p. 5.

were presented to the Soviet soldiers who had been sent to crush the Finnish army, it was mentioned that their task was to “liberate” the Finnish people from their government, landowners and capitalists).<sup>48</sup> It was noted that the airfields in Viborg and Helsinki had been bombed by the Soviet air force and that the president of Finland had announced that Finland was at war with the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup>

## THE MAINILA CASE UNDER RE-SCRUTINY

All nations tend to cherish their national narratives, but Russian history has been valued exceptionally highly in the twenty-first century. The contemporary regime has embraced not only the idea of the significance of a national historical narrative in attempts to create and maintain cohesion, but also the importance of controlling representations of the past. Especially the Second World War – or the Great Patriotic War, as it is called in Russia, referring to 1941–44 and omitting the collusion between Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939–41 – has been fully utilized in order to create idealized imagery of Russia heroically defending all of Europe against fascism, and the soldiers of the Red Army sacrificing themselves for the common good. This development towards a fully state-controlled past has fiercely resisted any counternarratives, for instance, by Eastern European countries which suffered the invasion, occupation, and other activities of the Red Army and the Soviet Union. These counternarratives, and basically any attempt to present the Red Army in anything but a positive light, have been proclaimed “falsification” of history by the Russian administration. Also, there has been a project to unify school textbooks to ensure that pupils are taught the “right” version of historical events.<sup>50</sup> Simultaneously, the disturbing features of the Stalinist period that do not match the cohesive national narrative have been whitewashed by, for

<sup>48</sup> *Pravda*, 1 December 1939; p. 1. van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939–40*, p. 27.

<sup>49</sup> *Pravda*, 1 December 1939, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> See, for instance, Veera Laine, ‘New Generation of Victors: Narrating the Nation in Russian Presidential Discourse, 2012–2019’, *Demokratizatsiya*, 28:4 (2020), 517–40; Keir Giles, *Moscow Rules – What Drives Russia to Confront the West* (Washington: Chatham House, 2019), pp. 105, 119–24; Gregory Carleton, *Russia – The Story of War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 80–113; Kati Parppei, ‘A thousand years of history’: References to the past in the addresses to the Federal Assembly by the president of Russia, 2000–19’, in *Medievalism in Finland and Russia*, ed. by Reima Välimäki (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), pp. 39–56; NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, *Falsification of History as a Tool of Influence*, ed. by Amanda Rivkin, Anne Geisow, and Marius Varna (Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2020), <[https://stratcomcoe.org/cuploads/pfiles/abuse\\_of\\_history\\_report\\_27-01-2020\\_reduced\\_file\\_size.pdf](https://stratcomcoe.org/cuploads/pfiles/abuse_of_history_report_27-01-2020_reduced_file_size.pdf)> [accessed 26 August 2022].

instance, directing the attention of Russians to external enemies rather than the internal terror.<sup>51</sup>

This revisionism is also the context in which the shelling of Mainila was re-scrutinized in the Russian media scene. The idea of the Soviet Union staging a provocation in order to justify an attack on a neighbouring country apparently did not fit in the martyrdom-toned, profoundly dualistic popular imagery of the Great Patriotic War which was being formed and maintained. Also, by bringing forth the hypothesis that the Soviet Union had indeed been a victim of hostile scheming in 1939, it was possible to downplay the awkward and disturbing fact that the Soviet Union had actually made an agreement with Nazi Germany.

In January 2018, the Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergei Lavrov, suggested founding a Finnish-Russian historical committee to investigate certain "controversial" historical issues, one of which, according to him, was the beginning of the Winter War. This suggestion was in response to a question asked by a Russian journalist at a press conference regarding whether the shelling of Mainila had been perpetrated by Finland or the Soviet Union (the journalist pointed out that views with which Finnish historians disagreed had recently been presented on the issue). Lavrov also said that historians should resolve such matters. In response to Lavrov's suggestion concerning the founding of a joint committee, the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, briefly replied that the question of the shelling of Mainila had already been adequately examined by both Finnish and Russian historians.<sup>52</sup>

By the time of Lavrov's suggestion, the generally accepted view of the shelling as a false-flag operation by the Soviet Union had indeed been questioned or challenged by several writers on internet platforms, some of which had connections to the administration. Some of them simply presented the issue of Mainila as an open question. For instance, in the "official" history portal in Russia, maintained by the state-supported Russian Military Historical Society, an article "the Soviet-Finnish War" was published on 15 December 2015. The authors, I.S. Rat'kovskii and M.V. Kho-diakov, presented the shelling as an unsolved question:

<sup>51</sup> One example of this whitewashing is the case of the Sandarmokh mass graves in Russian Karelia. In 1937–1938, over 9000 victims of Stalinist terror, of more than 58 nationalities, were buried in the area. From 1996 onwards, the Memorial Society worked on identifying the victims. In 2016, a Russian historian, supported by the Russian Military Historical Society, began to promote a new "theory" of Soviet prisoners of war, killed by Finns, having been buried in Sandarmokh (see, for instance, Anna Yaroyaya, 'Rewriting Sandarmokh,' *The Russian Reader*, 29 December 2017, <<https://therussianreader.com/2017/12/29/anna-yaroyaya-rewriting-sandarmokh/>> [accessed 28 August 2022]; see also Kati Parppei, 'Case study: Finland,' in *Falsification of History as a Tool of Influence*, pp. 34–41).

<sup>52</sup> 'Prezident Niinistö: vystrelly v Majnila uže izučeny', *YLE News in Russian*, 15 January 2018, <[https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/prezident\\_niiniste\\_vystrelly\\_v\\_mainila\\_uzhe\\_izucheny/10024386](https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/prezident_niiniste_vystrelly_v_mainila_uzhe_izucheny/10024386)> [accessed 28 August 2019].

Disputes regarding whose side the shots were fired from continue. In 1939, the Finns tried to prove that the shelling could not have been carried out from their territory, and the whole story of the “Mainila incident” was nothing more than a provocation from Moscow.<sup>53</sup>

However, some writers took their hypotheses further than that. Another article on the same site by Ivan Zatsarin, published on 26 November 2016, was entitled “How to stubbornly stir up trouble. For the anniversary of the Mainila incident”. It had a suggestive tone, aiming to draw parallels to contemporary political conflicts. The article began with quotes from British scholars, describing the tense position of Eastern European countries in relation to Russia, and the author continued by explaining how these countries actually brought the misfortune on themselves by considering Russia a hostile neighbour: “we should discuss the fact that if you continue crying ‘wolf’ for a long time, the wolf will come. But it is not his fault”. He continues by explaining that two versions exist of what happened in Mainila and reminds the reader that Finland gained independence because of Russia, which had granted it lots of privileges in the nineteenth century (the author points out that the situation was similar in “Malorossiiia”), thus creating an optimal foundation for independence, formalized by the Bolsheviks on 4 January 1918.<sup>54</sup>

After that, according to the author, Finland took Poland’s route: invading Karelia, raiding other territories, and making a general military nuisance of itself to Russia. “In other words, Finland, which in November 1939 suddenly shelled the territory of the Soviet Union, was nothing extraordinary. Shellings with small arms had taken place several times”. Further, the author explains, the reason for this courage was simple: the patronage of other countries, first Britain, then Japan, and finally Germany.<sup>55</sup> In 1939, Finland refused to move the border in the area of Vyborg (interestingly, the author chooses to call it “Crimea”) and, according to the author, either side could have performed the shelling. More important for him is, however, that the Soviet-Finnish war can be compared to the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 or “the return of Crimea to Russia” in the sense that “both of these events are today used as evidence of Russia’s incredible aggressiveness”

<sup>53</sup> Il’ja Rat’kovskij and Michail Chodjakov, ‘Sovetsko-finskaja vojna’, *Istorija.rf*, 15 December 2015, <<https://histrf.ru/read/articles/sovietsko-finskaia-voina-event>> [accessed 18 August 2022].

<sup>54</sup> Ivan Zaccarin, ‘Kak upriamo budit’ lichko. K godovščine Majnil’skogo incidenta’, *Istorija.rf*, 26 November 2016, <<https://histrf.ru/read/articles/kak-upriamo-budit-likho-k-77-lietiiu-mainilskogho-intsidienta>> [accessed 18 August 2022].

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

and an excuse to hunt down Moscow's agents and ask NATO for weapons and reinforcements.<sup>56</sup>

The author concluded by pointing out that as Poland and Finland from the 1920s onwards had aimed to "curse, threaten, intimidate and hunt down 'agents of Moscow'", these "current victims and candidates for victims" are erroneously doing the same. He sarcastically pointed out that they aim to unite to create "a sanitary frontier by the border of barbaric Russia" and those countries "that do not participate in such projects have no problems with the inviolability of their borders".<sup>57</sup>

An article by Leonid Maslovskii that was published in July 2017 on the *Zvezda*-channel website – run by the Russian Ministry of Defence – concentrated on historical issues, presenting yet another theory concerning the Mainila incident. The article, entitled "The shame of Dunkirk: how Europe eagerly bowed to Hitler", claimed that Finland had started the war, aiming to test the Red Army on behalf of the German forces after Finland had rejected the Soviet Union's proposition to move its border in exchange for an area of land twice as large: "Finland refused and reacted with a military provocation that had strong support from Germany and fellow warmongers".<sup>58</sup>

Thus, the shelling of Mainila, according to Maslovskii, was linked to the alleged general resentment and opportunistic attitude of the "West" towards the Soviet Union, the whole war having been a test of the Soviet Union's Western forces:

After the Finns encircled and defeated our 44th Infantry Division, W. Churchill stated in a radio appearance on 20 January 1944 that Finland "revealed to the world the weakness of the Red Army". This statement was made in order to accelerate Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. The whole policy of the West was aimed at achieving one goal: an attack by Germany on the Soviet Union.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Leonid Maslovskij, 'Pozor Djunkerka: kak Evropa s gotovnost'ju preklonilas' pered Gitlerom', *Zvezda*, 31 July 2017, <<https://tvzvezda.ru/news/qhistory/content/201707310904-1vri.htm>> [accessed 17 August 2022].

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

It was also announced by the author that any suggestion that the Soviet forces would anyhow have been defeated by the Finnish in the Winter War was a falsification of history.<sup>60</sup>

Finland is linked to the military aspirations of the “West” in some other writings, too. For instance, in December 2017, a site called *Politics and War*<sup>61</sup> published an article called “Mainila, what really happened”, by B. Rozhin. The author refers to documents (not properly cited) and claims that they contain evidence that Finland was to blame for this event.

According to Rozhin, other sabotage attempts by Finnish soldiers dressed as border guards took place in the Soviet Union at around the time of the shelling. He says that the reason for this was to provoke the Soviet Union to start a war in which the “West” would provide support to Finland; he asks why the Finnish government would behave “to put it mildly: unwisely” and comments that “the answer is self-evident: it is because they were promised serious support from the West in the case of war with the Soviet Union!”<sup>62</sup> He continues by explaining that it was necessary to present the Soviet Union as a warmonger to justify the intervention: “And so we come to understand that Finland was suddenly very interested in an event that would push the Soviet Union to take action”.<sup>63</sup>

The author also mentioned that Tsar Alexander I had made a mistake by joining the province of Vyborg with Finland in 1812, and that the nationalistic zeal of the Finns had been high prior to the war. He concludes his text as follows:

The lesson was learned by Finnish society and a high price was paid for the realization of its real place in the world. Only in getting rid of the ulcer of nationalism did Finland manage to build amicable relations with its great neighbour.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Maslovskii's article in *Zvezda* was noted by Finnish journalist Arja Paananen, specialised in Russia, who wrote an article about it in the Finnish tabloid *Iltta-Sanomat* on 1 August 2017: ‘Russian TV channel distorts history: “Finland executed the shelling of Mainila and, through military provocation, started the Winter War as an ally with Germany”’. In her article, Paananen also recalls her recent conversation with a Russian navy officer, who was worried about the resurrection of fascism and Nazism in Europe and emphasised that Russia had never been the aggressor in military conflicts. Paananen contextualised both of the issues in Russian information warfare, which aims to emphasise the threat posed by Europe (Arja Paananen, ‘Venäläinen tv-kanava vääristelee historiaa: ‘Suomi ampui Mainilan laukaukset ja provosoi talvisodan Saksan apurina’, *Iltta-Sanomat*, 1 August 2017, <<https://www.is.fi/ulkomaat/art-200005309849.html>> [accessed 26 August 2022]).

<sup>61</sup> The site seems to be run by several individuals, who proclaim their goals to be, for instance, to “advance a reasonable civil society” in Russia, and to “preserve and strengthen the independence and sovereignty, as well as the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, as well as the spiritual and material development of the country's population”. The authors emphasise that “the main priority for us is to counter the processes of colour revolutions in Russia initiated by external intervention, as well as the processes of new restructuring (‘perestroika-2’), related to the struggle between the Kremlin clans” (‘Manifest’, *Politwar.ru*, <<http://politwar.ru/manifest/>> [accessed 26 August 2022]).

<sup>62</sup> Boris Rozhin, ‘Majnila, kak eto bylo na samom dele’. This text used to be available on the site of *Politika & Vojna* (December 2017), but it has been removed; however, it can be found in Rozhin's personal blog, *LiveJournal*, 3 December 2017, <<https://colonelcassad.livejournal.com/3849481.html>> [accessed 28 April 2023].

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

In both cases, the authors explicitly emphasize the role of Finland as a pawn in a game played by the "West", thus repeating the claims of Soviet propaganda in 1939. In Rozhin's article, this role is explicitly linked to the unrealistic nationalistic aspirations of Finns.

Only on some occasions was the shelling of Mainila mentioned in the state media. For instance, on 26 November 2019 – on the anniversary of the event – the news site *Gazeta.ru* published an article "Shots in Mainila: who started the war between the USSR and Finland?". This article was written by Dmitrii Okunev and it represented this issue as controversial. It presented Finnish nationalism and hostile attitudes towards the Soviet Union, together with the restlessness of the border area, as the primary reason for the Soviet leadership wanting to move the border; the fear of an attack by Germany was mentioned only as a secondary reason. As for which side was responsible of the incident, the author mentions that many researchers now agree that it was a well-planned provocation of the Soviet command with the intention of justifying the subsequent invasion of Finland by the Red Army; he also says that the "pro-Western" version, which represented the shelling as the work of NKVD, was based on secondary sources. The author also cites journalist Arja Paananen (see note 58) in describing the significance of the event to Finns. He concluded the article by noting that the war, which lasted far longer than expected, had dispelled the myth of the power of the Red Army, the losses of the Soviet Union exceeding those of Finland.<sup>65</sup>

## AMBIGUITY, MIRRORING AND "THE DOCTRINE OF INNOCENCE"

What is the "legacy" of the shelling of Mainila and how does it relate to the military activities and propagandistic strategies of contemporary Russia? Of course, one always has to be cautious in drawing parallels between historical and contemporary events, approaches, and ideas. However, in this case prudent comparison can be said to be justified because post-Soviet Russia "inherited" certain propaganda strategies – also, we could say, the whole notion of the importance of propaganda and the idea of active involvement in information warfare – from the Soviet Union and has

<sup>65</sup> Dmitrii Okunev, 'Vystrely v Majnile: kto načal vojnu SSSR s Finljandiej', *Gazeta.ru*, 26 November 2019, <[https://www.gazeta.ru/science/2019/11/26\\_a\\_12831998.shtml?updated](https://www.gazeta.ru/science/2019/11/26_a_12831998.shtml?updated)> [accessed 26 August 2022]. Some dispute arose on social media due to the anniversary; on 30 November 2019, a state-run "Museum of Victory" tweeted that the Winter War broke out due to Finns firing at Soviet stations. The Finnish Reservists' Association made a statement on the issue. The museum replied by apologizing and saying the tweet had been misinterpreted ('Finnish Reservists' Association slams false Russian interpretation of Winter War', *YLE News*, 7 December 2019, <<https://yle.fi/news/3-11107504>> [accessed 26 August 2022]).



applied them in the modern media environment in domestic communication as well as in international circles.<sup>66</sup>

The Mainila incident has become a classic example in the media of a false-flag operation, together with another 1939 case, namely the so-called Gliwice (Gleiwitz) incident on 1 September 1939, when German forces invaded Poland using a staged “Polish provocation” in this Silesian border town as an excuse.<sup>67</sup> The Mainila shelling has been brought up especially in the context of Russia’s invasions of and interventions in its neighbouring countries (which is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the counternarratives described in the previous section have been produced).<sup>68</sup> It has been referred to, for instance, by Ukrainian representatives in the United Nations Security Council. At the meeting on 26 November 2018, the Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations, Volodymyr Yelchenko, compared the Kerch Strait incident to the event that started the Winter War in 1939 and which ultimately led to the expelling of the Soviet Union from the League of Nations.<sup>69</sup> On 31 January 2022, less than a month before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations Security Council held a meeting on the question of Russia concentrating troops near the border. The representative of Ukraine, Sergiy Kyslytsya, pointed out that “we are well aware of Russia’s history of ploys and provocations, and we will do everything possible to prevent another Mainila-type provocation by Russia”.<sup>70</sup>

On the doctrinal level, historical as well as contemporary false-flag operations can be said to represent or perhaps overlap with the strategy of ambiguity or deception (*maskirovka*) that is practiced by Russia, and by the Soviet Union preceding it.<sup>71</sup> A prominent example is the war in Georgia in 2008 and Russia’s preparations for it. By constantly provoking and pressuring Georgia, Russia aimed to tempt it to react militarily in order to convince the international community that its operation was justi-

<sup>66</sup> Sinikukka Saari, ‘Russia’s Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy *po russkii*’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 66 (2014), 50–66; Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (New York: Institute of Modern Russia, 2014), pp. 8–9; Katri Pynnöniemi, ‘Introduction’, in *Fog of Falsehood – Russian Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine*, ed. by Katri Pynnöniemi and András Rác (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2016), pp. 13–15.

<sup>67</sup> See, for instance, Richard C. Hall, ‘Renewed War’, in *Consumed by War: European Conflict in the 20th Century* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), pp. 119–36 (here: 119).

<sup>68</sup> See, for instance, ‘False flags: What are they and when have they been used?’, *BBC News*, 18 February 2022, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60434579>> [accessed 26 August 2022].

<sup>69</sup> The Kerch Strait incident refers to events on 25 November 2018, when three Ukrainian naval vessels attempting to transit from the Black Sea to the Azov Sea were fired on by the Russian coastguard. See Bjorn Ottosson, UN Security Council Emergency Meeting on Russia Ukraine Tensions, Nov 26 2018, online video recording, YouTube, 27 November 2018, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pf\\_aTPOM3A/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pf_aTPOM3A/)> [accessed 28 August 2022].

<sup>70</sup> Meetings coverage ‘Situation along Russian Federation-Ukraine Border Can Only Be Resolved through Diplomacy, Political Affairs Chief Tells Security Council’, *United Nations Security Council*, 31 January 2022, <<https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14783.doc.htm>> [accessed 24 August 2022].

<sup>71</sup> See, for instance, Charles J. Dick, ‘Catching NATO Unawares: Soviet Army Surprise and Deception Techniques’, in *The Art and Science of Military Deception*, ed. by Hy Rothstein and Barton Whaley (Norwood: Artech House, 2013), pp. 181–92; Douglas Mastriano, ‘Putin – the masked nemesis of the strategy of ambiguity’, *Defence & Security Analysis*, 33:1 (2017), pp. 68–76.

fied as a peacekeeping mission in the context of its alleged "Responsibility to Protect".<sup>72</sup> The annexation of Crimea and the war in East Ukraine were carried out utilizing strategies of deception and misinformation; in the case of the escalation of the war in February 2022, when Russia staged a full-scale invasion, the official Russian propaganda followed familiar lines by emphasizing the nature of this "special operation" as a reactive one that was a consequence of the alleged distress of the Russian-speaking population in East Ukraine (the ideas of "denazification" were intended to resonate primarily with the domestic audience in Russia).<sup>73</sup>

The military doctrine of deception is seamlessly intertwined with that of disinformation and the constant and multifaceted information war waged by Russia internally as well as abroad.<sup>74</sup> Obviously, the media of the 1930s and the twenty-first century cannot be compared as such, but certain common features can be found in Russian propaganda concerning the shelling of Mainila and, say, the ongoing war in Ukraine, despite the completely different media platforms that now exist. Blaming the adversary of "provocation" or a threat of some other sort when justifying intervention or invasion is the most prominent of these features. Provocation as a term derives from Soviet political language, originally referring to any critical voices, but it was later established to underline Russia's role as a victim instead of an aggressor in conflicts.<sup>75</sup>

Blaming others for provocations is a prime example of *accusation in a mirror*, "a rhetorical practice in which one falsely accuses one's enemies of conducting, plotting, or desiring to commit precisely the same transgressions that one plans to commit against them".<sup>76</sup> When the Soviet Union was secretly preparing for a war against Finland in November 1939, it consistently blamed the Finnish government for "warmongering" and plotting against its socialist neighbour. Similarly, contemporary Russia systematically denies any atrocities and transgressions in Ukraine – from war crimes to bombing civilians and risking a nuclear disaster – consistently blaming Ukraine for the same acts instead.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> See, for instance, Roy Allison, 'Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to "coerce Georgia to peace"', *International Affairs*, 84:6 (2008), 1145–71; Juris Pupchenok and Eric James Seltzer, 'Russian Strategic Narratives on R2P in the "Near Abroad"', *Nationalities Papers*, 49:4 (2021), 757–75. See also Matti Nupponen, 'Harhauttaminen Venäjän sotilasoperaatioissa' (unpublished master's thesis, National Defence University of Finland, 2017), pp. 28–49.

<sup>73</sup> Pupchenok and Seltzer, 'Russian Strategic Narratives on R2P in the "Near Abroad"', pp. 757–75.

<sup>74</sup> For an overview, see, for instance, Peter Pomerantsev, 'The Kremlin's Information War', *Journal of Democracy*, 26:4 (2015), 40–50. See also *Fog of Falsehood*, ed. By Pynnöniemi and Rác, passim.

<sup>75</sup> Katri Pynnöniemi, 'The Metanarratives of Russian Strategic Deception', in *Fog of Falsehood*, pp. 71–119 (p. 75).

<sup>76</sup> Kenneth L. Marcus, 'Accusation in a Mirror', *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*, 43:2 (2012), 357–93.

<sup>77</sup> For recent examples of these tactics, see, for instance, the Twitter account of the Foreign Ministry of Russia, <[https://twitter.com/mfa\\_russia](https://twitter.com/mfa_russia)> [accessed 29 August 2022]. See also Andrej Sementkovskij, 'Istorija fejkov I poddelok: kto stal krestnym otcom gazetnyh utok iz Buči', *Istorija.rf*, 5 April 2022, <<https://histrf.ru/read/articles/istoriya-fejkov-i-poddelok-kto-stal-krestnym-otcom-gazetnyh-utok-iz-buchi>> [accessed 29 August 2022].

Accusation in a mirror in Russian propaganda and rhetoric and Russia's systematic refusal to take any responsibility for its actions can actually be seen as a strategic application of a (profoundly imperialist) outlook I call "a doctrine of innocence". The perception of Russia as a victim of treacherous and self-interested Western Europe was being formulated in the nineteenth century, following the rise of nationalist and Slavist ideas, Russia's disappointment with the West following events such as Napoleon's invasion in 1812, and the Crimean war in 1853–56. Russia, for its part, was represented as a mere defender of its righteous interests in its geopolitical surroundings (and, for instance, in the case of Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, when Russia also represented itself as a defender of its oppressed Slavic brothers; here, we can actually see an early case of applying the ideas behind the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine, which was still forming at that time).<sup>78</sup> Further, as noted above, the Soviet Union presented itself as a socialist workers' realm devoted to peace, in contrast to capitalist and imperialist nations that were prone to conflicts and "anti-Soviet" representations of contemporary events. The rhetoric around the "provocation" in Mainila was a combination of "anti-Soviet" propaganda and the Soviet Union presenting itself as an innocent victim of warmongering on one hand, and threatening Finland with the invincible might of the Red Army on the other. The telegram to the League of Nations, emphasizing that the Soviet Union was not at war with Finland while it was bombing Finnish cities and localities (see above), is also quite a telling example, as is the idea of Soviet soldiers as "liberators" instead of invaders that was repeated frequently in the context of the Red Army in the Second World War.

Following the same doctrine, the idea of Russia never having attacked anyone, just being surrounded by "Russophobic" hostile forces and only reacting to provocations – for instance, by NATO – has recently been explicitly expressed by diverse actors in the context of the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (also, the concept of Russian soldiers as "liberators" has been used).<sup>79</sup> Of course, in principle this outlook is universal: in all military conflicts, both sides consider their cause a righteous one, but

<sup>78</sup> Parppei, 'A thousand years of history', pp. 51–53. See also Kati Parppei, 'Enemy Images in the Russian National Narrative', in *Nexus of Patriotism and Militarism in Russia – A Quest for Internal Cohesion*, ed. by Katri Pynnöniemi (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2021), pp. 23–47.

<sup>79</sup> See, for instance, Louis Jacobson, 'Russian spokesman's statement ignores centuries of Russian attacks', *PolitiFact*, 21 February 2022, <<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2022/feb/21/dmitry-peskov/russian-spokesmans-statement-ignores-centuries-rus/>> [accessed 27 August 2022]; 'Kirill's provocative statement: Russia has never attacked anyone', *Orthodox Times*, 4 May 2022, <<https://orthodoxtimes.com/kirills-provocative-statement-russia-has-never-attacked-anyone/>> [accessed 27 August 2022]; see also Prezident Rossii, 'Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniju', 1 December 2016, <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/53379>> [accessed 27 August 2022]. For the use of the concept "liberator" in the context of Ukraine, see, for instance, Andrej Sementkovskij, 'Zabveniju ne podležit. Istoki nasilija neonacistov nad voennoplennymi', *Istorija.rf*, 31 March 2022, <<https://histrf.ru/read/articles/zabveniyu-ne-podlezhit-istoki-nasilija-neonacistov-nad-voennoplennymi>> [accessed 6 November 2022].

the contemporary regime in Russia has brought it out openly and consistently as a basis for its demands from the international community, simultaneously blaming others for not taking into account its legitimate interests, for acting in a provocative way, or for military destabilization. This rhetoric has sometimes been combined with Russia showing off its new armaments, reflecting a sense of Russian exceptionalism in the military context.<sup>80</sup>

The doctrine of innocence applied to contemporary purposes is intertwined with the recent and ongoing attempts to control representations of history, especially the Second World War, and to whitewash the decisions of the Soviet administration and the activities of the Red Army. Accusing other countries of falsifying history while presenting the "official" and state-controlled Russian historical narrative as the only acceptable one is also a form of accusation in a mirror. The "truth" as such can – perhaps paradoxically – be seen secondary in this game of rewriting history. As one of Russia's tactics in distributing misinformation is to create general confusion and mistrust, it might well be enough to bring forth optional hypotheses – as in the case of Mainila incident – with the hope that they will adequately resonate in the minds of the attempted audience, thus challenging the established perceptions and images for the benefit of Russia and its regime.<sup>81</sup> Thus, we can say that the echoes of the shelling of Mainila, with all their implications and layers of meanings, are still relevant today in several ways.

<sup>80</sup> See, for instance, Prezident Rossii, 'Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniju', 1 March 2018, <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/56957>> [accessed 29 August 2022]. Carleton, *Russia – the Story of War*, passim.

<sup>81</sup> Pomerantsev, 'The Kremlin's Information War', pp. 40–50.

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# WHO ARE THE BASILIANS?

## ABSTRACT

The main topic of the article is the history of the Basilian Order in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, including the foundation and daily life of the order, its most important personalities, its internal laws, and relations between the clergy and laity. Particular attention is paid to the cultural role of the Basilians in social life, their struggle to survive under the Russian authorities, as well as the Basilian movement's crucial role in the development of Ukrainian and Belarusian culture of the Modern era. The article also describes the Basilian Order's most revered shrines, the activities of its main donors from the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, and the masterpieces of church architecture of that era that were created in Basilian monasteries.<sup>1</sup>

## KEYWORDS:

Basilians, Basilian order, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, monasticism, Metropolitanate of Kyiv, pope

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<sup>1</sup> This abstract was written by AREI's editorial team.

After the declaration of the Union of Brest in 1596, it was precisely the Basilian monastic Order and its monks that initiated the ‘creative tension’ within the Ukrainian-Belarusian cultural sphere of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They determined both the strategy and tactics of creating the ‘Ruthenian reality’, while helping the spiritual leadership play a crucial role in formulating the ‘strategy of absorption’ of the contemporaneous cultural codes offered by the Baroque and Catholic Enlightenment. Thanks to the parochial soul shepherding and the activities of the fraternities (book printing and organized schooling), the Basilian monastic Order gradually entered the socio-cultural realm of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom as an integral and simultaneously autonomous component that represented the unique confessional subculture *Slavia Unita*. Having at its disposal powerful spiritual, intellectual, and human potential, as well as sufficient material resources, the Basilian Fathers gained publicity. This level of socialization is attested to by the presence of Union-adhering monks in the ceremonies that were observed in cities, towns, and villages, where the monks participated in numerous processions and celebrations and organized public ceremonies.

When describing the internal structure of the monastic community within the cloisters’ walls, one has to understand that the life of the Basilian monastic Order as an institution was based on prayer and a system of worship that was externally represented through monastic charters. In other words, a monastery is, first and foremost, a community of praying monks.<sup>2</sup> As Father Dr. Porfyrii Pidruchnyi from Rome accurately observed, monastic rules represent a “living tradition of the monastic life that is founded on the teachings of the holy fathers”, and they rely on both an “order of worship that remains the same in all monasteries’, as well as ‘the living word of the prior’.<sup>3</sup>

The initial form of the monastic organization in Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese was anachoresis, which is seclusion and eremitism combined with strict ascetic practices, such as elimination of meat from one’s diet, strict fasting, etc. Pastoral and educational activities were not characteristic of Eastern monasticism, which is why the impact of monks on social life was limited to teaching by the example of spiritual deeds, as well as spiritual tutelage over those who came to the monastery. The newly founded Basilian Order, on the contrary, was focused on missionary and

<sup>2</sup> Porfyrii Pidruchnyj and Bohdan P’jetnočko, *Vasylijans’ki heneral’ni kapituly vid 1617 po 1636 rik. Bazylijańskie kapituly generalne od 1617 do 1636 roku. Capitula generalia basilianorum ab anno 1617 ad annum 1636* (Rym–Lviv, 2017), pp. 391–497.

<sup>3</sup> Porfyrii Pidruchnyj, ‘Počatky Vasylijans’koho čynu i Berestejs’ka unija’, in *Berestejs’ka unija ta vnutrišnje žyttja Cerkvy u XVII stolitti: Materialy Četvertych „Berestejs’kych čytan’ (Lviv, Luc’k, Kyjiv, 2–6 žovtnja 1995 r.)*, ed. by Borys Gudzjak and Oleh Turij (Lviv: Instytut Istoriji Cerkvy Lvivs’koji Bohoslovs’koji Akademiji, 1997), pp. 79–124 (here: 113–14).

pastoral activities within society.<sup>4</sup> Yosyf's (Veliamyn Ruts'kyi) reform of 1617 introduced the Union Church to the communal form of monastic life, or *koinonia*. Implicitly, this particular model of Basilian piety emphasized the communal life of monks, and it combined the ascetic spirituality of Eastern monasticism with openness to the Commonwealth and its society. One had to be ready for active soul shepherding and for cultural, educational, and missionary work grounded on ideals borrowed from Western Latin forms of monastic life, such as those propagated by Jesuits and, in part, Discalced Carmelites.

With the founding of the Basilian Order, some ground-breaking changes took place in the self-organization of Eastern monasticism in the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and, in part, the Polish Kingdom. Initially, monasteries functioned autonomously, while the local bishop, or metropolitan, would be considered their real or formal ruler.<sup>5</sup> This means that the monasteries observed diocese laws. However, after the reform of 1617, the monastic communities that were united with the Roman Apostolic throne became centralized.<sup>6</sup> The Union-adhering monks came together during the first council of the priors who led the five monasteries, which took place in Nahorodowicze during 20–26 July 1617. Yosyf (Veliamyn Ruts'kyi), Kyivan Metropolitan, became the leader of the monastic council. At his proposal, the Wilno Congregation of the Holy Trinity, which would soon become known as the Order of St Basil the Great, was founded.<sup>7</sup> Having confirmed the status of the new monastic community through *breve Exponi nobis* ('Exposed to Us'), signed by Pope Urban VIII, and dated 20 August 1631, Ruts'kyi set out to revitalize Eastern monasticism in Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese.<sup>8</sup> He determined that the main prior for all Basilians would be the protoarchimandrite and initially appointed this position for life, while spiritual and institutional leadership was reserved for the head of the Union Church, the Metropolitan, who also had the right to give his blessing for the choice of protoarchimandrite. By and large, the reform of 1617 provided for the assimilation of the experience of post-Trent Catholicism whilst preserving the main foundations of Kyivan Christianity, such as the legacy of worship, ascetic and penitential practices, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Isydor Patrylo, 'Narys istoriji vasylijan vid 1743 do 1839 roku', in *Narys Istoriji Vasylijans'koho Čynu Svjatoho Josafata* (Rym: Vydavnytstvo OO. Vasylijan, 1992), pp. 183–278 (here: 233).

<sup>5</sup> Mychajlo Vavryk, *Narys rozvytku i stanu Vasylijans'koho Čyna XVII–XX st.: topohrafično-statystyčna rozvidka* (Rym, 1979); Serhej Klimov, *Baziliane* (Mogilev, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> See: Meletius M. Wojnar, *De Protoarchimandrita Basilianorum (1617–1804)* (Romae: Sumptibus PP. Basilianorum, 1958).

<sup>7</sup> Porfyrij Pidručnyj, 'Vasylijans'kyj Čyn vid Berestejs'koho Zjednannja (1596) do 1743 roku', in *Narys istoriji Vasylijans'koho Čynu Svjatoho Josafata*, pp. 96–182 (here: 117–18).

<sup>8</sup> Porfyrij Pidručnyj, *Istoryčnyj narys zakonodavstva Vasylijans'koho Čynu sv. Josafata (1617–2018)* (Rym–L'viv, 2018), pp. 57–58.

One far-reaching consequence of these innovations was the gradual and steady unification of the monastic practices; another was the initiation of the Basilian Order's active public life in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, the Order's activities simultaneously unfolded in three areas:

1. Internal life of the monastic community within the cloisters' walls.
2. Communicative practices of interaction within the Union Church and the Catholic world.
3. Socio-cultural engagement with the contemporaneous public space of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Let us mention the following institutionalized forms of the communal integration of the Basilians:

- monasteries as places where monks prayed for the salvation of souls;
- monastic temples as centres of Christian worship and burial grounds for members of society;
- ecclesiastical missions;
- seminaries, *collegia*, dormitories, and other forms of education and upbringing;
- publishing houses and libraries;
- Basilian general *capitula* (assemblies of monks);
- festive religious processions.

As of 1631 and shortly before the death of its founder, Yosyf (Ruts'kyi), the Basilian Order consisted of 160 monks and 36 monasteries and boasted a well-organized community of novices in Byten' monastery. In the decades that followed, the Order suffered a spiritual and institutional crisis that was caused, first and foremost, by the turbulent mid-seventeenth-century wars. Among the other causes, one should mention the monks' tendencies toward Latinization, their reduced interest in the monastic vocation, and poorly regulated relations with the bishops of the Union Church. Right before the Khmelnytsky uprising and the Russo-Swedish Deluge, the Sviatohrotyts'k province of the Basilian monastic Order consisted of 90–100 monks in some 30 monasteries, half of which had the status of archimandrite chapters and covered the territories of the Great Duchy of Lithuania, Volhynia

Kholmshchyna and, in part, Przemyśl diocese.<sup>9</sup> However, in the last three decades of the seventeenth century, the Basilians managed to overcome these internal struggles, strengthened their organization, and created a foundation for the rebirth of the Union Church. During the Nahorodowicz Assembly of 1686, an agreement (*Nexus*) was made between Kyivan Metropolitan and the Basilian Order, while the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw served as an intermediary. This document stipulated the limits of jurisdiction between the two sides.

Concurrently, codification, rectification, and modernization of the Order's legislation took place, including the 'Rules' of Ruts'kyi and the constitution of the assembly.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly before the Synod of Zamość in 1720, the Basilian monastic Order consisted of 55 monasteries, 21 of which were active in the metropolitan diocese within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; 14 – within the Kingdom of Poland; 10 – in the Brest part of the Volodymyr diocese, as well as Pinsk diocese; and another 10 – in Polotsk diocese.<sup>11</sup> In the early eighteenth century, the chain of Basilian monasteries started to spread to the north of Wilno, covering Inflanty Voivodeship, or Polish Livonia, which is a territory of present-day Latvia. Two missions or residences of the Basilian Fathers were active in this region – in Ilūkste and Jakobstadt. They serviced the soul-shepherding requirements of the Catholics of Eastern rite, using, among other languages, Latvian and German.<sup>12</sup> Among all of the Union monasteries, only the one in Supraśl, together with its branches in Warsaw and Kuźnica, did not join the Basilian Order. This decision was dictated by the opinions of the donors, who were from the noble family of Chodkiewicz, as well as by the monastery's status of 'lavra'. The legislative status of Supraśl monastery as an autonomous community within the Union Church was defined in *Concordia* (1632), which placed the archimandrite

<sup>9</sup> *Litterae basilianorum*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj, 2 vols (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1979), I, pp. 59–61 (№ 29); Vavryk, *Narys rozvytku i stanu Vasylijans'koho Cynu XVII–XX st.*, pp. 9–10; Andžej Gil', 'Unijni monastyri Cholms'ko-Belz' koji jeparchiji (1596–1720)', in *Kovčeh. Naukovyj zbirnyk iz cerkovnoji istoriji. Čyso 5* (Lviv: Vydavnytvo Otciv Vasylijan 'Misioner', 2007), pp. 285–300 (here: 286–89); Serhij Horin, *Monastyri Zachidnoji Volyni (druba polovyna XV – perša polovyna XVII stolit'* (Lviv: Vydavnytvo Otciv Vasylijan 'Misioner'), pp. 20–25, 291–92; Serhij Horin, *Monastyri Luc'ko-Ostroz' koji jeparchiji kincja XV – seredyny XVII stolittja: funkcionuvannja i misce u volyns'komu sociumi* (Kyjiv: Vydavnyčnyj dim 'Kyjevo-Mohyljans'ka akademija', 2012), pp. 407–09; Valery Mickevič, *Katalickija kljaštary ChIV–XVIII stst. u mežach sučasnoj Belarusi* (Minsk: Rymaska-katalickaja parafija Sv. Symona i Sv. Aleny, 2013), pp. 27–56; Jacek Krochmal, 'Rola bazylianów we wprowadzaniu unii kościelnej w eparchii przemysko-samborskiej w latach 1610–1693', in *Zakon bazyliński na tle mozaiki wyznaniowej i kulturowej Rzeczypospolitej i krajów ościennych*, ed. by Stanisław Nabywaniec, Sławomir Zabraniać, and Beata Lorens (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2018), pp. 45–66; Wojciech Walczak, *The Structure of the Uniate Turau-Pinsk Eparchy in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, 2013), pp. 71–94.

<sup>10</sup> Pidručnyj, 'Vasylijans'kyj Cyn vid Berestejs'koho z'jednannja', pp. 138–66; Pidručnyj, *Istoryčnyj narys zakonodavstva Vasylijans'koho Cynu*, pp. 161–68.

<sup>11</sup> Scientific and Historical archive of Saint-Petersburg Institute of History (hereinafter: SPbIH RAS), col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 350, l. 3 ob.

<sup>12</sup> Andrzej Gil, *Kościół wschodnie w Inflantach i ich zaplecze w okresie od XIII do początku XIX wieku* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2019), pp. 173–83.

chapter in immediate subordination to the Kyivan Metropolitan and maintained its old monastic Order.<sup>13</sup>

The Synod of Zamość resolved to consolidate all the Union-adhering monks of the Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese into a single Basilian province.<sup>14</sup> After lengthy discussions, the monasteries from the territories of the newly converted dioceses, including Luts'k, Lviv, Przemyśl, and Kyiv in Right-Bank Ukraine, agreed to adhere to this new format of monastic life. The local monastic traditions to the piety of the Basilian Order were partly adjusted, first by the Diocesan Synod of Przemyśl of 1693, which introduced a superintendent's position that was equal to that of a prior for all monasteries of the dominion,<sup>15</sup> and then by the Union Monastic Synod of 1711,<sup>16</sup> the rulings of which were never approved by the Roman curia. In 1739, those monasteries that entered a 'new union' in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries created a crown (Ruthenian) province, known under the name of the Intercession of the Virgin. This new Crown province was led by a separate archimandrite,<sup>17</sup> which consisted of 130 monasteries and 700 monks, half of which were located in the Lviv and Przemyśl dioceses.<sup>18</sup> At the demand of the Papal cathedra, crown (Polish) Basilians united with their Lithuanian brethren during the Dubno General Capitol of 1743. The Order became known as the Ruthenian Order of St Basil the Great (*Ordo Sancti Basilii Magni Ruthenorum*) and comprised some 200 monasteries and 1150 monks. This act of unification was confirmed the following year by the decree of Pope Benedictus XIV, *Inter plures*. In 1772, the united Basilian Order had 158 monasteries populated by 11,268 brethren, with 72 monasteries in the Lithuanian province that were inhabited by some 600 monks.<sup>19</sup>

After the first Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Belarusian province, situated in the eastern part of the Commonwealth, was separated from Lithuania in 1780, while Halych province was singled out from Pokrov province (the latter one united the monastic

<sup>13</sup> Radosław Dobrowolski, 'Status i rola monasteru supraskiego w dziejach Cerkwi unickiej XVII–XIX w', in *Zakon bazyliański na tle mozaiki wyznaniowej*, pp. 71–78.

<sup>14</sup> *Synodus provincialis Ruthenorum habita in Civitate Zamosciae anno MDCCXX*, ed. by Leo Metropolitanus totius Russiae (Romae, 1724), pp. 107–8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ustawy rządu duchownego i inne pisma biskupa Innocentego Winnickiego*, ed. by Włodzimierz Pilipowicz (Przemyśl: Południowo-Wschodni Instytut Naukowy w Przemyślu, 1998), pp. 44–46.

<sup>16</sup> *Acta Capituli s. d. Unioviensis Basilianorum*, in *Litterae episcoporum historiam Ucrainae illustrantes (1600–1900)*, 1711–1740, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj and Porphyrius B. Pidrutchnyj, 5 vols (Romae: PP. Basiliiani, 1972–1981), V (1981), pp. 80–93. See also: *Acta S. C. de Propaganda Fide Ecclesiam Catholicam Ucrainae et Bielarussiae spectantia, 1710–1740*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj 5 vols (Romae, 1954), III, pp. 48, 52–53, 58, 70–73, 82–83 (№ 880, 886, 893, 908, 910, 916).

<sup>17</sup> *Beata Lorens, Bazylianie prowincji koronnej w latach 1743–1780* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2014), pp. 32–37.

<sup>18</sup> Jurij Stecyk, *Vasylians'ki monastyri Peremyśl's'koji jeparchiji (kinec' XVII–XVIII st.)* (Drohobyč: Misioner, 2014), pp. 48–53.

<sup>19</sup> Ludomir Bienkowski, 'Organizacja Kościoła wschodniego w Polsce', in *Kościół w Polsce. Studia nad historią Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce. Tom 2: Wieki XVI–XVIII*, ed. by Jerzy Kłoczowski, 2 vols (Kraków, 1969) II, pp. 781–1049 (here: 1017); Porfyriy Pidrutchnyj, 'Il "Diario" del Capitolo Basiliano di Dubno (1743) scritto da mons. Giorgio Lascaris (Sull'unione dei Basiliiani in un'Ordine)', *Analecta OSBM*, 14 (1992), 171–226.

communities of Lviv and Przemyśl Greek-Catholic dioceses under the rule of the Habsburg monarchy). In Galicia, Basilian monasteries fell victim to the politics of Enlightened Absolutism, which led to the closure of the majority of the Union monasteries, in line with the policies of Josephinism: Austrian functionaries considered the monasteries not socially beneficial as they did not provide schools or hospitals (at the beginning of Josephinism, Halych province of the Basilian Order comprised 36 monasteries; in 1800, however, just over 20 remained).<sup>20</sup> While some Basilian monasteries within the Austrian monarchy at the end of the eighteenth century suffered under the policies of European Enlightenment, in the Russian Empire, which after 1795 hosted the remaining Union monasteries, the Basilians were persecuted on confessional grounds. All monastic centres of the Basilian Order, as well as other structures of the Greek Union Church, were officially liquidated during the pseudo-Synod in Polotsk in 1839.<sup>21</sup>

Thanks to the participation of priors in monastic *capitula* (congregations, monastic synods), which took place every four years, the unity of the Basilian Order received foundational support. The *capitula* also reviewed internal issues of the Kyivan Union Metropolitan and, according to Father Porfyrii Pidruchnyi's accurate observation, they were 'similar to the semi-synods of the Unified Church and helped it to survive'.<sup>22</sup> During these gatherings of the Ruthenian monastic communities, the necessary decisions (rules, or constitutions)<sup>23</sup> that had a major impact on the unification of the internal life of the Basilian Order were approved. The other effective communication practice was visitation, or revision, which was carried out by archimandrites, protohegumens, or proto-consultors. These evaluation practices helped with the consolidation of the monastic communities and nurtured Basilian piety. Judging by the limited data we have, in the eighteenth century at least 20 full-scale visitations of monasteries located in the Sviatotoits'k province took place.<sup>24</sup> One of the first

- <sup>20</sup> See: Władysław Chotkowski, *Redukcje monasterów Bazyliańskich w Galicji* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1922); *Kasaty klasztorów na obszarze dawnej Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów i na Śląsku na tle procesów sekularyzacyjnych w Europie*, vol. 1: *Geneza. Kasaty na ziemiach zaborów austriackiego i rosyjskiego*, ed. by Marek Derwich, 4 vols (Wrocław: Wrocławskie Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii, 2014); Beata Lorens, 'Bazylianie w Galicji wobec działań kasacyjnych w latach 1772–1792', in *Kasaty klasztorów*, pp. 215–32.
- <sup>21</sup> Valentyna Los', *Uniats'ka Cerkva na Pravoberežnij Ukraini naprykinci XVIII – peršij polovyni XIX st.: orhanizacijna struktura ta kul'turno-relihijnyj aspekt* (Kyjiv: NBUV, 2013); Marian Radwan, 'Bazylianie w zaborze rosyjskim w latach 1795–1839', *Nasza Przyszłość*, 93 (2000), 153–225; Marian Radwan, *Carat wobec Kościoła greckokatolickiego w zaborze rosyjskim 1796–1839* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2004). See also: Viktorija Bilyk and Oksana Karlina, *Žyva spil'nota v impers'komu sviiti: Luc'ka breko-unijna jeparchija kincja XVIII – peršoji tretyni XIX stolit'* (Lviv: Ukrajs'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2018).
- <sup>22</sup> Pidručnyj, 'Počatky Vasyljans'koho čynu', pp. 91–92.
- <sup>23</sup> *Archeografičeskij sbornik dokumentov, odnosjaščichsja k istorii Severo-Zapadnoj Rusi, izdavaemyj pri upravlenii Vilenskogo učebnogo okruga* (hereinafter: ASD), ed. by Pëtr Gil'tebrandt, et al., 14 vols (Vił'na, 1867–1904), XII (1900); Pidručnyj and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 27–367; Meletius Wojnar, *De Capitulis Basilianorum* (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1954).
- <sup>24</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 328; Vienna, Austrian National Library (hereinafter: ÖNB), cod. SN-2798; cod. SN-2799; cod. SN-3838; cod. SN-3847; cod. SN-3849. Review of these materials in: Dzjanis Lisejčykaŭ, 'Materyjaly heneral'nych vizitacyj manastyroŭ Litoŭskaj pravincyi Bazyl'janskaha ordëna XVIII st. u fondach Aŭstryjskaj nacyjanał'naj biblijateki', in *Belaruskaja archyvi na mjažy tysjačahoddzjaŭ: zdabytki i straty. Materyjaly navukova - praktyčnaj kanferëncy, prysvečanaej 80-hoddzju Nacyjanał'naha histaryčnaha archyva Belarusi* (Minsk, 28 červenja 2018 h.) (Minsk, 2019), pp. 197–215.

successful revisions that spread to the vast majority of the monasteries was carried out by Lev (Kyshka) in 1704–1705, during the Great Northern War.<sup>25</sup> The same dynamics can be observed within Pokrov (crown) province, which in 1740–80 saw at least five visitations by protohegumens, covering practically all the Basilian communities of the region.<sup>26</sup>

Following the directive of the Apostolic capital, in 1686 the Basilian Order put its legislation in order for the first time; this legal system was recognized until the Dubno General Capitol of 1743. Later on, protoarchimadrite Lev (Kyshka) produced a new collection of constitutions that covered 26 *capitula* from 1617–1719.<sup>27</sup> In the early 1730s, the well-known Basilian chronicler Ignacy Kulczyński used a handwritten codex from the Church of Saints Vergius and Bacchus in Rome as the basis of a full compendium of the general capitula that he was preparing.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the rules were codified between the end of the seventeenth century and first three decades of the eighteenth century; they had a substantial influence on the development of the particular canon law of the Union Church and the adjustment of the entire ethos of the Kyivan Christianity to the contemporaneous discourse of Catholic universalism.<sup>29</sup>

The monastic community of every Basilian monastery was usually led by a hegumen (prior, superior) or, in some cases, an archimandrite (abbot, or prior). The hegumen would be elected for a duration of four years, for a maximum of two terms. Other brethren in the community served in the roles of vicar (prior of the Basilian diocese), consultor (adviser), sexton (sacristan), preacher, confessor, sacellarius (provisor), pocillator (piwnicz), prefect, pharmacist, professor (docent), etc.<sup>30</sup> Since medieval times, some of the most influential and wealthy monasteries had the status of archdioceses, therefore the leading monastic centres were headed by an archimandrite. This lifetime-long position was held by a prior of noble background; he was recommended ('presented') by a monarch or *ktitor* (benefactor), with the blessings of the Kyivan Metropolitan but without agreement from the Basilian Order, not to mention the monks' brethren.<sup>31</sup>

That is why the archimandrites, high-ranking clergy of the Union Church, were quite independent in their actions, and their activities did not always agree with the interests of the order or monasteries they headed. The dioceses' connections to the *ktitors* (benefactors) complicated their

<sup>25</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 328.

<sup>26</sup> Some of them have already been published: *Vizytaciji vasylijans'kych monastyriiv Peremyšl's'koji jeparchiji 1747–1767 roku*, ed. by Jurij Stecyk (Lviv: Misioner, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 207, l. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Pidručnyj, *Istoryčnyj narys zakonodavstva Vasylijans'koho Čynu*; Wojnar, *De Capitulis Basilianorum*.

<sup>29</sup> Pidručnyj, 'Vasylijans'kyj čyn vid Berestejs'koho z'jednannja (1596) do 1743 r.', in *Analecta Ordinis S. Basilii agni occasione sacri millennii Rus'-Ukraine 988–1988*, fasc. 1–4, XIII (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1988), pp. 144, 147.

<sup>30</sup> Pidručnyj and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 433–9, 445–62. See also: Klimov, *Baziliane*, pp. 74–75.

<sup>31</sup> Patrylo, 'Narys istoriji vasylijan', p. 201.



standing even further, leading to many misunderstandings and arguments within the Basilian Order. This was caused by the fact that the nature of the relationships between the monasteries and their numerous benefactors was in many ways determined by the 'right of patronage' (*ius patronatus*).<sup>32</sup> Legally established supreme rights of secular patrons to property that had been donated to the Church, as well as the right to dispose of and govern such property, presented the magnates with a wide range of opportunities to interfere with the internal affairs of Basilian monasteries. At the same time, this state of affairs limited the contact between the Church and society.

As an attempt to avoid further misuse, during the *capitula* in Wilno (1667) and Żyrowicze (1675), the liquidation of all archdioceses within the Basilian Order was announced, and the Basilians even attained some success by enforcing this decision (in particular, the status of archdiocese was removed from Wilno monastery).<sup>33</sup> However, because of opposition from part of the Union episcopate, as well as Basilian elites and magnates, this decision was not fully put into action. Further instances of nominating inappropriate candidates for the archimandrite administration destabilized the steady rhythm of the monasteries' devotional *modus vivendi*. Despite decisions taken at the Basilian *capitulum* that followed afterwards, specifically the one at Nahorodowicze in 1703, until the end of the eighteenth century the royal court in Warsaw produced nomination charters for the archimandrite administrations.<sup>34</sup> The secular authorities were disinterested in the liquidation of administrations as this would make them lose influence in the process of appointing high-ranking Basilians. The other opponents of liquidation were among the multiple candidates for the position of archimandrite from within the circles of the Catholic gentry of both Latin and Eastern rites. These candidates were seduced by a prestigious church career and the abundant benefits. Despite the resolutions of the 1719 Nahorodowicze *capitulum*, which renewed the fourth Basilian sacrament not to seek any appointments within the church, the candidates in question, who were hungry for their slice of 'spiritual bread', were performing outright simony.<sup>35</sup>

According to the Basilian rules, each monastic community included two groups of novices: brethren-priests (hieromonks) and brethren-helpers

<sup>32</sup> Jean Gaudemet, *Storia del diritto canonico. Ecclesia et Civitas* (San Paolo, 1998), pp. 710–20; Bogumił Szady, *Prawo patronatu w Rzeczypospolitej w czasach nowożytnych. Podstawy i struktura* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Drukarnia LIBER, 2003), pp. 5–7; Boris Florja, *Issledovanija po istorii Cerkvi. Drevnerusskoe i slavjanskoe srednevekov'e. Sbornik* (Moskva, 2007), p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> ASD, XII, pp. 95, 110; *Kultūrų kryžkelė: Vilniaus Švč. Trejybės šventovė ir vienuolynas*, ed. by Alfredas Bumblauskas, Šalvijus Kulevičius, and Ihoris Skočiliasas (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2017), pp. 110–11.

<sup>34</sup> Lithuanian State History Archive (hereinafter: LVIA), f. 1178, ap. 1, b. 374, l. 22; *Akty, izdavaemye Vilenskoj Archeografičeskoj komissiej* (hereinafter: AVAK), 39 vols (Vil'na, 1865–1915), IX (1878), pp. 437–50; ASD, X (1874), p. 317 (№ 43).

<sup>35</sup> *Litterae basilianorum*, I, pp. 265–6 (№ 163); Porfyrrij Pidručnyj, *Istoričnyj narys zakonodavstva Vasylijans'koho Čynu Svjatoho Josafata (1617–2018)* (L'viv: Misioner, 2018), pp. 187–9; Wojnar, *De capitulis basilianorum*, p. 22.

(lay persons). The Order accepted Catholics of Latin and Slavic-Byzantine rites, regardless of their ethnic, geographical, or social background. This approach made it possible for the representatives of various ethnic groups and confessions to be included the Basilian milieu. At the same time, the Orthodox monks (schemamonks) were not accepted 'unless somebody showed great promise of being beneficial for the [Basilian] Order'.<sup>36</sup>

One was allowed to profess perpetual vows (*złōżyć profesję*) at the age of sixteen (the upper age limit was mostly not fixed), corresponding with the practice of the post-Trident Catholic Church. According to the data provided by the Belarusian researcher Serhiy Klimov, in the second half of the eighteenth century the median age of those accepted into Basilian monasteries was 23–26 years, with a distinct tendency toward younger novices.<sup>37</sup> Candidates for priesthood were expected to know how to read and write; once they had matured spiritually, the young novices took the perpetual vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty. Rotation between monasteries was a necessary requirement: every four years the monks had to change cloister, and this rule was usually strictly observed.<sup>38</sup>

Because the Basilian Order was open to the idea of serving the Church and society in the broad sense of this word, from the 1620s hieromonks were predominant within its midst (according to the Nahorodowicze *capitulum* of 1675, they vowed not to seek any high ranks within the Union Church),<sup>39</sup> while lay persons (who were mostly engaged in household tasks and were allowed reduced participation in the worship and liturgy) constituted a small part of the brethren-monks; in line with the Lauryshava *capitulum* of 1621, they were required to never seek priesthood. As of 1773, the Lithuanian province of the Basilian Order consisted of 2.8% of lay persons but almost 72% of monks.<sup>40</sup> A similar situation was observed in Pokrov province, particularly in Przemyśl diocese, where, in the six monasteries and four residences, hieromonks constituted two thirds of all monks, who were recruited from the milieu of small gentry and middle-class families, with a noticeably increasing number of representatives of peasantry.<sup>41</sup>

During the seventeenth century and (to some extent) the eighteenth century, the institutional and spiritual centre of not only the Basilian Order but also the Union Church in its entirety was the monastery complex

<sup>36</sup> Pidručnyj and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 126, 142, 164, 181.

<sup>37</sup> Klimov, *Baziliane*, pp. 61–64.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> ASD, XII, pp. 109–10.

<sup>40</sup> Bienkowski, 'Organizacja Kościoła wschodniego w Polsce', pp. 106–7.

<sup>41</sup> Relevant calculations can be found in Stecyk, *Vasylians'ki monastyri Peremyśl's'koji jeparchiji*; Jurij Stecyk, *Černectvo Sajatopokrov's'koji provinciji ČSVV (1739–1783 rr.): prosopohrafične dosližennja* (Drohobyč: Redakcijno-Vydavnyčyj Viddil Drohobyc'koho Deržavnoho Pedahohičnoho Universytetu Imeni Ivana Franka, 2018).

on Sviatotoits'k mount in Wilno.<sup>42</sup> Here, the codification of the Eastern rite Catholics' experience of unity with Rome took place. The new ideal of monastic piety – with its distinctive spirituality that included both Eastern ascetic practices and Latin institutionalized monasticism – had formed here as well. Having joined the elite ecclesiastical circles of Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese, the Wilno Basilians for a long time determined the Union Church's strategy and tactics for the reception of contemporaneous cultural codes. The arrival at Sviatotoits'k monastery of the energetic Yosyf (Veliamyn Ruts'ky), a former Calvinist brilliantly educated in the West, as well as charismatic Yosafat (Kuntsevych), who laid the foundations for the spiritual renewal of the Union Church monastic community, enabled the Ruthenian monks to unite the Basilian Order. From that moment until the mid-eighteenth century, Sviatotoits'k monastery functioned as a 'seminary' for the entire Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese. Almost half of Wilno archimandrites and hegumens later became bishops and metropolitans, and most of them occupied leading positions within the Order. It was in Wilno that the ethno-confessional identity *Slavia Unita* started taking shape, and it was from here that, thanks to the efforts of the local Basilians, the ritual and socio-cultural practices of the Union-adhering Ruthenians spread to all territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Concurrently, in the mid-eighteenth century the influence of the Basilian Order on the internal life of the Union Church started to decrease. As a result of the administrative reform that transformed the institutional-representative model of diocese governing (via appointing the Basilians to key positions) into a personal-elective one (via creating competitive recruitment for the best representatives of secular clergy), the majority of hieromonks were removed from the high-ranking church governance and the wealthy benefice. These changes were especially full of strife in Lviv and Przemyśl dioceses, where in 1740–80 a number of legal disputes took place between the metropolitans and secular clergy on one hand, and the Basilians on the other. The disputed matters included the right of ownership to the monasteries and cathedrals, privileges, leading positions in the diocese

<sup>42</sup> The history of this monastery can be traced in more detail in the collective monograph: *Na perechrest'i kul'tur: Monastyr i chram Presvjatoji Trijci u Vil'njusi*, ed. by Al'fredas Bumblauskas, Sal'vijus Kuljavičius, and Ihor Skočyljas (Vil'njus, 2017) (Lithuanian version: *Kultūry kryžkelė: Vilniaus Švč. Trejybės šventovė ir vienuolynas*, ed. by Al'fredas Bumblauskas, Salvijus Kulevičius, and Ihoris Skočiliasas (Vilnius, 2017)). See also additional sources of reprints of this work: *Na perechrest'i kul'tur: Monastyr i chram Presvjatoji Trijci u Vil'njusi: Kolektyvna monografija*, ed. by Al'fredas Bumblauskas, Sal'vijus Kuljavičius, and Ihor Skočyljas, 2nd edn (Lviv: Ukrajin's'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2019). See also: Tomasz Kempa, 'Unicki ośrodek zakonny w Wilnie i jego rola w reformie bazylianów przeprowadzonej przez metropolitę Józefa Welamina Rutskiego', in *Zakon bazyliński na tle mozaiki wyznaniowej*, pp. 13–29.

*kliroi-capitula* and other institutions of the metropolitan courts, as well as soul-shepherding within the cloisters that had the status of parishes.<sup>43</sup>

#### FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE BASILIAN ORDER: YOSYF (VELIAMYN RUTS'KY) AND YOSAFAT (KUNTSEVYCH)

Two figures played a special role in the history of the Basilian Order and without doubt can be considered the founding fathers of this union. We are talking here about the talented, energetic, and well-educated Yosyf (his secular name was Ivan) Veliamyn Ruts'ky (1574–1637),<sup>44</sup> as well as Yosafat (known as Ivan in the secular world) Kuntsevych, a man deeply devoted to prayer, monastic asceticism and *imitatio Christi*. They were drawn together by friendship, ideals, dedication to the Union, the shared experiences of the monastic calling, the overcoming of hardships, and decisive courage when advocating for the *dignitas* of Ruthenian Catholicism. Even though their social background and experiences differed, their personalities complemented one another due to their special charisma and personal resolve to sacrifice their own careers in the name of the common good. Ruts'ky and Kuntsevych became the founding fathers of the Basilian Order and, to some extent, of the entire Ruthenian–Belarusian Union Church; they also educated its first ecclesiastic elite.

Yosyf (Ruts'ky) originated from the Veliamyns, a noble family of Tatar background that had been known in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since the late fifteenth century.<sup>45</sup> His parents were Calvinists; Yosyf, however, having been baptized by an Orthodox priest under the influence of Jesuits, converted at a young age to Catholicism. During his studies at the Pontifical Greek College of St Athanasius in Rome, Ruts'ky discovered his calling for the monastic life and even considered joining the Society of Jesus. Nevertheless, at the insistence of the Holy Father he decided to accept the Eastern rite. The *Hagiography of Yosyf Veliamyn Ruts'ky (Vita Josephi Velamini Rutski [Rutscii])*, compiled by one of Yosyf's students, Rafail

<sup>43</sup> Ihor Skočyljas, *Halyc'ka (Lviv's'ka) jeparchija XII–XVIII stolit': orbanizacijna struktura ta pravovyj status* (Lviv: Ukrajins'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2010), pp. 641–44.

<sup>44</sup> For more about him, see: Sofija Senyk, 'Dva mytropolyty – Potij i Ruts'kyj', in *Istoryčnyj kontekst, ukladennja Berestejs'koho uniji ta perše pouinijne pokolinnja: Materialy Peršych 'Berestejs'kych čytan'* (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Kyjiv, 1–6 žovtnja 1994 r.), ed. by Borys Gudzyak, and Oleh Turij (Lviv, 1995), pp. 137–48, 149–72; Sophia Senyk, 'Rutskyj's Reform and Orthodox Monasticism: A Comparison. Eastern Rite Monasticism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Seventeenth Century', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 48:2 (1982), 406–30; Mirosław Szegda, *Działalność prawno-organizacyjna metropolity Józefa IV Welamina Rutkiego (1613–1637)* (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1967).

<sup>45</sup> Denis Lisejčikov, 'Zaveščanie mitropolita Iosifa Vel'jamina Rutskogo', in *Zaveščanja uniatskich ierarchoh Kievskoj mitropolii XVII i XVIII vv. kak primer religioznoj kul'tury obščestva Reči Pospolitoj*, ed. Andžej Gil' (Ljublin, 2016), pp. 47–73 (here: 49–51, 56–57); Dzjanis Lisejčykaŭ, "Pjaci haloŭnych šturmaŭ...": Duchoŭny tastament mitrapalita Kieŭskaha, Halickaha i Usěj Rusi Iosifa Vel'jamina-Ruckaha 1627 hoda', *Belaruski histarėn časopis*, 3 (2020), 13–20.

(Korsak) in 1640, reveals the extremely rich spiritual life and organizational activity of the future Kyivan Metropolitan.<sup>46</sup>

Ruts'ky's missionary trip to Moscow in 1605–06 as part of the pontifical mission of Discalced Carmelites was an important phase of his evolution, as were his conversations with Pope Paul V and Roman cardinals in the summer of 1606 regarding the conversion of the Eastern Slavic lands. Upon his return to Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese in September 1607, Ivan Ruts'ky entered the novitiate of the Holy Trinity monastery in Wilno, accepted the monk's cassock and the name of Yosyf, and not long after completed his perpetual vows and bestowed his family estate Ruta upon the monastery. In 1608, Ruts'ky became a hieromonk, and the following year he was appointed as the archimandrite and headed the monastic community in Wilno.

As a young prior, Ruts'ky stood out not only with his organizational talent but also his personal virtues, which attracted middle-class Ruthenians, Eastern rite clergy, and generous benefactors. It was he who used prayers, personal asceticism, and humility to lay down the foundations of the Basilian virtues; moreover, following St Basil's rules, he brought up the first generation of young Union-adhering monks in the Holy Trinity monastery, as well as in the neighbouring cloisters in Byten', Żyrowicze, Mins'k, and Nahorodowicze (there was an unsuccessful attempt to replicate this experience in Kyiv, specifically in Vydubychi monastery).<sup>47</sup>

Ruts'ky initiated a strict monastic charter in all these cloisters, thus attracting the most-devoted young men who wanted to dedicate their lives to God:

At the monastery, Ruts'ky introduced daily contemplations and scrutiny of conscience. He dutifully observed the canon rules according to the Eastern rite, partook in modest communal meals, and took part in recreational activities. Archimandrite Yosyf lectured on the history of Church, taught Latin, Greek, and Old Church Slavonic languages, and taught the monks perfection in religious matters in accordance with St Basil's admonitions. The Liturgy of the Hours was held daily at the monastery so that the novices could take communion. The Holy Trinity Church was open to those faithful who wished to partake in the Holy Sacraments. Young monks continued

<sup>46</sup> Miroslaw Szegda, "Vita Rutsicii": Prima biographia Josephi Velamin Rutskyj, Metr opolitaie Kioviensis (1613–1637); *Analecta OSBM: Miscellanea in honorem Cardinalis Isidori (1463–1963)*, 4:1–2 (1963), 135–82 (here: 135–43).

<sup>47</sup> Ihor Skočyljas, "Jeparchijal'nyj sobor Unijnioji Cerkvy v Kyjevi 1610 roku: mytropolyčyj namisnyk Antonij (Hrekovyč) suproty pravoslavnoho duchovenstva, miščan i kozakiv", in *V orbity chrystyjans'koji kul'tury. (Materialy naukovoji konferenciji do 1030-riččja chreščennja Rusi; Kyjiv, 25–26 žovtnja 2018 roku)*, ed. by Ihor Skočyljas and Maksym Jaremenko, *Kyjivs'ke chrystyjanstvo*, 21 (L'viv: Ukrajin's'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2020), pp. 129–40 (here: 131–32).

their spiritual and theological training at the Metropolitan Seminary, while the most gifted ones studied at Wilno Jesuit Academy or went to study abroad, mainly to pontifical colleges.<sup>48</sup>

In his two treatises, *Account by a Certain Ruthenian Regarding Reformation of the Eastern Rite* (*Discursus*, 1606) and *Union Programme* (*Programma Unionis*, 1606),<sup>49</sup> Yosyf Ruts'ky offered his own programme for the renewal of the 'Ruthenian faith' by means of reforming Eastern monasticism. Having diagnosed as weary the contemporaneous state of the Union Church ('our unhappiness stems from two reasons: a lack of education for our leaders, and a lack of perfection and holiness'<sup>50</sup>), Ruts'ky proposed reorganizing the monastic community in Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese to follow the format of Western monastic orders. As a result of such a reform, well-educated and saintly monks would emerge – 'confessors and good preachers'; new educational institutions would 'produce good priests and worthy statesmen'. All in all, the most important ecclesiastical governing bodies would be headed by well-trained monks with solid theological education. Ruts'ky had high hopes for Jesuits and Discalced Carmelites – well-trained monks who were ready to accept the Eastern rite and the local monastic practices – and appealed to have them sent to Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese. The future prospects included the initiation of the missionary work in the East, in Muscovy state, by the reinvigorated Union-adhering monastic communities.

Yosyf (Ruts'ky) narrated the spiritual and organizational principals of the Basilian monasticism in his *General Rules*, *Specific Rules*, and *Capitular Charters*,<sup>51</sup> as well as *Rules for the Bishops* (1636).<sup>52</sup> These texts followed the format of the monastic charters of St Basil the Great, as well as the Latin legal system, foremost the Society of Jesus' *Rules*. Ruts'ky's monastic teachings were approved by Rome in 1624 and until this day remain the foundation for the Order of St Basil's activities in Ukraine and the world.<sup>53</sup> As Kyivan Metropolitan in 1613–37, Yosyf (Ruts'ky) introduced three more *capitula* in Ruty (1623), Lauryshava (1626), and Wilno (1636),<sup>54</sup> thus setting an example to follow and creating the foundation for the Basilian legislation.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted after: Pavlo Krečianas and Vasilis Parasiukas, 'Švč. Trejybės unitų vienuolynas ir Bazilijonų ordino steigimas', in *Kultūry kryžkelė*, pp. 80–91 (here: 86–87).

<sup>49</sup> Pidručnyj and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 371–80; Porfyrij Pidručnyj, 'Dva prohramovi pysannja Ruts'koho: Discursus i Programma Unionis', *Analecta OSBM*, 15 (1974), 24–47; id., *Istoričnyj narys zakonodavstva Vasylijans'koho Čynu*, pp. 28–35.

<sup>50</sup> Pidručnyj and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, p. 372.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 391–497.

<sup>52</sup> *Epistolae metropolitanarum kioviensium catholicorum: Josephi Velamin Rutskyj Metropolitae Kioviensis catholici* (1613–1637), ed. by Theodosius T. Haluščynskyj, and Athanasius G. Welykyj (Romae, 1956), pp. 369–80 (№ 188).

<sup>53</sup> One of the many compendiums of these rules was published in the mid-eighteenth century by the printery of the Pochaiv Monastery: *Summariusz regul świętego oycy naszego Bazylego Wielkiego, z Regul obszerniejszych y Krotkszych, z Konstytucyi Mniskich, y Nauk lego Zakonnych, w kretce zebrany* (Poczajów, 1751).

<sup>54</sup> Pidručnyj and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 27–367.

The model for the Basilian monasticism that was formulated by Ruts'ky entailed a union of the Eastern Byzantine and Western Latin piety: the ascetic contemplative life of the Orthodox priests and active cultural, religious, and social engagement with contemporaneous society, which was characteristic of the Catholic Orders and congregations (Jesuits in particular). The reform of Yosyf (Ruts'ky) caused an actual upheaval in the activities of the Union-adhering monks that, in a manner of saying, made them face the world. It seems that only the 'reverend ladies' or the Basilian Sisters continued to observe the traditional setup of monastic life, serving God according to the Basilian rules compiled by Ruts'ky.<sup>55</sup> However, since many of them came from elite backgrounds, even the nuns maintained sufficiently intense socio-economic and cultural-educational relationships with the secular world.

The other founding father of the Basilian Order, St Yosafat (Kuntsevych),<sup>56</sup> was a man of 'many worlds' of the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was probably born in the Ukrainian town of Volodymyr in Volhynia, spending his youth and the formative years of his monastic life in Lithuanian Wilno; his archimandrite service took place in Belarusian Polotsk; his relics remained in Biała Podlaska, Poland for quite some time and are now kept at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, Rome. Kuntsevych was rooted in the contemporaneous Ruthenian culture; he did not know any Latin, and as a rule he used Polish in public discourse; neither did he receive proper education, theological or otherwise. Despite that, he was well versed in the Holy Bible, the foundations of faith, and the teachings of the Church Fathers. First and foremost, Ivan (Yosafat) was a man of prayer who was deeply engaged with spiritual asceticism. As the beatification processes of 1628 and 1637 testify, he imparted incredible influence on Latin, Union, and Orthodox monks alike.<sup>57</sup>

In 1604, the young Kuntsevych joined the Wilno Holy Trinity monastery and became a living icon, serving as a model for the righteous life of the Eastern monk-anchorite within the Union Church. He spent

<sup>55</sup> Oleh Duch, *Prevelební panny: Žinoči černeči spil'noty L'vivs'koji ta Peremyšl's'koji jeparchij u rann'omodernyj period* (L'viv: Ukrajin's'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2017); Sophia Senyk, *Women's Monasteries in Ukraine and Belorussia to the Period of Suppressions* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1983).

<sup>56</sup> See the section on his beatification and canonization published by Basylians in Rome: S. *Josaphat Hieromartyr. Documenta Romana Beatificationis et Canonisationis*, ed. Athanasius G. Welykyj, 3 vols (Romae, 1952–1967) (their translation into Ukrainian: *Svjatij Josafat Kuncevyč. Dokumenty ščodo beatyfikaciji: Dokumenty ščodo beatyfikaciji (1623–1628 rr.). Katechyzm, ukladenyj Josafatom Kuncevyčem. Pravyla i konstytuciji, napysani svjatyj Josafatom dlja svojich svjaščenykiu*, ed., trans., by Josafat Romanyk [Zovkva: Misioner, 2010]). A special edition of the collection, published for the 100th anniversary of Kuntsevich's canonization, is also noteworthy: *Analecta OSBM. Miscellanea in honorem S. Josaphat*, 6:1–4 (1967). There are the following works in Belarusian historiography: *Ėpistaljacija S'vjatoha Jazafata: Zbor dakumentaŭ*, ed. by Michas' Baŭtovič (Polacak: Hrėka-katalickaja parafija S'vjatapakutnika Jazafata, 2006); Vaclaŭ Panucėvič, *S'vjaty Jazafat, arcbjapiskap polacki* (Polacak: Safija, 2000), in Polish: Alphonse Guėpin, *Żywot ś. Jozafata Kuncewicza męczenika, arcybiskupa Polockiego rit. gr. opowiedziany na tle historii kościoła ruskiego wedlug dzieła O. Alfonsa Guėpin, z przedmową H. Kalinki CR* (Lwów, 1885); Jan Urban, *Św. Józafat Kuncewicz: biskup i męczennik* (Kraków, 1921). Basilian perspective on the activities of this ascetic of the union is represented in the book: Pavlo Krečun, *Cvjatij Josafat Kuncevyč (1580–1623) jak svidok viry v eposi religijnoji kontroversiji* (L'viv: Misioner, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> S. *Josaphat Hieromartyr*, I, pp. 11 (№ 3), 147 (№ 71), 176 (№ 71), 177 (№ 71), 181 (№ 71); II, pp. 223, 289 (№ 137).

most of his time in vigils, wore a sackcloth at all times, engaged in self – flagellation, limited his food and drink, and showed a distinct affinity with Christian ascetism. He was provided with spiritual nourishment by hagiographies and the legacy of Church Fathers, as well as Kyivan-Ruthenian literature such as Pechers'ky Paterikon, *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Metropolitan Hilarion, chronicles, and other texts.<sup>58</sup> His contemporaries attributed Kuntsevych's charismatic influence on Wilno monks and the entire Ruthenian ethno-confessional community to his virtuous life as a monk and priest. Together with Yosyf (Ruts'ky), he initiated a hermitic and communal form of monastic life, known as *koinonia*, in Kyiv Union Metropolitan archdiocese:

The servant of God was used to rising before the others... Upon entering the church, he always served [Midnight Office] and sang [Prime]. The voice that God granted him with was angelic; he had an utmost admiration for singing... Having finished [Prime], he would immediately leave the monastery, and the same would happen after dinner; he visited the houses of schismatics, strengthened their faith, and encouraged them to go to Holy Confession. Otherwise, he would stop by the hospital at the Holy Trinity monastery and serve the sick in various manners: kiss their feet, give them a bath, move them from one place to another, adjust their beds, and feed them. If he could not be found at the monastery or the church, he would be there [at the hospital]. At times, they said that a church or a hospital served as his cell.<sup>59</sup>

Thanks to the personal testimony of Kuntsevych and his brethren, whom he brought up in the novitiate, a renewal of the spiritual (in part, devotional), liturgical, and monastic life took place in Wilno, which was the heart of the young Union Church at the time. Gradually, these new religious practices spread to the other Ruthenian Union centres of Kyiv Metropolitan archdiocese (parishes, monasteries, and fraternities), thus providing an example to follow and facilitating the forming of *Slavia Unita* and the appearance of the Basilian Order.

Concurrently, as hegumen and archimandrite of Wilno monastery, and later as archbishop of Polotsk (1618–1623), Yosafat (Kuntsevych) displayed determination and pertinacity with the questions of doctrine, advocating for the Union of Brest and the conversion of the Orthodox

<sup>58</sup> Sophia Senyk, 'The Sources of the Spirituality of St. Josaphat Kuncsevych', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 51 (1985), 425–36 (its translation into Ukrainian: Sofija Senyk, *Duchovnyj profil' sv. Josafata Kuncsevyc'a* [L'viv: Svičado, 1994], pp. 10–11).

<sup>59</sup> *Svjatyj Josafat Kuncsevyc. Dokumenty ščodo beatyfikaciji*, p. 148.



monks, who called him a 'soul snatcher', to Ruthenian Catholicism. The methods used by Kuntsevych to subordinate the Ruthenians to his ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Vitebsk and Polotsk voivodeships provoked not only resistance within the Orthodox milieu but also rejection by Catholics dedicated to the Union, such as the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania Lew Sapieha (1557–1633).<sup>60</sup>

After the murder of Yosafat (Kuntsevych) by a crowd of middle-class city dwellers in Wilno on 12 November 1623, his cult formed; it was supported and promoted mostly in the Basilian milieu. The veneration of this martyr fit ideally with the new Catholic identity of the Union Ruthenia, personifying its rootedness in the Eastern Christian (Kyivan) tradition, shaping its own historical-ecclesiastical memory, demonstrating the political loyalty of the Union-adhering population to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and testifying to the elite status of the Basilian monks in the public sphere of the contemporaneous society. Not long after the martyrdom of the Polotsk archbishop and at the initiative of Kyivan Metropolitan Yosyf (Ruts'ky), the Rome curia started the beatification process (the sessions of the special commission took place in 1628 and 1637<sup>61</sup>), which led to Yosafat (Kuntsevych) being endowed with the status of 'blessed one' by Pope Urban VIII in 1642. In 1867, he was also pronounced a saint of the Catholic Church.<sup>62</sup>

King and Grand Duke Władysław IV Vasa (1632–48)<sup>63</sup> took part in the festive reception of the papal bull which proclaimed Kuntsevych the 'blessed one'; the ceremony took place in Wilno, which at that time was the capital of the Metropolitan archdiocese of Kyiv and all Rus'. In the description of the festivities put together in 1642 by the Jesuit Stanisław Rostowski (*Decretum excepit insignis Vilnae celebritas, praesente Rege Vladislao*), the nationwide character of this celebration was emphasized:

After festive fireworks and a military parade in the suburbs, finely dressed warriors and other participants set off from the Cathedral, walking in three columns. In one column marched those who represented the troops of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah from the *Old Testament*; the second column apparently portrayed the army of the Indian prince Josaphat;<sup>64</sup> the third column consisted of academy members and was followed by a triumphal carriage decorated with the icon of the holy martyr, as well as

<sup>60</sup> See his letter to Kuntsevych dated 12 March 1622 published in: Tadeusz Żychiewicz, *Jozafat Kuncewicz* (Kalwaria Zebrzydowska: Calvarianum, 1986), pp. 159–71.

<sup>61</sup> *S. Josaphat Hieromartyr*, I, pp. 1–2.

<sup>62</sup> Kerstin S. Jobst, 'Transnational and Trans-Denominational Aspects of the Veneration of Josaphat Kuntsevych', *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 37 (2012), 9–15.

<sup>63</sup> Stanisław Rostowski, *Lituanicarum Societatis Jesu historiarum provincialium pars prima* (Vilnae, 1768), p. 357.

<sup>64</sup> According to the legend, an Indian king persecuted the Christian Church in his realm after astrologers predicted that his own son would become a Christian. The king imprisoned the young Prince Josaphat, who nevertheless met the hermit Saint Barlaam and converted to Christianity.

musical accompaniment (there was a children's choir here, some singing, recitation, trumpets, etc.). When the procession reached the triumphal gates near the Holy Trinity Church, the entire group of Basilian monks walked toward it with 'Greek' prayer melodies rising from their lips (*Graecanicis cantibus excipiens*). By the altar displaying the image of Kuntsevych, the rector of the academy served the Divine Liturgy, during which the martyr was venerated in Polish by Father Honchel. Father Albert Ceciszewski preached during the evening sermon, while one more sermon was delivered in Latin.<sup>65</sup>

In the papal *breve*, the commemoration of Kuntsevych was scheduled for 12 November (2 November by the Julian calendar, the day of his martyrdom); in the Metropolitan archdiocese of Kyiv, however, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the September honouring of the blessed one gained in popularity. This is why, in 1670, in response to the request of Metropolitan Cyprian (Żochowski), the Sacred Congregation of Rites authorized the celebration date to be moved from 12 November to 26 September. This decision was partially practical in that it allowed the pilgrims to travel to the sepulchre of Yosafat at St Sophia's Archcathedral in Polotsk. Later on, Żochowski added this festival as an obligatory liturgical celebration to the Missal that he had printed in 1692, thereby spreading its canonical legitimacy to the entire Ruthenian Church. As 26 September (16 September by the Julian calendar) would often fall on a weekday, the Basilian *capitulum* of 1703 in Nahorodowicze agreed to hold the celebration on the nearest Sunday.<sup>66</sup> The Volodymyr Diocese Union of 1715, summoned by Bishop Lev (Kyshka), adjusted the martyr's cult to local traditions, ordering "to celebrate the festive occasion of St Yosafat on the first Sunday after 27 September according to the new calendar". The devotional practice of celebrating it on other days was also maintained "according to the custom".<sup>67</sup>

Even though the cult of the Polotsk holy martyr did not essentially influence the territorial spread of the Union in the Metropolitan archdiocese of Kyiv, it nevertheless became a basic constituent of

<sup>65</sup> Mintautas Čiurinskas, 'Vaizdai XVII a. raštijoje', in *Kultūry kryžkelė*, pp. 157–76 (here: 160–61).

<sup>66</sup> Borys Balyk, 'Z istoriji kul'tu sv. Josafata v Peremys'kij jeparchiji (XVII/XVIII st.)', *Analecta OSBM*, 8:1–4 (1973), 43–62 (pp. 44–45, 48); Stefan Rohdewald, 'Medium unierter konfessioneller Identität oder polnisch-ruthenischer Einigung? Zur Verehrung Josafat Kuncsevycs im 17. Jahrhundert', in *Kommunikation durch symbolische Akte. Religiöse Heterogenität und politische Herrschaft in Polen-Litauen*, ed. by Yvonne Kleinmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010), pp. 271–90.

<sup>67</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 50, l. 42; Ihor Skočyljas, *Relihija ta kul'tura Zachidnoji Volyni* (Lviv: Ukrajin's'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2008), pp. 30–31.

the new Ruthenian-Catholic identity among laymen, clergy, and nobles in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, including those adhering to the Latin rite.<sup>68</sup>

This process was largely facilitated by the contemporaneous hagiography and eulogic literature which started to appear en masse within the Catholic intellectual milieu of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and of Rome. The first such work was *Relatio*, a hagiography of Kuntsevych, published in 1624 by Illia (Morokhovsky) and Yosyf (Ruts'ky). The following year saw the funeral sermon delivered by Lev (Krevza) after the martyr's death.<sup>69</sup> The popularization of Kuntsevych's spiritual personality was further supported by Jesuit Albert Wijuk Kojalowicz's lengthy *Miscellanea regarding the State of the Church in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania* (1650),<sup>70</sup> as well as a 1675 treatise by Andrzej Młodzianowski, *Symbolic Images of Life and Death of the Blessed Yosafat the Martyr* (*Icones symbolice vitae et mortis B. Josaphat martyris*); the latter is a Baroque masterpiece of contemporaneous literature.<sup>71</sup> Within the Union church, sacralization of the Polotsk holy martyr was confirmed with the 1665 publication in Rome of a fundamental work by Chełmno bishop and protoarchimandrite of the Basilian Order, Jakub (Susza), *The Flow of Life and the Martyrdom of the Blessed Yosafat Kuntsevych* (*Cursus vitae, et certamen martyrii, B. Iosaphat Kuncevicii*), as well as the emergence of iconography surrounding the saint.

After the Deluge in the middle of the seventeenth century, the first public veneration of Yosafat (Kuntsevych) took place in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the fall of 1667.<sup>72</sup> Well-attended ceremonies were organized that entailed the transportation of St Yosafat's relics from Żyrowicze monastery to Wilno and farther on to Polotsk. The main celebratory events took place on 25 September in the capital of the Polish-Lithuanian

<sup>68</sup> Andrzej Gil, 'Kult Jozafata Kuncewicza i jego pierwsze przedstawienia ikonowe w Rzeczypospolitej (do połowy XVII wieku). Zarys problematyki', in *Kościół wschodnie w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku. Zbiór studiów* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2005), pp. 65–72; Tomasz Kempa, 'Czy męczennika śmierć arcybiskupa Jozafata Kuncewicza przyczyniła się do rozwoju unii brzeskiej na obszarze archidiecezji połockiej?', in *ibid.*, pp. 93–105; Tomasz Kempa, 'Recepcja unii brzeskiej na obszarze Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego i ziem ruskich Korony do połowy XVII wieku', *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 3 (2005), 141–70 (here: 170); Tomasz Kempa, 'Unia i prawosławie w Witebsku w czasie rządów biskupich Jozafata Kuncewicza i po jego męczenniczej śmierci (do połowy XVII wieku)', in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Etniczne, kulturowe i religijne pogranicza Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku*, vol. 3: ed. by Krzysztof Mikulski and Agnieszka Zielińska-Nowicka (Toruń: Mado, 2005), pp. 135–54.

<sup>69</sup> [Leon Kreuzza], *Kazanie o świętobliwym żywocie i chwalebnej śmierci Przewielebnego w Bodze oycza Iosaphata Kuncewicza Arcybiskupa Połockiego, Witebskiego y Mściśławskiego w cerkwi Cathedralnej Połockiej przy depozycyey ciała jego odprawowane od oycza Leona Kreuzza Nominata na Episkopstwo Smolenskie. Za wolą y ukazaniem starszycy z Ruskiego języka na polski przelożone y w druk podane*, ([Wilno], 1625), p. [B3 v.].

<sup>70</sup> *Miscellanea rerum ad statum ecclesiasticum in Magno Lituaniae Ducatu pertinentium, collecta ab Alberto Wuiuk Kojalowicz Societ. Iesu, S. Theol. Doct. Almae Universitatis Vilnensis Procancelario, et Ordinario S. Theol. Professore vulgata Superiorum permissu*, (Vilnae, 1650). Publication with the translation into Luthainian: Albertas Vijūkas-Kojalavičius, 'Ivairėnybės apie Bažnyčios būklę Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštijoje', in *Lietuvos istorijos įvairėnybės*, 2 vols (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2003–2004), II, pp. 8–275.

<sup>71</sup> Mintautas Čiurinskas, 'Biografiniai šaltiniai ir barokinės literatūros tradicija', in *Palaimintojo kankinio Juozapato, Połocko arkivyskupo, gyvenimo ir mirties simboliniai atvaizdai: šaltinis, vertimas ir studija*, ed. by Andrzej Młodzianowski (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademija, 2015), pp. 401–43 (here: 435–41).

<sup>72</sup> Liepa Griciūtė-Svėradienė, *XVII–XVIII a. bažnytinės procesijos Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje* (Vilnius: Vilniaus Dailės Akademijos, 2011), pp. 26–32, 195–202; Tomasz Kempa, *Konflikty wyznaniowe w Wilnie od początku reformacji do końca XVII wieku* (Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 2016), pp. 476–77; Čiurinskas, 'Vaizdai XVII a. raštijoje', pp. 168–71.

Commonwealth, at the Cathedral of the Intercession of the Virgin, with the participation of Metropolitan Havryil (Kolenda), the Wilno Roman-Catholic bishop Aleksander-Kazimierz Sapieha (1667–1671), members of the Wilno Latin *capitulum*, numerous Lithuanian senators, and a large number of adherents of the Latin rite and the Union. From the Metropolitan archdiocese cathedral, the festive procession, consisting of soldiers, musicians, middle-class dwellers, nobles, and students, set off for the Holy Trinity Basilian church, which for a long time hosted a side altar dedicated to Kuntsevych, and a celebratory Liturgy was held here.<sup>73</sup>

According to a Basilian protohegumen (provincial prior), during the veneration of Kuntsevych's relics "numerous schismatics kept arriving, unable to hold back their tears, particularly during the sermon by the Basilian monk, Father [Yosyf] Grodzinski, Polotsk archimandrite, who delivered a sermon on the third day. Next, liturgies were held for the entire week in Wilno as a testimony to Catholic piety, and many schismatics started contemplating conversion".<sup>74</sup> As observed by one of the participants of the festivities, the Vitebsk voivode Jan-Antoni Chrapowitzki, the body of St Yosafat remained unharmed and imperishable while in the open casket-hearse, and this alone could be seen as a confirmation of the superiority of the Holy Union over Orthodox Christianity.<sup>75</sup>

Although, from the eighteenth century onward, for various reasons the memory of the holy martyr did not evolve into a powerful cult within the Union and within its successor, the Greek-Catholic Church, the personality of Kuntsevych became one of the foundations of Kyivan Basilian identity. Since 1931, the community has officially held his name: *the Basilian Order of St Yosafat*.

## PERSECUTIONS OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

The events of the Khmelnytsky Uprising and the Russo-Swedish Deluge of 1648–67 turned out to be a major test for the Basilian Order and the entire Union Church. As we know, the Cossack Uprising chose religious slogans to be the key ones in their program me, which invariably included points demanding the liquidation of the Union (starting with the Treaty of Zboriv in 1649) and provided privileges for the Kyivan Orthodox Metropolitan

<sup>73</sup> Cyprian Żochowski, *Relacyja czternastoletniego wygnania z katedry Połockiej b. męczennika loaphata przy, szczęśliwym powrocie onego do teyże katedry czyniona* (Wilno, 1667); id., *Valete imieniem b. męczennika lozaphata Kuncewicza arcybiskupa Połockiego, Witepskiego, [...] do katedry Połockiej ruszającego się dane stołecznemu Wilnowi, y W. X. L. magnatom na ten czas zebrany, w cerkwi katedralnej Przeczystej S. Nazwanej* (Wilno, 1667).

<sup>74</sup> *Epistolae metropolitaram Kioviensium Catholicorum, Raphaelis Korsak, Antonii Stelava, Gabrielis Kolenda (1637–1674)*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1956), p. 267 (№ 46).

<sup>75</sup> Jan A. Chrapowicki, *Diaryusz, cz. 2: Lata 1665–1669*, ed. Andrzej Rachuba and Tadeusz Wasilewski (Warszawa: Pax, 1988), pp. 352–55, 365.

Archdiocese.<sup>76</sup> This exclusionist policy of the Ukrainian Hetmanate in regards to Ruthenian Catholics comes across distinctly in the 1658 Treaty of Hadiach, established between Herman Ivan Vyhovs'ky (1657–59) and royal commissaries; this Treaty envisioned the emergence of the “Grand Duchy of Ruthenia” and the transformation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into a confederation of the three peoples.<sup>77</sup> Even though the Treaty supported religious tolerance towards Ruthenians of both ecclesiastic jurisdictions, the freedom to publicly profess one’s faith (*naboženstvo*) and to serve the church rites, “poki język narodu Ruskiego zasięga”,<sup>78</sup> in practice it allowed for the liquidation of the Union in three Ukrainian voivodeships: Bratslav, Kyiv, and Chernihiv.

The Cossack-Peasant uprising had a direct impact on the Basilian Order, with far-reaching consequences. Already by the spring of 1648 and up until his death in exile in Podlachia in 1655, the protoarchimandrite of the Basilian Order and Kyivan Metropolitan Antoni (Sielawa, 1640–55) was very ill and practically incapacitated. That is why, at the beginning of the war, the Order lacked centralized governance, a fact that complicated communication between the monasteries, as well as monks’ adjustment to the new, radical circumstances of living in a situation of warfare and systematic violence. Sielawa summoned the General *capitulum* only in June of 1650 to Wilno, the capital of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in order to “confer on the matter of [Ruthenian] rite and the Holy Union, which are being greatly violated by the schismatics, whom one can hardly withstand” (“abyschmy radzili *de ritu et unione sancta*, która *maximam patit violentiam a schismate, et vix subsistere potest*”).<sup>79</sup> As an attempt to prevent the monks from being pulled into the military conflict and keep them from converting to the Latin rite, the Wilno *capitulum* of 1650 prohibited Basilians from storing any cold steel or firearms in their cells, using Roman missals during the Liturgy, or introducing any kind of innovations in the rituals. However, as is testified by the materials of the following General *capitulum* in Minsk (1652),<sup>80</sup> the leadership could prevent neither disorganization within the Order, nor its persecution.

<sup>76</sup> Serhij Plochij, ‘Svjaščenne pravo povstannja: Berestejs’ka unija i relihijna lehitymacija Chmel’nyččyny’, in *Deržava, suspił'stvo i Cerkva v Ukrajinі u XVII stolitti. Materialy Druhych 'Berestejs'kych čytan'.* Lviv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Kyjiv, 1–6 ljutoho 1995 r., ed. by Borys Hudzjak and Oleh Turij (Lviv, 1996), pp. 1–13; see also: Serhij Plochij, *Nalyvajkova vira: kozactvo ta relihija v rann'omodernij Ukrajinі* (Kyjiv: Krytyka, 2005), pp. 230–48.

<sup>77</sup> The recent researches: *Hadjac'ka unija 1658: Zbirnyk naukovych statej*, ed. by Pavlo Sochan' (Kyjiv, 2008); Piotr Kroll, *Od ugody hadziackiej do Cudnowa: Kozaczyzna między Rzeczpospolitą a Moskwą w latach 1658–1660* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008); *W kręgu Hadziacza A. D. 1658: Od historii do literatury*, ed. by Piotr Borek (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> Andrey Sheptytsky National Museum in Lviv (hereinafter: NML), Rkl.-138, ark. 35–35 zv.; *Volumina Legum*, vol. 4 (Petersburg, 1859), pp. 297–301.

<sup>79</sup> ASD, XII, p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47–52; Pidručnyj, *Istoryčnyj narys zakonodavstva Vasyljans'koho Čynu*, pp. 123–26.

With its destructive impact, the Khmelnytsky Uprising advanced to the monasteries and Ruthenian Catholic churches primarily located in Volhynia, Polisia, and Kholmshchyna, where the Union gained widespread acceptance and built up an organizational chain and the support of the local elites.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, with the beginning of the Deluge, the Basilian shrines suffered devastation at the hands of the Muscovite army, the Protestant troops of Semyhorod Kingdom and Sweden, and the soldiers of the royal army, who marched through the monasteries' estates or stopped at military stations, plundering the locals and monks along the way. The fragmentary sources do not allow us to recreate a full picture of the massive persecution of Union-adhering monks and the destruction of monasteries, soul-shepherding communities, and educational and beneficent institutions and estates. However, even the fragmentary character of the testimonies points to the tragic and catastrophic nature of the situation that the Basilian Order found itself in.

According to the report by bishop Jakub (Susza) *De laboribus unitorum*, in 1649 on the territories of the Chełmno diocese, the Cossacks confiscated the Basilian monastery, and hieromonks were forced to serve the liturgies in secret in an abandoned Roman Catholic chapel.<sup>82</sup> The Minsk Union Seminary, which opened in 1650 after a long period of preparations (between five and twenty students from the secular and monastic milieu studied here), was forced to cease its operations shortly thereafter. In mid-1654, the Seminary buildings, together with the estate, were completely destroyed by Muscovite troops, and this educational institution was subsequently not able to fully recover. The rector of Minsk Seminary, Basilian Father Benedykt (Terlecki), wrote in despair in one of his letters to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1657, saying that 'against us, Ruthenians, united with the Holy Roman Church, are waging war', and that almost all Union monasteries 'are ruined because of the war, their estates seized', and that some of the monks had perished, while others had been abandoned to their fate and were hardly surviving.<sup>83</sup> The Basilian nuns also suffered during the Khmelnytsky Uprising. In 1648, in Pinsk, the congregation headed by Yevfrosinia (Tryzna) refused the Cossacks' demand to renounce the Union; their monastery and the church were burned down, however, and the nuns were forced to leave the town.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Sofija Senyk, *Ukrajins'ka Cerkva v dobu Chmel'nyc'koho* (L'viv: Svičado, 1994), pp. 9–14; Johanne Praszko, *De Ecclesia Ruthena Catholica sede metropolitana vacante 1655–1665* (Romae: Ex typographia Augustiniana, 1944).

<sup>82</sup> *Litterae episcoporum historiam Ucrainae illustrantes (1600–1900), 1641–1664*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj and Porphyrius B. Pidrutchnyj, 5 vols (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1972–1981), II (1973), pp. 321–22. See also: Sophia Senyk, 'Methodius Terlec'kyj – bishop of Holm', *Analecta Ordinis Sancti Basilii Magni*, 12 (1985), 342–73.

<sup>83</sup> *Litterae basilianorum in terris Ucrainae et Bielarussiae, 1601–1730*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj and Porphyrius B. Pidrutchnyj, (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1979), II, pp. 89–90 (№ 45).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98–100 (№ 53).

Thanks to the research done by Mykhailo Dovbyshchenko, a historian from Kyiv, we are well informed about the persecution of the Union-adhering monks in Volhynia. Even though the data is general, filled with stereotypical idioms like “tyrannical death of many Union-adhering monks” at the hands of the Cossacks, it points to the scorning and even the killing of said monks based on their confessional belonging. In particular, we are referring here to the events in Ostrih in March of 1649 and 1651, when Cossacks and Tatars invaded the town, bringing about a pogrom and a massacre, and to the capture of Kremenets’ in the fall of 1648. The local Union archpriest, Father Fedor Dubnyts’ky, managed to flee the town, while the other Union-adhering priest, Father Fedor Turyansky-Turs’ky, was first tortured by the Cossacks and then slashed to death with sabres. To benefit from this favourable situation, the Orthodox pastor Father Oleksandr Denysko occupied Ruthenian churches in Kremenets’ (specifically, the cathedral of the Christ Resurrection, which was burned by the Cossacks) and sanctified them repeatedly, while some Union-adhering monks were even baptized for the second time,<sup>85</sup> which contradicted church canon.

A similar fate befell the Union monastery in Derman’, which was plundered by the Cossacks, Tatars, and twice by the Swedes. A telling description of the events can be found in the monastery chronicle:

Roku 1648. Nastąpiła potym straszna z uniwersalną całej ojczyzny ruiną herszta Chmielnickiego rebelia, pod który czas od zuchwałego kozactwa zuchwałości, Dermański monaster zdawna w unii świętey zostaiący pofturnie został spustoszony, ludzie od tatarow wybrani, zakonnicy wszyscy rozproszeni po lasach y paryach tułac się musieli, nie tylko cerkiewne arygentarye y ornamęta, ale nawet y dokumenta gdzie mozna chowaiąc monasterne ktore przez lat siedm rok po rok trwaiąc nieustannie *hostilittes* niestusznie uzurpowanych dobr sobie monasternych *in spatio* tego czasu uluzerdziły possessią [...]. Jeszcze się y na to nie skączyło gdy z miłowania Boga wrędy głodziec y mizeryi biedni czekając zakannicy: aż nowa z pułnocy niespodziane takze. Roku 1655 od szwiedzkiej potencyi nastąpiła burza pod ktury czas trzecie znowu nastalo Dermanskiego monastera spustoszenie y w czym kozacka przepusciła złość w tym szwiedzkie dopełniło lepiej okrucieństwo ozdoby cerkiewne zabrane utracilismy do reszty mizerni rozproszeni zakonnicy. Dobra ciężkiemi obciążone kontry-

<sup>85</sup> Mychajło Dowbyszczenko, ‘Cerkiew unicka na Wołyniu w dobie wojen kozackich w latach 1648–1667’, in *Ruchy religijne na Wołyniu w XVI i XVII wieku*, ed. by Andrzej Gil (Lublin: KUL, 2013), pp. 11–120 (here: 38–45, 49–50).

buciami ktorym niepodobną było wystarczyc dla zrujnowania dobr przez kozaki y tatarzy niesłychanego, kturę do takich już przyszli byli angustyc przez te trzy lata woyny szwedzkich ze się w nich ledwie kылka osob dusz żyjących znaydowało w takowey tedy pałaiącego marca zawierusie nie mozna się było zadnym sposobem o niesłuszne w dobra wdarcie y sprawiedliwey upomniec krzywdzie.<sup>86</sup>

A wealthy and influential Basilian archdiocese of St Nikolas in Zhydychn,<sup>87</sup> which was plundered by the Cossacks and Tatars in 1648, became another victim of the Khmelnytsky Uprising. In this particular case, the records emphasize not only economic but also religious motivation behind the attack on the Union monastery, which was carried out “z nienawiści ku jedności świętej”. Even the newly appointed Orthodox archimandrite of the monastery, Father Oleksandr Mokosii Denysko, later described the events as a “fervent and frenzied Cossack rebellion”.<sup>88</sup> Other Union monasteries in Volhynia suffered concurrently; for instance, the convent in Rozvazh and the Holy Trinity monastery in Shums'k were burned down by the Cossacks.

In the aforementioned report to Rome, *De laboribus unitorum*, Prior Jakub Susza describes the impact of the Khmelnytsky Uprising and the Russo-Swedish Deluge in apocalyptic terms, paying particular attention to the numerous victims among Union monks at the time: “Numerous monasteries have been burned down together with churches; secular priests, monks, even laymen have been wounded, robbed, or killed. We know for certain that forty Union-adhering monks have been killed because of the holy Union”.<sup>89</sup> Similar information can be found in a letter of the Basilian protohegumen Benedykt Terlecki, who was elected in 1656; he confessed his helplessness in these tragic circumstances: “How can I possibly comfort the Order when monasteries, churches, and altars have been burned down or destroyed [...], when some monks have been killed, while others are wasting away as beggars”.<sup>90</sup> The martyrdom of Union-adhering monks was personified in the *Hagiography of Basilians*, compiled by Lev Kyshka in the late seventeenth century. He cites numerous examples of the demise of Basilian hieromonks, naming each one and regarding them as confessors of Catholicism and the Holy Union.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Mychajlo Dovbyščenko, ‘Rukopysna “Chronika” Dermans'koho monastyrja (1511–1673 rr.)’, *Drohobyc'kyj krajeznavčyj zbirnyk*, 11–12 (2008), 438–51 (here: 444).

<sup>87</sup> See about him: Serhij Horin, *Žydyčyns'kyj Svjato-Mykolajivs'kyj monastyr (do seredyiny XVII storiččja)* (Kyjiv: Majsternja knyhy, 2009).

<sup>88</sup> Dowbyszczenko, ‘Cerkiew unicka na Wołyniu’, pp. 48, 57–63.

<sup>89</sup> *Litterae episcoporum historiam Ucrainae illustrantes (1600–1900)*, 1641–1664, II, p. 320.

<sup>90</sup> *Litterae basilianorum*, I, p. 89 (№ 45). See also: *Narys Istoriji Vasylijans'koho Čynu*, pp. 144–45.

<sup>91</sup> Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv (hereinafter: TsDIAL), fond 201, op. 46, spr. 421. See also: Josafat Skruteni, ‘Žyttjepysy vasylijan. Vyjimok z rukopysnoho zbirnyka mytropolyta L'va Kyšky’, *Analecta OSBM*, 1:2 (1925), 284–91 (here: 287, 289–91); 2:3 (1927), 376–401 (here: 377, 393).



The tragic nature of the entire situation in which the Basilian Order found itself at the end of the 1640s and throughout the 1650s is confirmed by the dramatic resolution approved at the Byten' *capitulum* of 1657, which called upon all the monks "to hold on to the Catholic faith steadfastly, even if they have to let go of the monasteries, estates, and their own rites, or even leave their motherland or sacrifice their lives" ("przy wierze świętej katolickiej stać, by przyszło od monastyrów, od dóbr y *ab ipso ritu* odpaść, a na ostatek *a patria exulare et vita privari*").<sup>92</sup> The Orthodox and Union populations alike were well aware of the fratricidal nature of the opposition between "Ruthenia and Rus", which is why, even at the climax of the Khmelnytsky Uprising, both sides of the conflict were trying to reach a temporary agreement, or at least soften the clashes on a personal level. One rare example of such a dialogue was the attempts of the Basilian Union bishop from Chełmno, Jakub Susza, to establish contact with Herman Ivan Vyhovsky (1657–1659) and Pavlo Teteria (1663–1665). In one of his letters that is known to researchers, Susza even ventured to convince Vyhovsky to unite with the Roman throne.<sup>93</sup> At the time, however, it was practically impossible to come to a mutual understanding with the Cossacks; only the Treaty of Andrusovo of 1667 between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Muscovy Tsardom ceased the persecution of the Basilian Order and the entire Union Church for a quarter of a century.

The Basilians, with their clearly Catholic Union-oriented identity, as well as cultural and social integration in the multiconfessional and multi-ethnic community of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, provoked an existential lack of acceptance from the Muscovian Orthodoxy as well as the entire political system of the Romanov state. Having survived the dramatic events of the Khmelnytsky Uprising and the Deluge of the mid-seventeenth century, which were accompanied by the destruction of monasteries and property and massive persecutions and martyrdom of many monks, the Basilian Order faced a new threat a few decades later: Russian presence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the role of a formal ally during the Northern War of 1700–21 alongside the Swedish Empire of Charles XII. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, the Tsarist army was situated in contemporary Belarus and Lithuania, where, together with other troops, it plundered the churches, monasteries, and estates of the Union Church and persecuted its clergy and monks.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup> ASD, XII, p. 55.

<sup>93</sup> Serhij Plochij, 'Vid Jakova Suši do Atanasija Velykoho (Ohljad vydan' rym's'kych džerel z istoriji ukrajins'koji cerkvy)', *Ukrajins'kyj archeohrafičnyj ščoričnyk*, 1 (1992), 6–14 (here: 6).

<sup>94</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 321, l. 56 ob.–57; Borys Balyk, "Katafal'k černečyj vasylijan" XVII–XVIII st. (Rukopysna zbirka žyttjepysiv Vasylijan)', *Analecta OSBM*, 8:1–4 (1973), 269–310 (here: 80–1).

In Wilno, invaded in early 1705 by a Russian army unit a few thousand strong and headed by Peter I, Union-adherent monks did not suffer from direct oppression.<sup>95</sup> In mid-March the representatives of aristocracy and senators, as well as Wilno bishop and the Grand Chancellor Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, arrived in the city for the regular meeting of the Lithuanian Tribunal. Having gathered at Ogiński Palace, they demanded that Field Marshal Sheremetyev withdraw the Muscovy troops from the city and refused to continue with the Tribunal sessions with the foreign army present.<sup>96</sup> Simultaneously, the protoarchimandrite of the Basilian Order Lev (Kyshka), who was in the capital of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in early March, noted in his diary that “in Wilno, everyone was scared of the Swedes, and people were awaiting their own final demise in the event that the Muscovites, unable to defend themselves, would have to withdraw from Wilno and would be chased by the advancing Swedes”.<sup>97</sup>

In contrast to Wilno, in the other territories of the Commonwealth the Muscovy army was directly threatening monasteries and monks of the Basilian Order. When senators of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth attempted to intercede on behalf of the Byten’ and Żyrowicze monasteries to Prince Aleksandr Menshikov, the royal nobleman compared the Union-adhering monks “with dogs who are not even Calvinists, neither they are Lutherans, nor Roman Catholics”.<sup>98</sup> Some bishops of the Metropolitan archdiocese of Kyiv also suffered persecution at the hands of Russians. For instance, Tsar Peter I (1682–1725) raised personal accusations against Pinsk bishop Porfiriusz (Kulczycki, 1703–16) and openly harassed Luts’k bishop Dionysius (Żabokrycki, 1695–1711). The latter one, having recklessly supported Stanisław Leszczyński, the candidate for the Commonwealth’s throne and a personal enemy of Peter I, was first imprisoned in 1706; he was later on taken to Moscow and then to Solovki, where he passed away as a martyr.<sup>99</sup>

The persecutions culminated with the well-known Polotsk Tragedy<sup>100</sup> in the summer of 1705, wherein the Tsar tortured to death several Basilians in Sofia Cathedral who had publicly professed their loyalty to Ruthenian Catholicism. Closely following these events, the *Diarium Excidii Monasterii Polocensis Patrum Basilianorum cum Sancta Romana Ecclesia Unitorum, patrati a Serenissimo Moscoviae Duce, Anno praesenti 1705, die 11, et 12 Iulii* (*Diary of the Manslaughter Committed by the Muscovite Prince on July 11th and*

<sup>95</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 328, l. 164 ob.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., ll. 164–164 ob.

<sup>98</sup> *Epistolae metropolitae kioviensium catholicorum: Cypriani Zochovskij, Leonis Slubicz Zalenskyj, Georgii Vynnyckij 1674–1713*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj (Romae, 1958), p. 214 (№ 32).

<sup>99</sup> Aleksy Deruga, *Piotr Wielki a unicy i unja kościelna, 1700–1711* (Wilno, 1936), pp. 16–17.

<sup>100</sup> *Epistolae Zochovskij, Zalenskyj, Vynnyckij*, pp. 207–210 (№ 28); *Monumenta Ucrainae historica* (hereinafter: MUH), ed. by Andreas Septyckyj, 10 vols (Romae, 1964–1971), V (1968), pp. 14–5 (№ 15).

12th of the Current Year, of the Basilian Fathers from Polotsk Monastery United with the Holy Roman Church) relays the entire tragedy and cruelty of this affair:

Niewidziany nigdy, ani słyszany od początku prześladowania Cerkwie Chrystusowej (od Cesarzów, Królów i Panów Bałwochwalstwu służących, ani od Heretyków najgorszych) niepraktykowany, aż do tego 1705 roku, dnia 30 iunia podług starego kalendarza, sławny y wiekom następującym dziwny, Cerkwi Chrystusowej w Rusi, Litwie, i Polsce, jedność Świętą z Cerkwią Świętą Rzymską (jako wszystkich innych po całym świecie będących i mających z narodów jeszcze niewiernych) bydź, powszechną Mistrzynią i Matką, trzymającą, chwalebny, zakonowi S. Bazylego W[ielkiego] ozdoby odszczepieństwu – Greko-Ruskiemu haniebny, sławny uczynek, Wielkiego Monarchi Ruskiego Piotra Alexiejewicza Cara Moskiewskiego, nie mądrego nabożeństwa, i błędliwej żarliwości niecny Experiment w roku 1705 dnia 30 Junia starego, a dnia jedynastego Jula nowego kalendarza solennie w cerkwi katedralnej Połockiej S. Sophiey od godziny z południa szustey, odprawiony, według tey, ktorey mogłem mieć tak od swoich Braci Zakonników (zwłaszcza tegoż okrutnego postępkę, pozostałych uczestników) iako też y od samych Moskiewskich ludzi (jako tam poblizszy w Witebsku rezydując) wiadomości dla pamiątki opiszę.

Kiedy pomieniony Piotr Alexiejewicz Car moskiewski za wiarę świętą z okazyey jedności z Cerkwią Świętą Rzymską, pozabijał okrutnie mordując czterech różnemi jako się położy śmierciami, kapłanów, a piątego brata kleryka, po śmiertelnych razach, dla wiadomości też takowych tyrańskich akcji (o których nikt inny powiedzieć nie mógł) Pan Bog aż do dzisiaj dnia 28 Maja 1713 w życiu chowa.<sup>101</sup>

In reaction to the persecutions of the Union monks, Metropolitan Shlyubych-Zelensky desperately appealed to Rome and the Commonwealth monarch.<sup>102</sup> In his *breve* dated 17 October 1705, Pope Clement XI (1700–21) declared his moral solidarity with Ruthenian Catholics, making an appeal not to shed the blood of ‘the Union’s sons’ nor ruin their churches.<sup>103</sup> The Roman pontiff also turned to Augustus II, asking him to take care of the adherents of the Union.<sup>104</sup> In his frantic reports dated 1708, the primate of the Metropolitan archdiocese of Kyiv emphasized a threat ‘to the holy

<sup>101</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 321, l. 56 ob.

<sup>102</sup> *Epistolae Zochovskiy, Zalenskiy, Vynnyckiy*, pp. 206–10.

<sup>103</sup> MUH, V, pp. 28–29 (№ 16).

<sup>104</sup> *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum historiam Ucrainae illustrantia* (hereafter DPR), ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj, 2 vols (Romae, 1953–1954), II, pp. 6–8.

Union' from the Russian army. As an example, bishop Lev mentioned the devastation inflicted upon the Basilian monasteries in Berezewcz and Minsk (where Field Marshal Count Boris Sheremetyev was stationed), as well as in the estates of Wilno Metropolitan archdiocese Cathedral and Pinsk Union diocese. These efforts indeed had a certain impact, and after the Polotsk Tragedy the political stance of Russia and its occupation army vis-à-vis Catholics of the Eastern rite changed, if only superficially, and became more flexible. Moreover, in November 1705 a tolerant privilege was issued for the Ruthenian Church united with Rome, warranting the personal freedom and immobility of the clergy's property. There also appeared other kinds of 'immunity charters' to protect land ownership and individual Union shrines.<sup>105</sup>

#### MONASTERIES AS A LOCALE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP: BENEFACTORS AND ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECES OF THE BAROQUE AGE

In the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, Basilian monasteries gradually started to self-integrate into the public sphere of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by way of enhancing the reciprocal influence between society and these monastic communities. Concurrently, monasteries represented special sacred locales for nobles, middle-class dwellers, and peasants of various confessions; in these locations one could find examples of exalted spirituality, Christian perfection, and faithfulness to Christ visualized via the artistic 'signs of the times' characteristic of the Baroque<sup>106</sup> and the Enlightenment. The Divine Office, the ascetic practices of the monks, the daily prayers for a Grand Prince and a King, *ktitors*, and benefactors lent Basilian monasteries a sense of 'belonging' to the contemporaneous Baroque culture in general and Polish-Lithuanian society in particular. Miraculous healings that occurred as a result of praying to the wonder-working icons of *Theotokos* (specifically, of Żyrowicze and Pochaiv), the relics of holy martyrs and saints, the burials of middle-class dwellers and nobles in crypts of Basilian monasteries created a special cultural and spiritual

<sup>105</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 321, l. 57; Deruga, *Piotr Wielki a unicy i unja kościelna*, pp. 89–221.

<sup>106</sup> The Ukrainian perspective of this cultural phenomenon is represented in the following works: *Ukrajins'ke baroko*, ed. by Dmytro Nalyvajko and Leonid Uškalov, 2 vols (Charkiv: Akta, 2004); *Ukrajins'ke barokko: Materialy I konbresu Mižnarodnoji asociaciji ukrajinciv* (Kyjiv 27.08 – 3.09.1990), ed. by Oleksa Myšanyč (Kyjiv: Instytut archeohrafiji AN Ukrainy, 1993); *Ukrajins'ke literaturne barokko: Zbirnyk naukovych prac*, ed. by Oleksa Myšanyč (Kyjiv: Naukova dumka, 1987).

aura which was attractive for Ruthenians, Poles, Lithuanians, and other ethnicities alike.

For the first time, contemporaneous Baroque literature mentions the presence of the Basilians in the public sphere of the Polish-Lithuanian state in the book of Quirini Cnogleri the Austrian, *Pompa Casimiriana* (1604),<sup>107</sup> which was compiled on the occasion of the festive canonization of St Casimir in Wilno, 10–12 May 1604. The Basilians are mentioned in part of a procession where the clergy was marching, following four monastic ranks, fraternities, and students, “After these schools, the Greek-Catholic priests were marching, carrying the torches according to their tradition. There were many acolytes and two archimandrites (see, this is how they call the monasteries’ priors).”<sup>108</sup> The same treatise mentions for the first time the Holy Trinity monastery as one of the main Catholic cloisters of the city: the dramatized performance featured an angel of the Basilian church who appeared right after the angel of the Cathedral Basilica of St Stanislaus<sup>109</sup> in Wilno.

According to the Lithuanian literary scholar Mintautas Čiurinskas, this “confirms the public recognition of the Basilian Union Church and its incorporation into the ecclesiastic topography of the Catholic city.”<sup>110</sup>

First and foremost, Eastern rite monasteries were places of prayer and monastic asceticism which attracted numerous representatives of contemporaneous society. Union – adhering monks, as well as monks of other monastic communities and orders of the Commonwealth, played the role of “trustworthy intermediaries” who had been abiding by the model of *ars bene moriendi*, which was traditional for the Church and society, by offering funeral services and other prayers for the soul salvation of noblemen, clergymen, middle-class dwellers, or peasants. Out of gratitude to the praying Basilians for their ministering of the “honourable death” and the afterlife, laymen of various confessions and ethnic groups acted as *ktitors* and benefactors of their monasteries and other ecclesiastical organizations.<sup>111</sup>

As a rule, such support entailed monetary donations and the granting of land allotments and other material resources that enabled the functioning of monastic communities and the various pastoral, cultural, and social initiatives of the Basilian Order.

<sup>107</sup> [Quirinus Cnoglerus Austrius], ‘Pompa Casimiriana sive de labaro D. Casimiri Regis Poloniae etc. F. Jagellonis N. M. D. Lith. Principis etc. a Leone X. Pontif. Max. in Diuos relati, ex urbe transmissio, et Vilnam Lithuaniae Metropolim solenni pompa, ad 6. Idus Maii, Anno M.DC.IV. illato, Quirini Cnogleri Austrii Sermo Panegyricus’, in *Theatrum S. Casimiri, in quo ipsius prosapia, vita, miracula, et illustris pompa in sollemni eiusdem apotheoseos instauratione, Vilnae Lithuaniae metropoli, V Id. Maii, anno D[omi]ni M.DC.IV. instituta graphice proponuntur*, ed. by Gregorius Swiecicki (Vilnae, 1604), pp. 37–127. See also: *Casimiriana: fontes vitae et cultus S. Casimiri = Šv. Kazimiero gyvenimo ir kulto istorijos šaltiniai*, ed. by Mintautas Čiurinskas (Vilnius: Aidai, 2003), pp. 231–83.

<sup>108</sup> Čiurinskas, ‘Vaizdai XVII a. raštijoje’, pp. 158–59.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Pompa Casimiriana’, pp. 114–15.

<sup>110</sup> Čiurinskas, ‘Vaizdai XVII a. raštijoje’, p. 159.

<sup>111</sup> Oksana Viničenko, ‘Rusėnų tapatybės, arba meldžiantis už sielas’, in *Kultūry kryžkelė*, pp. 129–35.

The Wilno Holy Trinity monastery in Lithuania, the Buchach monastery of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Galicia and the Holy Dormition Pochaiv lavra in Volhynia are all telling examples of the living connection between the Basilian Fathers and the poly-confessional and multi-ethnic society of the Commonwealth. According to the data provided in *Memorial* by procurator Father Jan Olszewski, and *The Diary*,<sup>112</sup> the monks from the Holy Trinity monastery in Wilno received monetary donations from various benefactors in the sum of a few hundred thousand Polish złoty, as well as numerous inheritance bequests for townhouses and land allotments in Wilno, and estates in Wilno and Polotsk voivodeships (Bilychany, Zalissya, Svirany, Shankopole, or Voychany, and so on).<sup>113</sup> Representatives of noblemen and the middle-class were eager to choose the Holy Trinity monastery as their eternal resting place. Thanks to their patronage, a few votive chapels for the testators' burials were erected, including those for the Wilno voivode Janusz Skumin Tyszkiewicz (died in 1642) and his daughter Eugenia-Katarzyna (the wife of prince Korybut-Wiśniowiecki), as well as influential families of Ruthenian patricians, such as Dubowicz, Sinczyl, and Ogurcewicz.<sup>114</sup> Having received generous donations, the monastery in Wilno was able to maintain a vast community of monks and servants to carry out renovations after numerous fires, to decorate the interior of the monastery and sustain its many institutions, including the Basilian novitiate, *konwikt* (a dormitory for youngsters of noble background), a theological school, hospital, fraternity, choir, etc. As Ukrainian researcher Oksana Vinnychenko rightly observed, "the bequests to the Basilian monastery in Wilno were the means of public manifestation of the new Union identity pertaining to the Ruthenian ethno-confessional community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth."<sup>115</sup>

An impressive albeit singular example of the charitable work and personal engagement of the Polish Catholic nobility with the affairs of the Basilian Order is the activity of the influential and affluent Potocki family. One of its representatives, Belz voivode Stefan Aleksander Potocki (1652–1726/27) from the Prymasowa/Złota Pilawa line, became a *ktitor* of the Buchach monastery of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The monastery was in immediate subordination to the Lithuanian (Sviatotroits'k) province of the Order. The principal part of the so-called 'Buchach Foundation' (1712–17) became the charter, whereby Potocki endowed the new monastery with 30,000 Polish złoty and a *folwark* in Pushkari, the outskirts of

<sup>112</sup> [Jan Olszewski], *Memoryał, albo informacja y objaśnienie klasztoru Wileńskiego cerkwi Przenajświętszey Tryjcy*, pp. 1–217 (№ 1); ASD, X, pp. 26–32 (№ 1).

<sup>113</sup> Ihoris Skočilasas, and Juliana Tatjanina, 'Vilniaus bazilijonų gyvenimas XVIII a.', in *Kultūrų kryžkelė*, pp. 116–28.

<sup>114</sup> Materials of archaeological and anthropological research of burials in crypts of Vilna Basilian Monastery in the 2010s has recently been published: Albinas Kuncevičius, and others, 'Nekropolis ir jo archeologiniai tyrimai', in *Kultūrų kryžkelė*, pp. 224–36.

<sup>115</sup> Viničenko, *Rusėnų tapatybės*, p. 133.

Buchach.<sup>116</sup> In 1740, a Latin archbishop from Lviv passed the local St Cross Roman-Catholic church (*kostelyk*, a small church) on his way to the Buchach Basilians. In 1765–71, on the foundations of this small church and following the blueprint of the architect Jan Gottfried-Hoffmann, a new grand Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was erected in the Wilno Baroque style. This time, the construction was carried out under the patronage of Stefan-Aleksander's father, Mikołaj Bazyli Potocki (c. 1706–1782), a *starosta* of Bohuslav and Kaniv who worked closely with the well-known artists of that time, such as architect Bernard Meretyn (died in 1759) or sculptor Johann Pinsel.<sup>117</sup> Mikołaj Potocki chose Buchach as his magnate residence, endorsed the 'Buchach Foundation' of his father, and donated almost 20,000 Polish złoty for the construction of an ornate Union church.<sup>118</sup> Thanks to Potocki's special benevolence toward the Buchach hegumen, Father Hieronim (Nereziusz), who "opened Potocki's heart and purse to the Basilians",<sup>119</sup> a new monastery edifice, a public school (*gymnasium*), and a boarding school for the education and youth's upbringing were erected using the magnate's funds; all these institutions were maintained thanks to the monastic estates of Zvenyhorod and Zelena.

Nevertheless, one of the biggest and most successful patronage projects of Mikołaj Potocki, his 'spiritual Jerusalem', was foundational support for Pochaiv Basilian monastery, into which this magnate, according to various estimates, invested up to 2,200,000 Polish złoty. For the construction of the new Baroque cathedral in Pochaiv lavra, Potocki hired a well-known architect from Silesia, Jan Gottfried Hoffmann; the cornerstone of the construction was solemnly consecrated on 3 July 1771, while the construction itself took until 1791. This cathedral, which has a grand monastery complex at its centre, is a striking example of the Basilian architecture of the late Baroque period (or the 'Basilian Baroque', according to the Ukrainian researcher, Archbishop Ihor Isichenko).<sup>120</sup> Potocki also sponsored a festive coronation of the wonderworking icon of Pochaiv Virgin Mary. The ceremony, which took place on 3 July 1773, and included over 100,000 Christians, demonstrated the Union's triumph within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Mikołaj Potocki was so inspired by the Basilian piety

<sup>116</sup> SPbIH RAS, col. 52, op. 1, ed. chr. 350, l. 6 ob.; Jaroslav Stoc'kyj, *Bučac'kyj monastyr Otciv Vasylijan: na službi Bohovi j Ukrajinii. Do 300-lit'nja zasnuvannja* (Žovkva: Misioner, 2011), pp. 56–57.

<sup>117</sup> Borys Voznyč'kyj, *Mykola Potoc'kyj starosta Kanivs'kyj ta joho mytci architekotor Bernard Meretyn i snycar Ioan Heorbij Pinzel* (Lviv: Centr Jevropy, 2005); Johann Georg Pinsel: *Un sculpteur baroque en Ukraine au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. by Jan Ostrowski, and Guilhem Scherf (Paris: Louvre, 2012).

<sup>118</sup> Stoc'kyj, *Bučac'kyj monastyr Otciv Vasylijan*, pp. 57–60; Zofia Zielińska, 'Potocki Mikołaj Bazyli h. Pilawa (1706?–1782)', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, ed. by Emanuel Rostworowski, and others, 53 vols (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź, 1935–), XXVIII, 116, pp. 113–15.

<sup>119</sup> Sadok Barącz, *Pamiętki Buczackie* (Lwów, 1882), p. 74.

<sup>120</sup> This concept is presented in Ihor Isichenko, 'Vasylians'ke baroko', *Slovo i Čas*, 1 (2011), 3–21. Unfortunately, there is still no separate monographic study of the Uniate Baroque, nor is there a scientific name for this cultural phenomenon (for example, in historiography there have long been definitions of 'Vilna Baroque', 'Cossack/Mazepa's Baroque', etc.).

that, even before 1758, he converted from Latin rite to the 'Ruthenian faith', thereby becoming an Eastern rite Catholic. He settled on the outskirts of Pochaiv monastery, regularly visited Union liturgies (he owned a house within the monastery), and was buried in 1782 as a benefactor of Pochaiv monastery in the crypt of the Basilian cathedral, which is to the left of the main entrance.

A different representative of the noble family of Potocki, Volhynian and Kyivan voivode Franciszek Salezy Potocki (1700–1772), who belonged to the Hetman line of *Srebrna Pilawa* and was considered a "Little King of Ruthenia",<sup>121</sup> also supported the Basilian Order on the lands of his vast domain in Galicia and Right-Bank Ukraine. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, which emphasized the dissemination of rational civility via church institutions, Franciszek founded a church and a Basilian monastery (1763–64) at his residence in Krystynopol, and he also facilitated the establishment of the Union monastery in Strusiv near Terebovlya (1760). His biggest investment into the Basilian Order was the foundation a monastery with a church and a public school in Uman', a private town of the Potocki family.<sup>122</sup> This town was situated on the Great Steppe border between the Judeo-Christian and Islamic civilizations in the southern part of Bratslav voivodeship, on the frontier between the nomad camps of Crimean Tatars and territorial domains of Zaporozhian Sich, not far from the notorious Kuchmans'ky and Chorny Ways. The local Uman' community at that time united the prevailing numbers of Union-adhering Ruthenians and Hebrews (Rabbinic Jews and Caraites); concurrently, the town was inhabited by Roman-Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Protestants (mostly Lutherans), Armenians-Monophysites, and even Muslims.

The foundation in 1765–68 of the Shroud of the Virgin monastery in Uman' was confirmed by the Sejm constitution of 1768. Potocki's foundation privilege allowed for up to fourteen Basilian monks (hegumen, priest-vicar, four missionaries, four teaching professors, and a few confessors and preachers). Franciszek Salezy Potocki granted funding for the monastery's activities by gifting a square at the centre of the town for the construction of a church, crypts, and a school. He also donated the initial sum of 2,000 Polish złoty and even donated two of his estates, the villages of Gerezhenivka and Monastyrrok, to the monks.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> For more about him, see: Jan Czernecki, *Mały król na Rusi i jego stolica Krystynopol. Z Pamiętnika klasztorowego 1766–1787 i z innych źródeł zebrał i zestawiał Jan Czernecki* (Kraków, 1939).

<sup>122</sup> Mykola Krykun, 'Dokumenty pro nadannja pustyni Uman' u vlasnist' Valentiju Aleksandrovi Kalynovs'komu 1609 roku', *Ukrajins'kyj archeohrafičnyj ščoričnyk*, 21–22 (2018), 698–712; Ihor Kryvošeja, Volodymyr Kryvošeja, and Ihor Blyznjuk, *Umanščyna v etnopolityčnij istoriji Ukrainy (kinec' XVIII – perša tretyna XIX st.)* (Kyjiv, 1998).

<sup>123</sup> Ihor Kryvošeja, *Uman's'kyj vasylians'kyj monastyr (1765–1834)* (Uman', 2009), p. 16.



The activities of Uman' Basilian collegium were especially successful. This institution remained in existence up until 1834; in 1773 it became a centre of high learning, with theology as well as new 'secular' disciplines (geometry, physics, history, geography, etc.) being part of the curriculum. Well-known representatives of the 'Ukrainian School' of Polish literature of the nineteenth century, such as Seweryn Goszczyński, Michał Grabowski, brothers Aleksandr and Sylwestr Groza, and Józef Bohdan Zaleski,<sup>124</sup> were among its graduates.

From the 1770s until the early 1830s, the Uman' Basilian community became a full-fledged partner in the interconfessional dialog taking place along the Great Border; concurrently, the Basilians served as mediators in numerous local conflicts between the Jews, Poles, and Ruthenians. This 'Golden Age' was a culmination of the socio-cultural engagement of the monastery in the public space of Uman' and the entire Right-Bank Ukraine. The new brick edifices of the Basilian collegium, dormitory (*konvikt*), monastic cells and the church, all of which were erected in 1785, became a visual symbol of the town, as well as a spiritual and cultural centre of the Ruthenian population of the region.

One of the most tragic chapters in the history of the Basilian monastery and the entire Uman' were the events of Koliivshchyna.<sup>125</sup> In June of 1768, Cossacks, peasants, and middle-class dwellers led by Maksym Zalizniak and Ivan Gonta captured Uman' and massacred the Jews and Catholics who had found shelter in the town. Among the numerous residents of Uman' who were tortured and killed, there were a few graduates of the Basilian collegium, together with their prior, Heraklii Kostecki. Starting in the 2010s, ecumenic commemoration services have been taking place in the yard of the former Basilian monastery in memory of the innocent victims of Koliivshchyna.<sup>126</sup> In 2018, a community initiative was announced to erect a memorial in the shape of a wellspring which, among Uman' Christians and Jews, would symbolize victims of the 1768 massacre and emphasize the need for compassion and mutual understanding between ethnic groups; among the Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians, it also symbolized non-conflictual memories shared by the victims of these tragic events.

<sup>124</sup> Daniel Beauvois, *Szkonictwo polskie na ziemiach litewsko-ruskich 1803–1832. Szkoły podstawowe i średnie*, 2 vols (Lublin: KUL, 1991), II, pp. 181–83; Ihor Kryvošeja, Tetjana Tyščenko, and Oksana Zelins'ka, 'Storinky istoriji Umans'koho vasylians'koho monastyrya', in *Kyjiv's'ki polonistyčni studiji, "Ukrajins'ka škola" v literaturi ta kul'turi ukrajins'ko-pol's'koho pohranyččja* (Kyjiv, 2005), pp. 180–92.

<sup>125</sup> Tetjana Tajirova-Jakovleva, *Kolijivščyna. Velyki iljuziji* (Kyjiv: Klio, 2019); Zenon Kohut, 'Myths Old and New: The Haidamak Movement and the Koliivshchyna (1768) in Recent Historiography', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 1 (1977), 359–78; Władysław Serczyk, *Koliszczyzna* (Warszawa, 1968). See also: Jurij Mycyk, *Uman' kozac'ka i hajdamac'ka* (Kyjiv: Kyjevo-Mohyljans'ka Akademiya, 2002), pp. 122–30; Hryhorij Chraban, *Spalach bniuu narodnoho: Antyfeodal'ne narodno-vyzvol'ne povstannja na Pravoberežnij Ukrajinii u 1768–1769 rr* (Kyjiv, 1989).

<sup>126</sup> Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, 'Materialy do istoriji Kolijivščyny', in *Hruševs'kyj, Mychajlo Serbijovyč. Tvory*, ed. by Pavlo Sochan' et al., 50 vols (L'viv: Svit, 2005), VII, pp. 120–39.

The monastery complexes in Buchach, Počaiv, and Uman', together with other equally striking monuments of the Basilian architecture on the territory of modern Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine, should be perceived as part of the cultural realm of Wilno Baroque, which included Sviatotoits'ka province and, with some reservations, Pokrovs'ka (Ruthenian, Polish) provinces of the Basilian Order. This cultural realm had its own shared artistic traits as well as regional features, in particular in the dioceses that belonged to the 'new Union', where monasteries of the Eastern rite joined the Order only in the early 1740s. The characteristic architectural traits of the Basilian monasteries and churches, built by such well-known artists as Johann Christoph Glaubitz, Jan Gottfried-Hoffmann, Oleksandr Osinkiewicz, and Jakub Fontana (1710–1773), included the traditional cross-domed, single-apse plans of the order system that, concurrently, did not follow the rule of facing eastward; openwork and multilayering of the architectural forms; the main façade featuring enhanced plasticity and bearing two tiered towers; the main altar decorated according to the Roman-Catholic tradition; columns and statues within the church interior, etc. Typically, the architecture of the Basilian monasteries and churches combined Western European forms of the Late Baroque with the local regional traditions. Specifically, in present-day Ukrainian lands (Volhynia, Galicia, and Right-Bank Ukraine), this process manifested itself in a fluid interaction between the traditional sacred architecture of Ruthenian churches and the Cossack Baroque.<sup>127</sup>

One of the impressive monuments of the Basilian (Union) Baroque style that is entirely or partially preserved in Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, or Ukraine is the Cathedral of St Sophia the Holy Wisdom in Polotsk; it was rebuilt by Kyivan Metropolitan Florian (Hrebnicki) in the 1750s, after it had been blown up in 1710 by the Muscovite army, led by the tsar's dignitary Aleksandr Menshikov. Other examples include the aforementioned Buchach monastery and the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; the Basilian shrine in Volna (built in 1768, Brest region of Belarus); Petropavlivs'k church of Berezwezc monastery (destroyed in the 1960s); the Shroud of the Virgin Church (in the shape of a cross fit into a rotunda) in Piddubtsi near Luts'k (1761); the church of the monastery in Boruń (built after 1757 from a blueprint by the local Basilian hegumen Oleksandr Osinkiewicz); Trinity Gate of Wilno monastery (1761); the Shroud of the Virgin Church in Talachyn monastery (1787, Foundation of princes Sanguszko); and the Epiphany and

<sup>127</sup> The most important synthetic researches of the recent decades on the phenomenon of the Vilna Baroque are the following: *Baroka ŭ belaruskaj kul'tury i mastactve*, ed. by Viktar Šmataŭ, 3rd edn (Minsk: Belaruskaja navuka, 2005); Tamara Habrus', *Muravanaja sakral'naja architekturna XVI–XVIII stst.* (Minsk: Belaruskaja navuka, 2006); Inessa Sljun'kova, *Monastyri vostočnoj i zapadnoj tradicii: Nasledie architektury Belarusi* (Moskva, 2002).

Exaltation of the Holy Cross churches in Żyrowicze.<sup>128</sup> These sacred edifices spread widely over the territory of Kyivan Metropolitan archdiocese and became an important manifestation of the Union Church's inculturation within the social, political, and religious structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The grand Dormition Cathedral of Pochaiv lavra, which was erected on an elevated terrace in the 1770s–1780s, is particularly impressive in terms of its scale and artistic perfection; it is a variation of a domed basilica, featuring an elongated altar section and a sculptural southern façade that is supported by two angular four-tiered towers (designed by the architect Gottfried-Hoffmann, with the participation of Piotr and Maciej Polejowski, and Franciszek Kulczycki).<sup>129</sup>

## TOPOGRAPHY OF HOLINESS: BASILIAN WONDERWORKING ICONS

The massive dissemination of St Mary's cult in contemporaneous Europe (caused by both the reaction of Catholics to the Protestants' negation of the Holy Mother of God cult and the nationalization of the Virgin Mary's guardianship over certain ethno-confessional communities within specific socio-cultural circumstances), as well as the view regarding St Anne's immaculate conception of the Holy Mother of God,<sup>130</sup> promoted by Jesuits, imparted direct influence on the Basilian milieu, which readily accepted this peculiar 'theology of fear' that was characteristic of the Baroque culture.<sup>131</sup> On an institutional level, the reception of St Mary's cult manifested itself through the sanctuaries, which were patronized by such important Kyivan Metropolitan dioceses as Żyrowicze and Pochaiv (according to the Eastern Christian *topos*,<sup>132</sup> the Holy Mother of God founded them in order to provide space for contemplating the wonderworking icons). Union sanctuaries attracted thousands or even tens of thousands of pilgrims and

<sup>128</sup> Tamara Habrus', *Muravanyja charaly. Sakral'naja architektura belaruskaha baroka* (Minsk: Uradžaj, 2001), pp. 117–20, 174–204; ead., 'Stylistyčnyja aspekty architektury vilenskaha baroka', in *Baroka ŭ belaruskaj kul'tury i mastactve*, ed. by Viktor Šmataŭ (Minsk, 1998), pp. 14–166; *Istorija ukrajins'koji kul'tury. Ukrajins'ka kul'tura druhoji polovyny XVII–XVIII st.*, ed. by Valerij Smolij, 5 vols (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2000–2013), III (2003), pp. 844, 846; Ji: *Nezaležnyj kul'turolohičnyj časopys, Lviv epochy Pinzelja*, 72 (2013); Algė Jankevičienė, 'Dviejų stilių sintezė XVI a. Vilniaus cerkvių architektūroje', *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis. Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės gotika: sakralinė architektūra ir dailė*, 26 (2002), 167–79; Stanisław Lorentz, *Jan Krzysztof Glaubitz, architekt wileński XVIII w. Materiały do biografii i twórczości*, *Prace z Historii Sztuki*, 5 vols (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie, 1936–1946), III (1937).

<sup>129</sup> Petro Ryčkov, and Viktor Luc, *Počajivs'ka Svjato-Uspens'ka lavra* (Kyiv, 2000), pp. 40–66.

<sup>130</sup> Natalja Jakovenko, "'Bytva za duši': Konkurencija Bohorodyčnych čud miž unijatamy ta pravoslavnyjny u 17 st. (vid Teodozija Borovyka do Joanykija Haljatovs'kohoh)', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 32/33:2, *Žnyva: Essays Presented in Honor of George G. Grabowicz on His Seventieth Birthday* (2011–2014), 807–25.

<sup>131</sup> Andrzej Zakrzewski, *W kręgu kultu maryjnego: Jasna Góra w kulturze staropolskiej* (Częstochowa, 1995), pp. 86–88.

<sup>132</sup> See: Wayne James Jorgenson 'Orthodox Monasticism: Byzantine', in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, ed. by William M. Johnston and Christopher Kleinhenz (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), pp. 974–76.

created a distinctive spiritual atmosphere of the close proximity of God in the world, as well as the immediate effect of miracles.<sup>133</sup>

Basilian wonderworking icons and the Union sanctuaries that grew around them created a particular trans-confessional sacred space for communication between a human and God.<sup>134</sup> Sacred objects such as icons and the miracles revealed through them played a special role in creating space for the spiritual unity of a human and God; they created a palpable 'God's presence'. In the interpretation of Mircea Eliade and Oleksii Lidov, the process of *erotopos* (from Greek 'eros' – sacred, and 'topos' – place, space) made it possible to single a certain territory out of the external world which was endowed with specific qualities. Such a 'topography of holiness' emerged as a result of either the purposeful activity of human beings who were engaged in a certain *hierophany*, or the process of transformation of a regular profane space into a sacred one, within the boundaries of which a special holiness was preserved.<sup>135</sup> The application of this theoretical model helps us to better understand the role of the wonderworking icons and sanctuaries in the formation of a special Basilian piety in theseventeenth–eighteenth centuries; it also helps us track the socio-cultural mechanisms of constructing the public religious cult of Ukrainian-Belarusian *Slavia Unita* within the Basilian milieu of the Commonwealth before the first partition.

The description of the procession of the less popular Wilno Holy Mother of God confirms the trans-confessional and supra-ethnic nature of the cult of wonderworking icons which were entrusted into the care of the Basilians. As papal nuncio Mario Filonardi<sup>136</sup> noted in 1636.

On Sunday 15 June, during the celebration of Pentecost, the city's Union-adhering monks walked in a festive procession from one of their churches, the Holy Trinity, to the other, that of the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin Mary. The faithful carried two icons of the Holy Virgin Mary, with the wonderworking icon being abundantly decorated. In front of the holy images, over a hundred torches were ablaze. The multitudes of people who gathered here kneeled on the ground and remained still, while the icons floated above. Finely dressed Union clergy walked with the Metropolitan of Rus' [in the lead]. The procession also included the Polish Vice-Chancellor (Piotr Gembicki), "His Excellency *marszałek Radziwiłł*", the Royal Chancellor, the Lithuanian *referendar*, and other magnates. Music rang out from the windows of the neighbouring houses, and children

<sup>133</sup> Marian Rusiecki, *Cud w chrześcijaństwie* (Lublin: TNKUL, 1995), pp. 125–40.

<sup>134</sup> Aleksej Lidov, 'Sozdanie sakral'nych prostranstv kak vid tvorčestva i predmet istoričeskogo issledovanija', in *Ierotopija: Sozdanie sakral'nych prostranstv v Vizantii i Drevnej Rusi*, ed. by Aleksej Lidov (Moskva: Indrik, 2006), pp. 9–58.

<sup>135</sup> Mirča Eliade, *Izbrannye sočinenija. Očerki sravnitel'nogo religiovedenija* (Moskva: Ladimir, 1999), pp. 337–38.

<sup>136</sup> *Litterae nuntiorum apostolicorum historiam Ucrainae illustrantes, 1629–1638*, ed. by Athanasius G. Welykyj, 14 vols (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1959–1977), V (1961), p. 212 (№ 2335).

read poems from the carpeted raisers, glorifying the Holy Mother of God in their native tongue.<sup>137</sup>

The icon of Wilno Holy Mother of God was honoured by the Basilians and middle-class city dwellers as a wonderworking image; it attracted numerous pilgrims (Orthodox and Union-adherent ones alike), who donated substantial amounts of money and jewellery out of gratitude for being blessed with grace. The description of the silver garments, precious ornaments, and votive tablets on the icon demonstrate that it was one of the most treasured holy objects in the capital of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Every Saturday, the monks of St Trinity monastery served an *akathist* in front of the Holy Mother of God icon.<sup>138</sup>

During the Russo-Swedish Deluge in 1662, the wonderworking icon was taken by the Don Cossacks under uncertain circumstances to Moscow, where a copy was produced. In just a few years, however, the holy image, “bearing a new lining and a case, framed with bright red satin”, was returned in 1668 to Sviatotoits’k Basilian monastery.<sup>139</sup> This was done according to articles 8 and 9 of the Treaty of Andrusovo, which entailed the restitution of valuables looted from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as requested by its (Commonwealth) envoys. The monastery took care of the icon up until 1849, when the Union was officially liquidated in the Romanov empire.

However, the honouring of the two other wonderworking icons from Żyrowicze and Pochaiv achieved a trans-regional and even an all-state dimension within the Basilian Order in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. Their worship created a special ‘space of faith’,<sup>140</sup> which went beyond the scope of the Basilian Order or even the Union Church itself; it took on a trans-confessional and supra-ethnic character, becoming part of the contemporaneous religious mentality of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the course of the eighteenth century, 26 festive coronations of the wonderworking icons of the Roman-Catholic Church<sup>141</sup> took place there; four of these icons were Union ones that belonged to the Kyivan Christian tradition.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Čiurinskas, ‘Vaizdai XVII a. raštijoje’, p. 160.

<sup>138</sup> Irina Gerasimova, *Pod vlast’ju russkogo carja. Sociokul’turnaja sreda Vil’ny v seredine XVII veka* (Sankt-Peterburg: Evropejskij universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2015), pp. 219–20; Piotr Chomik, *Kult ikon Matki Bożej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Białystok: Wydział Historyczno-Socjologiczny Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2003), p. 197; *Wilnianie. Żywoty siedemnastowieczne*, ed. by David Frick, *Bibliotheca Europae Orientalis*, 32 (Warsaw: Studium Europy Wschodniej, 2009), p. 123 (№ 46).

<sup>139</sup> Gerasimova, *Pod vlast’ju russkogo carja*, pp. 136, 195, 219–20.

<sup>140</sup> This is Natalia Yakovenko’s statement: Natalja Jakovenko, ‘Ochtyrs’ka čudotvorna ikona: prostir i semiotyka religijnogo dosvidu’, in *V orbiti chrystyjans’koi kul’tury*, pp. 45–57 (here: 53, 57).

<sup>141</sup> Aleksandra Witkowska, ‘Uroczyste koronacje wizerunków maryjnych na ziemiach polskich w latach 1717–2005’, in *Maria Regina. Koronacje wizerunków maryjnych w II Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. by Aleksandra Witkowska (Tarnów: Biblos, 2011), pp. 29–40.

<sup>142</sup> Mar’jana Levyc’ka, ‘Koronovani ikony Bohorodyci v ukrajins’kij unijnij tradycji XVIII–XIX st. (istoriohrafija i zrazky)’, *Karpaty: ljudyna, etnos, cyvilizacija*, 7–8 (2017–2018), 270–84; Dorota Wereda, ‘Koronacje wizerunków maryjnych w Cerkwi unickiej’, in *Koronacje wizerunku Matki Bożej na przestrzeni dziejów*, ed. by Ewelina Dziewońska-Chudy and Maciej Trąbski (Częstochowa: SIM, 2018), pp. 67–79.

The extraordinary popularity of wonderworking icons is exemplified by the fact that, in 1742–1807, the registry of miracles demonstrated by the Foot of Pochaiv Virgin Mary, together with spiritual chants ('Sing merrily, bow your foreheads', etc.),<sup>143</sup> was published seven times in a finely decorated book, *Pochaiv Mountain* (*Góra Poczajowska*). Both icons turned Żyrowicze and Pochaiv Basilian monasteries into widely popular centres of pilgrimage and sanctuaries of the Virgin Mary. These centres attracted pilgrims of various social, ethnic, and confessional backgrounds, the majority of which (almost three quarters) were clergy, peasants, and middle-class city dwellers.<sup>144</sup>

Żyrowicze was the main centre of the veneration of the Virgin Mary on the territories of contemporaneous Belarus, where one of the largest Basilian monasteries, together with the grand Dormition of the Holy Mother of God Church (erected c. 1650, rebuilt in 1710<sup>145</sup>), had been in operation since 1613. The main founders of this monastery were the noblemen and Union-adhering spouses Ivan and Anna Meleszko, while a dedicated custodian of the Virgin Mary's religious centre was Lew Sapieha, the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania and a *starosta* (prefect) of Slonim. The veneration of the Żyrowicze wonderworking icon of the Holy Mother of God, a representation of the iconographic type of *Eleusa* (Virgin of Tenderness, "queen of the Ruthenian nation in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth"), spread equally in the Roman-Catholic, Orthodox, and Union milieu alike. The local parish fraternity of the Holy Mother Mercy supported and propagated this veneration; in 1639, the fraternity received from Pope Urban VIII the right to give absolution to all Christians taking part in the pilgrimage to the site of the wonderworking icon. The pilgrims arrived at Żyrowicze from everywhere – Wilno and Žemaitija in the north, Volhynia and Podlachia in the south – while individual devotees came from as far as the outskirts of Moscow.<sup>146</sup>

According to the legend, during the first decades of the sixteenth century a miraculous revelation of the icon of Virgin Mary took place in Żyrowicze when shepherds from the household of *marszałek* Oleksandr Oleksandrovych Soltan found the icon in a wild pear tree. From that moment on, the veneration of Żyrowicze Holy Mother of God started to spread. The first miraculous healings, and even resurrections of the dead, date

<sup>143</sup> See more details: Jurij Medvedyk, *Ukrajins'ka duchovna pisnja XVII–XVIII stolit'* (L'viv: Ukrajins'kyj Katolyc'kyj Universytet, 2006).

<sup>144</sup> Natalja Jakovenko, 'Tvorennya lokal'nych "prostoriv viry": topohrafija i social'na stratyhrafija palomnyctv v Ukrajinі XVIII stolittja (za knyhamy čud Počajivs'koji ta Ochtjrs'koji bohorođyčnych ikon)', *Zapysky NTŠ*, 271 (2018), 209–30 (p. 221).

<sup>145</sup> Habrus', *Muravanyja charaly*, pp. 193–94; Mickevič, *Katalickija kljaštary*, p. 38.

<sup>146</sup> Gennadij Saganovič, 'Žirovičskaja ikona Bogomateri kak "mesto pamjati" Rusi VKL v XVI–XVIII vv.', in 'Mesta pamjati' Rusi konca XV – serediny XVIII v., ed. by Andrej Doronin (Moskva, 2019), pp. 149–68 (here: 152–54).

back to 1558 (by the mid-seventeenth century, some 2,000 miracles had been registered). The icon was a miniature one, painted on an oval-shaped jasper stone sized 5.6 x 4.4 cm. It was an object of veneration for Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and adherents of the Union.<sup>147</sup> Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth monarchs often visited Żyrowicze; during the Khmelnytsky uprising and the Russo-Swedish Deluge, the veneration became saturated with military undertones and acquired all-state significance. Numerous surviving testimonies of regular soldiers and nobility describe their rescue during battles with Cossacks and Muscovites thanks to protection by Żyrowicze Holy Mother of God. Noblemen often consecrated their battle banners in front of the holy image and, according to the *Books of Miracles*, this was the reason they did not perish during the war. In 1649, members of Minsk Union church fraternity arrived at Żyrowicze to express their gratitude to the wonderworking icon for not letting the 'Cossack sword'<sup>148</sup> invade their town.

In 1644, Władysław IV and his wife Cecilia visited Żyrowicze; in 1651, Jan II Kazimierz prayed there ("to take an oath to Virgin Mary") when leaving for the military campaign against the army of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. During the sermon given on this occasion, Basilian archimandrite Aleksy (Dubowicz) emphasized that, thanks to the care of and protection of Żyrowicze Holy Mother of God, the Polish-Lithuanian army would attain an 'overwhelming victory' over Cossacks and Tatars. Concurrently, soldiers were sanctifying their war banners on the eve of the Battle of Berestechko.<sup>149</sup> When, in 1655, the Muscovian army approached the town, Basilians took the icon to Byten', where it survived the calamity, after which it was returned to Żyrowicze. In 1684 and 1688, Jan III Sobieski also visited this sanctuary of Virgin Mary to worship and thank the Holy Mother of God for the victory over the Turkish army in the Battle of Vienna.<sup>150</sup> The holy image attained the most significant military renown in 1660, when on the eve of the victorious – for the Commonwealth – Battle of Polonka, located not far from Slonim, a Lithuanian division of the great Herman Paweł Sapieha arrived at Żyrowicze to worship the wonderworking icon. The soldiers perceived their victory over the army of the Muscovite voivode Ivan

<sup>147</sup> Teodozy Borowik, *Historia albo powieść zgodliwa przez pewne podanie ludzi wiary godnych, o obrazie przeczystej Panny Mariety Żyrowickim cudotwornym W. X. L. W powiecie Slonimskim, Y o rozmaitych cudach, które się przy nim... dzieią...* (Wilno, 1628); Jozafat Dubieniecki, *Historia o obrazie przeczystej Panny Mariety cudownym* (Wilno, 1653); Antoni Mironowicz, 'Jozafat Dubieniecki – historia cudownego obrazu żyrowickiego', *Rocznik Teologiczny*, 33 (1991), 195–215.

<sup>148</sup> Saganovič, 'Žirovičskaja ikona Bogomateri', pp. 149–57, 163–66; Henadz' Sahanovič, 'Militarynyja abrysny kul'tu Božaj Maci Žyrovickaj u XVII st.', *Belaruski Histaryčny Ahljad*, 25 (2018), 33–56 (pp. 47–52).

<sup>149</sup> Aleksy Dubowicz, *Comunctia planetarum terrestrium et caelestium in ecclesia Żyrowickiej wystawiona gdy niezwycciężony monarcha Władysław IV Król Polski z Naisniejszą Cęcilią Renatą Królową Polską Cudowny Obraz nawiedzali. Roku 1644 Dnia 9 Stycznia* (Wilno: Drukarnia Bazyljanów, 1644); id., *Złota godzina. Dnia złotego Początek, Przed Naisniejszym Janem Kazimierzem Krolew Polskim, Wielkim Książęciem Litewskim etc. etc. w Cerkwi Żyrowickiej* (Wilno, 1651).

<sup>150</sup> Sahanovič, 'Militarynyja abrysny kul'tu Božaj Maci Žyrovickaj', pp. 44–46.

Khovansky as another act of mercy from Żyrowicze Virgin Mary. Thus, starting in the mid-seventeenth century, this holy image became perhaps the most sacred Union sanctuary. According to Catholic Ruthenians, its protection saved them during the ordeal of the Khmelnytsky uprising and, in 1654–1667, during the war between the Commonwealth and the Tsardom of Muscovy.

The triumphant spreading of veneration of Żyrowicze Holy Mother of God culminated at the icon's festive coronation on 7–15 September 1730, against the backdrop of the discovery of a copy of this icon, known as *Madonna del Pascolo*,<sup>151</sup> in 1718 in Rome at the Basilian church-residence of Saints Sergius and Bacchus. This was the sixth icon to be crowned in the Commonwealth and the first Union one; not only the Union diocese and the Basilian Order but also the influential noble families of Radziwiłł and Sapieha joined the organization of the large-scale public festivities. The wonderworking icon was embellished with two golden crowns delivered from Rome, while all participants were given valuable commemorative medals. At the occasion of the coronation, in vernacular language a Basilian monk composed *A Song About the Holiest Virgin of Żyrowicze*. The song praised the wonderworking image, and the town of Żyrowicze was praised as the 'new Częstochowa' and the capital of Virgin Mary in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; this composition was popular among the clergy and the faithful, and can de facto be considered a political manifesto of the 'Ruthenian Union nation' within the Commonwealth.<sup>152</sup> The coronation act of the 'Queen of Ruthenia' was carried out by Kyivan Metropolitan Athanasius (Szeptycki), while some 140,000 people (with many Orthodox Christians among them<sup>153</sup>) participated in the pilgrimage to the site of the wonderworking icon. As the German scholar Mathias Niendorf observed, the veneration of Żyrowicze Holy Mother of God, constructed by Basilians, turned out to be the most effective instrument of the consolidation of multi-ethnic and poly-confessional society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>154</sup>

The veneration of Pochaiv Holy Mother of God also acquired a supra-regional character, and Basilians actively invested in it after 1712, when Arsen (Koczarski), the hegumen of Pochaiv monastery, together with his

<sup>151</sup> Ignacy Wolodzko, *Della Madonna Santissima del Pascolo* (Roma, 1719); Isidoro Nardi, *Relazione storica dello scoprimento della sacra e miracolosa immagine della Madonna del Pascolo* (Roma, 1721) (Polish translation: Isidor Nardi, *Relacja historyczna o zjawieniu cudownego obrazu Naswietszey Panny Zyrowickiey, nazwanego po włosku Del Pascolo od Zyru w Rzymie przy Gorach w Resydencyi WW. OO. Bazylianow Ruskiego Narodu po włosku wydana teraz przetlumaczona przez Ign. Kulczynskiego* (Supraśl, 1728).

<sup>152</sup> Saganovič, 'Žirovičskaja ikona Bogomateri', pp. 163–66.

<sup>153</sup> See: Nikolaj Dikovskij, *Koronowanie Žirovickoj čudotvornoj ikony Bogomateri (1730 god)* (Grodna, 1902).

<sup>154</sup> Mathias Niendorf, *Das Grossfürstentum Litauen: Studien zur Nationsbildung in der frühen Neuzeit (1569–1795)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 164.



monks-brethren, converted to the Union.<sup>155</sup> Narrative half-legendary accounts connect the emergence of the wonderworking icon with the visit of the Greek Metropolitan Neophyte to Kyivan Metropolitan diocese in 1559. He gifted the icon to Anna Goiska, nee Kozińska, an Orthodox Christian of noble background (the first recorded mention of the holy image goes back to 1641<sup>156</sup>). The wonderworking icon was quite small in size (29 x 24 cm), painted with red paint on cypress board; it belonged to the iconographic type of *Eleusa* (Tenderness; Ελεούσα), which depicts the Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus with her right hand, pressing Him to her face. The icon had silver casing and was decorated with numerous votive tablets.<sup>157</sup>

Initially, this icon was kept at Anna Goiska's private chapel. However, to venerate the icon properly after the miraculous healing of her brother, who gained eyesight thanks to the icon's wonderworking power, in 1597 Goiska founded Pochaiv monastery and provided it with vast lands and monetary donations.<sup>158</sup> In the 1620s–1640s, the holy image became a victim of the confessionalization of the noblemen's religious self-awareness. The successor of Anna Goiska, a castellan from Belz (future voivode of Sandomierz) called Andrzej Firlej (c. 1586–1649/1650), who was active as Protestant-Calvinist, took the icon to his family estate in Kozyn, and only returned it to Orthodox monks in 1647, following the decision of the Lublin royal tribunal. The specific character of the adoration of Pochaiv Holy Mother of God and Her Foot was its pairing with the veneration of the local hegumen and ascetic Iov (Zalizo), who, in 1659, was proclaimed a saint of the Orthodox church.<sup>159</sup> Back then the veneration was still a local custom; it became widespread after the emergence in 1665 of Ioanykiy Halyatovsky's treatise *Nebo novoye* (The New Heaven), which for the first time described the miraculous deeds of Pochaiv Holy Mother of God. Adoration gained popularity during the events of 20–23 July 1675, when Pochaiv was besieged by Turks, and, thanks to protection from the Holy Mother of God (the 'Pochaiv miracle'), both the monastery and the town were saved from being captured by the enemy (a striking representation

<sup>155</sup> Skočyljas, *Halyc'ka (Lvivs'ka) jeparchija*, pp. 287–88. The controversy over the historical and cultural memory of this monastery is described by: Liliya Berezhnaya, 'Heilige Gottesmutter von Počajiv, sie wird uns retten!' 'Die Gottesmutter von Počajiv als Erinnerungsort in der postsowjetischen Ukraine', in *Maria in der Krise: Kulturpraxis zwischen Konfession und Politik in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. by Agnieszka Gašior and Stefan Samerski (Köln: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 347–58 (pp. 348–55); Liliya Berezhnaya, 'Kloster Počajiv', in *Religiöse Erinnerungsorte in Ostmitteleuropa: Konstitution und Konkurrenz im nationen- und epochenübergreifenden Zugriff*, ed. by Joachim Bahlcke, Stefan Rohdewald, and Thomas Wünsch (München: Akademie, 2013), pp. 74–80.

<sup>156</sup> Horin, *Monastyri Luc'ko-Ostroz'koji jeparchiji*, pp. 333–34.

<sup>157</sup> *Istorija ukrajins'koji kul'tury*, III p. 774.

<sup>158</sup> Horin, *Monastyri Luc'ko-Ostroz'koji jeparchiji*, pp. 315–37.

<sup>159</sup> This fact was emphasized by: Berezhnaya, 'Heilige Gottesmutter von Počajiv, sie wird uns retten!', pp. 349–51. See also: Ihor Isičenko, 'Prepodobnyj Iov Počajivs'kyj u kul'turnomu kodi Počajivs'koho vasylijans'koho monastyrja', in *Kul'turotvorča misija Počajivs'koho vasylijans'koho monastyrja: Zbirnyk naukovykh statej*, ed. by Ihor Isičenko (Charkiv: Akta, 2018), pp. 51–61.

of this military *topos* is apparent in the 1704 etching by Nykodym Zubricki, *Obloha Pochayeva turkamy* [The Siege of Pochaiv by Turks].<sup>160</sup>

*Xiġga Cudów obrazu Poczajowskiego N[ajświętszej] Maryi Panny y Stopki*, which has been closely studied by Valentyna Los' and Natalia Jakovenko,<sup>161</sup> relates some 379 accounts of healing (according to other data, the number is 278) between 1607 and 1827 that were recognized as miraculous by the monks. During the Orthodox epoch, only 21 miracles were registered, while the lion's share of acknowledged healings occurred in the 1770s (almost 30% of records). The subject matter of the wonderworks of Pochaiv Holy Mother of God and their narrative content generally fits with the common Christian *topoi*. The records, edited and systematized by the Basilians, reflect the solidarity of the Union community in the face of the growing socio-political and confessional destabilization of the Commonwealth in the eighteenth century and demonstrate a clear connection with 'Ruthenian antiquity', marked by Old Church Slavonic and 'Ruthenian vernacular' as these languages were used to record miracles heard from regular pilgrims (Polish appears in these sources in 1736, and starting mid-eighteenth century it dominates *The Book of Miracles*).<sup>162</sup> Records regarding the miraculous deeds of the Union epoch stand out with their realistic and rational manner, putting emphasis on providing mandatory proofs for miraculous healings with the help of sworn witnesses and the 'materialization' of the miraculous impact of Pochaiv Holy Mother of God on worshippers.

The veneration of Pochayiv Holy Mother of God (an Orthodox holy icon that became truly accepted by the Catholics of Eastern and Roman rites<sup>163</sup>), propagated by the Basilians, spread first and foremost in Volhynia, Podlachia, Podilia, and the Ruthenian voivodeship. The opportunities for pilgrimage here were extremely varied. The largest number of records in the *Book of Miracles* is connected with pilgrims from the Luts'k diocese (around 70), while only one worshiper arrived from the neighbouring Union diocese. Regarding the quantity of miraculous healings, second place was taken by the neighbouring Ruthenian voivodeship (the localities close to Volhynia); considerably fewer pilgrims came from Kyiv region and Podilia. The mass printing of *Pochayiv Mountain* was conducive to the rapid spread of the veneration. From 1743 to 1774, five main groups of pilgrims

<sup>160</sup> Natalja Jakovenko, *U pošukach Novoho Neba: Žyttja i teksty Joanykija Galjatos'koho* (Kyjiv: Krytyka, 2017), p. 431.

<sup>161</sup> Jakovenko, 'Tvorenja lokal'nych "prostoriv viry"', pp. 209–30; Natalja Jakovenko, 'Čudo Počajivs'koji ikony na mori pid Neapolem 1762 roku', *Zapysky NTS*, 270 (2018), 201–19; Valentyna Łoś, 'Księga cudów Najświętszej Marii Panny monasteru Bazyljanów w Poczajowie: analiza ponadkonfesyjnej mentalności religijnej (XVII – początek XIX wieku)', *Orientalia Christiana Cracoviensia*, 10 (2018), 111–30 (here: 120–22).

<sup>162</sup> Jakovenko, 'Tvorenja lokal'nych "prostoriv viry"', pp. 210–12, 217–22; Łoś, 'Księga cudów Najświętszej Marii Panny', pp. 123–24.

<sup>163</sup> This fact was emphasized by: Berezhnaya, 'Heilige Gottesmutter von Počajiv, sie wird uns retten!', pp. 351–53.

to Pochayiv appear in 115 records: priests and monks (40%), low-ranking nobles (23.5%), peasants (17%), middle-class city dwellers (15%), and individual communities (4.5%).<sup>164</sup>

Noblemen (approx. 30%) and Union clergy (almost 27%) constituted a large percentage of the pilgrims to Pochayiv Holy Mother of God and her Foot, although among the healed worshippers there were also an Orthodox hegumen from Cossack Hetmanate and a Capuchin-missionary. Among the witnesses of miraculous revelations and healings, one could frequently find monks from the neighbouring Dominican monastery in Pidkamin'. At the same time, the supra-confessional character of the Virgin Mary's veneration is evident, since the list of the healed Christian pilgrims includes adherents of the Union, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox Christians alike. Moreover, Union-adhering monks dominated among the peasants, while middle-class dwellers were more varied from a confessional standpoint.<sup>165</sup> Natalia Yakovenko mentions a striking example of solidarity between the rites during the plague in 1771: Six pilgrims from Tovstenke near Husiatyn (western Podilia), 'adhering to our Ruthenian, as well as Roman rite, arrived in Pochayiv'. During the epidemic they submitted themselves to the care of the Pochayiv Holy Mother of God, gathering together to read the book of Pochayiv miracles; while some were sick, none passed away, and so out of gratitude they brought a silver tablet to Pochayiv to decorate the wonderworking icon. The Roman Catholics and adherents of Union from Pidhirtsi and Luts'k did the same by submitting themselves to the care of the icon during the plague.

The spread of veneration of Pochayiv Holy Mother of God culminated during the festive coronation of the wonderworking icon in September 1773, organized by the Basilian Order, the Union hierarchy, and the magnate Mikołaj Potocki. After a special committee headed by the Luts'k Union Bishop Sylwester (Lubieniecki-Rudnicki) recognized the genuine nature of the miracles, and, in April 1773, Pope Clement XIV issued a bull announcing an eight-day indulgence for all the participants of the coronation. Those who had taken part in the liturgies, had prayed to the wonderworking icon, had confessed, and had taken holy communion were supposed to be completely forgiven (receive an indulgence) for their sins.<sup>166</sup> The entire Kyivan Metropolitan diocese and particularly the Basilian monasteries experienced a bold mobilization aimed at preparing the highest number of pilgrims, both spiritually and organizationally, to participate

<sup>164</sup> Jakovenko, "Tvorennya lokal'nykh "prostoriv viry", pp. 221.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19; Łoś, 'Księga cudów Najświętszej Marii Panny', pp. 125–26.

<sup>166</sup> Lorens, *Bazylianie prowincji koronnej*, pp. 278–80.

in the coronation. The equestrian royal regiment and infantry squadron of Prince Janusz Sanguszko kept order during the ceremony.

The actual festivities took place on 19 September 1773, during the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary celebration (according to the Julian calendar), and followed the scenario provided by the Wilno *capitulum*. The festive ceremony started one day earlier, when two papal crowns were brought to the monastery's church, while the wonderworking holy image was moved to a special space that had been built for it by the architect Jan de Witte: a shrine of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the outskirts of Pochayiv. The road from the monastery to the shrine was planted with trees and decorated with five triumphal arches; numerous paintings depicting the miracles revealed by the icon were placed on the side of the road. The coronation rite took place on the following day, 19 September, with the main protagonists being the Pochayiv hegumen Dometius (Janowski), the proto-hegumen of Pokrov province Onuphrius (Bratkowski), and the proto-archimandrite of the Basilian Order Porfiriusz (Ważyński).<sup>167</sup>

To immortalize the coronation, 5000 commemorative medals (*koronarki*) and 11,000 small paper images depicting the Pochayiv Holy Mother of God were produced. In the evening after the actual coronation, a theatrical demonstration of artificial lights that had been brought from Warsaw<sup>168</sup> was organized in Pochayiv by military engineers. In total, some 100,000 pilgrims and guests participated in the celebrations, which continued until 26 September. According to calculations by the Basilians, 24,000 adherents of the Union and 9,300 Roman Catholics received confession and holy communion. Pilgrims brought their votive tablets to the holy image and participated in numerous liturgies and nightly contemplations.<sup>169</sup>

Based on the chalcography *Crowning of the Pochayiv Virgin Mary Icon*, created by the engraver Teodor Strzelbicki in the 1780s, one can form a certain impression as to the scope of the coronation ceremony. This etching confirms the massive nature of the coronation and the participation of the numerous representatives of Union-adhering and Catholic clergy, magnates and nobles, local royal administration, church fraternities, and peasant pilgrims. The large-scale celebrations in Pochayiv facilitated the popularization of the wonderworking icon, thereby supporting the emergence of the impressive sanctuary of the Basilian Order, which remained a striking symbol of the triumph of the Ruthenian Catholic triumph in Right-Bank Ukraine up until the very liquidation of the Union.

<sup>167</sup> Józef E. Dutkiewicz, 'Fabryka cerkwi Wniebowzięcia NMP w Poczajowie', *Dawna Sztuka*, 2 (1939), 131–62; Lorens, *Bazylianie prowincji koronnej*, pp. 281–82.

<sup>168</sup> Lorens, *Bazylianie prowincji koronnej*, pp. 283–84.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

## CULTURAL TRANSFER: BOOK PRINTING IN WILNO, POCHAYIV, AND SUPRAŚL

The Basilians' noticeable contribution to the culture of the ethnic groups who inhabited the Commonwealth, first and foremost in the areas of book publishing and education, can be partially explained by the Union monks' successful usage of contemporaneous methods of inculturation. Among other things, these methods allowed for the emergence of the phenomenon of *Basilian Enlightenment*, which fits within the wider discourse of the European Enlightenment. In the eighteenth century, especially its second half, the Enlightenment substantially changed the religious life of Christian Europe and led to the appearance of 'educated piety' (*pietas litterata*). The assimilation of Enlightenment ideas by various representatives of political and spiritual elites, as well as an active secular milieu, started the process of rejuvenation (modernization) of the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Churches. This was done by way of the rationalization of faith with the simultaneous application of techno-scientific progress alongside new models of education and civility. This is how the 'Catholic Enlightenment' formed; with the help of Enlightenment-inspired methods of cultural modernization, they implemented contemporary mechanisms for religious reformation and developed their ability to communicate with the world in ordinary language.

The Catholic Enlightenment was also partially successful in opposing followers of the Enlightenment's attempts to rid Europe of its traditions and remove the Church as an institution of highest authority from the public sphere.<sup>170</sup> The ideas of the Enlightenment also spread in the Commonwealth and its eastern Lithuanian-Belarusian-Ukrainian lands, farther to the east (to Kyiv, the Cossack Hetmanate and the Russian Empire<sup>171</sup>) and to the south (to Slavic ethnic groups of the Balkans, the so-called 'Orthodox Enlightenment' phenomenon<sup>172</sup>). The Kyiv Union Metropolitan diocese and its Basilian Order, where the impact of the Enlightenment and its reception by the Catholics of the Eastern rite took

<sup>170</sup> Ulrich L. Lehner, *The Catholic Enlightenment: The Forgotten History of a Global Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 5–7, 128, 154; Ulrich L. Lehner and William P. O'Brien 'Mysticism and Reform in Catholic Theology between 1600 and 1800', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800*, ed. by Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and Anthony G. Roeber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 63–74 (here: 64–65).

<sup>171</sup> See polemic article: Volodymyr Sklokin, 'Čy isnuvalo ukrajins'ke Prosvitnytstvo? Kil'ka mirkuvan' iz pryvodu nezaveršenoji istoriohrafičnoji dyskusiji', *Kyjivs'ka akademija*, 12 (2014–2015), 146–59.

<sup>172</sup> Vasilios N. Makrides, 'The Enlightenment in the Greek Orthodox East: Appropriation, Dilemmas, Ambiguities', in *Enlightenment and Religion in the Orthodox World*, ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2016), pp. 17–47; Dimitrios Moschos, 'The Churches of the East and the Enlightenment', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800*, pp. 505–13; Marija Petrović, 'Austrian Enlightenment the Orthodox Way. The Church Calendar of the Habsburg Serbs and the Josephinist Reforms', in *Encounters in the Europe's Southwest. The Habsburg Empire and the Orthodox World in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. by Harald Heppner and Eva Posch (Bochum: D. Winkler, 2012), pp. 45–54.

various forms, were no exception to this rule. First and foremost, we are referring here to the emergence of an elaborate chain of Basilian public schools (including those for secular youth), and widespread utilization (after 1773) of the potential of former Jesuit *collegia*, specifically the Wilno Academy (known after 1801 as Imperial University). All of these helped to transform the local Sviatotoitrois'k monastery into a kind of 'educational corporation'.<sup>173</sup>

The periodization of the Commonwealth Enlightenment ('early', 1740–1773; 'high', 1773–1794; 'late', 1795–1820)<sup>174</sup> proposed by the British historian Richard Butterwick can be applied to the Basilian Enlightenment only in part. Visible manifestations of the reception of Enlightenment ideas within the milieu of Union-adhering monks can be detected, first and foremost, in schooling. New Enlightenment standards of education in the Basilian public schools allowed for reduced attention being paid to classical languages, the introduction of science, math, history, and law as individual disciplines, as well as an emphasis on learning both native and other European languages. The new educational discourse of the Basilian schooling programme underlined the need for learning a 'Slavic language', rigorous control over the educational process, and ensuring an adequate professional level for teachers. A system for encouraging students was implemented as well.<sup>175</sup> In addition, scholars make observations regarding changes of several aspects within the Basilian religious environment: models of sainthood; organization of community life in the monasteries and within the individual (e.g., devotional practices); a degree of secularization of the repertoire of published works<sup>176</sup> (an expanded range of secular books on husbandry, *belle-lettres*, nature, and politics); increased attention to non-official national languages (specifically Lithuanian and Ruthenian vernacular)<sup>177</sup> and Biblical languages (Greek and Hebrew), as well as major European languages, namely Italian, German, and French.

<sup>173</sup> Vadimas Adadurovas, 'Švč. Trejybės vienuolynas kaip švietimo institucija', in *Kultūrų kryžkelė*, pp. 137–43; Ina Kažuro, 'Bazilijonų vienuolijų ryšiai su Vilniaus universitetu', *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, 42 (2018), 29–47.

<sup>174</sup> Richard Butterwick, 'Catholicism and Enlightenment in Poland-Lithuania', in *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe*, ed. by Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 297–358 (here: 297, 310).

<sup>175</sup> Oleksandr Savyč, *Narysy z istoriji kul'turnych ruchiv na Vkraini ta Bilorusi v XVI–XVIII v.*, Zbirnyk istorično-filolohičnoho viddilu, 90 (Kyjiv, 1929), pp. 278–81, 297–98, 305–06; Maria Pidlypczak-Majerowicz, *Bazylianie w Koronie i na Litwie. Szkoły i książki w działalności zakonu* (Warszawa–Wrocław, 1986), p. 103.

<sup>176</sup> The last one who drew the attention to this fact was: Joanna Getka, 'Secular lexis in 18th-century Ruthenian religion-related printed matter (based on Basilian "moral theologues")', in *Beiträge zum 19. Arbeitstreffen der Europäischen Slavistischen Linguistik (Polyslav)*, ed. by Enrique G. Rubio, Ekaterina Kislova, and Emilia Kubicka (Wiesbaden, 2016), pp. 81–91.

<sup>177</sup> Ivan Al'mes, *Istorija čytannja: Čenci v sociokul'turnomu prostori L'vius'koji jeparchiji (rannij novyj čas)* (L'viv, 2020) (in print); Marija Pidlypczak-Maerovič, 'Izdanija na litovskom jazyke vasilianskich i iezuitskich tipografij', in *Istoričeskij put' litovskoj pis'mennosti: Čb. materialov konf. (4–6 nojabrja 2004 g., Moskva)*, ed. by Juozas Budraitis and Sergej Temčin (Vil'njus, 2005), p. 34; Joanna Getka, *U progmu modernizaciji: Ruskojazyčne drukarstvo bazyliānskie XVIII wieku* (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2017), pp. 113–26; Ina Kažuro, 'Vilniaus bazilijonų vienuolyno spaustuvės veikla 1628–1839 m.' (doctoral thesis, Vilnius University, 2019).

This is how the Union-adhering monks, while remaining under the influence of Enlightenment discourse and the ideas of the European Renaissance, contributed to the development of national cultures. A striking example of Basilian educational inculturation is the work of Sviatotoitroits'k monastery's printing house in Wilno. Specifically, in 1794 a patriotic sermon was published in Lithuanian by Father Mykolas Karpavičius (*Kozonius ant gailingo atprovijimo pagrabo*) on the occasion of the burial of the Kosciuszko Uprising participants; in 1811, one of the Wilno monks, Oleksandr (Butkiewicz), prepared a Lithuanian grammar and Lithuanian–Polish dictionary (*Kalbriedą Lietuviškay Lenkiszka Ležuwie mieleyšnieme Zemayciu*) for printing.<sup>178</sup> A different example of Basilian inculturation can be seen in the activities of the Uman' *collegium*, which provided elite education for Union adherents, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox Christians in line with the Jesuit motto 'To teach everyone regardless of their confession' (during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, some 400–800 students, predominantly sons of local nobility, studied there). Raised within the walls of this particular *collegium* were the best representatives of Right-Bank Ukraine's contemporaneous intellectual elite. It suffices to mention such figures as Józef Bohdan Zaleski and Seweryn Goszczyński, who started the 'Ukrainian School' of nineteenth-century Polish literature, as well as a number of other well-known scholars in the fields of ethnography, history, medicine, etc.<sup>179</sup>

Book printing was one of the most successful cultural initiatives of the Basilian Order; it ensured that the Order's need for ascetic, liturgical, polemical, and homiletic texts was met. It also served as an effective tool of Union confessionalization,<sup>180</sup> especially in the realm of liturgy. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Basilians supported six printing houses in Wilno, Lviv, Minsk, Pochayiv, Supraśl, and Univ; all these were noticeably active in the Commonwealth's book printing landscape and were bested in terms of thematic diversity only by the Jesuits and Piarists.<sup>181</sup> The Basilian Fathers set up their first press in Wilno monastery, having purchased a well-known printing house that belonged to the Mamonicz family. Here, in 1628, the first Basilian book – a catechism written in 'vernacular' Ruthenian<sup>182</sup> – saw the light of day. Despite the occasional

<sup>178</sup> *Na perechrestii kul'tur*, 2nd edn, pp. 674–93 (№ 15); Anna Kaupuž, Ingė Lukšaitė, 'A. Butkevičiaus gramatikos byla', *Kalbotyra*, 5 (1962), 122–61.

<sup>179</sup> Kryvošeja, *Umans'kyj vasylians'kyj monastyr*, pp. 3–4, 16–17.

<sup>180</sup> The use of printing as an instrument of Catholic confessionalization in early modern Europe is emphasized by: Thomas Kaufmann, *Die Mitte der Reformation. Eine Studie zu Buchdruck und Publizistik im deutschen Sprachgebiet, zu ihren Akteuren und deren Strategien, Inszenierungs- und Ausdrucksformen* (Tübingen, 2019).

<sup>181</sup> Mychajlo Vavryk, 'Cerkovni drukarni i vydannja v Ukrajin's'kij katolyc'kij cerkvi 17 stol.', *Analecta OSBM*, 9 (15) (1974), 119–21; Pidlypczak-Majerowicz, *Bazylianie w Koronie i na Litwie*, pp. 59–60.

<sup>182</sup> Antonina Zernova, 'Tipografija Majeroničej v Vil'ne (XVII vek)', *Kniga: Issledovanija i materialy*, 1 (1959), 167–223 (here: 219).

moment of crisis in the activities of this printing centre, by the end of the eighteenth century the Wilno monks had published a few hundred books, having collaborated with such well-known engravers as the German Conrad Götke and the Ruthenian Leontii Tarasevych. The most fruitful periods were the 1640s through the early 1650s (22 printed eulogies) and from the 1760s to the 1790s (172 books), when the Basilian Press renewed its work. Among the printing house's successes were translations of the *Book of Hours* (Semi-Uncial) into Church Slavonic in 1670, and a Grand Missal in 1692.<sup>183</sup>

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Wilno printing house was publishing books predominantly in Polish and partly in Latin; this went in line with the contemporaneous language preferences of the Basilian milieu and the process of acculturation. Concurrently, texts in Cyrillic remained an important part of the publishing repertoire and fulfilled several needs of the Union Church: liturgical (missals, breviaries, etc.), educational (primers, dictionaries), and evangelical (catechisms). 75 such editions from Wilno are known to us, while Pochayiv Press printed 321 books in vernacular Ruthenian or Church Slavonic language<sup>184</sup>. Statistical data for the year 1800 testify to the publishing potential and impact of Wilno Press; almost 26,000 copies of 53 editions were printed at the monastery bookstore. Church Slavonic primers and Polish prayer books gained the most popularity.<sup>185</sup>

In the early 1690s, the Wilno printing house was transferred to the Basilian monastery in Supraśl on the initiative of Metropolitan Cyprian (Żochowski); it thereby laid the foundation for one more impressive printing centre for the Union Church (the Press was active until 1803). One of the most fruitful periods in the activities of this centre was during the governance of archimandrite Lev (Kyshka), when 65 titles were published. Up until the early nineteenth century, some 500 editions were published in Supraśl, the majority of which were books in Polish and, in part, Latin (respectively, c. 70% and 10%–18%). There was no lack of Cyrillic books, which constituted almost one-fifth (99 titles) of the published output; a few books in Lithuanian saw the light of day as well.<sup>186</sup>

The biggest Basilian printing house of the eighteenth century was initiated in Pochayiv in 1730 by the Luts'k Union bishop, Theodosius

<sup>183</sup> Ivanas Almesas, 'Spaustuvė', in *Kultūry kryžkelė*, pp. 203–208 (here: 203, 207–208); Ina Kažuro, 'Vilniaus bazilijonų spaustuvės (1628–1845) veiklos organizavimas', *Knygotyra*, 69 (2017), 14–19.

<sup>184</sup> Olena Zeleznjak, 'Počajivs'ki vydannja kyrylyčnym šryftom: 1734–1830', in *Drukarnja Počajivs'koho Uspens'koho monastyria ta jiji starodruky: Zb. nauk. prac'*, ed. by Oleksij Onyščenko (Kyjiv, 2011), pp. 162–92; Zoja Jaroševič-Pereslavcev, 'Vil'njusskoe kirilličeskoe knigopečatanie: ego sud'ba i značenie', in *Vilniaus Universiteto bibliotekos metraštis*, ed. by Viktorija Vaitkevičiūt et al. (Vilniaus: Vilniaus universitetas, 2015), pp. 303–24 (here: 303–4).

<sup>185</sup> Almesas, *Spaustuvė*, pp. 203–8.

<sup>186</sup> *V pomošč' sostaviteljam svodnogo kataloga, vyp. 3: Kirillovskie izdaniya Suprasl'skoj tipografii*, ed. by Jurij Labyncev (Moskva, 1978); Maria Cubrzyńska-Leonarczyk, *Oficyna supraska 1695–1803* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1993), p. 28.



(Lubieniecki-Rudnicki). In 1618, Kyrylo (Trankvillion-Stavrovets'kyi) from the Orthodox Press, a distant predecessor of Pochayiv printing house, published his theological treatise *The Mirror of Theology*.<sup>187</sup> In October 1732, Augustus II granted Pochayiv monastery the privilege to initiate book printing, since there was a lack of liturgical 'Ruthenian books' within the Union Church. This legitimizing clause of the royal charter is very telling as it explains the main reason behind setting up the printing house: the need to arrange for the publication of unified and edited liturgical books for the 'new Union' dioceses, in line with resolutions taken at the Synod of Zamość in 1720.<sup>188</sup> The reception of the liturgical reform in the Kyivan Union Metropolitan diocese was one of the main goals of the Pochayiv Press, and this explains the domination of Church Slavonic and vernacular Ruthenian languages among its publications.

Shortly, after having won the competition with Lviv and Univ, the new Basilian Press became the largest publishing centre for Union-adhering Ruthenians in the Crown lands of the Commonwealth. Pochayiv's status as a St Marian sanctuary helped to provide financial support for the book printing. Generous donations were made both by the numerous pilgrims visiting the wonderworking icon and by the residencies of the Basilian proto-hegumen (located in Pokrov province). This concurrently widened the circle of reader-consumers. The Holy Dormition lavra's yearly revenue from book sales ranged from about 2000 to 20,000 Polish złoty yearly, and on average constituted 15% (2000–3000 złoty) of the total income of the monastery.<sup>189</sup>

The Pochayiv centre stood out among the Basilian publishing houses thanks to the increased number of books in vernacular Ukrainian and liturgical Church Slavonic languages.<sup>190</sup> In the 1830s and 1840s, a few dozen

<sup>187</sup> Jaroslav Isajevyč, 'Knyhovydannja i drukarstvo v Počajevi: iniciatory ta vykonavci', in *Drukarnja Počajiv's'koho Uspens'koho monastyrja*, pp. 7–22 (here: 8–9).

<sup>188</sup> This aspect of the operation of the printery draws attention in Ivan Al'mes, 'Kontroversijne misce pam'jati ta spil'na kul'turna spadščyna: Počajiv's'ka obytel' i monastyrs'ka drukarnja domodernoho času', in *Kataloh starodrukiv Počajiv's'koji vasylijans'koji drukarni XVIII – pershoji tretyni XIX stolit'* (Lviv, 2020) (in print).

<sup>189</sup> Lorens, *Bazylianie prowincji koronnej*, pp. 220–24, 410–15.

<sup>190</sup> The general background of the functioning of the Pochaiv printery is represented by the following works: Jaroslav Isajevyč, 'Ukrajins'ki monastyrs'ki drukarni Pravoberežžja: Univ i Počajiv', in *Ukrajins'ke knyhovydannja: vytoky, rozvytok, problemy*, ed. by Jaroslav Isajevyč (Lviv, 2002), pp. 276–86; Luc Ryčkov, *Počajiv's'ka Svjato-Uspens'ka lavra*; Ivan Tylawsky, 'Monastero di Počajiv – la sua tipografia e le sue edizioni', in *Analecta OSBM*, 4.1–2 (1963), 230–92 (Ukrainian translation: Ivan Tyljavs'kyj, *Liturbijni naprjamky Počajiv's'koho monastyrja pid čas uniji (1712–1831)* [Rym–Lviv, 1997]). An older work has not lost its relevance too: Andrej Chojnackij, *Počaevskaja Uspenskaja lavra. Istoričeskoe opisanie*, ed. by Grigorij Kryžanovskij (Počajev, 1897). In recent decades there have been a number of new studies about this monastery and its contribution to the culture of the time: Valentyna Bočkovs'ka, 'Počajiv's'kyj duchovnyj osередok v istoriji i kul'turi ukrajins'koho narodu XVIII–XIX st.' (unpublished candidate's of sciences thesis, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, 2018); *Drukarnja Počajiv's'koho Uspens'koho monastyrja*, ed. by Oleksij Onyščenko; Olena Železnjak, 'Kyrylyčni vydannja svits'koho pryznačennja drukarni Počajiv's'koho Uspens'koho monastyrja', *Rukopysna ta knyžkova spadščyna Ukrainy*, 16 (2012), 197–205; *Kataloh vydan' Počajiv's'koho ta Unius'koho monastyriv XVIII–XX st. z kolekciji Muzeju knyhy i drukarstva Ukrainy*, ed. by Valentyna Bočkovs'ka, Ljudmyla Chaucha, and Valerij Adamovyč (Kyjiv: Vydavnyčyj dim Kyjevo-Mohyljans'ka Akademiya, 2008); *Kul'turotvorča misija Počajiv's'koho vasylijans'koho monastyrja: Zbirnyk naukovyj statej*; Anastasija Romanova, 'Knigozdatel'skaja dejatel'nost' Počajevskogo monastyrja (1732–1830)', in *Počaevskij sbornik*, ed. by Natalija Kolpakova (Sankt-Peterburg, 2007), pp. 8–14.

monks lived here, some of whom were involved with the printing.<sup>191</sup> Apart from finely decorated and precious liturgical codices (Anthologion, Apostol, Menaion, Psalter, Missal, Typikon, Euchologion, etc.), books of didactic, homiletic, and catechistic literature, which were popular among the clergy and laymen alike, were also published. Among these publications one can mention *Didactic Theology (Casus)*, with an addendum entitled *Lexicon, namely Thesaurus of the Slavonic Language*; a Church Slavonic-Polish dictionary (seven editions); a collection of sermons entitled *Evangelism, or a Sermon for Catholics*, featuring a question-answer format and an introduction for priests and catechists (published in 1756, 1768, and 1778)<sup>192</sup>; *Seed of God's Word on the Pastures of Human Hearts* (1772; reissued in 1781); and a translation by Julian (Dobrylowski) of the treatise *Weekly Parochial Lore and Yearly Festivities* (editions in 1792 and 1794), which was published in vernacular Ruthenian (this writer also composed a popular song called 'God Willing, We'll Have a Good Time').<sup>193</sup> Pochayiv Basilians also published 'practical' resources dealing with everyday organizational activities and the soul-shepherding work of the Order and Union Church (panegyrics, pastoral letters and epistles sent by high-ranking clergy, constitutions of the assemblies, monks' registries, charters of church fraternities, etc.), curriculum of *collegia*, as well as translations of theological and homiletic treatises by leading Catholic theologians (for example, St Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*).<sup>194</sup>

In response to soul-shepherding challenges connected to the process of Christianization among the Union-adhering populace, and to the widening of the missionary activities of Basilian preachers, in 1791 the Pochayiv Press published a unique collection of religious songs (*Bohoblasnyk: Reverent Songs for Our Lord, Virgin Mary, and Saints' Holidays throughout the Year*). This book included poems and carols by Basilian poets and texts by Orthodox theologians such as Dymytrii (Tuptalo), Heorhii (Konys'ky), Hryhorii (Skovoroda). In total, 251 pieces were published in the collection: 213 in Church Slavonic; 33 in Polish; and five in Latin. These addressed Virgin Mary and Our Lord's holidays, were dedicated to saints and individual wonderworking icons, or dealt with the subjects of repentance, death, and Judgment Day.<sup>195</sup> Especially popular were church carols (devotional songs celebrating

<sup>191</sup> Al'mes, 'Kontroversijne misce pam'jati'.

<sup>192</sup> The treatise consists of five introductory parts on key themes of Christian doctrine and seven chapters. The last chapter separately discusses the case of the conversion from the Byzantine to the Latin rite, notes the uniqueness and self-sufficiency of the rites of the Christian East, and legitimizes the 1596 Berestaian Union (Isičenko, 'Vasylians'ke baroko', pp. 13–15).

<sup>193</sup> Detailed analysis of this book: Joanna Getka, *Prosta mowa końca XVIII wieku. Język 'Nauk Parafialnych' (Począjów 1794)* (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2012).

<sup>194</sup> Isajevyč, 'Knyhovodannja i drukarstvo v Počajevi', p. 19; Isičenko, 'Vasylians'ke baroko', pp. 12–13.

<sup>195</sup> The latest critical publication of this text: *Bogoglasnik: Pěsni blagogovějnyja (1790/1791): Eine Sammlung geselliger Lieder aus der Ukraine: Facsimile und Darstellung*, ed. by Hans Rothe and Jurij Medvedyk, 2 vols (Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau, 2016).

Christmas), which through the Basilian tradition became part of the parish (liturgical) practice of the Union-adhering monks, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics, while also acquiring a folk character.<sup>196</sup>

The trans-confessional *Bohoblasnyk* was reprinted numerous times in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and became popular not only among Greek-Catholics but also Orthodox Christians of the Austrian monarchy and the Russian empire. This compendium of songs imparted a powerful influence on Ukrainian and, in part, Belarusian and Polish folk cultures. It facilitated the deepening of the Christianization of these cultures in the spirit of the Enlightenment and can be seen as a successful example of the reception of monastic scholarship at the level of 'parish civilization', when religious songs created by the 'high culture' combined with folk sources and became an important element in modern Ukrainian nation-building.

A lesser-known but quite telling example of the efficacy and capability of the Pochayiv Basilian Press is the 1770 publication of *Secular Politics* – a book of advice on 'appropriate behaviour' for young people, written in vernacular Ukrainian with the addition of Church Slavonic.<sup>197</sup> An interesting example of a bilingual edition can be seen in the *Book of Husbandry* (*Książka Lekarstw Końskich*). This treatise laid out the household and veterinarian advice that was traditional at the time and emphasized the necessity for clergy, monks, and laymen to study 'Slavonic' language, which was used for communication by the majority of commonwealth folk in the Bratslav, Volhynia, Kyiv, and Podilia voivodeships.<sup>198</sup>

Confessional texts were also important for the Basilian Order, since they showed the assimilation of Metropolitan Synod of Zamość's resolutions of 1720 into the Union Church (*How to Follow the Festivals of the Holy Sacrament of Eucharist, Our Lady of Sorrows, and Blessed Martyr Yosafat...*, etc.).

Another feature of the Pochayiv Press was its openness toward collaborating with the Orthodox and Old Believers' centres in Kyiv, the Cossack Hetmanate, and contemporary Russian territories.<sup>199</sup> This interaction facilitated intercultural exchange, the overcoming of ethno-confessional stereotypes, and the emergence of successful printing projects, while being prompted by practical, entrepreneurial calculations: mainly, the desire to spread the marketing of products to territories that were not inhabited by Catholics. Ukrainian scholar Yaroslav Isaievych draws attention to the Basilians' publication of *Hagiography of Iov Zalizo*, an Orthodox saint, as well

<sup>196</sup> Isičenko, 'Vasylians'ke baroko', pp. 15–16.

<sup>197</sup> See: Dmytro Hrynčyšyn, 'Polėtyka svėčka – unikal'na Počajivs'ka pam'jatka kincja XVIII stolittja', *Zapysky NTŠ*, 246 (2003), 246–63.

<sup>198</sup> Isaievych, 'Knyhovydannja i drukarstvo v Počajevi', p. 17.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

as the fact that Pochayiv printers were using ‘frontispieces’ (title pages) from Orthodox Christian presses for the publication of Union books. For instance, for the five-volume Bible of 1798, the frontispiece and depiction of the Assumption monastery complex were borrowed from the cognominal edition of the Kyiv-Pechers’k lavra, while the attached calendar contained the dates on which the Orthodox saints were remembered. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Spyrydon (Kobers’ky), the prefect of Pochayiv Press, maintained friendly relations with his colleague, the monk Yustyn from Kyiv-Pechers’k Press. Thanks to this connection, both printers, “taking into account their belonging to the same nation and old friendship”, coordinated a mutually beneficial exchange of books and printing materials from both sides of the border.<sup>200</sup>

Most editions produced by Basilians’ presses were published in Polish, while some contained fragments in Latin script in Church Slavonic and Ruthenian; these were addressed to the Polonized clergy and laymen. The domination of Polish language among the printed editions of Pochayiv Press should not be surprising since, in the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries, the Union Church used this language and its native one. Polish was also the language of communication, the courts, and the Sejm (Parliament). According to the latest calculation, between 1734 and 1800 the Pochayiv Press published over 170 books in Polish (approx. 38% of all production) – considerably fewer than the Wilno (73%), Minsk (100%), and Supraśl (68%) printing centres.<sup>201</sup>

The majority of Pochayiv editions printed in Polish fit into the following categories: prayer books, catechism handbooks, theological treatises by Basilian and other Catholic writers (specifically the Union hieromonk Tymoteusz Szczurowski); school textbooks and various courses on rhetoric, theology, and natural philosophy (for instance, *Ethologia czyli nauka dla młodzi szkolnej*, 1772); poems and moral-ethic writings (*Dialogue Between Wisdom and Artfulness, Conversation about the Purpose of Human Happiness*, etc.); historical documents and translations of classical literature works (Sallust, Cicero, etc.).<sup>202</sup>

Unev publishing house, which had been sporadically active since the 1640s, resumed its activities in 1732, mostly producing small books and texts in Church Slavonic and vernacular Ruthenian. In the 1760s, however, this Basilian Press did not survive the competition with Lviv and Pochayiv and was shut down.<sup>203</sup> Similarly, the activities of the Minsk Basilian Press

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>201</sup> Joanna Getka, *Polskojęzyczne druki bazylikańskie (XVIII wiek)* (Warszawa: Bel Studio, 2013), pp. 247–49.

<sup>202</sup> Isajevyč, ‘Knyhovydannja i drukarstvo v Počajevi’, pp. 15–16; Isajevyč, ‘Ukrajins’ki monastyr’ski drukarni Pravoberežžja’, pp. 283–84.

<sup>203</sup> Isajevyč, ‘Ukrajins’ki monastyr’ski drukarni Pravoberežžja’, pp. 276–86; Ihor Myc’ko, *Sujatouspens’ka Lavra v Unevi (kinec’ XIII – kinec’ XX st.)* (Lviv, 1998), pp. 222–53.

were limited in scope; between 1790 and 1793, this printing house published a small number of books, mainly servicing the needs of the Sejm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which met every four years in Grodno.<sup>204</sup>

In the second half of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Basilians in Wilno, Pochayiv, and Supraśl started to actively collaborate with communities of Old Believers, publishing relevant religious literature at their request (some 50 editions of this kind have survived<sup>205</sup>). For the needs of Old Believers, the *Alphabet* and *Edifying Gospel* were published in Supraśl; *Precepts* of Abba Dorotheus and individual works of the Church Fathers (a reprint of Muscovy editions from the seventeenth century), precepts from Ephrem the Syrian, and liturgical texts were published in Wilno. In similar ways, the collaboration with Old Believers developed successfully at the Pochayiv Press.<sup>206</sup> In 1781, its prefect Spyrydon (Kobers'ky) received a blessing from the Lutsk Union bishop to publish works by Russian religious dissidents, one of whom arrived in Pochayiv from Klyntsi (at the time, this was within the territory of the Hetmanate; nowadays it is Russia's Bryansk oblast) to oversee the printing. In the 1790s, Basilian printers published *Pandektai* and *Taktikon* by Nikon of the Black Mountain and, overall, some 40 individual customized editions were published in Pochayiv.<sup>207</sup> Russian Old Believers were interested in collaborating with Union printing centres as this provided a chance to avoid censorship in the territories of the Russian Empire while receiving high-quality books.

The Enlightenment policies that Basilian presses carried out in the second half of the eighteenth century also manifested in non-religious publications, such as *belle-lettres*, classical literature, books on science, geography, history, husbandry, etc. *Geographical Lexicon* (1766) by Basilian Hilarion (Karpiński), *A Brief History of the Eastern Indies* (1776) by Tadeusz Podlecki, *Husbandry* (1791) by Jan Herman, poetry by Mikołaj Białkowski, dramatic works by Michał Tomaszewski – all these are examples of the internalization of Catholic Enlightenment discourse by the Wilno Press.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Podlipczak-Majerowicz, *Bazylianie w Koronie i na Litwie*, pp. 65–66.

<sup>205</sup> Andrej Voznesenskij and Irina Počinskaja, 'Knigoizdanie XVIII – pervoj četverti XIX vekov', in *Knigoizdatel'skaja dejatel'nost' staroobradcev (1701–1918). Materialy k slovarju*, ed. by Andrej Voznesenskij, Petr Mangilev, and Irina Počinskaja (Ekaterinburg, 1996), pp. 8–24 (here: 8); Zoja Jaroszewicz-Pieresławcew, *Starowiercy w Polsce i ich księgi* (Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego, 1995), pp. 121–22.

<sup>206</sup> Voznesenskij and Počinskaja, 'Knigoizdanie XVIII – pervoj četverti XIX vekov', pp. 11–20; Irina Počinskaja, *Staroobradčeskoe knigopečatanie XVIII – pervoj četv. XIX v.* (Ekaterinburg, 1994), pp. 45–50, 123–37; Jaroszewicz-Pieresławcew, *Starowiercy w Polsce*, pp. 82–86, 158–60.

<sup>207</sup> Isajevyč, 'Knyhovydannja i drukarstvo v Počajevi', pp. 15–16.

<sup>208</sup> Almesas, 'Spaustuvė', p. 208.

## BASILIAN ENLIGHTENMENT: EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

When compared with publishing, the Basilian Enlightenment manifested in a far more pronounced way within the educational sphere.<sup>209</sup> The emergence of Basilian schooling was prompted by the necessity to build the Order's own system of spiritual formation and theological discipline, as well as to create a chain of public schools for secular youth, a potential source of monastic callings. Another factor was preparing hieromonks for soul-shepherding service in parishes, since the majority of diocesan seminaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (in particular, those in Wilno, Volodymyr, Minsk, and Chełmno) turned out to be short-lived educational projects.<sup>210</sup> Initially, the monks received theological education at several places: the Wilno Jesuit Academy, founded in 1582 (over 80 Basilian students studied here between 1670 and 1774); the Lviv Theatine papal *collegium*, founded in 1665 (prior to 1780, some 130 Armenians and 200 Ruthenians received their education there); and Jesuit *collegia* overseas (Braniewo, Prague, and elsewhere).<sup>211</sup>

In March of 1613, King Sigismund III granted the privilege to the Basilian Fathers to establish schools where Greek, Latin, Church Slavonic (Ruthenian) and Polish languages would be taught, and in 1615 Pope Paul V declared the Basilian schools to be of equal standing with Jesuit ones.<sup>212</sup> At least in the first half of the seventeenth century, the monks paid great attention to the study of Church Slavonic – the language of Union Church liturgy, used in the majority of hagiographical, ascetic, and patristic literature.<sup>213</sup> Acquiring knowledge per se was not the main goal of education in those schools: the emphasis was put on bringing up the youth by way of introducing students to appropriate literature, as well as nurturing their spirit, mainly through encouragement of weekly or monthly confession and receiving regular communion. To this end, such treatises as *Menologium bazylińskie*, a two-volume compendium compiled by Ignacy Kulczyński, which

<sup>209</sup> See the programme article: Jaroslav Isajevyč, 'Do charakterystyky kul'tury doby Baroko: vasylijans'ki osvıtni osередky', *Ukrajina: kul'turna spadščyna, nacional'na svıdomist', deržavnist'*, 12 (2004), 195–206.

<sup>210</sup> Their activities and training programme are considered by: Rodion Holovac'kyj, 'Mytropolyca seminarija Ruts'koho', *Analecta OSBM*, 9:3–4 (1960), 387–91; Ihor Skočyljas, "'Volodymyrs'ki Ateny" XVII – počatku XVIII st.: vid katedral'noji školy do jeparchial'noji seminariji', *Kyjivs'ka Akademijska*, 7 (2009), 54–73; Janusz Kania, *Unickie seminarium diecezjalne w Chełmie w latach 1759–1833* (Lublin, 1993); Szegda, *Działalność prawno-organizacyjna*, pp. 202–08.

<sup>211</sup> Dmytro Blażejovskij, *Byzantine Kyivan rite students in Pontifical Colleges, and Seminaries, Universities and Institutes of Central and Western Europe (1576–1983)* (Rome, 1984); Dmytro Blażejovskij, *Ukrainian and Armenian Pontifical Seminaries of Lviv (1665–1784)* (Rome, 1975); Edward Tryjarski, *Katalog kolegium teatynskiego w Lwowie* (Kraków, 1960), p. 77.

<sup>212</sup> Piłypczak-Majerowicz, *Bazylianie w Koronie i na Litwie*, p. 30; Meletius M. Wojnar, 'Basilian Seminaries, Colleges and Schools (XVII–XVIII)', *Analecta OSBM*, 9 (1974), 48–63 (here: 62).

<sup>213</sup> This language was learned from textbooks by Meletij Smotric'kij: *Grammatiki slovenskiá pravil'noe sintagma of 1619* (the only textbook for learning the Slavic language), Pamvi Berindi *Leksikon slavenorosskij i imen tolkovanie of 1627* and *Leksikon' latinskij* by Ėpyfanij Slavynec'kyj published in the 1630 and 1640 (a Latin Church Slavonic dictionary with 27,000 entries, distributed in numerous copies).

consisted of examples of the righteous life led by Basilians from various monastic communities in Italy, Spain, and other countries,<sup>214</sup> were used.

The first Basilian *collegium* opened in Volodymyr in 1675 at the initiative of the local bishop Benedictus (Korsak-Gliński). It soon became one of the most successful educational institutions of the Union Church, which in the seventeen–eighteenth centuries covered the Kyivan Metropolitan diocese with a dense network of collegia.<sup>215</sup> In the period following the Synod of Zamość, the Basilian Order maintained over 30 public schools that were considered some of the best in the Commonwealth, especially for the local noble youth.<sup>216</sup> In the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, the Union monks were so successful in their educational activities and spiritual tutelage among the local Lithuanian population in Padubysis township (in 1748, a theological school for the local youth was established at the request of magnates Beinor) that soon enough this settlement (the only one in the world) received the name of *Bazilionai* in honour of the Basilian Fathers.<sup>217</sup>

The majority of Basilian *collegia* were considered ‘incomplete’, which meant that they were secondary schools (Bar, Lyubar, Uman’, Sharhorod, and others) that provided a five-grade curriculum of the humanities (Greek and Latin schooling), without the ‘high disciplines’ (*superiora*), i.e., theology and divinity (among the Jesuit *collegia* of the Commonwealth, only Wilno Academy offered theological studies). A secondary school of this kind provided education consisting of seven ‘liberal arts’: *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). Such a curriculum possessed a secular rather than theological character; particular attention was given to nurturing personal devotion via emotions and public activities (participation in church school fraternities, religious processions, theatrical performances, etc.). The system followed the Jesuit liberal arts curriculum, which was based on studying Greek and Latin classical literatures (*studia humanitatis*) as ‘imitation of antiquity’ (*imitatio antiquorum*); rhetoric was considered the main discipline to properly prepare students for the public sphere, according to the principle of ‘educated devotion’ (*pietas litterata*).

<sup>214</sup> Maria Pidlypczak-Majerowicz, “Menologium bazylikańskie” Ignacego Kulczyńskiego – forma i treść księgi, in *Zakon bazylikański na tle mozaiki wyznaniowej*, pp. 267–80.

<sup>215</sup> Their training programme is considered by: Pantelejmon (Denys) Trofimov, ‘Traktaty De Deo Uno et Trino vasylijans’kich bohoslaviv Svjato-Pokrovs’koi provinciji (XVIII st.)’, *Naukovi zapysky UKU*, serija ‘Bohoslov’ja’, 14:7 (2019), 179–92; Olexa Horbatsch, *Epitome praeceptorum rhetoricorum: Počajiv 1764. Die lateinische Schulrhetorik des Basilianerordens aus d. J. 1764* (München, 1992); Meletius M. Wojnar, ‘Basilian Scholars and Publishing Houses (XVII–XVIII)’, *Analecta OSBM*, 9 (1974), 64–94; Wojnar, *Basilian Seminaries, Colleges and Schools*; Meletius M. Wojnar, ‘De studiis philosophico-theologicis in Provincia Rutheno-Ucraina Ordinis Basiliani s. XVIII eorumque manualibus’, *Analecta OSBM*, 7 (1971), 85–113.

<sup>216</sup> *Istorija ukrajins’koi kul’tury*, III, p. 451.

<sup>217</sup> *Šv. Bazilijaus Didžiojo ordinas: iš liaudies – liaudžiai. Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys*, ed. by Aldona Vasiliauskienė, and Olena Lukačuk (Šiaulių: Šiaulių universitetas, 2017), p. 237.

After the liquidation of the Society of Jesus in 1773, Basilians took under their control a portion of the Commonwealth's Jesuit educational institutions with the help of the Commission for National Education (*Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*).<sup>218</sup> This step contributed to an improvement of the level of education and created elite status for schools in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. A special curriculum was developed; it reflected the new educational strategy of the Enlightenment, with emphasis on the ideals of utilitarianism, and was adapted to the schools' special needs in the form of a separate charter.<sup>219</sup> The majority of rectors, prefects, and professors teaching at Basilian schools represented the elite of Ruthenian ecclesiastical culture; they were highly educated and boasted a wide intellectual outlook of a European calibre.

As a rule, these Basilian schools were of two levels, offering either three or six grades, where philosophy and physics could be studied in addition to the regular subjects. Similarly to other schools in the Commonwealth, Basilians paid less attention to mathematics and natural sciences.<sup>220</sup>

Taking into consideration the level of the primary education in the Kyivan Metropolitan diocese at the time, studies in Basilian schools started with foundational courses aimed at teaching *spudeyi*<sup>221</sup> how to read and write in 'Slavonic' and Polish (this form of education corresponded to the level of the Jesuit's *proforma* course). It is unclear whether Basilian schools were even partially based on the tradition of the school fraternities (*studii ruthenici*) of the Kyivan Metropolitan diocese of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (e.g., close collaboration with students' families; open character of student admissions, carried out in public; devotional practices; the didactic process of studying Greek and Church Slavonic languages; and preparing *spudeyi* for active public life).<sup>222</sup>

The concept of free education that was established in the *Ratio studiorum* (full version of 1599; attachments of 1615) in the sense that it was understood within the territories of the Commonwealth<sup>223</sup> was primarily used in middle-level Basilian educational institutions. It entailed the upbringing of a "well-rounded – intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically

<sup>218</sup> See: *Raporty generalnych wizytatorów szkół Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim (1782–1792)*, ed. by Kalina Bartnicka and Irena Szybiak (Wrocław, 1974).

<sup>219</sup> Savyč, *Narys z istoriji kul'turnych ruchiu*, pp. 288–92; Natalja Jakovenko, *Narys istoriji seređn'ovičnoji ta rann'omodernoji Ukrajinu*, 2nd edn (Kyjiv: Krytyka, 2005), pp. 495–97.

<sup>220</sup> Pidhupczak-Majerowicz, *Bazylianie w Koronie i na Litwie*, pp. 35–37.

<sup>221</sup> A student of bursa and other spiritual educational institutions; the name of students of secondary and junior classes of the Kyiv Academy.

<sup>222</sup> Iaroslav Isaievych, 'Confraternities of Laymen in Early Modern Ukraine and Belarus', in *Belarus. Lithuania. Poland. Ukraine. The Foundations of Historical and Cultural Traditions in East Central Europe. International Conference (Rome, 28 April – 6 May 1990)*, ed. by Jerzy Kłoczowski (Lublin–Rome: Foundation John Paul II, 1994), pp. 175–98; *Pam'jatky brats'kych škil na Ukrajinu. Kinec' XVI – počatok XVII st.: Teksty i doslidžennja*, ed. by Volodymyr Šynkaruk (Kyjiv, 1988), pp. 37–47.

<sup>223</sup> Stanisław Obirek, *Jezuici w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w latach 1564–1668 (Działalność religijna, społeczno-kulturalna i polityczna)* (Kraków, 1996).



– personality to better serve God and the community of people”.<sup>224</sup> Despite the fact that some scholars display a rather sceptical attitude to the educational potential of the Union’s educational institutions, one must admit that most of these provided adequate theological education, in some cases approaching and exceeding the average level of the Commonwealth’s ecclesiastical schools.<sup>225</sup> Concurrently, starting from the second half of the seventeenth century, the programme of Basilian education was no longer a compromise “between the Byzantine-Slavic tradition of Enlightenment and ‘Latin scholarship’”.<sup>226</sup>

Not only Union but also Orthodox educational institutions (first and foremost, the Kyiv – Mohyla *collegium*, which became an academy in 1701) borrowed from and actively incorporated the Jesuit system of education and the internal organization of such *collegia*.<sup>227</sup> This applies to the way students were divided into groups, the organization of the classes, lectures, and exams, as well as the teaching methodologies:

- nurturing of student’s sense of ambition;
- constant repetition;
- competitiveness;
- public speaking;
- memory training;
- mutual questioning of one another (*concertations*) as a ‘reminder that every human action is controlled by God and one has to be ready, every minute, to be held accountable for his actions’);
- attention to students’ recreation.<sup>228</sup>

According to the charters of the Basilian Order, “first and foremost, the students are attempting not to look for anything within their studies that is beyond God’s glory, gain for the Church, their native land, and the Order; they are trying to follow God’s will in everything, study with diligence, and they should not hope to avoid God’s Last Judgment if they do not make use of their natural talents, even if they have never had a chance to put what they have learned to practical use”.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>224</sup> Tetjana Ševčenko, *Jezuits’ke škil’nyctvo na ukrajins’kykh zemljach* (Lviv: Svičado, 2005), pp. 5, 10–11. The best studies of the Jesuit concept of education: Mario Barbera, *La Ratio studiorum e la parte quara della Costituzione della Compagnia di Gesù* (Padova, 1942); John W. Donohue, *Jesuit Education: An Essay on the Foundation of Its Idea* (New York, 1963). The influence of the *Ratio studiorum* model on the Ukrainian school is traced by: Natalja Jakovenko, ‘Latyns’ke škil’nyctvo i škil’nyj humanizm v Ukraini kincia XVI – seredyiny XVII st.’, *Kyjivs’ka starovyna*, 12 (1997), 11–27.

<sup>225</sup> Bienkowski, ‘Organizacja Kościoła Wschodniego w Polsce’, s. 1015–22.

<sup>226</sup> Jakovenko, *Narys istoriji*, p. 293.

<sup>227</sup> Zoja Chyžnjak, *Kyjevo-mohyljans’ka akademija* (Kyjiv: Vyšča škola, 1981); Jaroslava Stratij, Vladimir Litvinov, and Viktor Andruško, *Opisanie kursov filosofii i ritoriki profesorov Kievo-Mogiljanskoj akademii* (Kiev, 1982); Ludwik Piechlik, ‘Działalność kulturalna Towarzystwa Jezusowego na północnych i wschodnich ziemiach Polski w XVI–XVIII wieku’, in *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny. Między Wschodem i Zachodem. Kultura umysłowa*, ed. by Jerzy Kłoczowski, 8 vols (Warszawa, 1974–1995), VI (1989), pp. 75–96.

<sup>228</sup> *Istorija ukrajins’koji kul’tury*, III, p. 517; Ševčenko, *Jezuits’ke škil’nyctvo na ukrajins’kykh zemljach*, pp. 48, 73–74, 76.

<sup>229</sup> Nikolaj Petrov, ‘Očerker’ istorii Baziljanskago ordena v’ byvszej Pol’she’, *Trudy Kievskoj duchovnoj akademii*, 12:7 (1871), p. 186–88.

*Capitula* expected orderly behaviour from *spudeyi* during their short trips to the city and that they use Latin in all situations except for recreation (when they were allowed to communicate in their 'native language'). Students were instructed to converse in Latin not only during lectures but also in everyday life, with the goal of creating a language milieu for processing knowledge. In a similar manner, courses on poetics, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology were conducted in Latin, as well as arbitration of disputes.<sup>230</sup>

According to the Basilian programme of studies, laid out in part in *Sposób uczenia się teologii moralnej w Poczajowie ustanowionej*, students were supposed to memorize theology lessons in Polish, not Ruthenian; Polish was also the language of instruction for moral theology.<sup>231</sup>

Concurrently, the resolutions of the Basilian *capitula* allowed the study of rhetoric in one's 'native language', with the caveat that one be aware of the grammatical differences between the native language and Latin. The most impressive compositions were read aloud by the students from the pulpit of the refectory during lunch. The course of 'philosophy' was considered to be of a high level; it prepared students for the course in theology, which one had to study for three years; here, they consecutively gained knowledge of logic (dialectic), physics (philosophy of nature) according to Aristotle, metaphysics (spiritual foundations of existence), ethics (moral philosophy), and mathematics and geography.<sup>232</sup>

One of the Basilian charters' most important objectives for the schools and *collegia* was the assertion and propagation of the 'Holy Union'. Special attention was given to the professional level of the teachers and administrators, as well as the curricula of classes taught by professors, as the success or failure of the Basilian Order's educational projects hinged on these factors. The charters also determined the yearly academic calendar, including vacations. Twice a year (at the beginning of the academic year and on St Basil's Day), public lectures on rhetoric were offered; they included recitations of poems in Greek, Latin, Polish, Ruthenian, and other languages.<sup>233</sup>

Apart from the disciplines normally studied within the system of *Ratio studiorum*, Basilian *collegia* emphasized the importance of studying canon law, in particular the dogmatic resolutions of ecumenical and local Synods and Church Tradition; this included resolutions regarding the basic truths of faith, heresies, church discipline and legal proceedings,

<sup>230</sup> Pidručnyj, and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 415–16.

<sup>231</sup> Pidłypczak-Majerowicz, *Bazylianie w Koronie i na Litwie*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>232</sup> Petrov, 'Očerik istorii Bazyljanskago ordena', pp. 180–83; Pidručnyj, and P'jetnočko, *Capitula Generalia Basilianorum*, pp. 415–16.

<sup>233</sup> Petrov, 'Očerik' istorii Bazyljanskago ordena', pp. 157–66.

Christian morality, rituals, etc. Apart from these, the curriculum also entailed the exposition of Papal charters and decrees of the Holy See.<sup>234</sup> The specifics of the Basilian school curriculum included an in-depth study of ecclesiastical and secular history (within the Jesuit realm, history was seen as a discipline necessary for understanding works of classical literature and composition of speeches; it was therefore simply a part of rhetoric).<sup>235</sup>

The so-called *Manuscript of Kyshka*<sup>236</sup> was a collection of materials prepared for the course of lectures on ecclesiastical history, taught in the first half of the 1690s at Volodymyr school (*Collegio Zalesciano*) by Lev (Kyshka); it provides a certain sense of the content of the ecclesiastical history curriculum of Basilian *collegia*. Kyshka, at the time a professor of rhetoric and philosophy, later became a proto-archimandrite of the Basilian Order (1703–1713), bishop of Volodymyr and Brest dioceses (1711–1728), and the head of the Union Church (1714–1728). The narrative of this codex was supposed to create the foundation for Kyshka's work on the history of the Ruthenian Church; however, this plan was never realized. Even in its draft format, the *Manuscript of Kyshka* makes possible the reconstruction of the historical memory in the Basilian and Ruthenia Union milieu of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as well as the content of the historical curricula in the public schools of the Order.

Lev Kyshka organized the *Manuscript of Kyshka* in a way that represents world history from Antiquity to the seventeenth century in chronological order, while thematically connecting historical events in the Ukrainian–Belarusian lands of the Commonwealth with ancient Rome and Greece and, later on, Christian Europe.<sup>237</sup> The first chapter contains notes on quotations by writers from antiquity and their biographies (Cesare Baronio, Herodotus, Eusebius, Pliny, Polybius, Seneca, Sozomen, Socrates), works on European history, and stories. In the second chapter, one finds notes, in Polish, on *Annales Nestora*, a text of the Hypatian Chronicle, which relates stories regarding the travels of Andrew the Apostle to Kyivan Rus', the reign of the legendary Kyi, Shchek, and Khoryv, the invitation of Rurik to Rus', and up until the entry from the year 1301 concerning Prince Lev Danylovyč.<sup>238</sup> The third and sixth chapters present an original

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp. 178–79.

<sup>235</sup> Jaroslav Isajevyč, *Ukrains'ke knyhovydannja: vytoky, rozvytok, problemy* (Lviv, 2002), pp. 333–38. See also: Kazimierz Puchowski, *Edukacja historyczna w jezuickich kolegiach Rzeczypospolitej, 1565–1773* (Gdańsk: Uniwersytet Gdański, 1999), pp. 145–46.

<sup>236</sup> TsDIAL, fond 201, op. 46, spr. 421.

<sup>237</sup> See a structural analysis of this text: Ołeksandr Baran, 'Rękopis Lwa Kiszki: struktura i treść źródła. Z dziejów bazylikańskiej historiografii przełomu XVII i XVIII wieku', *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 3 (2005), 23–54.

<sup>238</sup> TsDIAL, fond 201, op. 46, spr. 421, pp. 1–130. This source is taken into account in the publication: *Kronika halicko-wołyńska. Kronika Romanowiczów*, ed. by Dariusz Dąbrowski, and Adrian Jusupović (Kraków–Warszawa: Avalon, 2017).

compendium of chronicles, compiled by Lev Kyshka, on the subject of various predominantly church-related historical events in Lithuania, Poland, and Ruthenian lands between 1469 and 1718.<sup>239</sup> In the fourth chapter, one finds polemical texts which represent fragments of Lev (Kyshka's) work about the Kyivan Union Metropolitan, Hypatius (Pociej), published in Supraśl (1714) under the title *Kazania i Homilie Męza Bożego niesmiertelney sławy i pamięci Hypacyusza Pociēja*.<sup>240</sup>

The next chapter of the *Manuscript* deals with the traditions of Kyivan Rus' and presents the Union Church and Basilian Order as successors to it. Alongside lengthy hagiographies of Ruthenian princes from the tenth to fifteenth centuries (Saints Cyril and Methodius, 'the Apostles of Rus', St Volodymyr the Great, Saints Borys and Hlib, St Olha, Ihor, Rurik, Vaišvilka, princess Paraskevi of Polotsk), Lithuanian martyrs Antonius, Johannes, and Eustachius, and Eleazar, archimandrite of Lauryshava monastery, one encounters biographies (384 full and 14 concise ones) of metropolitans, bishops, and Basilian monks up until 1703.<sup>241</sup>

The *Manuscript of Kyshka* was compiled not only for the needs of Basilian public schools but also for the desire to present an alternative Union history of Slavonic–Ruthenian Christianity that did not agree with the official version narrated by the Orthodox *Synopsis* (Kyiv, 1674): this was the first text to connect Ruthenian history with the historical past of the Muscovy Tsardom, thereby creating a Muscovy-centred conception of the past of the Eastern Slavic lands.

The importance of Basilian schooling in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lies, first and foremost, in the fact that it broke down the confessional and socio-cultural barriers that had set apart religious and ethnic communities of the Commonwealth throughout the centuries. With the Union Church and the Basilian Order as intermediaries, the Western models of schooling permeated the Orthodox milieu of the Kyivan Metropolitan diocese, and even that of the Muscovy patriarchy. Concurrently, the curriculum and character of the activities carried out in the public schools and *collegia* testify to evident tendencies within Ruthenian culture to preserve its separation from both Polish and Muscovy (Russian) cultures.

\* \* \*

Prior to the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, one can provisionally single out four chronologically consecutive periods:

<sup>239</sup> TsDIAL, fond 201, op. 46, spr. 421, pp. 131–226, 491–767.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227–38.

<sup>241</sup> Some of them were published in the interwar period: Skruten', 'Żyttjepysy vasylijan', 1 (1924–1932), pp. 105–30, 284–91, 496–520; (2), pp. 123–38, 376–401; (3), pp. 496–520; (4), pp. 219–37, 496–520.

1. *Initium*: the reform of Yosyf (Ruts'kyi) of 1617; the asceticism and martyrdom of Yosafat (Kuntsevych); the formation of the chain of Basilian monasteries.
2. *Bellum et resurrection* (1648 to the early eighteenth century): the persecution and ruin during the Khmelnytsky Uprising and the Russo-Swedish Deluge; the Basilian revival from the last quarter of the seventeenth century until the early eighteenth century.
3. *Formatio* (1720s–1750s): the unification of the 'New Union' monasteries with the Lithuanian province and the formation of a 'Lithuanian-Polish' (Ukrainian-Belarusian) model of Basilian piety.
4. *Schola professorum* (second part of the eighteenth – early nineteenth century): the Golden Age of the Order, which is characterized by the active functioning of presses and public libraries, the formation of a chain of Basilian collegia, as well as participation in the Educational Commission and the Wilno Jesuit Academy.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Basilian Order was one of the foundations of the Union Church's organizational structure, while its monks belonged to the ecclesiastical elite of the Kyivan Metropolitan diocese within the public space of the Commonwealth. Basilians became creators and carriers of the new model of *Slavia Unita* within European Christianity; as 'public figures', they joined the cultural development of Sarmatian Baroque within Central-Eastern Europe and facilitated the entry of the 'Ruthenian nation' into Western civilization. Not only were the Union monks able to maintain their educational institutions (some 20 Basilian *collegia*) at a high level, they also brought about an intensification of Catholic religious life in the Commonwealth. The monks organized numerous ecclesiastical missions, managed some 100 parish churches, and supported primary schools, popular vacation spots, Marian sanctuaries and publishing centres. Owing to its universal character, the Basilian Order formed a common Early-Modern identity of Union-adhering Ruthenians, the kind of identity that united Slavic-Byzantine and Latin traditions on Ukraine's Great frontier.

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# Łukasz Adamski

## HISTORY BETWEEN THE DROPS\*

Book Review: Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Podolaty mynule. Hlobal'na istorija Ukrajiny*, Kyjiv: Portal, 2021, 432 pp.

As a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Ukrainian nation united in its opposition to the foreign invasion and the crimes perpetrated by the occupiers. The countries of the Western world responded by giving the invaded country unprecedented military, economic and political aid, as well as moral support. One negative outcome of the war, however, has been the fact that intellectual debates in Ukraine, including critical reflection on the past, have practically ground to a halt. This is hardly surprising. The existential struggle for the survival of the state demands the greatest possible national consolidation, increased fortitude, and the mobilization of the free world to provide further help – not just the charging of emotions and stoking of social divides that tend to come with critical reflection on the past and coming to terms with national myths.

The prominent Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak's synthesis of Ukraine's history "Overcoming the past: the global history of Ukraine" arrived in Ukrainian bookshops just before the outbreak of war, in winter 2021/2022. It was thus denied the chance to arouse much discussion on the arguments it presents. It is also yet to be reviewed outside of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian reviews that were published were polemical columns rather than academic analyses. This is not a criticism, incidentally, as Hrytsak has written a popular history book which at times – especially in the conclusion, and as the author makes clear – even veers towards essayism.

His book is well worth a read, even for somebody who thinks he knows the history of Ukraine and imagines that reading another work on it – even such an extensive one, at over 400 pages – would simply be a waste of time. The book itself is a source that shows how an influential Ukrainian scholar views his native country's history and how he tackled the task of integrating Ukraine's past into global history.

\* A Polish version of this review is to be published in the journal: *Dzieje Najnowsze*.

The second and equally important key to reading this book should be the position of Yaroslav Hrytsak himself – a professor at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv and Central European University in Vienna. He is a renowned figure in the Ukrainian and Western academic world, often figuring as a “public intellectual” and long engaged in the process of

Ukraine’s political and intellectual integration with the rest of Europe. Given the influential nature of his statements and their treatment, especially in the West, as the authoritative voice of a Ukrainian intellectual democrat and European, we can assume that Hrytsak’s work (the author has said on social media that it is being translated into English) will also be treated as a reliable source of balanced views and knowledge about Ukrainian history. In Ukraine itself, however, the views presented by this Lviv scholar will be treated as polemical towards authors identifying – or identified – as Ukrainian nationalists. Hrytsak’s opinions certainly inspire many influential circles’ views on history, as is shown by the fact that the blurb on the book’s cover is written by Archbishop Borys Gudziak, founder and president of the Ukrainian Catholic University, and Pavlo Klimkin, minister of foreign affairs in 2014–2019.

For the attentive reader from outside Ukraine, reading the work of a historian known as a liberal will also be important for inferring which interpretations or terminology constitute a certain engrained consensus in Ukrainian historiography, and where there is contradiction with the views of, for instance, Polish historians.

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Let us begin the review of Hrytsak’s book with its merits. Perhaps the biggest is the lively narrative, which makes the book an easy read and allows non-historians to discover or gain better insight into many historical phenomena. I emphasize this because not all popular-history syntheses are actually written in an interesting way and with a light touch – especially in Ukraine, where historians are accustomed to a very heavy academic style – yet this should be one of the main requirements of such works. Hrytsak meets this criterion. Meanwhile, by constantly showing the context – phenomena occurring throughout Europe – he manages to avoid the pitfalls of many Ukrainian syntheses of “national history”, namely relaying the history of Ukraine as if this country were on another planet.

In terms of its objectives, Hrytsak’s book can also be appreciated for a patriotism not marked by the patriotic exaltation or even showiness that is common among Ukrainian authors. The final parts of the book are abundant with journalistic interjections – for example, on the attitude of contemporary Ukrainians to property law – suggesting that Hrytsak

would like to show his compatriots that it is impossible way to repair their country without changes in mentality. It is another matter that this Lviv scholar – ignoring the good rule of the historian maintaining distance of time to the events he describes – writes things that were out of date a few weeks after publication, such as a passage criticizing Volodymyr Zelensky's presidency (p. 402).

Hrytsak would also evidently like to point out other values in the politics of history to his compatriots: for example, his words, printed in bold, that “to build a new Ukrainian nation, apart from heroes ready to give up their lives for ideals, we need heroes demonstrating elementary human decency and sacrificing their lives for others”. His desire to explain history to his fellow Ukrainians is evident, as well as many other issues from history that are of significance for the present. This tendency is illustrated by four reliable examples that arise in the discussion on subjects such as the richness of Ukrainian culture, the nature of the Ukrainian lands' dependence on Moscow, evaluation of the actions of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, and the balance of Bolshevik rule for Ukraine.

The author states plainly that Kyivan Rus' was an area of intellectual poverty (p. 70), on the grounds that 3000 times more books were printed in the Western Christian cultural world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than in that of Eastern Christian culture (p. 71); however, he does not mention, for instance, the mutual relationship between these two parts of the Christian world. Hrytsak also voices an unpopular view in Ukraine, again printed in bold (p. 190), that “if we are to speak about the colonial status of the Ukrainian lands as a whole, this outline is a better fit for a description of the state of affairs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire [or in fact Austria-Hungary, because Hungary was not an empire in the legal sense of that word, but a separate kingdom being in union with the Austrian Empire]. On the other side of the Russo-Austrian border, the Ukrainian lands were not a colony but part of the political and economic core of the Russian Empire”. He describes the OUN as an organization that also used terror against Ukrainians and those Poles who backed Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation (p. 285). Moreover, he soberly points out (p. 311) that the Bolsheviks were successful in unifying all the Ukrainian lands, and without revolution and war the Ukrainian nation might have taken a different shape.

The author evidently realizes that by making such arguments he is exposing himself to criticism from large parts of “patriotic” public opinion, especially when it comes to the past of what could in simple terms be called Russo-Ukrainian relations. It is therefore telling that he frequently mitigates them elsewhere in the book, and sometimes even on the same

page. Cynics might even sense design in this – “keeping both sides happy” – while pedants might go as far as to accuse Hrytsak of a casual approach to careful expression of his ideas and, more broadly, the requirements of diligent analyses. For example, his categorical assertion that Ukraine was not a Russian colony is weakened by the reflection (p. 384) that it in fact was and had an influence, both in the eighteenth century and after the death of Stalin, on the administration of the empire, as well as a considerable impact on the language and culture of the metropolis. Elsewhere (p. 202), Hrytsak mentions “German and Jewish colonizers”, although Ukrainian differentiates between “colonists” and “colonizers”.

Regarding the OUN, meanwhile, Hrytsak avoids answering the question in the ongoing debate over whether it was a fascist organization – as many scholars, especially those from outside Ukraine, argue. He does this by using an eristical device, proposing a reformulation of the question: “to what extent was [the OUN] fascist, and to what extent was it not?” As for the claim that the Ukrainian nation could have taken a different form, this Lviv historian does not draw the obvious logical conclusions for his own shaping of the book’s narrative. I will discuss this question in more detail later in this review.

In any case, Hrytsak’s framing of his ideas tries to avoid a direct polemic with the historical myths entrenched in Ukrainian public opinion. Often, as we shall see, he even surrenders to them or reproduces them, even if the substance of his arguments is clearly opposed to the historical myths entrenched in Ukrainian public opinion. It is easy to criticize this position as lacking principle, so Hrytsak anticipates this objection by identifying with the stance of a “conservative-liberal socialist” (p. 422), i.e., turning fluid views into a virtue.

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This book has many evident shortcomings and errors. I will give a lot more attention to these, not so that readers get the impression that they exceed its virtues – that is up to everybody to decide for themselves – but because the primary objective of a review is to debate and criticize.

Let’s begin with a fundamental matter. It is impossible to reconcile two methodological premises in a logically coherent way without succumbing to teleological presentism. One premise is the nineteenth-century origin of nations, which are clearly distinct from ethnic communities, or peoples, as they used to be called. The other is the possibility of writing the history of Ukraine as a distinct country inhabited by the Ukrainian nation or its protoplasts from the time of the old Kyivan Rus’. The thing is that a history of Ukraine cannot be based on an exposition of the history



of the Ukrainian state – a palpable, indisputable entity, and its population – as this was formed briefly in 1918, and for good in 1991. So, we are to understand that the nation existed previously, but without a state, and then we have to describe this history of the nation. But how can this be done when Hrytsak writes that the nation emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? “If nations had passports, then the Ukrainian one would have 1914 as its date of birth. That is not to say it did not exist earlier. It existed, but in the minds of several tens of thousands, and at best a hundred thousand inhabitants of the Ukrainian territory who called themselves Ukrainians” (p. 223). How, then, does one justify identifying a Ukrainian territory prior to 1914, when there was no Ukrainian state or nation? To maintain logical coherence, one could write that the emergence of this nation was a natural and obvious consequence of earlier historical events. And this is what practically all researchers writing about the history of Ukraine do. What this means is that from the mass of different events and processes that have taken place in the lands they are describing, they choose those that explain the premise, accounting for the emergence of the contemporary nation in the form familiar to the researcher.

The shape of the Ukrainian nation in its contemporary form thereby becomes a starting point for creating a narrative about the history of its emergence, development of culture, and the Ukrainians’ struggle for their own state, while ignoring, or at best diminishing, the probability of historical processes going in the other direction. There is no discussion of – or at least the narrative does not emphasize – data, figures and events suggesting that the nation-forming processes in the region could have occurred quite differently. These processes could lead, for example, to the formation of one Ruthenian nation comprising the population of today’s Ukraine and Belarus, a “triune” Russian nation (the Great Russians, Little Russians and Belarusians) or a “triune” Polish/Commonwealth nation (Poles, Lithuanians, and Ruthenians), or several distinct nations on the territory of today’s Ukraine (“Halychian”, “Ukrainian-Cossack”), and thus to the emergence of a Ukrainian state in a different territorial form.

But an exposition of history that does not refer to these problems would be characterized by teleological presentism, as the causes that are supposed to explain the present are described from the perspective of knowledge about the present. Events or processes that might potentially have had different consequences are discussed from the perspective of the actual outcome. This will lead less critical readers astray, even if they call themselves professional historians. They will get the impression that,

since the Ukrainian nation and state exist, they had to exist, which is a logical fallacy that is known as retrospective determinism.

I discuss this at length because at no point, even in the introduction, does Yaroslav Hrytsak refer to these methodological problems, even though he is aware of them. He writes (p. 375) that a nation that included today's Ukrainians and Belarusians might have arisen. He cites Benedict Anderson and his ideas about nations being "imagined communities" (p. 140), and Miroslav Hroch's model (not mentioned anywhere in the book) about phases A, B, and C of national movements (p. 158). In his own reflections on nations (pp. 17, 39), Hrytsak argues that nations are "products of the last few centuries", and that "most nations are very young, although they all want to be old". Why, then, does he not explain his justification for distinguishing the territory of the modern-day Ukrainian state as a subject of historical narrative in the period before 1918?

Furthermore, the author's specific reasoning frequently contradicts his general assumptions about the course of the Ukrainian nation-forming process, thus suggesting an attachment to the "traditional model of Ukrainian history" and the formation of the Ukrainian nation as soon as the late Middle Ages. For example, we read (p. 91) that "the Ukrainian nation [*natsiia*], when, having in the early modern period almost entirely lost its elites to Polish or Russian assimilation or acculturation, became a peasant nation". Ergo, in the sixteenth century it was a "full" nation. Elsewhere (p. 103), the author argues that "from the formation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, all the Ukrainian lands found themselves in one state", thus suggesting that one could speak of the existence of the Ukrainian lands as a distinct entity as early as 1569. This does not mean that the author of this review is denying that the elites of Kyiv, Podolia, Volhynia and Red Rus' felt certain national or pre-national ties. I simply wish to point out the logical inconsistency between this hypothesis and the claim regarding the twentieth-century emergence of the nation.

In the guise of constructing a Ukrainian national historical narrative from the perspective of knowledge about the effects of the Ukrainian nation-forming process, the teleological presentism is accompanied by analytical and terminological presentism as the author uses contemporary analytical categories to examine the past from a perspective unknown or unrecognizable to the actors of that same past. He refers, for example (p. 153), to 85% of Ukrainian lands after the Partitions being in the Russian Empire, and 15% (Galicia, Bukovina, and Carpathian Ruthenia) being in the Austrian Empire. He then (p. 154) includes a table: "ethnic make-up of populations of the Ukrainian governorates of the Russian Empire" (1897 census according to the language used) with the Taurida Governorate,

where the percentage of the Ukrainian-speaking population was 42.2%. Finally, he notes (p. 215) that almost half of the “Ukrainian ethnic territory” was made up of steppes, continuing on the same page that the “Wild Fields” were colonized from the second half of the seventeenth century by various peoples and nations.

I would be amazed if anybody could prove that the residents of Uzhhorod, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Poltava, and Odesa in the late eighteenth century had any sense of community, especially one strong enough to justify distinguishing the region encompassing all these provinces as one research subject called “the Ukrainian lands”. Clearly, the only criterion that justifies incorporating these areas into Ukrainian lands is the fact that Crimea and the old “Wild Fields” today belong to Ukraine. This is outright presentism, and Russia’s questioning of their belonging to Ukraine and criminal war should not affect our judgement of whether it is permissible to retrospectively view them as Ukrainian.

Another example of terminological presentism – albeit one shared by practically the whole of Ukrainian historiography – is the regular use of the term “Western Ukraine” to refer to Galicia and Volhynia in the interwar period. These were in fact internationally recognized parts of Poland – regions, in fact, to which the Ukrainian People’s Republic itself abandoned its claims in 1920, as Hrytsak honestly notes (p. 269).

It is telling that the author – as if forestalling future criticism – justifies the use of this term: “Western Ukraine was Ukrainian as Ukrainians constituted the majority here” (p. 270). I wonder, in that case, if he would agree with the assertion that “Crimea is Russian because Russians constitute the majority there”, or if he would accept a reference to the Vilnius Region, an indisputable part of the Republic of Lithuania, as “North-East Poland”, since Poles are in the majority there (note that, more than 80 years after Poland’s actual loss of Vilnius, the number of Poles in Lithuania’s capital is still larger than the percentage of Ukrainians in interwar Lviv, and in much of the Vilnius Region they constitute a majority similar to Ukrainians in the area of prewar Lviv). A very clear illustration of the problems caused by the presentism of the author’s narrative is provided by his specific conclusions on Polesia and Carpathian Ruthenia, which, incidentally, appear just one page after his reflections on Volhynia and Galicia (p. 271). On the one hand, Hrytsak notes – rightly of course – that the inhabitants of Polesia in the interwar period often described themselves as “from here”, since they did not think in terms of nationality. Among the population using Ukrainian dialects in Carpathian Ruthenia, the author points out, there was rivalry between the Ukrainian, Russian, Hungarian forms, and a separate “Ruthenian” one. On the other

hand, however, he attributes the history of these regions and their population to that of Ukraine.

It is, of course, obvious that popular national history is simplified and can employ less stringent criteria than purely academic works. Nevertheless, one might expect at least that readers would be informed of methodological problems and the simplifications used would be explained – all this is missing in Hrytsak's book.

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Another major disappointment of this book is the Lviv historian's analytical sloppiness. Hrytsak's pursuit of pithy expressions and preference for catchy phrases over precise reasoning means that his interpretations sometimes become convoluted. This is less of a concern when they are minor issues that do not lead the reader to draw wrong conclusions – surely everyone will realize that the sentence (p. 399) stating that “the best evidence for the existence of a Ukrainian nation is the fiasco of the Russian aggression [of 2014]” is misguided, because the contrary argument would be that victory of the aggressor would prove the non-existence of the Ukrainian nation, as well as the Polish one in 1794 or 1939, for example. Similarly unfortunate is the claim (p. 370) – founded on the convoluted premise that wars break out when there is no agreement or reconciliation between two nations – that the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation rendered a new Polish-Ukrainian war over Galicia and Volhynia impossible.

There are, however, also more serious issues. For example, the author writes (pp. 94–95) that: “the drama of Jewish-Ukrainian relations was that hostility reigned between these two social groups, which were at the very bottom of the social ladder [...] Along with social motives [Ukrainian hostility towards Jews] there were also religious ones. Jews were not Christians, and in the minds of Christians they were ‘Christ-killers’. [...] The [anti-Jewish] stereotypes led to violence. In the modern and contemporary era, the Ukrainian lands became the main site of mass anti-Jewish pogroms from the time of Khmelnytsky's Cossack revolution of 1648, the Koliivshchyna in 1758, the Russian pogroms in 1881, the 1905–07 and 1917–20 revolutions, and summer 1941 in Western Ukraine, to the Holocaust in all the Ukrainian lands for the next two years. Not all these pogroms were connected to Ukrainians. Let's say that in 1881 the chief perpetrators of the pogrom – workers – were mainly not Ukrainians. But in Jewish historical memory, Ukraine is strongly associated with pogroms, and Ukrainians with antisemitism”. A twofold conclusion can be drawn from this: the Holocaust was the result of Ukrainians' anti-Jewish stereotypes; or the historical memory of Jews, viewing Ukrainians as antisemites, is a sufficient reason for a historian

writing about the Holocaust in Ukraine to situate it in the context of centuries of social and religious Ukrainian antisemitic stereotypes.

Meanwhile, when Hrytsak describes the pogroms in the former Russian Empire (p. 241), he notes that the majority, 75%, took place in the Ukrainian lands. He does not mention the percentage of Jews who lived in these lands; this is a pity, because if the author had added the information that in tsarist Russia, excluding the lands of the Kingdom of Poland, more than half of Jews lived in governorates lying in present-day Ukraine, this would give a different impression of this data.

A further example of Hrytsak's lack of respect for analytical discipline might be his conclusions on the impact of religion on the processes of modernization. He writes, for example, that the literacy level was linked to the dominant denomination in a given nation: it was highest for Protestants, lower for Catholics, and lower still for Orthodox Christians (pp. 73–74). Yet, the author gives as the source of his reflections a table with data on the literacy level among the nations of the Russian Empire and Austria–Hungary, in which, I swear, the majority of Germans and Czechs were not Protestants. Not to mention the fact that the differences in reading and writing skills could also stem from factors other than religious denomination, and sources should be official data with the results of relevant statistical censuses, not the author's own work.

And what can we say about this kind of interpretation (p. 83) that suggests that Western Europe achieved economic success thanks to religion? “The first and almost infallible impression about a country's political order and prosperity can be gained from the appearance of its main places of worship: be they peaked Catholic churches or simple and well-maintained Protestant kirks or Jewish synagogues, Muslim mosques with high minarets or Orthodox churches with onion domes”. This sentence was undoubtedly written deliberately as it is highlighted and takes up half a page. But these views, citing Max Weber, could be criticized for the same reasons for which the German sociologist's views have been criticized for over a century.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere, the author writes (p. 80) that “the nations of Rus” before the First World War were less educated than their Catholic neighbours. It is puzzling that a professor at the Ukrainian Catholic University regards Galician Ukrainians, who at this time were practically all Catholics (the vast majority of the Greek Rite), as “non-Catholics”. Another lack of

<sup>1</sup> Suffice to say that in Germany, which given its relative cultural uniformity as well as its denominational splits offers a good case study for testing this theory, a contemporary economic historian, analysing data from 272 cities, found no corroboration of Weber's hypothesis; cf. Davide Cantoni, “The Economic Effects of the Protestant Reformation: Testing the Weber Hypothesis in the German Lands”, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 13:4 (August 2015).

terminological precision is the reference to the “Orthodox rite” of the Uniate Church: it would be more correct to speak of the Greek rite, which is separate from the Latin one. Also surprising are passages referring to the ‘Vatican’ in the sixteenth century (p. 28), rather than using the correct wording of the ‘Holy See’, or possibly ‘Rome’; after all, at this time the Papal States occupied a large expanse, and their capital was in Rome.

And what value is there in the author’s musings about the Union of Brest, which match the views of nineteenth-century Ukrainian and Soviet historiography but contradict the findings of later research, such as that of his prematurely deceased colleague from the Ukrainian Catholic University, Ihor Skochyliak? We read (p. 121) that “in 1587–1632, a devout Catholic, Sigismund III, came to the throne. Together with the Jesuits he forged plans to convert Orthodox Christians to Catholicism” – the same Jesuits about whom a little earlier (p. 120) we are told that “they marched with the Protestants like hunting dogs with game...”. There is nothing of the danger to Orthodoxy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth caused by the Reformation and the mass transition of the elites of Kyivan Rus’ to Protestantism as well as the low intellectual level of the Rus’ clergy. Moreover, historians usually mention that the decision that was taken in Brest to form the Union Church was influenced by such factors as concerns about the consequences of the formation of a patriarchy in Moscow for the Greek Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or the will of the Orthodox hierarchy itself. Hrytsak, however, ignores these circumstances completely.

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But the most astonishing thing about Hrytsak’s book from the perspective of a Polish historian, as well as others with at least some idea of the history of Central and Eastern Europe, is the number of errors, inconsistencies or interpretations pandering to patriotic tastes, often coinciding with the views of Ukrainian nationalist historiography of nineteenth-century origin.

Let’s start with interpretations pandering to patriotic tastes. It is understandable that Hrytsak describes the history of the name “Ukraine” and bases it on the widespread occurrence of the concept in folk tradition as the “land of the family”, disputing the incomparably more convincing hypothesis that it originally denoted a periphery or borderland; vide the similar names in other Slavic languages to denote a borderland, such as “Krajna” in Poland and “Kraina” in Croatia. Admittedly, the etymology of Ukraine as a borderland is no worse than that of Poland from “field” or

Russia as the land of (Germanic) rowers, but emotionally “land of the family” sounds better than “borderland”.

One can also understand the exaggeration of the influence of Ukraine’s culture on Europe. “Romanticism brought with it a fashion for everything Ukrainian – one need merely look at the popularity of the painting of Mazepa among European Romantics”, writes the author in a passage printed in bold (p. 173). But he does not give any other examples of this fashion for “everything Ukrainian” among European Romantics, and neither is this reviewer familiar with any. Analytically, such techniques are scarcely credible, but they take place almost everywhere, not just among Ukrainians.

What is worse is that this Lviv historian perpetuates inane myths. “On the Ukrainian national flag one can see a field of wheat under a blue sky. The Ukrainian culture of the early modern period was intentionally created as a culture of the countryside” (p. 91). If we reject the hypothesis that a professor of history in Lviv has never heard of the coat of arms of the medieval Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, the flag of the Galician Ruthenians during the Revolutions of 1848, and is unfamiliar with the basic principles of heraldry, we must assume that, for reasons known only to himself, he is deliberately reproducing a fairy tale once invented to make it easier for Ukrainians living in the Russian Empire to identify with these originally Galician colours.

The lack of consistency is similarly surprising. For instance, the author uses place names (p. 81) based on the native language, i.e., Helsinki, not Helsingfors; Tallinn, not Reval; Tartu, not Dorpat. But he makes an exception for Gdańsk, which, upon my word, in Ukrainian in the past and present has always been called Gdańsk, not “Danzig”. Likewise on a map (p. 217) titled “The Ukrainian lands in the nineteenth century – battle of nationalisms” we find “Breslau” and “Danzig” – although in Polish and Ukrainian these two cities have always been called Wrocław and Gdańsk (just as in German they are still called Breslau and Danzig) – but also Bratislava, the name given instead of Pressburg after the First World War.

Such inconsistencies also appear in the section on the nineteenth century, which, given his specialization, the author ought to know better. The map “Serfdom in 1800” (p. 211) shows a picture of contemporary Europe, not that of 1800. Another map (p. 118), purporting to show the ethnic origin of Cossacks, also contains the contemporary borders of European states and a strange array of origins: “Poles, Kashubians, Masurians, from Prussia, Lithuanians, Belarusians, Volhynians, Germans, ‘from Kolomyia’ [sic]”. But when Hrytsak lists the nations (p. 157) that did not have their

own state in the nineteenth century, he names, for example, the Silesians and the Provençals but does not do this by analogy to the Galicians or Carpathian Ruthenians. With this comes a rather dismissive remark about minor nations: “Who today remembers the Lusatian Serbs?” (p. 159). In fact, many people remember, and above all they themselves do.

Let’s move on to incorrect interpretations. It is not true, as the author writes (p. 9), that “the historical works of Mykhailo Hrushevsky became a kind of republican revolution in writing about Eastern Europe”. The idea that the history of Rus’ is different from that of Russia, and the latter traces its origin to not Kyiv but Moscow, formed the basis of Polish national ideology in the nineteenth century and justified the rejection of Russian rule of the “Lithuanian–Rus’” lands (today Lithuania, Belarus and most of Ukraine). History was also described in this way. After all, as early as 1839, more than 60 years before Hrushevsky, Joachim Lelewel wrote: “Along with the main fairy tales, lies and errors with which the history of Rus’ was filled, there is the fact is that these histories are interpreted as being the same as Muscovy’s and Russia’s, the same as those of the tsars and emperors”. This Polish scholar bemoaned the lack of differentiation between Muscovy and Old Rus’ “to which historians tended to succumb”.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, however, elsewhere Hrytsak writes things that evidently contradict Hrushevsky’s ideas and are clearly closer to the meaning of the sources, for example that Old Rus’ was neither a Ukrainian nor a Russian state – incidentally, the concept of a state in the eleventh century differed from the modern one – or that the name “Kievan Rus’” was invented by Russian historians in the nineteenth century (p. 54).

The author’s discussion of the situation of Kyivan Rus’ and the Ruthenians in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is immensely one-sided, perpetuating views that contradict the interpretations presented by contemporary Ukrainian specialists on this period, such as Natalia Yakovenko and Natalia Starchenko. These claims about the Polish “annexation of the Halychian lands” (p. 102) – in fact, rather incorporation – or the phrases printed in bold on the same page about the “Polish Drang nach Osten”, reproduce the views of Ukrainian historiography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for which the delegitimization of Polish claims to Halychian Rus’ was a patriotic issue.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the assertion that “the Commonwealth elites” were Polish (p. 103) is hard to maintain in the light of contemporary research of the aforementioned

<sup>2</sup> J. Lelewel, *Dzieje Litwy i Rusi aż do Unii z Polską w 1569 w Lublinie zawartej* (Lipsk, 1839), pp. 35–36.

<sup>3</sup> This expression is used, for example, by Mikhailo Hrushevsky; cf. M. Hrushevsky, *Istoriya Ukrajinny-Rusy*, vol. 6 (New York, 1955), p. 279.



Ukrainian scholars as well as their Polish colleagues (Henryk Litwin) regarding the mid-seventeenth century. And there are striking interpretations in the description of the Khmelnytsky Uprising: there is nothing about recognizing it as a civil war, but much about a “Ukrainian revolution” (pp. 124–25). There are surprising errors too, e.g., “the Right Bank [of Ukraine]” following the Truce of Andrusovo “went to Poland” (p. 127). So, which country did it belong to before? It was actually the Left Bank that went to Moscow.

Hrytsak’s interpretations of the Pereiaslav Agreement are also superficial (see p. 129). It cannot be compared to the Treaty of Zboriv of 1649 or the Treaty of Hadiach of 1658, as he does, since these concerned the status of lands captured by the Cossacks (not “the Ukrainian lands”, because neither of these agreements involved, for example, the Halych Land) within one state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, while the Pereiaslav Agreement meant a change of sovereign, and thus also of state affiliation. Meanwhile, “the local peasants seldom saw their lord – who lived far away in a palace in Warsaw, Krakow or Lviv” (pp. 93–94) is an example of a huge, different simplification. After all, it was not just the landed gentry or aristocracy who possessed land, but also the middle nobility, who did not live in the palaces of Lviv or Warsaw.

Bizarre and incomprehensible simplifications also appear in the parts of the book describing the period in which the author specializes – the nineteenth and twentieth century. He claims, for instance, that “the Ukrainians as a nation” emerged not thanks to but against the wishes of the Polish elites (p. 102). This is a bold theory when the author himself gives the moment of the origin of the Ukrainian nation conventionally as 1914, although half a century earlier, in 1863, the elites of the Polish nation in the guise of the National Government unanimously recognized the Ruthenian nation as separate – albeit also assuming that it would naturally become part of the rebuilt Commonwealth. And it was Polish agitation, carried out in Ukrainian, and the January Uprising that in July 1863 led the Russian government to issue the infamous Valuev Circular, which placed stringent restrictions on publishing in Ukrainian.

Certain assertions seem to result from the pursuit of *bons mots* and a disregard for the need for diligent analysis: “Józef Piłsudski compared the Commonwealth to an *obwarzanek* [a ring-shaped bread] – a big hole in the middle, and everything good on the outside. He knew what he was talking about, because he too was a man ‘from the Borderlands’. Other famous Poles were also ‘Borderlanders’: the poets Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Czesław Miłosz; the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, Marie Skłodowska-Curie [sic]; the world-famous writer Joseph Conrad – the list

is too long to continue. And it reflects an important tendency – the peripheries were areas of heightened creativity” (p. 104). This claim about creativity is in bold. Yet it goes without saying that the list of famous Poles whose activity or works were significant not only within Poland certainly includes many more Poles from the lands of the Polish “core”, and the theory of the peripheries as areas of increased creativity is groundless.

Passages such as (p. 177) “Pushkin perceived the battle of the Polish nationalists and the Russian Empire as a zero-sum game” and a similar claim on p. 165 are truly bemusing. They evidently show that the author uses the term “nationalists” in the same way as some Western literature to mean “supporters of the national idea as the basis of settling relations between states”. Yet, as the book uses the same term for authentic nationalists (i.e., advocates of the nationalist worldview), e.g., writing about nationalists and socialists (p. 204) or nationalists and liberals (p. 208), it creates the misleading impression of an ideological continuation between, for instance, the Polish independence movement, based on the rules of democracy and a voluntaristic vision of the national idea, and twentieth-century Ukrainian nationalism, based on an ethnic and often anti-democratic understanding of nation. It is an open question whether the author intended to connect Mickiewicz with Bandera and the UPA (p. 219) or it just “came out like that” owing to carelessness, but it gives the impression of manipulation.

There are also a number of fairly elementary factual errors: “The Peace of Westphalia introduced two principles: the borders between states are to be inviolable, and no state may interfere in the affairs of another”, the author claims (p. 104). In fact, the principle of non-intervention of a state in others’ affairs began to form at the time of the French Revolution and was codified only in the twentieth century, in the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Charter of the United Nations. International law is yet to hear of the inviolability of borders; if anything, it is familiar with the principle that borders may not be changed by force, but this is a result of the development of international law starting in 1929, when first the Kellogg–Briand Pact came into force, delegatising war as a foreign policy instrument, followed by the UN Charter, and finally the Helsinki Accords of 1975.

“In 1610, the last Rurikid, Tsar Vasili Shuisky, died in Moscow”, the author writes. “His death, combined with the previous rule of Ivan the Terrible (1547–1584), resulted in the long-lasting Time of Troubles in the Tsardom”. In fact, Vasili Shuisky died not in 1610 but in 1612, and in 1610 he was dethroned. Indeed, he came from the Rurikid dynasty, but a subsidiary branch, and he was preceded by two rulers not from this dynasty – Boris

Godunov and False Dmitry I – and it is generally thought that the Time of Troubles began with False Dmitry's arrival in Russia in 1604, not with the dethroning of Shuisky, when, if anything, it reached its peak.

We also learn (p. 106) that in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth “it was indeed the magnates, and not the nobility, who elected the king and limited his power”. This is another argument showing the author's lack of understanding of the history of not just Poland but also Ukraine; after all, if we look at the various elections, which were indeed free (until the late seventeenth century), as a rule it was the candidates of the nobility, not the magnates, who prevailed.

Hrytsak twice (pp. 157 and 163) wrongly dates the Kościuszko Uprising to 1793 and places the famous Krzemieniec Lyceum in Volhynia (today Kremenets) in the city of Kremenchuk (p. 172). He claims that Ukrainians in the Russian Empire were “inorodtsy” (p. 16), although in fact they were regarded as Russians, and they were only called “inorodtsy” in Stolypin's circular from 1910. Compared to all other legal acts, this can hardly be seen as representative. In addition, the author himself soon disavowed this circular, calling the inclusion of “Little Russians” an accidental mistake. There is even an error involving Hrytsak's home and university city: Mykhailo Hrushevsky (p. 161) is described as a professor of “Ukrainian history” at the University of Lviv. In fact, he was a professor of the chair of “general history with a particular emphasis on the history of Eastern Europe”. The fact that in practice his lectures often boiled down to the history of Ukraine is another matter. And then there is the imprecise claim that his main work – a history of Ukraine–Rus' – was written in Lviv. The historian in fact wrote it throughout his life; he indeed began it in the “Lviv” period (only publishing half of the series, the first five volumes) but continued in the “Lviv-Kyiv” period, between 1905 and 1914, and then in exile in Russia during his emigration (1919–1924), and upon his return to Ukraine – in the USSR.

In the section on the nineteenth century (p. 382), the author claims that the Germans ridiculed Polish attempts to set up their own university, but the Poles did so anyway. It is worth remembering that Jagiellonian University in Krakow was founded as early as 1364 and operated continuously from the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards. Hrytsak makes similar mistakes when discussing his own *alma mater*, Lviv University (p. 159), which in his interpretation opened in 1807. This may not be a new interpretation, stretching back as it does to the time of Hrushevsky, but it goes against not only historical sources – as King John II Casimir founded the college in Lviv in 1661 – but also against the identity of the university itself, which in 2021 celebrated the 360th anniversary of its

formation.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that Erich Koch was not Gauleiter of “West Prussia” (p. 337) – a term from the period of the German Empire and Third Reich used to describe Gdańsk Pomerania – but rather East Prussia.

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Absolutely the biggest disappointment, however, comes with Hrytsak’s description of Polish-Ukrainian relations, especially in the twentieth century, where his hasty judgements, lack of analytical precision, deficits in knowledge and tendency to write history “between drops” results in a first-class example of reproduction of the stereotypical views of mainstream Ukrainian historiography, with the possible exception of his description of the effects of the OUN’s activity.

Reading the book, one is left with the strong impression that Hrytsak – despite his knowledge of Polish and his popularity in Polish liberal circles – actually knows little about Poland. It is telling that in his bibliography, with the exception of Sławomir Tokarski’s English-language book about Jews in Galicia, there is no Polish historiography on Ukraine, but there are many Ukrainian, Western, and even Russian books. The author’s arguments suggest a similarity in Poland’s and Russia’s approaches to Ukraine in the nineteenth century. We hear, for example, that “the Russian Empire could exist without Baltia [sic – this is what the author calls the Baltic states] or even the Caucasus. The loss of Ukraine would become the beginning of the end. [...] Control of the Ukrainian lands was also critically important for Polish nationalism. In the ideas of the Polish elites, ‘the Borderlands’ were as important as the ‘Okraina’ of Little Rus’ for the Russian authorities” (p. 163). In fact, it was mainly Polish nationalism that demanded the division between Poland and Russia of the lands that representatives of the Ukrainian national movement treated as their own, while other streams of political thought, especially socialism, saw Ruthenia (*Rus’*) as federalized, and then – after the failure of the January Uprising – a state organism confederated with Poland (only Galicia’s status might have been disputed).

The author’s lack of sensitivity to Polish history is also illustrated by his musings on the intelligentsia (p. 180). “The members of the intelligentsia resembled the early Christians: they were united by their readiness for self-sacrifice for the public good. Unlike the Christians, however, most of them were indifferent to religion, and some were outright hostile. They believed in not God but progress”. This is a description that applies

<sup>4</sup> Information from the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv website: “360 – Lviv’skyi universytet” <<https://lnu.edu.ua/360-l-vivs-kyi-universytet/>> [accessed 25 June 2023].

to the Russian intelligentsia, not the Polish variety, who were often characterized by deep religiosity.

Hrytsak gives as an example of “debasement of national dignity” (sic) Henryk Sienkiewicz’s novel *With Fire and Sword*, in which “the Ukrainian Cossacks were presented as savage barbarians from the East”. Disregarding the fact that Sienkiewicz gleaned this image of the Cossacks largely from Panteleimon Kulish, one of the leading Ukrainian intellectuals of the nineteenth century, in all fairness we should note that the main female protagonist in his novel bears the hallmarks of a typical Shevchenko Ukrainian and is a Ruthenian from a knyaz family, just as a few of the other main protagonists come from Ruthenia (Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, Michał Wołodyjowski) and some, clearly portrayed positively, are even Cossacks (Mikołaj Zaćwilichowski, serving Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, and Zakhar, serving Khmelnytsky). Indeed, the historical background of the novel, the Khmelnytsky Uprising, is portrayed as a civil war, a revolt instigated even by justified causes, but a savage, untamed one against the idea of statehood and social order; the author’s sympathies are evidently on the side of the Ruthenian elites, not the Cossacks, although in parts he also tries to show the Cossacks’ rationale. Seeing Sienkiewicz’s book as anti-Ukrainian might result either from Hrytsak’s unfamiliarity with it and the influence of Volodymyr Antonovych’s review of 1885<sup>5</sup>, or Hrytsak’s mental identification with the “traditional model of Ukrainian history”.

The author presents the Polish-Ukrainian war over Lviv and Eastern Galicia from the Ukrainian perspective, based on the conviction that it was waged on “Ukrainian lands” (p. 238). This is accompanied by a map on which the West Ukrainian People’s Republic (WUPR) stretches from a line running west from Przemyśl (p. 240), although in fact the map shows the area claimed by the WUPR, which is not the same. The WUPR, of course, proclaimed its uprising in all parts of the former Austrian Empire where Ukrainians lived but in practice controlled only part of Eastern Galicia, and the army and administration of the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic was even ousted from Lviv after three weeks of battles. We might therefore ask the author how he defines the WUPR territory, since he speaks about it as something self-evident (p. 233). He lays the blame for the Lviv pogrom squarely with Czesław Mączyński (p. 335), which is odd as historians researching investigation files are far more cautious in their assessment. There is also a claim regarding Poland’s “annexation

<sup>5</sup> Vladymyr Antonovič, ‘Polsko-russkije sootnošenija XVII v. v sovremennoj polskoj prizme’, in id., *Moja spovid: Vybrani istorični ta publicystični tvory*, ed. by Ol’ha Todijčuk and Vasyľ Ul’janovs’kyj (Kyiv, 1995), pp. 106–35.

of Volhynia” in 1919 (p. 269), which is evidently false. No such thing took place, and throughout that year Poland was the occupier from the point of view of both international and domestic law.

Elsewhere in the book, we can read that interwar Poland “swallowed up so many [Ukrainian] lands that it could not digest them” (p. 272), or that its policy was inconsistent because it sought to “Ukrainize Volhynia and de-Ukrainize Galicia” (p. 273). There is not the slightest reference showing the dominant perspective among the Poles at the time, who treated at least Eastern Galicia, and sometimes also the entirety of the lands up to the Dnieper, as part of the Polish national territory. There is also no attempt to show the foundations of Poland’s interwar policy towards Ukrainians, by which of course I do not mean that the author should not criticize the instruments used, which were indeed harmful as they gave rise to new resentments. In any case, the Galician Ukrainians were perceived as disloyal to the Polish state, resulting in efforts to use administrative means to limit what was seen as Ukrainian national agitation. Meanwhile, in Volhynia – where the local Ukrainians, culturally different from their Galician compatriots, identified much less with the version of the Ukrainian national idea, which was confrontational towards Poland – the voivode Henryk Józewski wanted to create an area where the Ukrainians would have better chances of personal development and furthering their national culture than in Soviet Ukraine.

However, Hrytsak, who repeatedly stresses the cultural diversity of Ukraine and polemicizes against the template approach to the Donbas population of Ukrainian nationalists, might be expected to reflect comparatively on the challenges, means and effects of the policy of the authorities of the Second Polish Republic towards lands inhabited by a population different in culture and religion from the core of pre-war Poland on the one hand and, on the other, of the Ukrainian authorities towards the linguistically and often mentally alienated eastern, southern Ukraine and the Crimea. One can expect that he would compare the challenges faced by the Polish authorities and the means of implementation (utraquist schools, an exclusively Polish-language university in Lviv or the requirement of military service in the Polish army for Ukrainian students) with those which Ukraine – quite rightly from the point of view of its state interests – undertook towards its Russian-dominated lands, especially as the challenges were somewhat similar. Upon its foundation in 1991, Ukraine had the task of integrating a Catholic (Eastern Rite) population in the west with an Orthodox (or more often agnostic or culturally Orthodox) one in the east, using two languages (Russian and Ukrainian) and torn between two visions of Ukrainian identity – national and European,

anti-Russian and Russophile – invoking the civilizational community of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians.

There were, of course, differences, such as the legitimation of the foundation of independent Ukraine in the referendum of 1 December 1991 in all the regions of Soviet Ukraine, followed by the holding of further democratic elections, acceptance of the constitution, and also the conviction dominant among Ukrainians that, irrespective of religion and language, self-declaration as a Ukrainian was the key factor in national identification. Post-1918 independent Poland started from a different position: the Partitions had annihilated the project of creation of a Polish political nation existing at elite level but not that of the people in the second half of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century, and created conditions that made it easier to distinguish separate nations within the pre-Partition Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nevertheless, knowledge of this should lead a Ukrainian historian to exercise some caution in his judgements, yet these are lacking.

Hrytsak's antihero is Roman Dmowski, whom he calls "the ideologue of the chauvinistic and antisemitic National Democracy party" (p. 274), without any attempt to define antisemitism (opposition to the role of the Jewish elites in economic and political life, but not "racial") or "chauvinism". Elsewhere, he writes that the Ukrainian "national democrats", unlike the Polish ones, were indeed democrats (p. 280). The author missed the fact that among Polish national democrats there were many politicians and activists with overtly democratic views who were persecuted under Piłsudski. However, he mentions that after 1926 it was Piłsudski who pursued Dmowski's line – meaning, we can assume, antisemitism and chauvinism. This is a hefty charge when the only example he gives is the pacification, or "anti-terrorist operation", of autumn 1930, which was directed at the terrorism of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists. The Ukrainian civilian population were also affected as they were suspected on the grounds of national solidarity – i.e., collective responsibility – of favouring the terrorists, thus they were often the victims of the excesses and crimes committed during the operation. Hrytsak also accuses Piłsudski (p. 263) of preparing plans for another march on Kyiv and issuing a relevant directive to this end to the General Staff, although historiography knows nothing of this – those who do speak of it, frequently, are Russian commentators.

Hrytsak's portrayal of the Soviet aggression against Poland on 17 September 1939 is extremely disappointing. He writes that "the Red Army crossed the Soviet-Polish border and entered the territory of Galicia and Volhynia" (p. 290, similarly on "crossing" p. 293), claiming that these areas

as well as “Western Belarus” (there is, of course, no mention of the fact that the Belarusian-speaking population comprised less than 25% of the population there according to the census, and Orthodox Christians around 45%) thereby came to be part of the USSR in 1939. The author seems not to understand that annexation is by definition illegal, and annexed areas continue to be occupied. Legally, 90% of the area that the Red Army occupied in 1939 came to be part of the USSR only on 5 February 1946, when the border treaty of 16 April 1945 between Poland and the USSR entered into force. This treaty involved Poland ceding 90% of its territory occupied by the Soviets in September 1939 to the USSR, with 10%, including Białystok and Przemyśl, remaining in Poland, from which nobody had ever detached them.

Only ignorance of the foundations of international law can account for the repetition of the Soviet terminology regarding “former Poland” (pp. 291, 324) to refer to the times of the Second World War, or the assertion (p. 297) regarding the “detachment of Galicia from Ukraine in 1941 and its annexation to the occupied Polish lands”. I wonder on what basis Hrytsak distinguishes the status of the Polish territory entered in 1939 by Germany (“occupied”) and by the USSR “incorporated into the USSR”? The explanation that he might be using a definition of occupation that is different from that of international law helps little because inconsistencies can also be seen in other cases. For example, when discussing the occupied areas of Ukraine, the borders of 1991 are visible, while Carpathian Ruthenia – until 1939 part of Czechoslovakia, with contested status in 1939–45 (part of Hungary or Czechoslovakia) – is marked as “occupied by Hungary”.

It is hardly surprising that, ignorant of the status of the territory of the Polish Republic under international law, Hrytsak makes a common mistake by considering (pp. 308, 326) Ukraine’s population losses during the war and comparing them with the Belarusian ones. Yet the Soviet and Polish statistics partly cover the same categories owing to a different perception of the state affiliation of Galicia, Volhynia, Polesia, the Navahrudak Region and the Vilnius Region. It is true that this is seldom discussed, but it would certainly be easier to discern the problem if the Soviet and Russian claims of “incorporation of Volhynia and Galicia to Soviet Ukraine” in 1939 were not taken in good faith.

Last but not least, the description of the Volhynia Massacre. Hrytsak is one of few Ukrainian historians to accept what is obvious for Polish and Western historians: that the UPA carried out ethnic cleansing in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia (on p. 212, the author mentions solely Volhynia in 1943, while on p. 296 there is a reference to “preventative ethnic



cleansing"). He has in fact been active in discussions on Volhynia for over 20 years: in 2003, he signed a letter by Ukrainian intellectuals stating that the UPA murdered Poles, so he can hardly be accused of a lack of knowledge on this matter. For some reason, however, in his synthesis Hrytsak notes that the Volhynian Massacre was not the only genocide encountered in the Ukrainian lands, and that "the Polish underground" conducted an operation exterminating Ukrainians that was also genocide (p. 212). In practice, therefore, the description that emerges in this book is one of unabashed symmetrism.

The description of the massacre (pp. 302, 327) is also disappointing, although the author devotes several paragraphs to it in all. He claims twice that the massacre began in summer and one of the UPA's first acts was the extermination of the Polish population in Volhynia, and on the night of 11–12 July it attacked between 50 and 100 Polish villages. But in one place we are told that it is unclear who gave the orders, while in another it is clear that it was Dmytro Klyachkivsky. Atrocities such as those committed in Parośla, Pendyki, Lipniki, and Janowa Dolina go unnoticed, although these are just some of the best-known examples of villages that were victims of UPA's cleansing in late winter and spring 1943. The lack of information on the number of victims, which ran into the tens of thousands, and of any mention of Galicia, where Shukhevych also ordered a repeat of the massacre, produces the impression that the author is deliberately diminishing the significance of the Volhynia Massacre so that information about it does not confound his efforts to write a popular history of Ukraine to raise spirits and boost faith in modernization and Europeanness, especially as amid all this he relativizes terror thus (p. 331): "It was not the Banderites who unleashed the terror. As the Ukrainian poet Marianna Kiyanovska succinctly noted, were it not for Piłsudski, Bandera would be a little-known agronomist". Such explanations are disappointing, especially as the author reaches for another eristic device of dubious merit, namely "whataboutism", to relativize the massacre. He writes that "the current Polish government [headed by the Law and Justice Party] treats the Volhynian Massacre as a genocide of Poles but prefers not to speak of Poles' participation in the extermination of Jews and Ukrainians" (p. 331). As an illustration of Polish atrocities, Hrytsak mentions the village of Pawłokoma, somewhat simplistically attributing it to the Polish Home Army (AK, which actually no longer existed, although it was indeed a post-AK unit that was responsible). Unfortunately, the author bemoans the fact that those responsible were not punished for their crime perpetrated in Ukraine (p. 338) – the thing is, though, that Pawłokoma is in fact in Poland.

Overall, Hrytsak's book might increase Ukrainians' identification with their country and its history, and it might somewhat reduce the popularity of radically nationalistic interpretations of history in Ukraine. But the cost of this is an enormous number of simplifications, logical inconsistencies, and conclusions based on convoluted methodology and reproduction of nationalist stereotypes, especially concerning the situation of Ruthenia in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Polish-Ukrainian relations in the later period. And on top of this there are numerous substantive errors.

Not only is this not how to write a history that allows the neighbour's perspective to be understood; it is also not how to write a history that satisfies the criteria of an academic popular history book. Rather, it is how to write a new historical mythology that is only superficially pro-European and liberal.

# Henryk Litwin

Book Review: Leonid Tymošenko, *Rus'ka religijna kul'tura Vil'na. Kontekst doby. Oseređky. Literatura ta Knyžnist'*. (XVI – perša tretyna XVII st.): mononbrafija, Drohobyč: Kolo, 2020, 796 pp.

Leonid Tymoshenko's new book is a summary of many years of research on the question of inter-faith relations in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His academic studies have long focused on the Union of Brest, although his individual works often address the various forms of activity of the Orthodox Christian community in the territories of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. It is no exaggeration to say that Tymoshenko's academic output is enormous. This latest book's bibliography refers to 91 of his works (books and academic articles) that form the foundation of the numerous and valuable summaries he provides.

The book, it should be noted immediately, would be very difficult to review in a traditional manner because the most contentious issues concern its title and construction. Tymoshenko takes as his titular subject matter "the Ruthenian religious culture of Vilna in the sixteenth century and the first three decades of the seventeenth century", and the origins of the concept of "religious culture" are extremely competently discussed in the introduction. In the erudite first chapter, he demonstrates to the reader his excellent knowledge of the subject literature, regardless of whether it was produced in Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, or Lithuanian academic settings, or in Russian, American or Italian ones. He also leaves no doubt as to his excellent grasp of the manuscript sources of East Central and Eastern Europe that might contain material concerning the Ruthenian religious culture of Vilna (now Vilnius). Yet, this author's treatise proper demonstrates intentions broader than just placing a magnifying glass over Vilna. In fact, Chapters 3, 5 and 7 (a total of 227 of the 574 pages written by the author) focus on the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Two extremely interesting chapters (the second and eighth) discuss selected issues from the history of the Eastern church in Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, concerning questions of the identity of Ruthenian religious culture. These amount to 131 pages. Both Chapter 2, "Slavia Orthodoxa and Slavia Unita", which concerns the sixteenth century, and Chapter 8, which discusses the mutual influences in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century between

the religious cultures of Lithuanian and Polish Ruthenia on the one hand, and Catholic Poland and Orthodox Muscovy on the other, are separate monographs which feature their own introductions and discuss the relevant subject literature in depth. The third “ingredient” of the book (covering 154 pages in total) is Chapters 4 and 6, which are also monographs on two hitherto little-known treasures of Ruthenian (Uniate) polemical and hagiographical literature that were published in Vilna but concern the entire Commonwealth rather than local issues.

The purpose of highlighting this “tripartite” structure is not to make critical remarks. On the contrary, I am in favour of such formal experiments, but I would argue that they should not be “hidden” behind a title promising a much narrower thematic scope than the book actually has. A suitable title would be “Studies on the history of Ruthenian religious culture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century and the first three decades of the seventeenth century”.

Moving on to a discussion of the book’s distinct “segments”, Chapters 2 and 8 deserve particular attention due to the significance of the research topics they explore. The first two parts of Chapter 2, “Slavia orthodoxa and Slavia unita”, form a kind of whole based on solid source studies that presents the author’s judgements concerning the impact of Byzantine religious tradition on Ruthenian Orthodox Christianity and on the Uniate tradition (which he calls “Florentine”). Tymoshenko finds traces of strong influences of Byzantine tradition in Ruthenia, especially in the guise of obedience to the patriarchy of Constantinople. He admits, however, that this impact weakened over time and – especially after the Union of Brest – slowly gave way to the influences of Western European religious cultures (p. 76). This correct conclusion might be further reinforced by a reminder of Antoni Mironowicz’s important article on the Orthodox Church councils in the Commonwealth,<sup>1</sup> which Tymoshenko omits. Analysis of the infrequent references to the tradition of the Union, which is associated with memory of the Council of Florence, leads the author to the conclusion that “Florentine” propaganda was present in the religious culture of sixteenth-century Lithuanian Ruthenia, but that its effects were weak and critical judgement was dominant (pp. 88–89). One can agree with the author, but only regarding his summary of the analysis of polemical texts. If we take into account the ecclesial reality of the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century, then we must clearly recognise the strong influence of the Florentine idea in the very development of the Uniate Church.

<sup>1</sup> Antoni Mironowicz, ‘Typologia soborów lokalnych Kościoła prawosławnego na ziemiach ruskich i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego do końca XV wieku’, *Latopisy Akademii Supraskiej*, 5 (2014), 9–38.

However, the author's interesting reflections on the concept of Orthodox patriarchy in the Commonwealth (pp. 89–91) are commendable. Tymoshenko analyses this question in the context of the autonomist aspirations of Ruthenian Orthodox Christianity, rightly noting that these aims were thwarted by "radical Cossacks". It would do no harm to add that the only alternative to this concept proved to be the inclusion (thanks to the Cossacks) of Ruthenian Orthodox Christianity in the sphere of influence of the Muscovite patriarchy, which was certainly not in the scope of the aspirations for autonomy. In the third part of Chapter 2, the author describes the organisational structure of the Kyiv Metropolitanate, mainly using subject literature with which he is very familiar. He rightly emphasises the significance of the secular parish and patronage, but perhaps his references to the question of monastical life and the networks of monasteries of the Eastern Church are somewhat too cursory. This passage does not contain original arguments but has value as a highly competent summary of the conclusions of the subject literature.

Tymoshenko reserves the most attractive content for the end of Chapter 2, where he summarises his own thoughts, which often dispute the various trends of the subject literature regarding the causes of the Union of Brest. He agrees with neither the notion that the crisis of Orthodox Christianity in the Commonwealth was the main reason for the Uniate aspirations, nor with arguments about the attractiveness of the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation era. The author argues that the signs of a crisis of Orthodox Christianity were few and that positive developmental phenomena were clear (the role of brotherhoods, the development of theological writing). He demonstrates that the Polish Catholic Church in the late sixteenth century was in crisis and could not offer an attractive model for the Eastern Church. He in fact finds only one significant motive for the initiators of the Union of Brest: the desire to secure the same privileges enjoyed by the Catholic clergy. The author's reflections on this subject include many important and detailed arguments that should undoubtedly be considered in analyses of the causes of the Union of Brest. Yet, it is hard to agree with his main conclusion. If it was indeed the courting of the privileges of the Catholic clergy (bishops' senatorial status, the clergy's fiscal immunity) that was the main reason for the initiative of the Union, it would not have lasted longer than the few months that sufficed to demonstrate that the Uniate Church would not receive these privileges.

It is also important to note that the crisis of Orthodox Christianity in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a phenomenon encompassing more elements than those debated in Tymoshenko's work. In this respect, his otherwise interesting polemic with Borys Gudziak and the arguments

of the latter's book, *Crisis and Reform...*,<sup>2</sup> on the genesis of the Union of Brest must be seen as selective. Furthermore, it is worth discussing the author's argument concerning the supposed weakness of the model of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. Tymoshenko bases his conclusions on the premise that the Ruthenian Orthodox hierarchy's perception of Roman Catholicism was founded on a familiarity with the realities of the Commonwealth and the situation of the Polish Church. However, this theory is assumed to be correct, even though it is not based on any arguments, ignores the existence of contacts between senior Church figures and Rome (even via papal nuncios), and wrongly underestimates the Orthodox bishops' intellectual horizons and knowledge of the world. Also dubious is the description of the crisis situation in the late-sixteenth-century Polish Church, which is constructed on the basis of a memorandum of the Krakow Cathedral Chapter from 1551 (p. 145) and fragmentary quotations from nuncial correspondence (pp. 146–47). The memorandum in question described the situation from a completely different era: the difference in the state of Catholicism between the early 1550s (when the Reformation flourished most) and the late 1590s and the period of the triumphs of the Counter-Reformation was vast. The author is evidently convinced that Catholicism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late sixteenth century suffered a more profound crisis than Orthodox Christianity, yet this argument is hard to accept as proven. Even if we accept that using the argument of the supremacy of Russian religious-didactic literature over the Catholic variety is justified,<sup>3</sup> this is not sufficient as *pars pro toto* evidence.

Chapter 8 is something of a continuation of Chapter 2: it uses the subject literature as well as numerous original comments to reflect on the potential interaction between Ruthenian religious culture and the “neighbouring” Polish and Muscovite ones. Regarding this interaction, the author mostly notes examples of Ruthenian influences on the Muscovite Church, while downplaying effects in the opposite direction. In terms of the impact of Polish religious culture on Ruthenia, particularly interesting are Tymoshenko's remarks on Catholic influences on the structure of the activity of Orthodox brotherhoods and cathedral chapters (*krylos*). It is a pity that he confined himself to studying this interaction of religious cultures but overlooked another extremely interesting question: the influence of the political culture of the Polish szlachta on the Ruthenians and the process whereby “Sarmatian” ways of thinking about politics permeated Ruthenian religious polemics, in which the topos of “our rights and privileges”, for example, was

<sup>2</sup> Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform. The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> In this respect Tymoshenko cites: Marharyta Korzo, ‘Porivnjal’nyj analiz pol’skoji katolyč’koji ta ukrajins’koji prašoslavnoj cerkovno-učitel’noji literatury XVI–XVII st.’, *Kovčeb. Naukovyj zbirnyk iz cerkovnoji istoriji*, 2 (2000), 64–84.

widely used.<sup>4</sup> In my view, it is also worth considering another topic not discussed in the book: the fact that the electoral congresses for high Church positions followed the model of regional councils (*sejmik*).<sup>5</sup>

Let us now turn to the key part of the book, which concerns the Ruthenian religious culture in Vilna. This comprises Chapters 3, 4 and 7. In the first of these, the author discusses the activity of Orthodox religious institutions in Vilna, concentrating on the most important ones: the Holy Trinity church and monastery and the Holy Trinity brotherhood. This is an extremely competent discussion based on primary studies, and it leads Tymoshenko to the conclusion that the Holy Trinity monastery enjoyed great “sacred authority” in the pre-Union period. He sees as similarly important the contribution of the Holy Trinity brotherhood to the development of the “new religious culture”, which, he says, formed a “Ruthenian protomodern religious-ethnic community”. One can agree with this enthusiastic appraisal of the activity of the Holy Trinity monastery and brotherhood. Regarding the “Ruthenian protomodern religious-ethnic community”, however, I would recommend greater caution. This is very much his own term, but it is not one that is yet widespread in historical research. It is more common to refer instead to a “cultural-ethnic” community which could encompass not only Orthodox and Uniate Christians but also Protestants and Catholics. The third part of Chapter 3, devoted to the output of Ruthenian printing houses in Vilna in the sixteenth century, is an important contribution to research on Ruthenian culture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Tymoshenko argues that the Ruthenians surpassed Catholics (and also Protestants?) in terms of the publication of biblical texts. He also admits that the Vilnian “Latinites” were in the ascendancy when it came to editions of current polemics and occasional prints. Generally, the author paints an optimistic portrait of Ruthenian religious culture in sixteenth-century Vilna. Given that this era was an introduction to the sharp divides caused by the events connected to the Union of Brest, this depiction could be said to be somewhat too flattering.

This is illustrated, incidentally, by Chapter 4, which is based on analyses of sources and concerns the period from after the Union of Brest until the end of the last decade of the seventeenth century. The author compares the Uniate activity (post-Brest) of the Holy Trinity (subchapter I) and the Disuniate religious centre formed by the Holy Spirit monastery and brotherhood (subchapter II). In his view, it is the Orthodox side that emerges victorious

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel's article, overlooked by Tymoshenko: “Do praw i przywilejów swoich dawnych”. Prawo jako argument w polemice prawosławnych w pierwszej połowie XVII w., in *Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Rzeczpospolita XVI–XVIII w. Studia ofiarowane Zbigniewowi Wójcikowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. by Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel et al. (Warszawa: Historia pro Futuro, 1993), pp. 53–60.

<sup>5</sup> Especially the question of participation of non-Orthodox local officials in elections, see Henryk Litwin, ‘Paweł Rzechowski vel Rechowski, pisarz grodzki kijowski – adaptacja Polaka do funkcjonowania w środowisku szlachty ruskiej na Kijowszczyźnie w czasach Zygmunta III’, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 128:4 (2021), 899–912 (here: 908).

from this confrontation, although he bases this verdict on a rather arbitrary opinion by using the construction “it is thought” without even a reference to the subject literature. What is commendable, however, is the precision with which Tymoshenko writes about the Vilnian Orthodox-Uniate polemics in the period 1599–1632 (subchapter III) and the activity of Cyrillic printing houses between 1600 and 1631 (subchapter IV).

The author's reflections on the Grand Duchy's capital culminates with Chapter 7, which discusses the sacralisation of Vilna in Cyrillic texts in the sixteenth century and the first three decades of the seventeenth century. Tymoshenko presents examples of use of the term “bohospasajemyj grad” in reference to Vilna, referring to the background of similar terminology applied to other Russian cities in the same period. He gives it the status of topos, associating it with the existence of a “national religious-cultural code uniting Ukrainians and Belarusians” (p. 541). I must admit that this conclusion is not convincing. The author cites many quotations from various texts, and we can have no doubt that the expression “bohospasejemyj grad” was a relatively common rhetorical construction. The question of whether it was also an element of a “cultural code” which had value in terms of identity is a separate problem that should be explained with reference to the context of the examples cited; however, in my opinion, Tymoshenko fails to do this. The large number of “bohospasajemyj” towns and individual cases of usage of this term (Chełm, Śniatyń, Podhajce, Konstantynów, Rohatyn, Mohylów, Braclaw, Tarnopol, Słuck, Mińsk, Supraśl, Putywl, Hrubieszów, Stryj) also suggest that the phrase was more rhetorical than sacred. In any case, its frequency in various types of texts is not sufficient proof that it was understood and experienced in soteriological terms, as the author claims.

Two chapters in the book that are worthy of attention discuss important and hitherto little-known artefacts of Uniate polemical literature, which the author convincingly appraises highly. These are Hipatius Pocij's work about the Union of Brest, published in Vilna in 1597 (Chapter 4; edition of the complete text in the appendix), and Leon Krevza's funeral panegyric to Josaphat Kuntsevych from 1625 (Chapter 6). Both chapters in fact comprise independent, separate monographs and are ‘books within a book’. The text on Pocij's work contains an interesting historiographical introduction on the Brest Synod, a biographical sketch of the metropolitan that is mainly based on the subject literature, a discussion of selected polemical texts on the synod (the *Apokrysis*, for example, is mentioned but not discussed), and a literary description of Pocij's work, its structure and composition. Meanwhile, Tymoshenko outlines the contents of this work (preparation for the Union, a description of the Synod of Brest, the matter of the supposed “miracle”) and analyses the authorities cited by Pocij.



This presentation is followed by a discussion of the polemics prepared by the Orthodox side, particularly the previously disregarded *Apokrisis*. One must admit that this is a dubious construction. After all, the *Apokrisis* was a reaction to Skarga's text; it was not a reaction to the work of Pociiej that is discussed by Tymoshenko. The chapter concludes with a valuable but slightly artificial "tacked-on" discussion of the sources of the history of both Brest synods. The summary offers the author the opportunity to pay homage to Mykhailo Hrushevsky and his diagnosis of the status of the Orthodox and Uniate Church in the Commonwealth. This note is slightly disappointing because the subject literature that Tymoshenko himself cites provides convincing evidence that research in this respect has advanced significantly since the times of the father of Ukrainian historiography.

The chapter discussing Leon Krevza's funeral speech in honour of Josaphat Kuntsevych, published in Vilna in 1625, is something of a revelation. It begins with an introduction to historians' limited familiarity with this speech. Tymoshenko then lays out the principles of the analysis of the text, which is treated as a sermon, and also provides a note on Leon Krevza's life and work. Above all, however, he analyses narratives on Kuntsevych. The author's summary of this speech praises it, recognising its high literary merit. He also underlines the significance of Kuntsevych's death and beatification for the development of the religious situation in the east of the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century.

Let us also add that the book ends with a conclusion reiterating the arguments that summarise each chapter and also includes important and interesting appendices: an edition of Hipatius Pociiej's polemical text, which is discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 579–604); and a complete list of the editions of Ruthenian books made in Vilna in 1523–1632 (containing 118 titles and 10 that have not survived). It also features an impressive, 90-page-long list of sources and a bibliography.

Tymoshenko's book is undoubtedly a noteworthy event in the historiography of the Union of Brest and Ruthenian religious disputes in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is a very valuable summary of the subject literature and an extremely interesting analysis of the sources concerning the religious culture of Vilna in the period 1523–1623. It contains valuable essays analysing the sources of two little-known yet very important artefacts of religious polemics in the era after the Union of Brest that were written by Hipatius Pociiej and Leon Krevza. In my view, however, the author is somewhat hasty in certain generalisations and conclusions regarding the religious situation in the Commonwealth in the sixteenth century and the first three decades of the seventeenth century, which appear without adequate links to detailed arguments.

