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Nicholas W. Sessums April 10, 2024

Parallel Nations
Ukrainian, Russian, and Imperial Identity in Right-Bank Little Russia

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Abstract

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Vladimir Putin's 2022 invasion of neighboring Ukraine was premised on the belief that Russians and Ukrainians are two of three branches (along with Belarusians) that make up one Orthodox East Slavic nation. He based this claim on a belief that Russians and Ukrainians share political and linguistic history dating back to the ninth century Rurikid Dynasty and Church Slavonic, and a shared religious history dating back to the tenth century Orthodox Baptism of Vladimir I. Under his leadership, Putin hopes to see the Orthodox East Slavic world united. His rhetoric is not new. In 1833, under the reign of Tsar Nicholas I, Count Sergei Uvarov theorized Official Nationality. The goal was to create an identity into which all imperial subjects could be integrated under the interlocking concepts of religious orthodoxy, political autocracy, and *narodnost* (most commonly translated as nationality). In response to the rise of nationalism in Europe, the tsars would attempt to implement Official Nationality until the Empire's collapse in 1917. Their most extensive attempts took place in the Southwestern borderlands, comprised primarily of the modern Ukrainian lands, then known as Little Russia. Paired with the attempt to implement Official Nationality in these borderlands were efforts to Russianize and Russify the local population. Some Little Russian intellectuals, however, saw their land and history as exceptional. From this view, they began the intellectual development of their own nation, a Ukrainian nation, that was incompatible with Official Nationality. Much like Ukrainians are doing today, these intellectuals eventually asserted that their nation was distinct from Russia and deserved independence. Much like how the tsars responded in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Putin has denied the historical basis for the existence of a distinct Ukrainian nation. Whether Putin's Russia shares the fate of tsarist Russia is for time to tell.

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Introduction

In the early hours of February 24th, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that his forces had begun invading neighboring Ukraine. As part of a campaign to prepare the Russian public for war, Putin delivered a televised address to his country on February 21st communicating his justifications for military intervention. The bottom line, claimed Putin, was that Ukraine "is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space".[1] He asserted that through the historical bonds of their nation, Russians and Ukrainians were a unified people until the division of Imperial Russian lands by Bolshevik policies. Implicit in Putin's words were imperialist messages suggesting a belief in the superiority of Russian culture and society as well as the continuation of centuries-old traditions in the development of Russian nationalism.

The construction of a unifying identity has been an important theme in Russian history since the tsars began expanding their empire in the early-eighteenth century. Indeed, throughout many of the world's contemporary empires, the ideological development of national and imperial identities often took place within imperial borderlands through the active participation, support, and leadership of minority groups.[2] This was especially true in the Russian Empire, which claimed dominion over subjects from Central Europe to the Pacific Coast. The incorporation of Russia's borderlands over time necessitated the construction of ideological foundations that could act as a centripetal force for the empire's ethnically heterogeneous peoples. Generations of intellectuals in both the metropole and the borderlands devoted themselves to defining Russian imperial identity in such a way that it could be implemented under the framework of official nationality, comprised of the famed interlocking concepts of orthodoxy, autocracy, and

[1] Vladimir Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," February 21, 2022.

[2] An idea developed by Peter Sahlins in *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

narodnost.[3] Official nationality was an ideology developed by Tsar Nicholas I and Count Sergei Uvarov for the cohesion of the Russian Empire. Subsequent regimes used Uvarov's basic framework until the collapse of the autocracy in 1917.

While imperial administrators were developing and spreading official nationality, local intellectuals situated in the borderlands were simultaneously imagining their own national communities. As Polish nationalism increased in the West, Jews organized in the Pale of Settlement, and Finns pushed for autonomy in the North as did the empire's Central Asian subjects. Perhaps the most interesting of these groups was located in modern day Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper River. During the nineteenth century, these lands were rather ethnically diverse and contested. Few documents highlight the competition to capture local identity more than the Valuev Circular of 1863, which stated "that there was not, is not, and cannot be any special Little Russian language, and that their dialect, as used by uneducated folk, is the same Russian language, only corrupted by Polish influence".[4] From Valuev's statement, one can deduce that Little Russian (local), uneducated (Ruthenian), imperial Russian, and Polish identities all had a presence in these lands.[5]

This project analyzes how attempts to construct an overarching imperial identity in the Southwestern borderlands led to the construction of competitive national identities during the

[3] For a translation of Uvarov's original phrasing, see *A Parting of Ways: Government and the Educated Public in Russia, 1801-1855*, trans. Nicholas Riasanovsky (Oxford: Carendon Press, 1976), 108. In terms of secondary discussions on official nationality, extensive scholarship exists. For an up-to-date example, see Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald Grigor Suny, "Imperial Russia in the Moment of the Nation, 1801-1855" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[4] Peter Valuev, "Appendix 1: The Circular of the Minister of the Interior P. A. Valuev to the Kiev, Moscow and Petersburg Censorship Committees, 18 July 1863.," in *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Alexei Miller, Russian Empire and Nationalism in the 19th Century (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2003), 263–64.

[5] For discussion on the active adoption of these identities in these lands, see Fabian Baumann, "Nationality as Choice of Path: Iakov Shul´gin, Dmitrii Pikhno, and the Russian-Ukrainian Crossroads," *Kritika (Bloomington, Ind.)* 23, no. 4 (2022): 743–71.

nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. I argue that the increasing radicalism of imperial administrators over time was reflected by increasingly radical local national activists. I also analyze the roles that various groups played in constructing or destroying imagined communities in these lands.[6] Much of the intellectual integration of official nationality into Little Russian society was done by imperial administrators in conjunction with local elites situated on the right bank. Contrarily, other local elites worked to construct and implement their own national identities. This work explores the relationships between these groups, the strategies that each used to craft and implement imagined group identities, and the responses of each group to each other's strategies.

While the heart of this project is rooted in right bank Little Russia, it will not neglect the need to situate local national projects within broader ethno-national currents throughout the empire. Therefore, I will also discuss contemporary Russification projects throughout the empire's diverse borderlands. European borderland studies is still a relatively adolescent and ill-defined historical subfield.[7] A universal aspect of the current historiography is the study of human interactions with and within contested spaces.[8] Methodological frameworks for studying the borderlands are widely applicable depending on how one chooses to define a borderland. Indeed, no set definition exists within the historiography, and I certainly do not venture to create

[6] I use the term "imagined communities" in the Andersonian sense, which is to say that a nation "is an imagined political community– and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (New York: Verso, 2006), 6.

[7] For discussion on borderlands as a field of historical study, see Paul Readman, Cynthia Radding, and Chad Bryant, "Introduction: Borderlands in a Global Perspective," in *Borderlands in World History, 1700-1914* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 1–23.

[8] Several monographs have looked at how humans shape physical boundaries and how physical boundaries shape humans in turn. To list just a few examples, see Astrid Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain: Environment, Economy, and Culture in the Borderlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). Also see Eunice Blavascunas, *Foresters, Borders, and Bark Beetles: The Future of Europe's Last Primeval Forest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

one. Tara Zahra has, however, put borderland studies forward as a field that can see past the conception of the nation-state and capture the non-national forces present within political and social narratives, an important implication for my study.[9]

I deploy two analytical lenses to capture the nuance of identity construction during this period. In chapter one, I use the framework of empire to analyze policies of Russification in the borderlands through secondary literature. Valarie Kivelson and Ronald Suny have highlighted that this framework addresses "how various forms of non-democratic governance managed to succeed and survive, or, alternatively, what caused them to collapse and disappear" and is "unavoidable in thinking about Russian history".[10] This chapter makes use of empire to macroscopically examine historiographical discourse since the 1980s about the construction of imperial identity throughout late-imperial Russia's borderlands.

In doing so, the chapter provides discussion on the concepts of Russianization and Russification, both of which are central to the narrative presented in this work. The reemergence of archival evidence in the West enabled the creation of new narratives that included the perspectives of imperial administrators. As a result, historians began to reinterrogate the process of making official nationality practical, the meanings and mechanisms of Russification, the goals of imperial officials in these processes, and their own analytical techniques. Twenty-first century historiography on the subject has trended away from a focus on elites involved in the process and toward a more nuanced and contextual understandings of key social, political, economic, and cultural relationships between imperial administrators and borderland peoples relevant to identity construction at the end of the empire.

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[9] See Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119.

[10] Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald Grigor Suny, *Russia's Empires* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). xiv, 2.

The second is Miroslav Hroch's model for national awakenings which he established in his seminal 1985 book *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe.*[11] Hroch's work posits three distinct phases of national development: "Phase A (the period of scholarly interest), Phase B (the period of patriotic agitation") and phase C (the rise of a mass national movement)."[12] In chapter two, I apply Hroch's model in addition to recently developed historiographical concepts to analyze the pre-Phase A and Phase A development of separate Russophile and Ukrainophile intellectual traditions among the Little Russians from the mid-eighteenth to early-nineteenth centuries. Faith Hillis has defined the Little Russians as "activists who saw local traditions as compatible with imperial rule".[13] While I adopt this definition, I apply it to what I term "Russophiles". I find this distinction important because, despite the designs of imperial administrators, some Little Russian intellectuals believed that their land had "a right to her own distinctiveness, inherited from earlier times".[14] I term these Little Russians "Ukrainophiles", who Hillis defines as "activists who questioned the unity of the East Slavs and the authority of the imperial state."[15]

Though the imperial bureaucracy feared nationalism in its lands, it recognized the strength of national tendencies within large minorities such as the Poles. Therefore, for practical reasons, imperial administrators attempted to utilize Russophile thought to create a broader imperial ideology that could counteract developing national ideologies.[16] Destroying the idea of

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[11] Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: [Cambridge University Press], 1985).

[12] Ibid, 23.

[13] Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), xiii.

[14] Semen Divovych, "A Talk Between Great Russia and Little Russia (Excerpt)," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 69.

[15] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* xiii.

[16] Hillis, *Children of Rus'.*

Ukrainian exceptionalism was essential for imperial administrators who saw it as a threat to imperial unity. The urgency of this undertaking was increased following 1863-1864 revolt of the Polish nobility who sought to reestablish the partitioned Polish nation, and especially so after the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II. The Russophile intellectuals of the right bank made some of the first and most successful attempts to integrate official nationality into the framework of autocratic rule and local national distinctiveness.

Chapter three analyzes Phases B and C in which increasingly radical strategies for promoting imagined communities were deployed by these groups following the tsar's assassination, eventually leading to the establishment of an independent Ukrainian nation-state. During this period, imperial administrators suppressed local cultures within Little Russia while promoting Russian culture, setting up intellectual battles between the Ukrainophiles, their Russophile counterparts, and hardline Russian nationalists. This period also saw the idea of imagined communities diffuse widely into Little Russian society, resulting in the region's first major ethno-national conflicts. Ultimately, the radically autocratic ambitions of Russian imperialists led to irreversible ruptures within the Little Russian lobby, resulting in increasingly radical and competitive ideologies that fractured imperial unity.

I conclude with a discussion of promising new categories of analysis for interrogating imperial Russification. The first is through imperial bureaucratic use of the term *inorodtsy*. The viability of the term as a category of analysis has been contested within the literature, but I suggest that its shifting usage over time justifies its deployment in future works. The other is the concept of national indifference. Tara Zahra has found that the use of national indifference as a

category of analysis can expose the frontiers of national constructions, thereby allowing historians to interrogate limits in the construction of national identities.[17]

A crucial limitation to this study is the fact that I only speak English, and so am unable to adequately access sources in other languages. Even if I could speak the necessary languages, virtually all the relevant archival materials are located in Ukraine, an active war zone, or Russia, a sanctioned country. Therefore, no archival material will be used. Instead, I gather empirical evidence from the translated works of both imperial bureaucrats and local nationalists. While this does limit the total number of available primary sources, enough translated literary works exist to allow for thorough analysis.

In contributing new perspectives on the actors involved in forming national identities in the southwestern borderlands, the important themes in imperial identity formation, and promising new analytical categories, the project will also hopefully shed light on the long-term significance of current events in Ukraine. Indeed, the 2014 Donbas War, the prelude to the current conflict, was itself derived from arguments over Ukrainophile versus Russophile identity in the region.[18] Therefore, the current war is one that can be cast as an imperial metropole trying to re-exert influence over national and cultural identity within its borderlands. Ultimately, I hope that this study prompts readers to consider connections between past attempts to construct national identity in an imperialist context, the results of those attempts, and the present, as it has prompted the author to do.

[17] Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities".

[18] See Pål Kolstø, "Ukrainians and Russians as 'One People': An Ideologeme and Its Genesis," *Ethnopolitics*, 2023, 1–20.

Chapter 1: Russification vs. Russianization

Prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, studies of nationality within the Russian Empire's borderlands were generally divided into two historiographical schools.[19] The first was mainly comprised of authors from the nations that emerged out of the borderland regions following the First World War. This scholarship tended to focus on nineteenth century ethno-national movements and their responses to imperial policies rather than the imperial administration itself. Studies of this type are numerous within the historiography of each individual borderland territory, in part because of the focus on nation-states in the twentieth century but also because of the lack of Russian archival sources during this period. In many ways, the scholars working in this vein act as modern representatives of local ethno-national traditions.

On the other hand, Western historical studies as well as those originating from within Russia itself did not focus much on imperial nationality policies. Instead, this scholarship concerned itself with Russian narratives about the empire and its borderlands rather than the ethno-nationalities on the outskirts of the empire.[20] As access to Russian state archives gradually increased in the lead up to and following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these paradigms started to shift. Beginning in the 1980s, local, Western, and Russian historians began to study imperial policies from the perspective of the imperial bureaucracy, thereby developing several new historiographical themes and currents in the process.[21]

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[19] Darius Staliūnas has elaborated extensively on both schools and provides examples for this historiography. See Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 3-18.

[20] Ibid.

[21] The late Mark von Hagen's discussion on whether Ukraine has one definite historical narrative upon which to base its national identity provides a good example of the historiographical shift toward studying local national movements in imperial contexts and an overview of how scholars began to approach nationalism in Eastern and

In this chapter, I discuss the development of this new historiographical school. I identify similarities and differences in how these scholars depict the construction of national and imperial identities throughout the borderlands during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as nationalism came to threaten the imperial autocracy. I also geographically circumnavigate the major borderland regions of the Russian Empire. Specifically, the chapter journeys through studies of the Northern borderlands (Finland), the Northwestern borderlands (Lithuania and Belarus), the Central Asian Borderlands (Uzbekistan), the Southwestern borderlands (Ukraine and Poland), and the Eastern borderlands (Siberia and the Amur region). I pay particularly close attention to scholars' conclusions about processes of Russification despite studying different borderlands, their insights about the goals and policies of imperial administrators throughout the borderlands, and the frameworks and methodologies scholars use in their analyses.

Russification and Russianization in Scholarly Discourse

A substantial difficulty faced by Western historians of the Russian Empire before 1991 (and now again after February 2022) was the general inaccessibility of Russian archival material, particularly before the implementation of *glasnost* by Mikhail Gorbachev in the latter half of the 1980s. In his discussion on the impact of the archives on contemporary new scholarship, historian Donald Raleigh noted that he was only able to gain access to the Central State Archive of the October Revolution and Socialist Construction (TsGAOR, today GARF) in 1986.[22] Even when he did gain access, Raleigh remarked that,

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Central Europe from new perspectives after the fall of the Soviet Union. See Mark von Hagen, "Does Ukraine Have a History?" *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 658–73. Additionally, Ronald Suny has remarked on the need to study empires from a top-down perspective. See Ronald Suny, "The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "National" Identity, and Theories of Empire," in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23–66.

[22] Donald Raleigh, "Doing Soviet History: The Impact of the Archival Revolution," *The Russian review (Stanford)* 61, no. 1 (2002), 16.

> the terms of admission imposed from above also put me on edge. For one thing, I was shown—and then only after frustrating delays—a mere twenty archival files (*dela*). I could not consult archival inventories (*opisi*) or catalogs, discuss my research with archivists willing to help, or inspect files in the same building in which our Soviet colleagues conducted their research.[23]

Clearly, Soviet archival authorities were highly protective of their materials and conscious of the potential impacts that Western use of them could have.

Tuomo Polvinen's *Imperial Borderland*, first published in Finnish in 1984 and then translated to English in 1995 by Steven Huxley, became one of the first monographs written outside of the Soviet Union to make extensive use of the heavily guarded archives. The author was able to access and use documents in Moscow, Leningrad, and St. Petersburg years before Raleigh's visit. Archival research in the Soviet Union was an essential undertaking in the author's goal to "clarify *Russia's* policy on Finland" because it is the main source type missing from General M.M. Borodkin's 1905 history of Finland under Governor-General N.I. Bobrikov, a major source of inspiration for Polvinen's project.[24] Borodkin's influence on the work is also clear through Polvinen's choice to interrogate imperial policy in the Finnish borderlands from Bobrikov's point of view, which Borodkin also does. Indeed, making Bobrikov his main character was an excellent choice by Polvinen given his access to the archive. The combination of structure and evidence allowed for a much more nuanced understanding of imperial policy toward the Finnish people than previously achieved. This is particularly true in Finnish historiography, where scholars had not previously attempted to analyze imperial policy from the Russian administrative perspective, instead opting for Finnish sources and narratives.

Though this work would only become accessible to non-Finnish speakers after the fall of

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Tuomo Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland, 1898-1904* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), viii. Italics included in original.

the Soviet Union and the opening of its archives to the world, Polvinen's intervention nonetheless marked an important historiographical step. Today, virtually no book on imperial Russia can be considered complete without access to Russian archival material, and Polvinen's work was a starting point for this trend. In addition to being one of the first scholars of the Russian borderlands to combine the state archives with a policy-centric approach and the lens of the top imperial authorities, Polvinen tapped into several important historiographic discussions upon which numerous authors would seize in the decades after.

Perhaps the most conceptual of these debates that Polvinen touches on is the pandora's box that is Russification (*Obrusenie)*. The term has been notoriously difficult to define and characterize within historiographic circles. The concept of Russification acts almost as a boogeyman to many scholars of the late Russian Empire. Darius Staliūnas, for example, largely sidesteps debate of Russification as a term in his 2007 book *Making Russians*, stating that "an analysis of Russian national discourse, especially the semantics of the terminology, is important, but the results of such analysis can give only very limited information about the aims of such policy."[25] Even more extremely, Stephen Velychenko avoids both the debate and the term itself entirely in his 1992 book *National History as a Cultural Process* despite tracing "Ukraine's past in survey histories of Poland, Russia, and Ukraine."[26] Alexie Miller has suggested that "it is more correct to speak not of russification in the singular, but of 'russifications,' i.e. of a whole cluster of various processes and interactions that often differ not in some minor detail in the manifestation of a general principle but in their inner logic and nature."[27] Indeed, scholarly

[25] Staliūnas, *Making Russians*, 21.

[26] Stephen Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process: A Survey of the Interpretations of Ukraine's Past in Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian Historical Writing from the Earliest Times to 1914* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), xiv.

[27] Alexei Miller, "Russification or Russifications?," in *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 45.

dialogue about Russification has become so focused and nuanced that it can fall out of the scope of studies that are not wholly dedicated to this discussion.

Often, then, discourse on Russification can only be substantively found within tertiary sources. Edward Thaden, for example, has written extensively about conceptions of Russification in the historiography, finding that the term was first developed in the 1860s by German and Polish intellectuals, "who attributed to the Russian government the goal of forcibly making Russians out of non-Russians."[28] Thaden, however, understands this as a definition selectively used by those in opposition to tsarist rule. He therefore sees the need to differentiate between three types of Russification in the historiography: unplanned (suggesting the voluntary acceptance of Russian identity by imperial subjects), administrative (suggesting Russification of language, laws, and institutions), and cultural (which sought to supplant borderland culture with Russian language and culture).[29] Formulations of this sort have led scholars to continue debating methods for differentiating types of Russification.[30]

The year before Thaden published his essay "Russification in Tsarist Russia" in 1990, Raymond Pearson also commented briefly on the issue. Reflecting on the historiography prior to the late 1980s, Pearson alludes to the ongoing historiographical debate in which some historians used the terms 'Russification' and 'Russianization' interchangeably whereas others drew the distinction between 'Russification' as a process requiring the erasure of ethnic identity through

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[28] Edward C. Thaden, "Russification in Tsarist Russia," in *Interpreting History: Collective Essays on Russia's Relations with Europe*, ed. Marianna Forster Thaden and Edward C. Thaden (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 211.

[29] Ibid, 211, 213.

[30] It is important to note that imperial administrators were very inconsistent in their use of the term *Obrusenie*. Whereas it was strictly applied in the linguistic sense in the Western borderlands, where subjects were considered relatively assimilated, it had social and cultural implications in places like Central Asia where administrators pursued "the idea of making Russians out of inorodtsy". See Paul Werth, "Inorodtsy on Obrusenie: Religious Conversion, Indigenous Clergy, and the Politics of Assimilation in Late-Imperial Russia," *Ab Imperio* 2000, no. 2 (2000): 105–34. Quote appears on p. 107.

assimilation and ‘Russianization’ as a process perpetuating the dominance of Russian language, culture, and institutions without the total erasure of local identity. Pearson concludes in his essay “Privileges, Rights, and Russification” (1989) that “what has in the past generally been dubbed ‘Russification’ would be better named ‘Russianization’, especially in the light of the strengthening view that the tsarist state possessed neither the totalitarian ambition nor the modern resources to undertake the ethnic assimilation of its minorities (other than perhaps the Ukrainians and Belorussians).”[31] Indeed, modern historiographical interpretations of imperial policy towards national minorities in the Russian Empire’s disparate borderlands can largely be broken down along the lines of efforts to Russify populations (assimilation or forced integration) and efforts to Russianize populations (acculturation and unforced integration).

Benjamin Nathans would develop this analytical differentiation more sharply in his 2002 book *Beyond the Pale*, stating,

> assimilation should be understood as a process culminating in the disappearance of a given group as a recognizably distinct element within a larger society. By contrast, acculturation signifies a form of adaptation to the surrounding society that alters rather than erases the criteria of difference, especially in the realm of culture and identity. Integration is the counterpart of acculturation (though the two do not necessarily go hand in hand) in the social realm—whether institutional (e.g., schooling), geographic (patterns of residential settlement), or economic (occupational profile).[32]

In Nathans’ view, the criterion for assimilation is the erasure of a unique socio-cultural identity. Acculturation, however, is defined by an adaption or alteration to a unique cultural identity rather than erasure, and integration is cast as the social “counterpart of acculturation” because it is also

[31] Raymond Pearson, “Priveleges, Rights, and Russification,” in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, ed. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 89-90.

[32] Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 11.

defined by adaption rather than erasure, but to a social identity rather than a cultural one.[33]

The conversation around the contours of Russification has also led to debate surrounding how imperial policies were applied across the borderlands, a debate which Polvinen's work provided commentary on as well. Indeed, this debate was sparked largely by an oversight on the part of previous generations of historians, who, according to Pearson,

> focused myopically upon a few highly visible minority nationalities who seized and then monopolized international attention, and made sweeping generalizations from this limited sample… To attempt to generalize about the one hundred or more national minorities within the empire on the basis of just three patently unrepresentative nationalities must be indefensible for any professional historian.[34]

While Pearson referenced Finns as one of the overly studied minorities, he is specifically writing about the historiographic family that focuses on Finnish responses to Russification rather than policies from the imperial perspective. From this imperial perspective it is notable that leading up to Bobrikov's appointment as Governor-General, "the special status of the Grand Duchy of Finland had gradually become firmly established… Even during the reign of Alexander III".[35] Finns were allowed "their own police force, their own currency, their own postage stamps, their own railway system and, most obvious to Russians, the Finns spoke their own local languages of Finnish and Swedish."[36]

Certainly, the tsarist government had been attentive to the challenges of national

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[33] Except for Orthodox East Slavs, imperial authorities made relatively few attempts to assimilate imperial subjects into a Russian identity in order to maintain hierarchies based on difference. Kivelson and Suny highlight the centrality of difference-based hierarchies in imperial formations in *Russia's Empires,* 5. Additionally, until around the turn of the twentieth century, difference was not generally classified on ethnic grounds, but rather on feudal grounds. See Juliette Cadiot, "Searching for Nationality: Statistics and National Categories at the End of the Russian Empire (1897-1917)," *The Russian Review (Stanford)* 64, no. 3 (2005): 440–55. Also see Ilya Gerasimov, "The Great Imperial Revolution," *Ab Imperio* 2017, no. 2 (2017): 21–44.

[34] Ibid, 87.

[35] Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland,* 21-22.

[36] Peter Waldron, "Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland [Review]," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 7 (1996), 1244. The Finnish situation was generally unique in the empire. Only Congress Poland held a similar degree of autonomy in the empire until these rights were eroded starting in 1830. On this, see Edward C. Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

minorities in the borderlands for decades before Polvinen's period of study and had, at times, acted to crush those movements. Imperial bureaucrats were evidently not as understanding with Polish or Ukrainian nationalists in the empire's Southwest borderlands, Central Asian and Siberian subjects who were relatively neglected, or Jews confined to the Pale of Settlement. In this light, Polvinen's findings do contribute to the thesis that borderlands were treated differentially on a spectrum from practical autonomy to colonial territory. From a historiographical perspective, scholars mused that if imperial policies were indeed unequally applied across borderlands, then through what methodologies could these inequalities be analyzed? Could methods of Russification and Russianization be further categorized beyond Thaden's, Pearson's, and Nathans' formulations? These questions have become central in the minds of Russian borderland scholars since the turn of the century.[37]

Indeed, Polvinen himself weighed in by understanding Russian policy in Finland as being initially focused on integrating Finns into Russian culture and society before fully assimilating them. He points out that "In 1881… Finland's newly appointed Governor-General, the former Chief of the Russian General Staff Count Fedor Logginovich Heiden, outlined far reaching integration measures in a memorandum to the Tsar… integration policy was to be implemented step by step" but "in 1891… in a memorandum concerning the 'Finnish provinces' he now refused altogether to recognise Finland's status as an autonomous state."[38] Here, then, Polvinen suggests that Russification and Russianization policies were not mutually exclusive and inflexible, but could flexibly complement one another depending on the situation in a given

[37] A literature review by Peter Gatrell engages several works premised partially on these questions. See Peter Gatrell, "Ethnicity and Empire in Russia's Borderland History," *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 3 (1995): 715–27.

[38] Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland,* 22. See also Fiona Hill, "The Borderlands of Power: Territory and Great Power Status in Russia at the Beginning and at the End of the Twentieth Century," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 22 (1998): 225–50.

borderland.

Yuri Slezkine was another early contributor in these debates. Though only dedicating about half of his book to the imperial period, Slezkine's geographically and temporally expansive study of Russia's northern borderlands in his 1994 work *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* supports Polvinen's implications and makes its own novel contributions. Most interestingly, Slezkine highlights the "conflicting rationalist and romantic impulses" of imperial administrators in applying Russifying and Russianizing policies in the north (though Slezkine equates the two in his book through the exclusive use of the term Russification).[39] These conflicting impulses are evident in the adoption of the term *inorodtsy* (aliens) by imperial administrators during the nineteenth century. The term was used for subjects who "were different from others in ways that were legally recognized but had no legal justification. By the early-nineteenth century 'foreigners' (*inozemtsy*—people from a different land) had become 'aliens' (*inorodtsy*— people of a different birth)."[40] This change in terminology implies that the *inorodtsy* were considered geographically part of the Russian Empire, but not necessarily so in the social, cultural, economic, or political sense. Slezkine therefore states that the language and attitudes of imperial bureaucrats toward borderlanders can be used to reveal the former's policy priorities at different times and in different places. In other words, official terminology can represent an official marker of who was Russian and who was not from the administrative perspective.

Staliūnas provided even greater nuance when categorizing imperial policies in *Making Russians* by further developing Nathans' ideas. He suggests that,

We would even broaden the concept of integration and also regard the measures by which

[39] Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 389.

[40] Ibid, 53.

> the imperial authorities sought to turn people of other nationalities into loyal subjects as integration. Thus, *Making Russians* does not necessarily mean Russian policy sought to assimilate people of other nationalities. Acculturation or integration also shows the authorities' aim to turn people of other nationalities into Russians in the political, rather than the ethno-cultural sense. Acculturation or integration policy could also use methods of "divide and rule." The aim of such policy was to support those non-dominant national groups, which, in the opinion of imperial officials, were loyal to the empire and would thereby serve as a counterweight to a disloyal nation, which was the authorities' main opponent in a given region.[41]

Staliūnas posits multiple new ideas here. First, he suggests that if one focuses on policies of integration and acculturation, they demonstrate that the imperial bureaucracy was not solely focused on assimilating all its subject nationalities into an imperial identity in the long-term and was not even necessarily focused exclusively on ethno-national identities. Second, he posits that attempts to acculturate and integrate borderland populations made use of strategies that were distinct from strategies of assimilation. In cases where imperial authorities were attempting to acculturate and/or integrate, one may find strategies that he describes as "divide and rule", an approach that is defined as supporting non-dominant groups loyal to the empire in opposition to national groups that were not.[42]

Jeff Sahadeo's 2007 monograph *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* represents another work asking these novel questions and implementing these new methodologies as well as one that strongly supports Staliūnas' assertions. Sahadeo puts his focus on the tsarist administration in imperial Tashkent, a leading city in the empire's Central Asian borderlands, asking whether imperial policy toward Central Asian minorities could be classified as Russification or Russianization and what means were used for those ends. Indeed, Sahadeo's choice of geographical and cultural focus brings much to the discussion. Imperial administrators

[41] Staliūnas, *Making Russians*, 2. Italics included in original.

[42] Staliūnas has since further discussed and clarified the nuances of defining this approach and its applications in the northwest and western borderlands of the late empire. See Darius Staliūnas, "Affirmative Action in the Western Borderlands of the Late Russian Empire?," *Slavic Review* 77, no. 4 (2018): 978–97.

tended to view their Central Asian colonies as 'oriental', a term which Edward Said has noted "connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European colonialism."[43] Sahadeo casts the relationship between the imperial administration and Central Asians in colonial terms and finds that imperial administrators actively sought to create boundaries "between privileged, modern, orderly European colonizers and lowly, backward and dirty Central Asians."[44] Decidedly, imperial administrators avoided attempts to Russify the Central Asian population in order to maintain the hierarchies of difference necessary for empire. Additionally, much like the subjects in Slezkine's study, the conception of Russia's Central Asian borderlands as uncivilized, oriental, and non-national by imperial administrators is likely a major reason for the region's underrepresentation within the historiography of nationalism in the borderlands during the past half-century.

Sahadeo's monograph plugs this historiographical gap. He finds that "Tsarist administrators needed the cooperation of important sections of the Central Asian population to rule the region in a cost-efficient manner. Native notables in Tashkent pledged outward allegiance to the tsar in exchange for assurances of political and cultural autonomy."[45] Despite being unaware of Staliūnas' findings and discussions since the two authors published in the same year, Sahadeo makes two relevant findings. First, he provides evidence suggesting that some imperial administrators actively avoided attempts to Russify alien populations. Second, he demonstrates a focus by administrators on Russianizing Central Asians in the sense that divide and rule strategy was deployed to socially integrate locals into the imperial system without

[43] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, First Vintage books edition. (New York: First Vintage Books, 1979). Unfortunately, this online edition of the book does not include page numbers.

[44] Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 231.

[45] Ibid, 230.

attempts to Russify culture.[46]

In many ways, Hillis' 2013 work *Children of Rus'* dovetails with Sahadeo's to support the assertions of Staliūnas and earlier scholars. She too finds that imperial administrators clearly applied "divide and rule" strategies in the borderlands on the right bank (west) of the Dnieper by allying with Little Russian intellectuals, who Hillis defines as "activists who saw local traditions as compatible with imperial rule" against Ukrainians, who she defines as "activists who questioned the unity of the East Slavs and the authority of the imperial state."[47] Hillis' work also adds to a recent historiographic subtheme that focuses on the role of modernization and urbanization in perpetuating Russification and Russianization.[48]

However, citing *Making Russians* and other texts in an oblique reference to the Russification vs. Russianization debate, Hillis semantically adopts "a set of policies that some referred to as 'Russification'" for the policies in right bank Ukraine rather than Russianization.[49] Given the development of conceptions surrounding 'Russification' and 'Russianization' prior to her work, a more meaningful engagement with and application of the terminology may have been productive in enhancing scholarly understanding of the Little Russians that Hillis studies. While Russification was an affectual force in contemporary right bank Ukraine, it was primarily within policies directed toward Ukrainian activists. Russianization, on the other hand, seems to be the more appropriate way to categorize policies directed toward the Little Russians. The author herself states that "By the early-twentieth century, official tolerance for nationalist agitation on the right bank permitted activists to create a socially variegated and mass-oriented

[46] Divide and rule was also explicitly used in Turkestan. See Bakhtiyar Babajanov, "'How Will We Appear in the Eyes of *Inovertsy* and *Inorodtsy*?' Nikolai Ostroumov on the Image and Function of Russian Power," *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (2014): 270–88.

[47] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* xiii.

[48] Staliūnas, Sahadeo, and Malte Rolf also fit into this trend.

[49] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* 4.

Russian nationalist movement, which soon became the preeminent political force in the region."[50] Therefore, while this work supports the distinction between Russification and Russianization conceptually, it also shows that this distinction is not yet fully deployed within recent historiography.

Malte Rolf's *Imperial Russian Rule in the Kingdom of Poland,* first released in German in 2014 and subsequently translated into English in 2021, applied the term 'Russification' much more thoughtfully. His work offers a refreshing perspective on a borderland that is well represented in the historiography, from which came imperial administrators' first real experience with an agitated national group in 1831 and again in 1863-1864. In characterizing the Kingdom of Poland as "a test ground where the imperial government devised and developed ways to secure power and to force integration," Rolf adopts the conceptual language of Russification to support this characterization.[51] His extensive citation of both Thaden and Staliūnas further alludes to the fact that a secondary objective of Rolf's work was to develop the contours of Russification as a concept, thereby making the book one of the field's most up-to-date works when it comes to this debate.

The implications of this decades-long discourse appear to be spreading into neighboring historiographical fields. In his 2017 book *Beyond the Amur*, published as part of the University of British Columbia Press' Contemporary Chinese Studies series, Victor Zatsepine's primary goal is "to describe and analyze the emergence of the Amur frontier society and how the region was claimed and divided by two states [Imperial Russia and Qing China] despite difficult natural

[50] Ibid, 2.

[51] Malte Rolf, *Imperial Russian Rule in the Kingdom of Poland, 1864-1915* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021), 5.

conditions".[52] In approaching the claims of imperial Russian bureaucrats over a borderland from an adjacent historiographical perspective, Zatsepine is able to highlight the core of the field's recent debates and broadly summarize their findings without needing to engage with them directly. This is accomplished by the author when he concludes that "Russia engaged in a variety of initiatives to expand its influence in the region", that "One persistent feature of this frontier was inconsistent and insufficient support from central governments", and that "this frontier region came to symbolize the ambiguity of imperial attitudes, which ranged from high expectations to neglect".[53] Zatsepine both identifies the primary motivator for these conversations (the ambiguity of imperial attitudes) and the consensus that has resulted (a variety of attitudes and policies that represented high expectations for a region and its peoples and/or relative neglect). Indirectly then, and from an outsider historiographic perspective, the work supports the notions that imperial policies were applied inconsistently across time and space, that they were highly dependent on the perceptions and attitudes of contemporary actors, and that they employed particular strategies depending on these attitudes and goals of said actors.

Indeed, a historiographical circumnavigation of the borderlands helps in defining what Russification meant and how it was applied in the empire. Recent work strongly supports the idea that imperial administrators adopted different policies depending on the contexts of different borderlands at different times. These historiographical developments have proven particularly disruptive because, before the opening of the Russian archives, the Russian Empire was perceived as a monolithic entity with a coherent and effective policy of Russification in its borderlands. At the same time, however, it is evident from authors like Hillis that the distinction

[52] Victor Zatsepine, *Beyond the Amur: Frontier Encounters Between China and Russia, 1850-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 16. Brackets added.

[53] Ibid, 6, 160, 162-163.

between ‘Russification’ and ‘Russianization’ is either not fully developed or fully accepted as of the 2010s. It is also clear that the research focus has generally been on relatively small and elite portions of the imperial population. Further analysis of these policies is necessary if historians wish to understand their impact on all the empire’s subjects as well as the impact of the empire’s subjects on these policies.

Chapter 2: Who are we?

Despite the relatively recent emergence of nations as the world's preferred unit of political and cultural organization, the power of nationalism has been recognized since the concept emerged as a product of the Enlightenment. National tendencies were first expressed during the French Revolution in the forms of anti-absolutism, civic-nationhood, and national sovereignty. National fervor subsequently spread through Europe, redefining its political landscape through disruptive liberal revolutions, imperial instability, and national formations. The 1848 "Springtime of Nations" represents the most obvious and all-encompassing example. Originating in Paris, the revolutionary spirit of 1848 quickly spread in all directions forcing constitutions on many of Europe's absolute monarchs. This constitutional turn was a matter of survival, one which evidences the difficulty of integrating national movements into an imperial autocratic framework. Though it did not experience an explosive crisis of its own during 1848, the Russian Empire would also eventually be consumed by the challenge of integrating national identities into its autocratic framework all the same.[54]

Imperial administrators had been experiencing difficulties with national movements in their Polish and Little Russian borderlands since the second half of the eighteenth century when these lands were progressively acquired through the conquest of the Cossacks and the partitions of Poland. Polish lands were split between the Russian, Austrian, and Prussian Empires, thereby introducing Polish and Ruthenian minorities into each. Recognizing how difficult it was to exert control over their new subjects, imperial administrators established Congress Poland in 1815

[54] Though there was no serious unrest in Russia, the events of 1848 still rattled Nicholas I enough for him to write "the most famous manifesto of March 1848, in which he lamented that rebellion and lawlessness were rampant in Prussia and Austria and menacing 'our holy Russia'" and to call an army of 400,000 men to the borders, potentially with the intent to march across the Rhine and put down these revolutions himself. See Paul Dukes, *A History of Russia: Medieval, Modern, Contemporary c. 882-1996*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 130.

under a dynastic union with the tsar in order to territorialize, and so control, the increasingly nationalistic people. By 1831, however, it was apparent that Polish nationalism represented a rising threat and had to be addressed. Central to the imperial response was Little Russian intellectualism in Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper River.

The idea of Little Russia was rooted in its Cossack past and the eighteenth-century policies of the imperial administration, who sought to integrate newly acquired territories into the empire through colonial settlement and Russification.[55] From 1686 to 1793, the Dnieper divided these borderlands between Poland-Lithuania on the right bank and the Russian Empire on the left.[56] This divide also separated these lands into two separate zones of cultural influence. After 1793, the idea of Little Russians (Orthodox East Slavs on both banks) developed to better integrate the right bank into the empire. The Little Russian idea and its significance, however, was both complex and divisive among imperial administrators and the Little Russians themselves.[57]

In general, Little Russian intellectualism on the right bank diverged from that on the left bank. On the one hand, members of the left bank gentry were "Presenting 'Poles' (*liaky)* and Jews as groups that historically had exploited Orthodox believers" and "perceived an equally coherent Rus' or Little Russian *narod* stretching across both banks of the Dnieper."[58] On the other hand, some literary figures and groups on the right bank such as the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius were producing works that highlighted the particular national characteristics of the land. Nonetheless, works such as Ivan Kotliarevsky's *Eneïda,* which was

[55] At this point, russification was generally administrative rather than cultural. See Andreas Kappeler, "The Ambiguities of Russification," *Kritika* 5, no. 2 (2004): 291–97.

[56] This period begins with the 1686 Treaty of Perpetual Peace between Poland-Lithuania and the Russian Empire and ends with the first partition of Poland.

[57] See Hillis, *Children of Rus',* 31-35.

[58] Ibid, 31.

written in vernacular Ukrainian and has been identified as a foundational work in modern Ukrainian literature despite its author having been born on the left bank, show that trans-Dnieper ideological exchange was also present and significant, particularly in the first half of the century.[59] Though imperial administrators were aware of these different developmental paths, they hoped that their guidance would extend Russian influence across both banks.

This chapter discusses the origins of national identities in Little Russia. It asks how and why, as imperial administrators consolidated their rule in the region, local intellectuals began to divide themselves into Ukrainophile and Russophile factions. It makes use of translated literary works to trace the split in the Little Russian lobby along ethno-national lines. Ultimately, I find that the Little Russians began to develop into Ukrainophile and Russophile factions in the first half of the nineteenth century. In response, the imperial bureaucracy implemented progressively more radical policies which were paralleled by the growth of radicalism within elements of the Little Russian intellectual lobby after 1830. These factors prompted many Little Russians to consider the idea that their politics, society, and culture had characteristics which were incompatible with the Russian Empire.

To investigate these questions, I adopt two separate yet deeply intertwined frameworks of analysis. The first is Benedict Anderson's ubiquitous theory of imagined communities.[60] In his original formulation, Anderson posited that a nation "is an imagined political community– and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[61] Through this framework, I

[59] See Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 149.
[60] See Anderson, *Imagined Communities.*
[61] Ibid, 4.

am able to conceive of separate Ukrainophile, Russophile, and Imperial nationalizing projects. However, while this idea is useful in conceptualizing nations and understanding how the national seed is planted, its usefulness is limited once that seed begins to sprout. Therefore, I combine it with Miroslav Hroch's three-phase framework for "the 'revival' of an oppressed, or small, nation" which posits an initial phase of scholarly interest in the national idea (Phase A), a second phase of patriotic agitation to spread the national idea (Phase B), and a final phase in the rise of a mass national movement (Phase C).[62] Curiously, this framework has been applied in studies of "great" and "small" Western and Central European nations, but not Ukraine.

Importing Ethnicity Pre-1831

The rise of nations and nationalism is deeply linked to the rise of capitalism and associated ideas of "modernization" and "modernity". Hroch certainly suggests as much by pointing out the primacy of economics in the social conflicts of the early-nineteenth century.[63] The emergence of the industrial revolution in England around the turn of the nineteenth century and the associated growth in the productivity of human and physical capital called into question the viability of feudal economic and autocratic political systems. The growth of urban populations in England was quickly matched throughout Western Europe as the industrial revolution spread, resulting in immense social change. Literacy rates rose, poverty rates decreased, and the quality of life was generally higher as the quality of manufactured commodities rose and their prices decreased.

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[62] Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Hroch lays out the conditions for what constitutes a "small nation" on p.8-9. For the quote, see p. 9.

[63] Specifically, Hroch posits that the fight against feudalism and absolutism defined the social conflicts of the period i.e. academic discourses. See Ibid, 25.

Though Russian modernization programs in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not keep pace with those of Western European empires, they certainly existed and, from the perspective of the contemporary tsars, were of great importance. Western European economic distinctions between "urbanized" and "modern" versus "backward" and "rural" were instrumental in perpetuating the territorial and cultural imaginings of "Eastern" and "Western" Europe during and after the Enlightenment. Larry Wolff has detailed the "inventing" of Western Europe through the simultaneous "inventing" and "othering" of Eastern Europe, suggesting that Western European institutions were defined as modern and progressive through the collective belief that Eastern European institutions were backward and conservative.[64] The internalization of this belief by the Russian tsars of the eighteenth century is clear in Peter I's "turn to Europe" and Catherine II's similarly Western European fashion, expansionary aims, and acceptance of the "enlightened despot" philosophy.[65] Evidently, while the eighteenth century tsars held onto and prized their autocratic empire, they were simultaneously insecure about it when compared to others in Europe.

To resolve this insecurity, the tsars began to aggressively colonize and russify the left bank, the proverbial "wild lands" of the empire. In abolishing the Hetmanate, a left bank political entity created after the end of the Khmelnytsky Uprising in the mid-seventeenth century, Catherine gained control over the region's major political institutions.[66] By resettling peoples from other parts of the empire as well as foreigners into the "empty" lands of "New Russia", she

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[64] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[65] In the first line of her "Instruction (*Nakaz*) to the Legislative Comission of 1767", Catherine says that "Russia is a European state". See Catherine II, "Instruction (*Nakaz*) to the Legislative Commission of 1767," in *Russia under Catherine the Great*, ed. Paul Dukes, vol. 2 (Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners, 1977).

[66] For a more specified definition of the Hetmanate and its origins, see Zenon Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s-1830s.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 16.

erased the history of the peoples that had inhabited those lands in favor of an imperial reimagination of the territory. By enforcing the conversions of Uniate observers to Orthodoxy and absorbing the Polish nobility into the Russian, she began the effort to de-Polonize the right bank. New Little Russian cities like Odesa, Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Mariupol began to develop because of the importation of human and physical capital into the territory. Urbanization was particularly acute for the Jewish population, of whom "up to 200,000" were transferred to urban centers by the 1840s "to facilitate the collection of taxes and aid the growth of towns."[67] From the actions and policies of Peter and Catherine, one can see attempts to "modernize" the empire through expansion along the lines of Western European models.

Still, imperial administrators were not in full agreement with the Little Russian nobles in the left bank about the role of these borderlands in the empire. Whereas the gentry in the left bank saw Little Russia as the homeland of East-Slavic civilization, Catherine saw it in the old lands of Kyivan Rus' farther to the North.[68] Therefore, as the eighteenth century proceeded into the nineteenth, the Little Russian intellectuals of left and right bank Ukraine began to consider the question of the genesis of Orthodox East Slavdom. Thus, immediately following this period of assimilation into the empire, these intellectuals generally started to highlight their Cossack past as one that differentiated them from the rest of the empire, a historiographical tradition that Velychenko labels "The Cossack Chronicles".[69]

It is important to note that in Velychenko's analysis, the Chronicles are historiographically split between the camps of those who "disliked the intrusion of Russian

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[67] Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (London; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 85, 84-85.

[68] Hillis, *Children of Rus'*, 32.

[69] Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process.* Also see Alexei Miller, "Ukrainophilia," *Russian Studies in History* 44, no. 2 (2005): 30–43.

central authority into the life of their patria and who sought to protect and maintain as much as possible of their autonomy" and "the descendants of [Cossack] officers who were proud to be part of a powerful empire".[70] The former is represented by historical works such as the *Istoriia Rusov,* one of the most famous works of this tradition. The work appeared in the early 1820s and built on the Cossack-centric histories of the late-eighteenth century. It glorified the Cossacks as those who "had fought so bravely and overcome evil days with their valour and praiseworthy unity."[71] The latter is exemplified in the *Kratkaia letopis Malyia Rossii,* which posited that Cossack hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky ultimately sought to "join everything that had once been under the rule of the grand dukes and autocrats of All Russia to the All-Russian autocracy."[72]

These two historiographies can be cast as the origins of separate Russophile and Ukrainophile intellectual traditions within broader Little Russian historiography through the nineteenth century. Despite existing at this early point, the Russophile-Ukrainophile intellectual conflicts of the early-nineteenth century were confined to intellectual circles in Little Russia and therefore had minimal impact on broader Little Russian society during this time. This would change as these historiographic schools continued to develop, enhanced by the cultural development of Little Russia on the right bank.

Phase A: The Era of Ethnophilia, 1831-1881

In the early 1830s, Tsar Nicholas I and Count Sergie Uvarov developed "official nationality", the ideology that would come to define the Russian autocracy's response to the

[70] Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process,* 155-156.

[71] Anonymous, "Istoriia Rusov (Excerpts)," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj, An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995 (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 82.

[72] Vasyl Ruban, "Kratkaia Letopis Malyia Rossii (Excerpt)," in *National History as Cultural Process: A Survey of the Interpretations of Ukraine's Past in Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian Historical Writing from the Earliest Times to 1914*, trans. Velycheko Stephen, 1777, 153.

national challenge. This ideology was comprised of three interlocking concepts: "A Russian, devoted to his fatherland, will agree as little to the loss of a single dogma of our *Orthodoxy* as to the theft of a single pearl from the tsar's crown"; "*Autocracy* constitutes the main condition of the political existence of Russia"; and "Together with these two national principles there is a third, no less important, no less powerful: *nationality*".[73] These concepts of orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality would form the ideological bedrock of the autocracy until its fall in 1917, and provide the intellectual scaffolding into which imperial administrators attempted to mold the Little Russian idea during the nineteenth century.

The development of this ideology was largely in response to the contemporary Russo-Polish conflict in Little Russia. The revolt of the Polish *szlachta* (nobility) under Prince Adam Czartoryski in November of 1830 was the first major catalyst of the conflict. These nobles formed a rebellious provisional government and amassed tens of thousands of troops to defend it. Imperial administrators quickly deployed a large army to crush the rebellion before stripping Congress Poland of its political autonomy, intellectual institutions, and military in addition to engaging in a grand campaign of de-Polonization.[74] It is at this point that the imperial administration began to consider the Little Russian idea as a tool to this end in the right bank.

Coincidentally, one of Little Russia's most famous cultural figures was in Warsaw immediately before the insurrection of the *szlachta*. A young and enserfed Taras Shevchenko was receiving instruction in painting from "Franz Lampi, the first top-notch teacher he had had

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[73] Sergei Uvarov, "*Desiatiletie Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia*, 1833-1843," in *A Parting of Ways: Government and the Educated Public in Russia, 1801-1855*, trans. Nicholas Riasanovsky (Oxford: Carendon Press, 1976), 108. (Emphasis included in the translation).

[74] At that point in time, however, de-Polonization was mostly undertaken outside of Congress Poland. See Daniel. Beauvois, *The Noble, the Serf, and the Revizor: The Polish Nobility Between Tsarist Imperialism and the Ukrainian Masses (1831-1863)* (Chur; New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991).

thus far, and a man who inspired in the youth a love for Classical art."[75] The coming insurrection forced Shevchenko and his feudal lord to flee Warsaw for St. Petersburg where Shevchenko began to acquaint himself with other Little Russian artists. Through these circles, Shevchenko came to meet Yevhen Hrebinka, a Little Russian writer who very likely introduced Shevchenko to some of the most important Little Russian literary works in existence at that time.[76] It was within these same circles that Shevchenko found the help he needed to buy his freedom from serfdom in 1838.

After gaining his freedom, Shevchenko began to produce many of his most famous works under the patronage of associates who understood his talent. He published his first poetic work, "The Bewitched Woman", in 1837 and followed it up with a series of twelve poems, both long and short, the very next year.[77] He published his most famous collection, *The Kobzar*, in 1840. Shevchenko would continue to publish poetry until his death in February of 1861, one week before the tsar abolished serfdom. In many ways, the great Ukrainian bard's poetic collections represented continuity with past Little Russian literature and historiography, but also new ideas.

Shevchenko's work "The Night of Taras" is an excellent example of these two phenomena.[78] On the one hand, the author highlights the glorious Cossack past of Little Russia. One of the final passages in the work reminisces sadly on this past,

> Along that river, in a field, A darksome mound is seen; Where once the Cossack life-blood flowed—The grass is bright and green. A raven perches on the mound, And caws from hunger's pain… A Cossack dreams of Hetman's days And sheds his tears again. There was a time when Cossack fame And freedom reigned in state—The fame still shines, But freedom's cause Has met an evil fate. There was a time when we were lords, But gone are all those days… Yet Cossack glory we recall In never-ending praise.[79]

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[75] C. H. Andrusyshen, "Introduction," in *The Poetical Works of Taras Shevchenko: The Kobzar* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), xii.

[76] Pavlo Zaitsev, *Taras Shevchenko: A Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 33.

[77] Andrusyshen, "Introduction", xiv.

[78] Taras Shevchenko, "The Night of Taras," in *The Poetical Works of Taras Shevchenko: The Kobzar*, trans. C. H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 34–38.

[79] Ibid, 38.

On the other hand, "The Night of Taras" also contains both the anti-Polish sentiments that the imperial bureaucracy was interested in and the sorts of personal identifications with the Ukrainian nation by which they were alarmed. These sentiments are evident when "Taras Triasilo then spoke out With tears of bitter dole: 'Alas! Alack! My poor Ukraine Is trampled by the Pole!"[80] Shevchenko's work, therefore, is characteristic of Little Russian intellectualism during this early period. It rejects Polonization in favor of highlighting the unique characteristics of Little Russian history and people and demonstrates why imperial bureaucrats saw in the Little Russians a chance to de-Polonize the right bank entirely.

Shevchenko and his contemporaries also developed another important theme in the Ukrainophilic Little Russian intellectualism: the rejection of Russophilism and imperial policies toward Little Russia. In Russia, some literary critics "recognized the author's poetic gifts" but "denied Ukrainian literature any right to exist, ridiculed the Ukrainian language, and regretted that such a gifted poet was wasting his talent."[81] One Russian reviewer even believed that Shevchenko "was 'badly perverting Russian thought and language' by trying to write in Ukrainian."[82] Though they knew Shevchenko was talented, the empire's Russophiles could not count him among their ranks, and Shevchenko did not wish to be counted among them.[83] The clearest repudiation of imperial policy in Shevchenko's works comes in the politically charged poem "The Dream", in which the author writes,

> Thus, [The tsar and his wife] long sauntered up and down, A pair of puffed-up owls, And murmured underneath their breath (I could not hear the fowls) Of the "beloved fatherland" Or the new decorations Or those dull brutes, the new recruits; Then that Desire of Nations, The empress, sat upon a stool; Her husband, in his grace, Approached

[80] Ibid, 36.
[81] Zaitsev, *Taras Shevchenko: A Life*, 57.
[82] Ibid, 58.
[83] Conservative Russian writers of prior generations were forceful in their advocation for writing in Russian as a result of Napoleon's invasion of Russia at a time when most of the Russian nobility used French. See G. M. Hamburg, "Language and Conservative Politics in Alexandrine Russia," in *French and Russian in Imperial Russia: Language Attitudes and Identity*, ed. Derek Offord et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 118–38.

> the greatest of the lords And smashed him in the face! The poor chap licked his chops; then turned And punched the next man's belly To the echo!... That one in his turn Smote the next courtier smelly; Who struck a lesser toady still, He, one still less in score, And he assailed the smaller fry Who stood outside the door, And these rushed madly to the streets And there began to pound The rest of all the Orthodox. These faithful raised a sound—Their screams and roars vociferate Their reverential awe: "Our Father's having lots of fun! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! I roared with laughter, you may guess! But I, too, caught a sweep, A solid punch. Before the dawn All people fell asleep; And as the faithful Orthodox In sundry corners groaned, They thanked God for their Emperor In blessed state enthroned.[84]

This passage reflects Shevchenko's opinions of the tsars and the empire. It demonstrates contempt for the institution as one that has the power to slight and degrade its subjects on a whim, an act that those subjects would be thankful for despite the shame. It also demonstrates Shevchenko's understanding of the imperial system as coercive and repressive toward its minority peoples.

Shevchenko's works exemplify the growth of Ukrainophilia in Little Russia during the period. However, not all Little Russian authors believed that the unique qualities of the steppe warranted a national movement. Other sections of the Little Russian intelligentsia were producing works about Little Russia but in Russian rather than Ukrainian. Shevchenko himself called out Nikolai Gogol, another contemporary Little Russian literary figure and widely regarded as a founding figure in modern Russian literature, for writing about Ukrainian themes in Russian.[85] Gogol was born near Poltava in 1809. A member of the Russian-speaking nobility in the left bank, the young author published his first acclaimed work, *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*, in 1831. The work was a hit "which met with immediate critical acclaim, including that of the great Pushkin himself".[86] Gogol deeply admired Pushkin's works and sought to write in

[84] Taras Shevchenko, "The Dream," in *The Poetical Works of Taras Shevchenko: The Kobzar*, trans. C. H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 171-172.

[85] Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, 158.

[86] Stephen Mulrine, "Introduction," in *The Government Inspector* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1997), v.

the literary tradition that Pushkin pioneered. Gogol would go on to publish a rich body of literary works while living in Little Russia and St. Petersburg. His influence would become pervasive in Russian literature after his death in 1852, prompting Fyodor Dostoevsky, another famous Russian literary figure, to remark that "we have all emerged from under Gogol's overcoat" in reference to Gogol's short story *The Overcoat*.

Gogol's Russophile inclinations are most pronounced in his final work, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,* published in 1847. In an introduction to her translation of the work, Jesse Zeldin suggested that the work represents "the clarification of his religious, moral, and aesthetic views".[87] Religion plays a central role in connecting Gogol's "moral and aesthetic views", adopting motifs of religious revival and the resurrection of Jesus to advocate the resurrection of Russian identity under Orthodoxy.[88] The body of the work itself espouses Russophilia, with chapters like "It is Necessary to Love Russia" and "It is Necessary to Travel Through Russia". In the former chapter, Gogol declares, "No, if you really love Russia, you will burst to serve her… And not loving Russia, you do not love your brothers, you are not burning with love for God, and not burning with love for God, you are not saved."[89] The connection made by Gogol between love for God, love for one's people, and love for Russia as the formula for personal salvation would come to be extraordinarily influential for Russian policy in right bank Ukraine for decades to come.[90] Orthodoxy and East Slavdom, after all, would be the characteristics championed in the alliance between the Little Russians and imperial

[87] Jesse Zeldin, "Introduction," in *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (Nashville: [Vanderbilt University Press], 1969), vii.

[88] Lina Bernstein, *Gogol's Last Book: The Architectonics of Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1994), 41.

[89] Nikolai Gogol, "It Is Necessary to Love Russia," in *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, trans. Jesse Zeldin (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

[90] These sorts of lines also permit the categorization of *Selected Passages* as "a reactionary defense of the Tsarist autocracy and serfdom. See Mulrine, "Introduction," in *The Government Inspector* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1997), vi.

bureaucrats after the second uprising of the *szlachta* in 1863.

The 1863 uprising was a breaking point for the imperial authorities and their toleration of nationalities in the right bank.[91] Officials began a stifling campaign of Russification in the region and enacted extremely repressive policies even as they liberalized other areas of society through the Great Reforms. Any shred of Polish autonomy was annihilated, the Catholic and Uniate churches were persecuted, language was Russified, and national identities were targeted. Jews were banned from acquiring new land out of fear of "'Jewish domination' of the uneducated and inefficient peasants in 'nearly every sphere of life and labor'."[92] Expressions of Ukrainophilism were derided as being meant to "alienate the people of the all-Russian language and nationality".[93] Authors like Gogol were promoted by imperial bureaucrats as proper expressions of Little Russian identity. The persecution continued into the 1870s and was punctuated when Alexander II signed the Ems *ukaze* in May 1876. The decree almost completely banned Ukrainian publications and further promoted linguistic and administrative Russification.[94]

Nonetheless, Ukrainophilic groups continued to emerge. In Kyiv, the civic organization *Hromada* began to develop and spread Little Russian culture. The *Prosvita* literary society was founded between 1868-1877 to combat the widespread illiteracy of the Little Russian peasantry. By 1913, this group would have chapters across Little Russia with over 2,000 reading rooms for the peasants to read works like Shevchenko's. Radical groups like the *khlopomany* were also

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[91] See Edward C. Thaden, "Congress Poland," in *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). Thaden also partially attributes the harsh repression of Polish nationalists after 1863-1864 to the simultaneous emergence of "a Russian revolutionary intelligentsia that challenged the authority of the government and traditional society in Russia" This quote appears on p. 167.

[92] Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire,* 85.

[93] Olga Andriewsky, "The Russian-Ukrainian Discourse," in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter, 1600-1945*, ed. Andreas Kappeler et al. (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 210.

[94] Andriy Zayarnyuk and Ostap Sereda, *The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Ukraine: The Nineteenth Century* (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2023), 85.

gaining popularity in the 1860s and 1870s. Some elements of the Little Russian *narodniki* even began to follow the anarchic political philosophy of Mikhail Bakunin. The tendrils of radicalism were slowly creeping into the empire and would have dire consequences.

Taking the thematically opposed literature of Shevchenko and Gogol, one can see the continued development of separate Ukrainophile and Russophile currents within Little Russian intellectualism. Each built on its respective tradition by adding in new social elements to histories like the *Istoriia Rusov* and the *Kratkaia letopis.* One can also see how imperial policies after 1863 worked to widen the gulf between the two, privileging the *Kratkaia* lineage and attempting to relegate the *Istoriia* lineage to the proverbial dustbin of history. Of course, when something is banned, it generally makes people want to get their hands on it even more. Though they did not know how it would end, the imperial bureaucracy was instigating a battle for identity in the right bank. The battle would quickly spill out of intellectual circles and into the dialogue of the broader Little Russian populace.

Chapter 3: From the Ashes

1881 represents another turning point in the development of Little Russian nationalisms, for in March of that year Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in St. Petersburg by, among others, a Jewish member of the radical terrorist group *Narodnaya Volia*. The tsar's assassination shocked the empire and cemented fear of radical socialist groups in the empire. This fear interlocked with antisemitic attitudes to stoke Russian-nationalist fervor.[95] Indeed, the alienation of the Jewish minority had been developing for almost half a century. In 1835, imperial administrators decided to designate their Jewish subjects as *inorodtsy*, a legal term created in 1822 that had generally been reserved for "various 'eastern' peoples, mostly nomadic or semi-nomadic Siberian natives."[96] Over time, the term came to take on racial connotations and was used in a pejorative sense.[97] The racialization of Jewish *inorodtsy* was accelerated greatly by the tsar's assassination.

Alexander II's successor, Alexander III, would enact reactionary policies that pushed hard for "modernization" and enabled open antisemitism in the right bank. The Temporary Rules of 3 May (which were indeed permanent), for example, effectively banned Jews from settling in rural areas, and "By 1897, the Jewish share of landholding and leasing… fell by over 50% from levels prior to the implementation of the Temporary Laws".[98] These sorts of policies in addition to widespread pogroms reversed the attempts of Jews to emancipate and assimilate, and some intellectuals began to advocate for Zionism and emigration.[99] Alexander III's radicalism would

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[95] See Dimitry V. Pospielovsky, "Russian Nationalist Thought and the Jewish Question," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 6, no. 1 (1976): 3–17.

[96] John W. Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of 'Aliens' in Imperial Russia," *The Russian Review (Stanford)* 57, no. 2 (1998), 174. Also see Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*.

[97] Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy?".

[98] Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 202, note 2. Lohr notes that this data comes from "the twelve provinces for which there is reliable data".

[99] See I. Michael Aronson, "The Attitudes of Russian Officials in the 1880s Toward Jewish Assimilation and Emigration," *Slavic Review* 34, no. 1 (1975): 1–18.

be echoed in the policies of his successor Nicholas II and his stubborn dedication to official nationality. Nicholas' stubbornness, among other factors, would ultimately contribute to the demise of the autocracy and the creation of an independent Ukrainian state. Therefore, in this chapter, I argue that the fracture of the Little Russians into Ukrainophile and Russophile political entities after 1905 resulted from increasingly radical imperial policies after 1881. I also argue that growing radicalism within these national groups paralleled radicalism within the imperial bureaucracy throughout the period.

Phase B: National Agitation, 1881-1903

The months immediately following the tsar's assassination saw a wave of pogroms throughout the Pale of Settlement with the worst one taking place in Kyiv, the capital of Little Russian intellectualism. Between April 26-28, crowds of *pogromshchiki* targeted Jewish homes, businesses, and people of all social and economic classes in Kyiv, chanting phrases like "Beat the Jews who killed out tsar."[100] Though imperial authorities moved to control the chaos, they would also implement more antisemitic policies in the following years. In 1882, Jews were forbidden from moving to rural areas in the empire and from opening their businesses on Sundays/Christian holidays. A quota was imposed over Jewish admission to institutions of higher education. Jews could not vote for town councils by 1892 and could no longer use Christian names by 1893. The antisemitic policies of Alexander III and his bureaucracy would continue the antisemitic precedent set in past decades, deeply impacting the development of the Little Russian intellectuals in the future.

Along with antisemitism, another major characteristic of imperial policy after 1881 was a

[100] John. Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881-1882* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 35.

focus on “modernization”. Generally, modernization denotes the transition from an agrarian society to an urban industrial one, turning farmers into workers. This process, however, often results in immense social change for a modernizing entity. Gino Germani has perceptively communicated this reality in suggesting that “Modernization is permanent revolution.”[101] Indeed, regardless of the risk of revolution, economic modernization was necessary in Little Russia. Contemporaries found that “the economy throughout Ukraine was ‘underdeveloped’” and that industrializing reforms were needed for further economic development.[102] These attempts to modernize and industrialize were revolutionary and indeed ended in actual revolution.

The masterminds of these modernizing reforms were generally the Russian Ministers of Finance, led chiefly by Sergei Witte. Building on the Great Reforms, Witte heavily taxed the empire’s peasantry to fund state projects of modernization such as the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The empire was, however, constrained by the autocratic political system. Modernization was made difficult because conservative imperial bureaucrats maintained an iron grip over economic development, reducing the efficiency of projects and reforms. Indeed, modernization in Ukraine had lagged behind regions closer to Petersburg for some time because "the country’s leaders were not fully aware of the real interests of the regions outside the capital” so “their policies favored the North more than the South”.[103] Overall for the Little Russians, modernization meant attempts to industrialize, urbanize, ethnicize, racialize and/or russify the population.[104] A key

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[101] Gino. Germani, *The Sociology of Modernization: Studies on Its Historical and Theoretical Aspects with Special Regard to the Latin American Case* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981), 10.

[102] Stephen Velychenko, “The Issue of Russian Colonialism in Ukrainian Thought. Dependency Identity and Development,” *Ab Imperio* 2002, no. 1 (2002): 340.

[103] Ibid, 339.

[104] Hillis draws particularly strong connections between contemporary modernization, urbanization, and Russification efforts in Ukraine in *Children of Rus’.* Additionally, in summarizing Hans Rogger’s “Conclusion and Overview” to a 1992 volume on pogroms in Russia, Heinz-Dietrich Löwe connects modernization and urbanization to the ethnicization and racialization of Russia’s Jews. See Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, “Pogroms in Russia: Explanations, Comparisons, Suggestions,” *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 16–24. For Rogger’s original work, see Hans

figure in the political development of these policies was Konstantin Pobedonostsev.

Between 1881 and 1905, the ultra-conservative Pobedonostsev was arguably the most powerful political figure in Russia after the tsar. During this time, he "served as lay head of the Russian Orthodox Church and as chief adviser to Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II," acting essentially as each man's tutor during their development as Russia's leaders.[105] Pobedonostsev was also an ardent supporter of official nationality. As over-procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobedonostsev worked extensively to equate Orthodox Christianity with the state.[106] He also strongly believed that "Among the falsest of political principles is the principle of the sovereignty of the people, the principle that all power issues from the people, and is based upon the national will".[107] In this sense, one may consider Pobedonostsev to be the Uvarov of his time. His archconservative presence in St. Petersburg would have deep implications for the empire as a whole and Little Russia in particular.

In Little Russia, there were mixed reactions to Pobedonostsev's conservative radicalism. Many conservative Little Russians believed that peasant suffering could be traced to the cosmopolitanism of the urban capitalist elite and believed that capitalism was an arena in which non-East Slavs, particularly Jews, could oppress the peasantry.[108] The Ukrainophile and Russophile elements of the Little Russian lobby at the time were often divided by their stance on cosmopolitanism versus populism and free market versus state capitalism. Still others tried to toe the line by moderating their views and attempting to compromise with the increasingly radical

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Rogger, "Conclusion and Overview," in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[105] Murray Polner, "Foreword," in *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), v.

[106] See Heather J Coleman, "From Kiev Across All Russia: The 900th Anniversary of the Christianization of Rus' and the Making of a National Saint in the Imperial Borderlands," *Ab Imperio* 2018, no. 4 (2018): 95–129.

[107] Konstantin Pobedonostsev, *Reflections of a Russian Statesman,* trans. Grant Richards (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1898), 32.

[108] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* 118-119.

and authoritarian imperial bureaucrats.[109]

What is certainly evident are attempts by Ukrainophiles to identify themselves and their work with the Ukrainian peasantry in an effort to counter Russification and generate a wider ethnic identification with Ukraine. Mykhailo Drahomanov was the primary Ukrainophile activist popularizing these ideas. One of the main targets of the Ems *ukaze*, Drahomanov left the empire in 1876 in order to publish more freely. He began the first Ukrainian émigré paper in Geneva in 1878, calling it *Hromada* after the Kyiv *Hromada.*[110] Drahomanov prefaced his paper with a draft constitution for a free Ukraine, in which he states,

> The most important thing in every political society is to gather together as many members as possible who are clearly aware of their goal. These members will then find the most expedient means of attaining their goal. Therefore the following recommendations make no claim to completeness; they are merely an attempt to indicate certain methods, primarily for disseminating the fundamental ideas of the Free Union among various strata of the population.[111]

Here, Drahomanov demonstrates an interest in the political and social rights of peasant Ukrainians who constituted the majority of Little Russia's population. His nationalist populism would be echoed decades later in a lengthy 1891 work by Ivan Nechui-Levytsky in which he writes, in much more nationalistic terms, that "The autonomy of provinces and peoples is being broken; nationalities are being bent and twisted. Everywhere national languages and literatures are being destroyed. Everywhere we see the Great Russian national onslaught, which aims at the

[109] Indeed, there were some Little Russians who were able to fully reconcile their "Little Russianism" with being an imperial subject. See Stephen Velychenko, "Identities, Loyalties, and Government Service in Tsarist Ukraine," in *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin*, ed. Don K. Rowney and Eugene Huskey (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 46–71.

[110] Ralph Lindheim and George S.N. Luckyj, eds., *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine* (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 87.

[111] Mykhailo Drahomanov, "Draft Constitution for the Ukrainian Society in the Free Union," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj, An Anthology of Ukrainian thought from 1710 to 1995 (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 179.

complete destruction of all nationalities in Russia and at their Russification."[112]

Taken together, these two authors and the context in which they wrote provide evidence of the growing rift between the official nationality championed by imperial bureaucrats and Russophile Little Russians, on the one hand, and Ukrainophilic populist nationalism on the other. Importantly, it was largely Russian policies of Russification and particularly those which came after the 1863-1864 uprising, such as the Ems *ukaze,* that convinced these authors that they must double-down in the push to craft a Ukrainian identity. The effectiveness of their campaign, while understood to a degree at the time, would not be fully realized until the massive national mobilizations that took place during the first years of the twentieth century.[113] Indeed, by 1903 a clear and mobilizable Ukrainian ethnic identity, the end point of Phase B in Hroch's framework, had been established.

Phase C: National Mobilization, 1903-1918

"The end of the nineteenth century," wrote the Ukrainophile activist Mykola Mikhnovsky, "is marked by events that can be characterized as representing a new turn in the history of mankind. The fifth act of a great historical tragedy, the 'struggle of nations,' has begun, and its conclusion is fast approaching."[114] The ideological battle that had been raging for decades in Ukraine up to this point was finally reaching its zenith. Through the work of committed intellectuals of both the Ukrainophile and Russophile cloth, much of the Little

[112] Ivan Nechui-Levytsky, "Ukrainianism versus Russianism (Excerpts)," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj, An Anthology of Ukrainian thought from 1710 to 1995 (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 184.

[113] Numerous Ukrainophilic political groups were working to further develop Ukrainian culture and capture nationally indifferent people. See Trevor Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism': Dmytro Dontsov and Heterodox Marxism Before World War I, 1883–1914," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 3 (2014): 519–48.

[114] Mykola Mikhnovsky, "An Independent Ukraine (Excerpt)," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 201.

Russian population had been sufficiently agitated, and the rumblings of social unrest were beginning.

By 1903, imperial bureaucrats were clearly losing the ideological war being fought in the empire. Attempts to modernize industry within the autocratic political system meant that "senior government officials almost without exception contended that relations between employers and workers would be patriarchal in character, comparable to the relations between landlords and peasants".[115] This conception led imperial administrators, including Witte, to believe that a socially conscious class of proletarian workers was not possible given that peasant serfs had (more or less) always obeyed their landlords. However, imperial policy was at least in part responsible for the growing organizational ability of the working class and for growing extremist terrorism in the empire.

Police Socialism, developed in the late-nineteenth century by ex-revolutionary and Secret Police chief S.V. Zubatov, intended to control the extreme tendencies of some working-class radicals by using the police as mediators between the workers and factory owners, thereby fostering loyalty to the tsar.[116] Zubatov's system initially seemed to work, and police informants penetrated the highest ranks of oppositional organizations The most prominent example was E.F. Asev who went on to lead the terrorist section of the Socialist Revolutionaries.[117] Police Socialism, despite initially being nationally neutral, also effectively provided radical workers with organizational experience, and its failings would become clear when workers put this experience to the test.

In 1902-1903, massive labor unrest broke out in Ukraine. A surge of strikes was

[115] Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: A Short History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 5.
[116] Sydney Bailey, "'Police Socialism' in Tsarist Russia," *The Review of Politics* 19, no. 4 (1957): 462.
[117] Ibid, 463-464.

"concentrated in Ekaterinoslav, where, seemingly overnight, labor made the transition from a movement characterized by spontaneous, uncoordinated, nonpolitical disturbances to a movement able to coordinate a general strike."[118] The general strike wave which swept through Southern Ukraine shocked imperial administrators, who were also contending with the rise of political parties oppositional to the tsar's autocratic rule. 138,777 people participated in a total of five work stoppages that year.[119] In a bid to recover and rally public opinion around Tsar Nicholas II, imperial administrators declared war on Japan, perceived to be a weak and easily defeated developing power. The war, however, was a complete fiasco. The Russian military failed to win a single battle, lost two fleets, and proved the incompetence of the imperial administration. For the time being, the tsar's administrators were blamed rather than the tsar himself following the old Russian tradition of a 'good tsar' surrounded by 'bad advisors', but this opinion would change almost overnight.[120]

On Sunday, January 9th, 1905, a crowd of thousands of workers and their families led by Father Georgii Gapon marched to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Gapon was a Ukrainian priest and Police Socialist who sought to push the workers away from radicalism by addressing their everyday concerns through the state-sponsored "Assembly of Russian Factory Workers".[121] The workers and Gapon carried with them a petition for Nicholas to consider and portraits of him to prove their good faith and loyalty. They were met with bullets. "Bloody Sunday", as it became

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[118] Charters Wynn, "The Revolutionary Surge: 1903 to October 1905," in *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms: The Donbass-Dnepr Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 165.

[119] Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: A Short History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 6.

[120] Hiroaki Kuromiya has found that Ukrainians first came to believe in the practicality of revolution during the war and even finds that Motojirō Akashi, a Japanese officer, in attempting to foment internal rebellion against the Russian Empire during the war, "believed, probably wrongly, that he was responsible for the mutiny of the *Potemkin*. See Hiroaki Kuromiya, "Ukraine and Eurasian History in the Twentieth Century," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 34, no. 1/4 (2015): 195–213. Quote appears on p. 198.

[121] Mark Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution, 1905-1921*, First edition. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 47.

known, kicked off months of social unrest throughout the empire, particularly in Little Russia. The unrest culminated with the October General Strike, which mobilized millions to protest the tsar's autocracy and working conditions in the empire, and the "October Manifesto", a document promulgated by the tsar which promised liberalizing reforms and the end of autocracy.

Of great importance to the Little Russian intelligentsia on both sides of the nationality debate were the manifesto's political reforms. They allowed those who had previously been engaged exclusively in intellectual debates to politically organize themselves in a representative assembly, thereby creating a hard political divide between Ukrainophiles and Russophiles. The reactionary and nationalist "truly Russian" bloc, as Hillis calls them, "began to assemble a mass-appeal coalition that counted peasants, workers, and nobles, urbanites and rural dwellers among its members."[122] Major "truly Russian" groups like the Union of Russian People (*Soiuz Russkogo Naroda,* or SRN) advocated for more local self-governance, land reform, access to education and credit for Orthodox peasants, as well as minimum wage and nine-hour workday.[123] The growth of the "truly Russian" lobby was, however, also accompanied by growing radicalism in its ranks, particularly in terms of antisemitism. The SRN, for example, also advocated against "the 'conspiracy' of Ukrainian nationalists, Polish landowners, and Jewish merchants,".[124] Others, like the monks Iliodor and Vitalii of the Pochaev monastery, published articles in their local paper that "were characterized by an 'extreme intolerance towards local Jews and Poles'" and which instigated "'hatred towards all non-Orthodox (*inovertsam*) and aliens (*inorodtsam*),

[122] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* 181. While the "true Russians" were powerful for a time after 1905, were not ubiquitously successful. See Michael F. Hamm, "Jews and Revolution in Kharkiv: How One Ukrainian City Escaped a Pogrom in 1905," in *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Century Perspectives*, ed. Anthony J. Heywood and Jonathan D. Smele (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005).

[123] Ibid, 186.

[124] Anton Kotenko, "An Inconsistently Nationalizing State: The Romanov Empire and the Ukrainian National Movement, 1906-1917," in *The Tsar, The Empire, and The Nation: Dilemmas of Nationalization in Russia's Western Borderlands, 1905-1915*, ed. Darius Staliūnas and Yoko Aoshima, Dilemmas of Nationalization in Russia's Western Borderlands, 1905-1915 (Central European University Press, 2021), 19.

Polish landlords, Jews, and even the local administration,'".[125] These antisemitic elements were troubling to the more moderate "truly Russian" leaders and would push them away from the lobby, contributing to its increasingly weaker position in the lead up to World War I.

The mobilization of the peasantry against imperial authorities during 1905 naturally excited the Ukrainophiles. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the founder of modern Ukrainian historiography, moved himself to Kyiv to continue his academic pursuits in his homeland following the revolution.[126] Hrushevsky's respect within the Ukrianophile lobby had been hard won through decades of work. As the first person to chair the Ukrainian History Department at Lviv university (between 1894 and 1914), he built on prior Ukrainophile historiography but also reshaped it.[127] Among his earliest historiographical contributions was the idea that Russia and Russians were excluded from the myths of old-Rus (and he accordingly coined the term Ukraine-Rus'), thereby shifting the historiographical basis of Ukrainian identity away from the Cossacks past and toward Ukrainian national exceptionalism.[128] To his broader European audience, he asserted that "Ukrainian people had been victimized as much by Russia's 'bureaucratic and centralizing' policies as by the szlachta" and that "imperial authorities treated every 'manifestation of Ukrainian national consciousness' in the Russian empire as a 'criminal phenomenon.'"[129] Indeed, the Ukrainophile lobby was fully embracing its newly granted rights.

The reforms would not last for Hrushevsky and his associates, however. Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin, who rose to power following the revolution, initiated a coup in 1907 which "is usually seen as a conservative measure intended to reduce the power of liberationist parties, roll

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[125] Ibid, 27, 28.

[126] Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj, eds., *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995* (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 227.

[127] Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 109.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* 182.

back the social and political reforms of 1905, and produce a Duma that could work productively with the tsar."[130] Indeed, Nicholas never intended to scrap the autocracy, and used the manifesto simply to buy himself time.

In Ukraine, a viciously reactionary conservative movement was initiated. The Black Hundreds, who called themselves "True Russians", were made up of economically middle-class, socially xenophobic, antisemitic, and culturally russophilic Ukrainians, carried out pogroms and attacks against Jews, left-wing activists and Ukrainophiles.[131] By 1909, Kyiv and the right bank had become the stronghold of the (Russian) Nationalist Party under Governor-general V.A. Bobrinsky. In 1910, Stolypin drafted circular No. 2, which was "aimed at curbing any non-Russian nationalist activity irrespective of national group."[132] The document targeted Jews and Ukrainophile Little Russians, invoking the term "*inorodcheskie*" for both. Anton Kotenko has argued that this use of the term "broadened the rhetorical meaning of the concept" to include "all inhabitants of the empire who were linguistically different from Russians."[133] This document also shows that the concept was present and significant in Little Russia beyond its application the Jewish population. Ultimately, the stabilization of the autocracy and conservative counter reaction made Stolypin confident enough to declare, "give the state twenty years of internal and external peace, and you will not recognize present-day Russia."[134] Certainly, Russia would not be recognizable in twenty years, but not in the way Stolypin, who was assassinated in 1911,

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[130] Ibid, 211.

[131] Sergei Podbolotov underscores that right-wing (*pravye)* groups like the black hundreds "Set the tone… their positive program… remained vague. Yet they could always identify a concrete enemy: the Jew." See Sergei Podbolotov, "'True-Russians' Against the Jews: Right-Wing Anti-Semitism in the Last Years of the Russian Empire, 1905–1917," *Ab Imperio* 2001, no. 3 (2001): 193-194.

[132] Anton Kotenko, "Ukrainians as 'Aliens' (Inorodtsy): Governmental Regulation of Ukrainian Cultural Associations, 1905–17," *The Russian Review (Stanford)* 83, no. 2 (2024), 174.

[133] Ibid, 175.

[134] Pyotr Stolypin, "Interview in Volga Newspaper, October 1909," in *P.A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia*, trans. Abraham Ascher (Stanford, Calif: [Stanford University Press], 2001), 294.

intended.

Hrushevsky would play a pivotal role in undermining Stolypin and his Russophile clients. By the dawn of the First World War, the statesman had also become Ukraine's authoritative historian through "The fact that substantial segments of the disintegrating Russian nationalist camp had denigrated the value of local culture enabled Hrushevs′kyi to claim it for his own cause".[135] As the tsarist government began to topple, he demanded "the right to statehood for the Ukrainian people in a federation of the peoples of Russia… a full autonomy for Ukraine in its ethnographic boundaries, a full political, cultural, and national Ukrainian life."[136] Hrushevsky pressed that "this cannot be and should not be and will not be a threat to other nationalities who inhabit Ukraine… Not in the least!"[137] His call was timely, for military commanders representing the tsarist government "tolerated the participation of soldiers in pogroms, looting, and rape of Jews and other local civilian populations in the front zones… the army rarely intervened or punished participants in pogroms of Jews and Germans".[138]

Hrushevsky's status within the intellectual circles of Kyiv soon propelled him to his dream. In 1917, following the fall of the tsarist government, he would be unanimously elected to lead the Central Rada of a newly independent Ukraine. Following the takeover of the Bolsheviks under Lenin, the Central Rada would issue the *Fourth Universal* in January 1918, declaring that "*Henceforth the Ukrainian People's Republic becomes an independent, free, and sovereign state of the Ukrainian people, subject to no one.*"[139] The "Truly Russian" elements of Ukrainian

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[135] Ibid, 269.

[136] Mykhailo Hrushevsky, "A Free Ukraine," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 235.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 17.

[139] The Ukrainian Central Rada, "The Fourth Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George Luckyj, trans. Oleh Fedyshyn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 244.

society virtually evaporated in 1917 following the February Revolution.[140] Official nationality was dead. There was no more imperial identity to build. Finally, if only for a moment, Ukraine's 'struggle of nations' was over.

It is impossible to say whether official nationality would have prevailed had the tsarist autocracy been maintained. What is evident, however, is that the increasingly radical policies of the imperial bureaucracy, particularly after 1831, 1864, 1881, and 1905 generated parallel radicalism within both the Ukrainophile and Russophile elements of Little Russia, thereby polarizing right bank society over time. This is evident from the writings and views of each respective element in relation to one another throughout the period. Ultimately, the radicalism of the Russophile lobby, the dichotomous cosmopolitanism of the Ukrainophiles, and the fall of the tsarist government in 1917 resulted in the triumph of local Ukrainian nationalists. These grand narratives of national constructions, however, generally obfuscate the thoughts, understandings, and impacts of ordinary people, the primary targets of Russianization and Russification policies. Scholars must begin to study the individuals and groups who, at various times and in various places, were not convinced to join an imagined national community. It is only through an understanding of those who represent the limits of Little Russian nationalisms that scholars can come to fully understand processes of nationalization, including those being undertaken today, in the Ukrainian borderlands.

[140] See Andrei Ivanov, "'The Black Hundreds Went Underground and Vanished Without Trace': Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1917," *Russian Studies in History* 59, no. 1–2 (2020): 157–80.

Conclusion: Historiographic Frontiers

The reemergence of Russian archival documents after the Brezhnev era was revolutionary for non-Russian scholars of the Russian Empire. Westerners studying the Empire's history during the Cold War generally tended not to differentiate between Tsarist and Soviet imperialism thereby creating historiographical blind spots. Although access remained somewhat limited to Western academics until the fall of the Soviet Union, historians from countries that fostered warmer political relationships with it were able to make effective use of state archives, reshaping the subsequent historiography in their wake. Polvinen's 1984 publication is a prime example of this phenomenon. Part of a new wave of archivally-informed scholarship, Polvinen's work was on the forefront of Finnish historiography on the period of imperial rule as well as the vanguard of Western historiography on the Russian Empire. Part of the reason for this is attributable to his commentary on the concept of Russification.

Russification has long been an opaque concept to historians. The confusion stems from the Russian term *obrusenie's* multiple meanings which shifted by region and era during the imperial period.[141] A clear definition or universal criteria for identifying it remains elusive. Since the opening of the archive, the concept has come to be more generally understood as a process that can take the non-mutually exclusive forms of unplanned, administrative, or cultural Russification, thanks to the work of Thaden. Pearson further suggests that processes of Russification should be viewed as distinct from processes of Russianization on the basis that Russification necessitates the erasure of local identity whereas Russianization does not. Nathans adds further nuance to these definitions in positing that assimilation generally acts as a means toward the ends of Russification whereas acculturation and integration generally act as the means

[141] See Miller, "Russification or Russifications".

toward Russianization. Furthering the idea that Russification and Russianization were separate policies, Staliūnas finds that processes of acculturation and integration deployed their own unique strategies, such as “divide and rule”.

These findings imply that Russification and Russianization policies were applied piecemeal and unequally in different borderlands, often on a haphazard basis. While the inaccessibility of the archives certainly played a role in enabling this historiographic oversight by previous generations of scholars, the fact that their focus was on a very limited sample of highly prominent national minorities in the borderland is also important. From this limited sample, these scholars attempted to justify overgeneralized conclusions. Slezkine’s work was one of the first to push back on their notions, and through his brief discussion on the concept of *inorodtsy* he proposes it as a framework of analysis for understanding why certain policies were applied at different times and in different places. Staliūnas and Sahadeo’s monographs further support these new ideas. They both contribute evidence to new hypotheses that suggest Russification and Russianization were separate processes based on unequal policy applications in the borderlands which are evidenced by the presence of divide and rule strategies.

Malte Rolf demonstrates that the nuance of this historiographical debate is being picked up in some areas of recent scholarship. Citing many relevant works and adopting the appropriate language, Rolf’s exemplifies recent scholarship on the Russian Empire’s imperial borderlands. Demonstrating the overall importance of these historiographic conversations and trends to adjacent historiographic fields, Victor Zatsepine indirectly incorporates and supports many of these findings into his own study from an outsider historiographic perspective. Still, not all authors of recent works have been completely in tune with these new hypotheses. While Hillis’ work does support the hypothesis of unequal policy applications in the borderland and the idea of

divide and rule, she generally omits any discussion of Russification and Russianization in her monograph despite her awareness of Staliūnas' framework.[142] In general, the modern historiographic ideas that these authors are engaging with have prompted a reevaluation of national movements in the Russian Empire's borderlands and throughout the continent more broadly.

These national movements emerged as a product of the enlightenment and proved transformational for Europe. Between the late-eighteenth century and the end of World War I, ethno-national minorities within various European empires developed their own national ideologies, agitated their local societies with visions of ethno-national autonomy, and finally mobilized their target populations around the concept. Though its transformation came somewhat later than that of other empires to the West, the Russian Empire proved unable to resist the forces of nationalism within its borders due primarily to the constraints of the autocratic system.[143]

Rooted in the imperial colonialist policies of Peter I and Catherine II, the autocratic nature of the empire was both a central factor in the genesis of a national movement in Little Russia and the empire's greatest weakness in confronting it. Whereas the policies of Catherine brought Little Russians closer to Great Russians, they also helped foster the embers of separate Russophile and Ukrainophile historiographies within Little Russian intellectual circles. The emergence of contemporary works such as the *Kratkaia letopis Malyia Rossii* and the *Istoriia Rusov* around the same time demonstrate that while Great Russians viewed Little Russians as successfully russified, not all Little Russians saw themselves as ethnically Russian. In this way, one can see the colonization of the Ukrainian steppe lands as an action that introduced ethnic

[142] Kotenko's recent work also supports the assertion that divide and rule strategy was deployed in Ukraine given that some Ukrainian individuals and organizations sought to define themselves as Little Russians (i.e. Russians) to avoid becoming *inorodtsy*. See Kotenko, "Ukrainians as 'Aliens' (*Inorodtsy*).

[143] Suny and Kivelson, *Russia's Empires,* 266.

identity into the empire's Little Russian borderland, and so as the beginning of an intellectual battle between Ukrainophilism and Russophilism.

The duel for Little Russian identity in these borderlands accelerated rapidly after the uprising of the Polish *szlachta* in November 1830-1831. Wary of the potential polonization of Little Russians on the right bank, Nicholas I and Count Sergei Uvarov developed the concept of official nationality which intended to contort the principles of nation-building into the framework of autocratic empire. While official nationality was deployed throughout imperial lands, it was most focused and coherent in Little Russia. It sponsored authors like Gogol, who wrote in Russian and emphasized the need to maintain close ethnic and cultural ties to the motherland, against Ukrainophiles like Taras Shevchenko who advocated for Ukrainian exceptionalism. Official nationalists also persecuted oppositional organizations, such as the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius which was treated much like other contemporary revolutionary socialist organizations.[144] This policy pattern suggests the use of Russianizing "divide and rule" strategy in the right bank, whereby imperial bureaucrats sought to divide the Little Russian lobby between those loyal to the empire and those not in order to control national identities in the region. This divide was sharpened following the second *szlachta* revolt in 1863-1864 which began a campaign of strict Russification in the right bank that was punctuated by the Ems *ukaze* of 1876.

Efforts to Russify the Little Russian population were redoubled after the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II. The Jewish identity of one of his assassins contributed to growing racial and ethnic polarization in Little Russia. Widespread pogroms occurred between

[144] See Elżbieta Kwiecińska, "'And There Will Be No Russian Tsar and No Polish Lord…': The Ukrainian Populist Utopia of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius in a Transnational Perspective," *Global Intellectual History*, 2023, 1–26.

1881-1882, perpetuated largely by conservative reactionaries with as the government turned a blind eye. The antisemitic and Russophilic wave after 1881 was extremely troubling for Ukrainophile intellectuals in Kyiv, who also had to contend with modernizing reforms that often acted as vehicles for Russification, as well as moderate Russophiles. The writings and philosophies of Konstantin Pobedonostsev represent the archetypical manifestation of contemporary conservativism within imperial bureaucratic circles. An archconservative, Pobedonostsev trumpeted the importance of maintaining official nationality in the empire and protecting the autocracy. Authors such as Mykhailo Drahomanov and Ivan Nechui-Levytsky emerged in opposition to these policies and were among the first to agitate the Little Russian peasantry with ideas of national liberation and independence. It is evident within these discourses that increasingly inflexible policies on the part of the imperial bureaucracy only served to divide and polarize Russophiles and Ukrainophiles in the Little Russian lobby.

Though ideas of Russophilism and Ukrainophilism had begun to spread into the wider peasant population after 1881, the mobilization of the peasantry to one side or the other would only be possible after the 1905 Revolution (which really begins with the unrest of 1903). The social and political concessions made by Nicholas II in the October Manifesto strongly encouraged Little Russians of all flavors to engage in the ethno-national debate, often in the form of political parties. The emergence of these parties represents the crystallization of divides between Ukrainophile and Russophile Little Russians. Whereas Russophilic elements began labeling themselves as “truly Russian”, Ukrainophile intellectuals such as Mykhailo Hrushevsky began demanding autonomy and then total national independence. Though conservative figures in the imperial bureaucracy such as P.A. Stolypin and “true Russians” believed that they could contain the national mobilization of the Ukrainophiles, they would be disabused of that notion

with the fall of the tsarist government in 1917. Immediately seizing on the moment, Hrushevsky declared independence. These two events represent the culmination of the Little Russian conflict. The fall of the tsarist autocracy reflects the ultimate failure of the imperial bureaucracy to implement official nationality in the empire and other policies of Russification. The rise of an independent Ukrainian nation can also be seen as a manifestation of bureaucratic failure and as a representation of the power of national ideas at the time.

In the future, studies of nationalism in the Russian Empire and associated attempts to Russianize and Russify imperial minorities must be expanded beyond the current focus on the elite segments of these societies. I advocate for two potential new frameworks that could be of use in analyzing Russification and Russianization. The development of new analytical lenses is a constant undertaking in any historiographical field as they allow for new conclusions to be drawn and new questions to be asked. Indeed, seeing as the historiographical conversation around nationality policies in the borderlands has been ongoing for many decades and considering current events unfolding in these borderlands today, the need for new analytical tools seems particularly pressing. Both lenses proposed here have precedent within the current historiography, though to different degrees.

The first potential new lens for understanding Russification and Russianization within imperial policies is through the concept of *inorodtsy.* As highlighted by Slezkine in *Arctic* Mirrors, the term technically refers to a legal category used administratively throughout the empire (generally translated into English as “aliens”). However, John Slocum points out that it “was used, often in a pejorative sense, to refer to all of the empire's non-Russian inhabitants,” and that historians have “remarked on the shift in usage whereby, in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, the formal sense of the term gradually gave way to the informal

one."[145] Given the scholarly focus in the historiography on the relationships between imperial authorities and local peoples, it would reasonably follow that most works would at least include a mention and discussion of *inorodtsy* in the context of their respective borderlands. Curiously, however, the shifting meaning and application of *inorodtsy* has not been deployed in as a frame of analysis in any recent monographs. While Staliūnas uses the term throughout his work and Slezkine and Hillis define its significance in theirs, it is totally absent from Polvinen's, Sahadeo's, Rolf's, and Zatsepine's monographs.[146] How might this be explained?

Staliūnas positions this inconsistency as "the problem of what kind of general term could be used to describe the "objects" of nationality policy."[147] He correctly identifies *inorodtsy* as the term used for "aliens" or "when national groups were differentiated from Russians", but states that separate analytical categories are required to analyze the relationship between "Russians" and "*inorodtsy".*[148] Why can the concept of *inorodtsy* not be used as a category of analysis in and of itself? Indeed, Slocum's essay suggests that it can and perhaps should be. He highlights the fact that "The changing usages of the term *inorodtsy* are bound up with changing conceptions of 'Russianness' and the Russian nation, and evolution in the concepts of nationality and nationhood… the evidence presented here relates to broader questions concerning changing conceptions of identity, difference, and "otherness" in Russian history."[149] Studying the use of the term *inorodtsy* over time in different borderlands would allow historians to understand how imperial administrators and Russians in general "othered" non-dominant national minorities and deployed those differences to gain power within their empire. This understanding, in turn, would

[145] John Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy?, 173.

[146] A recent article by Anton Kotenko has found that the imperial government weaponized the category of *inorodtsy* against Ukrainian nationalists, further suggesting the viability of this analytical category (particularly in right bank Ukraine). See Kotenko, "Ukrainians as 'Aliens' (Inorodtsy)".

[147] Staliūnas, *Making Russians,* 22.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy?", 175.

enable more in-depth analysis of whether tsarist officials used strategies of 'Russification' or 'Russianization' to control these groups, thereby enabling further understanding of concepts within the historiography. This has yet to occur as far as I am aware.[150]

The second potential new analytical category is national indifference.[151] The framework was most cohesively hypothesized in a 2010 work published in the *Slavic Review* by Tara Zahra.[152] It should also be emphasized that by 2010, multiple works analyzing national indifference as an influential force in the construction of national identities in Central and Eastern Europe had already been released, including one by Zahra herself in which she applies her ideas.[153] Zahra's essay makes two novel and critical points. First, "while national indifference has long been an obsession of nationalist activists in east central Europe, it has only recently become a subject of historical research."[154] Indeed, while the concept of national indifference is as old as the concept of nationalism, it has received relatively scant attention in the scholarly circles of Russian imperial history. Second, "Making indifference visible… enables historians to better understand the limits of nationalization and thereby challenges the nationalist narratives, categories, and frameworks that have traditionally dominated the historiography of

[150] Indeed, scholars appear extremely hesitant to even define "minorities" in the Russian imperial context. See Paul W. Werth, "What Is a 'Minority' in an Imperial Formation?: Thoughts on the Russian Empire," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 41, no. 3 (2021): 325–31. Werth nonetheless sees *inorodtsy* as a viable category of analysis. See Werth, "*Inorodtsy* on *Obrusenie*".

[151] Defining national indifference has presented a great challenge to historians seeking to use it, but Pieter Judson and Tara Zahra, two of the concept's main proponents, have loosely defined it as "forms of popular indifference to nationalist presumptions about personal and group identity." See Pieter Judson and Tara Zahra, "Introduction," *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2021), 21.

[152] See Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic review* 69, no. 1 (2010), 93–119.

[153] See James Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008). Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[154] Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities", 93.

eastern Europe."[155] Understanding national constructions in the empire and how imperial administrators responded to them is what enables historians to interrogate distinctions between 'Russification' and 'Russianization'. At the same time, understanding national constructions also necessarily means understanding their limits. The historiography of Russification is therefore incomplete without a discussion of indifference to it. The greatest challenge of this framework remains finding empirical evidence of indifference, but scholars continue to innovate new methods.[156]

The need for such a discussion is further emphasized given the *ad hoc* nature of the empire's construction, its geographical vastness, and the heterogeneous composition of its population.[157] While the lack of analysis of national indifference and its non-use as an analytical lens is understandable in Polvinen's, Staliūnas', and Sahadeo's monographs given when Zahra's article was released and in Zatsepine's given that nationalism is not a central focus, the decision of both Rolf and Hillis not to incorporate this novel framework into their studies appears to be a missed opportunity.[158] Both authors could have placed their work into a novel and rapidly evolving historiographic framework, thereby giving it greater meaning and relevance without detracting from their overall points and goals. In Rolf's case, this omission seems particularly egregious given that James Bjork's monograph on national indifference in the Polish-German

[155] Ibid, 94.

[156] A relatively new collection of essays deploying the framework has been compiled by Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox. See Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, eds., *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe* (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2019).

[157] Brian Boeck's case study of the Don Cossack Host in the Russian Empire touches on all these points. See Brian Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Additionally, for a more direct focus on *ad hoc* imperial policies through different periods of Russian history, see Kees Boterbloem, *Russia as Empire: Past and Present* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020).

[158] Sahadeo's work would benefit from the utilization of national indifference as an analytical lens because attempts to nationalize the peoples of the Central Asian steppe were so weak, as the author points out.

borderlands was released more than a decade prior.[159] A focus on the concept in his book would have added strong evidence to a work premised on the belief that, "giving a dense description of the particular weave of interaction found [in the monograph's region and period] is the best way to demonstrate the complexities, inconsistencies, and formative dimensions of the imperial context."[160] Furthermore, the need for an analysis of national indifference in the narrative presented by Hillis is perhaps even more pressing today considering the tragic relevance of her work to contemporary events in Ukraine. Social studies of the Donbas region since 2014 have shown that both the Ukrainophile and Russophile parties in the War viewed locals as nationally indifferent, a view that said locals often affirm.[161]

To her credit, Hillis does explicitly point out that, "Scholars of national awakenings have generally taken for granted the transformative power of nationalism—a tendency recently challenged by historians who argue that the traditional focus on nation-building has obscured the fact that popular indifference and even hostility toward national ideas persisted well into the modern period."[162] However, she continues on by stating that, "Rather than focusing on expressions of consciousness or indifference, this book analyzes how nationalist agendas evolved through time and across space, often in convoluted and nonlinear ways."[163] While Hillis does not reject the concept of national indifference as an analytical framework, it seems that her choice not to incorporate it in some capacity somewhat discounts her work and limits the overall impact of the book.

The historiographical gap created by Hillis' choice not to include nationally indifferent

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[159] Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole.*

[160] Rolf, *Imperial Russian Rule in the Kingdom of Poland,* 5.

[161] For example, see Elise Giuliano, "Who Supported Separatism in Donbas? Ethnicity and Popular Opinion at the Start of the Ukraine Crisis," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 158–78.

[162] Hillis, *Children of Rus',* 11.

[163] Ibid.

people in her study is widened by her neglect of the term Russianization, an important aspect in the evolution of nationalist agendas in the Southwestern borderlands. Given the failure of tsarist officials to implement official nationality in right bank Ukraine (along with the rest of the empire) and Zahra's point about interrogating the limits of nationalization, the need for intervention is further emphasized. Indeed, accurately categorizing imperial responses to national constructions requires the study of indifferent people who represented a problem for spreading ideological agendas in the borderlands. By understanding national indifference, historians will be more empowered when investigating the processes of national constructions throughout the empire. This, in turn, will facilitate a greater understanding of imperial responses to those projects, thereby further clarifying the line between 'Russification' and 'Russianization' while simultaneously reshaping narratives of national identity to include larger segments of the contemporary population. Finally, understanding of national indifference will also assist in understanding the failure of Ukrainian nationalists to resist the Bolshevik conquest by mobilizing nationally indifferent people as, for instance, the Poles did, following shortly after the tsardoms collapse.[164] Considering the relevance of these two lenses to current historiographical debates, one would hope to see more extensive use of them by scholars in the near future. Their use may yield interesting connections to ongoing national projects in the region today.

Even without these new analytical categories, the links between past and present are extensive and extremely significant. Simon Sebag Montefiore has given perhaps the best summary of the connection between the narrative that I have presented and the current day in writing that "Mr. Putin…sees himself in an unbroken tradition of Russian personal leadership

[164] On the failure of the Central Rada to mobilize the Ukrainian peasantry, see Christopher Gilley, "Untangling the Ukrainian Revolution," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 17, no. 3 (2017): 326–38.

and imperial-national power from the czars to today."[165] Indeed, Putin seems to believe in a modern version of official nationality, reflected by his extensive promotion of Russian Orthodoxy, Russian language, and nondemocratic illiberalism (somewhat less openly than the other two given his attempts to hide behind a democratic façade). His increasingly radical responses to the "Orange Revolution" of 2004 and "Maidan Revolution" of 2013-2014 are reminiscent of the imperial responses the revolutions of the Polish *szlachta* in 1830-1831 and 1863-1863. Now, after 2022, as Ukrainians fight to assert their national existence, Putin hopes to impose Russian identity and crush Ukrainian exceptionalism once and for all. Whether or not he is able to reunite the Russian Empire is for time to tell.

[165] Simon Sebag Montefiore, "Putin's Imperial Adventure in Syria," *The New York Times*, October 9, 2015.

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